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Temper Tantrums

By Glenda Wentworth, Eagle County Family and Consumer Science Extension Agent

Temper tantrums are a normal part of growing up. Parents should expect them to happen. They happen for many different reasons. One of the reasons is young children are learning to communicate. They become easily frustrated when they cannot share how they are feeling.

Tantrums are emotional outbursts. Some emotions are difficult for a young child to hold inside. Children will express themselves by crying, screaming, biting, throwing themselves on the floor or stomping up and down. Some children even hold their breath.

Children have a harder time dealing with the world when they are tired, hungry, or sick. Be sure that your child eats and sleeps at his or her usual times.

Tantrums generally begin around age 12 to 18 months and peak between 2 and 3 years. Then they will decrease until age 4. After that, tantrums are not as much of an issue.

Many parents feel helpless or embarrassed when temper tantrums occur. Sometimes, parents may get angry themselves. Don't show anger or disgust.

Parents can help the temper tantrums from becoming explosive. Parents should not fight with the child during a temper tantrum. Shaking, spanking, or screaming will just make the tantrum worse. Don't be tempted to spank your child when he is upset. He is already out of control and he will become scared when he sees you out of control and angry.

What a young child needs most during times of temper tantrums are parent who are able to remain calm and collected. By staying calm, the parent is modeling acceptable behavior.

The most effective method to handle a temper tantrum is to ignore it. However, the parent should stay close by. Always stay in the same room and within sight. That way you can make sure the child will not hurt themselves or others. You may sit by the child and pat them, but do not say anything.

Gentle distractions may also be helpful. Try to get the child focused on something else by reading a book or listening to quiet music.

What if your child has a tantrum in a public place, such as the grocery store? It's important to understand that your child is not the first to scream in public. Even the people who stare or make comments have probably gone through this themselves. If the tantrum continues, you may have to pick your child up and leave the store. If you give your child what she wants when she has a tantrum, she may learn to use tantrums to get her way all the time.

The best time to help young children is when the tantrum is nearly over. After the child has calmed down, comfort and reassure the child by cuddling them. A quiet activity at this time will help the child regain their self-control.

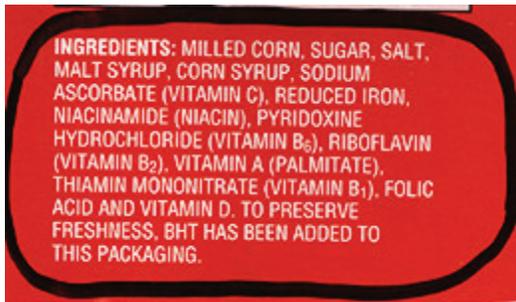
Tantrums can scare children. They need to know that you disapprove of their behavior but that you still love them.

List of Ingredients

Foods that have a Nutrition Facts label will also have in “ingredients” list. The ingredients are listed from “most” to “least” — in other words, if sugar is the first ingredient, you know that the food is mostly sugar! It is good to check the ingredients list of foods like cereal and juice, and other foods that often contain added sugar.

Here’s a nutri-tip: Whole foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains and legumes usually have no added fat or added sugar.

Oregon State University Extension



Make at home

Tuna Noodle Pea Casserole

Makes 10 – 1 cup servings

Ingredients:

1 (16 oz) package	Whole wheat pasta noodles
1 (12 oz) can	Tuna, in water, drained
2 (10 ¾ oz) cans	Low-fat cream of chicken or cream of mushroom soup
1 cup	Prepared non-fat dried milk or skim milk
1 (16 oz) package	Frozen peas, thawed
¼ tsp	Pepper

Directions:

1. In a saucepan, cook noodles until tender; drain.
2. Mix together the noodles, tuna, cream of soup, milk, thawed peas, and pepper.
3. Pour into a 3 quart, greased ovenproof casserole dish.
4. Bake at 375 degrees F. for 25 – 30 minutes.
5. Store in a covered container in the refrigerator.

Reference: CSU Extension, Easy Meals on A Budget. (July 2002).

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