

Tips for Parents



Magu plant.
Rhowch amser iddo.
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Parenting.
Give it time.
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Big Feelings and Big Behaviours (Tantrums)

Tantrums are very common in toddlers and younger children and are a normal part of growing up, as the brain develops. They often communicate their feelings and needs through their behaviour as they may not yet have the words or understanding to communicate verbally.

Hang in there – tantrums happen less often after children turn four. Sometimes older children can have tantrums too and the tips outlined below may also help children of all ages.



What to do when your child has a tantrum

- **Make sure they're safe.** You can't stop a tantrum. Stay nearby and if needed move your child somewhere safe, quiet and calm.
- **Stay close and stay calm.** It is important that your child knows that you are still there and with them – this might be by saying something reassuring or maintaining eye contact with them.
- **Try not to show anger.** Counting to ten and taking a few deep breaths might help. Don't try to reason with them or shout. It's very hard to think when you are feeling overwhelmed.
- **Do not smack or physically punish.** This is illegal in Wales. This won't help you to understand what's causing the tantrum.
- **When your child has calmed down comfort them and reconnect.** Let them know you are proud of them for calming down.
- **Don't worry about what other people think!** It can be stressful if your child has a tantrum. Stay calm if there are people watching and remain focused on your child.

Ways to avoid tantrums

- **Think about when tantrums happen.** Try and understand why your child might behave in this way. A useful acronym to remember is **HALT** – Is your child **H**ungry, **A**ngry, **L**onely, **T**ired?
- **Is your child worried or anxious about something?** Give your child lots of reassurance with love and cuddles.
- **Give your child some simple choices.** Toddlers and young children crave independence. They may get angry and tearful if they are never given any choice or control. You can offer simple choices for example '*apple or banana?*'.
- **Plan ahead.** Take some snacks and small toys when you go out and about.
- **Help your child express their feelings.** Name your child's feeling, for example when you see that they are happy, sad, cross, disappointed or frustrated. It will help them learn the word for that feeling or emotion so they are able to learn to express how they feel later. This can help them understand and manage their feelings better.
- **Make time for active play every day** so your child can "let off steam". Go to the park, play in the garden or put some music on and dance.
- **Show a good example by keeping calm when things get stressful.** This will encourage your child to do the same.
- **If you are concerned in any way speak to your Health Visitor.** Your Health Visitor is there to support you and can provide advice and assistance on all aspects of your child's development.

Our 'Understanding and Responding to Children's Behaviour in the Early Years' resource has more information on ways to help your child develop self-regulation skills to manage their feelings as they grow.

Where to get advice and support

Universal parenting support and advice is provided by midwives, health visitors, GPs and your local authority. Early help programmes such as Flying Start (if you live in a Flying Start area) and Families First are also available.

Look after yourself. Meeting up with other parents can be great for your wellbeing. Your local **Family Information Service (www.fis.wales)** will be able to tell you what's on in your area.

For positive parenting tips and expert advice, visit: gov.wales/giveittime

