

How to Overcome Temper Tantrums and Moody Days!



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We've all had those days. You know, the days where you wake up to the spring bird's love song, the sun lightly kissing your face. With your morning cup of coffee in hand, you delight in seeing the dew on the flower petals. It's peaceful. And calm.

And then you hear it.

"Mama, I can't find my pants!" shrieks your toddler. You turn to see a red-faced, saliva-spewing monster. Make no mistake. He's two, but a little devil is on the brink of bursting out of his body!

Calmly, you ask him if he remembers where he last put his pants, but no luck. You ask if he can wear another pair, but no, it has to be THOSE pants. By now, he is crying hysterically and no amount of reason will help

him find his cool or his pants. So, you tell him to take a time out to calm down. Of course, that only makes him flip out. He stomps his feet and starts biting his forearm. As you leave him in his time out spot, he screams with daggers for a tongue, "You don't love me anymore!"

Of course, details in this story have been modified to protect the innocent, but in hindsight, were there signs of a potential outburst looming on the horizon? What are the possible triggers that escalate a situation for a young child? As parents, what could we do to overcome these circumstances?

We may never quite know what goes on at any given moment within the developing mind of a young child, but consider these possible tantrum triggers:

Over stimulation – When children are overwhelmed by decisions, they are confused and frustrated. Try creating a plan and preparing ahead so there are no surprises. In this situation, setting out clothes the night before might help. Also, try keeping your child's activities to a reasonable amount. If they are doing too much, it is not always a good thing. Sometimes, less is more.

Fatigue – Not only are children physically active, their brains are also learning and growing by leaps and bounds! Their physical body needs rest, and their mind needs rest as well. Did you know that the National Sleep Foundation recommends that preschoolers aged 3-5 years get 10 to 13 hours of sleep a day? Make sure your kids

are well-rested according to their sleep needs. For example, my daughter took 2-hour afternoon naps until she was eight years old.

Communication blocks – Young children may not know how to articulate their feelings. Perhaps they don't know how to respond emotionally and they may benefit from you teaching them feeling words so they can express themselves next time. Is it ok for them to be sad? Yes, they can cry, but what are other constructive ways to respond to this situation? Can they be flexible and accept an alternative? Can they be resilient and try finding their pants again? Help children use their words to communicate.

In all these circumstances, be patient, keep calm, and reassure your child that you are there to help him work through the sticky situations. Review the scenario with him so he has confidence on how to approach similar conditions in the future. Give him a big hug and let him know that you love him, no matter what.

What has helped you and your children overcome temper tantrums and bad moods?

Wishing you sunny days ahead,

Jaime

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