

HOW TO CURB TEEN TANTRUMS

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Anger is a normal, healthy emotion. It is only when it causes detrimental outbursts that it becomes a problem. Tantrums in teens are usually the result of not having learned how to successfully manage anger and frustration while in early childhood. There are many reasons why teens become frustrated and 'boil over'. Many times it is because they can't get their own way, but the cause may also relate to a number of other factors. When a child sees a parent losing his/her temper by lashing out, slamming doors, using bad language and throwing things they think this is normal and repeat what they see.

Teen tantrums may also stem from over-controlling parents, being treated unfairly, inconsistent parenting, impossibly high expectations, or repeated put-downs making the teen feel worthless. It may be due to the negative influence of friends. Frustration also comes from not coping at school, being stressed out or from physical conditions such as being in pain. There are many, many children who are angry because of home break-ups.

If your child is throwing uncontrollable tantrums, consider the causes before just jumping in with some disciplinary measure. Ask yourself a few hard questions. Do you have an anger management problem? If so, admit it, own it and get some professional help - fast. Are you and your spouse on the same page regarding your family values? Have you agreed on AND explained and demonstrated to your children what respect and self-control should look like in your home? Have you taught your children how to recognize their frustration early and self regulate their own anger? Are you favoring one child over another, putting them down or trying to live your life vicariously through theirs? Are you monitoring the atmosphere in the home to look for early signs of frustration in your children? Is your home a safe and calm place? If the answer is 'no' to any of these questions, then adjust your parenting behaviors and gauge the results. If necessary, get help.

At a time when your child is NOT angry, ask him/her why they lose their temper. You might be surprised at their response. They need to know they can talk to you without fearing consequences. If they will not tell you, then encourage them to talk to the school counselor or another trusted adult.

Teach your child or get help to show them how to recognize the signs of anger and how to deal with it. If the cause is a marriage break-up, then you all need to attend counseling sessions to deal with the grief and move forward.

If your child is actually in the middle of an anger meltdown, do not retaliate. You cannot fight fire with fire as this only escalates the situation. If your children are angry at each other, then separate them and deal with the matter

when, and only when they have cooled off. If your child is angry with you, then act calm and exercise self-control. If necessary, turn and walk out of the room. Count a slow 25.

When they are ready to talk, get them to start at the beginning. You will often find that they are angry about something completely different than you thought and that you or another child did or said was just the last straw. Explain how this situation could have been averted. Tell the child how you expect them to behave next time and praise your children when you see them managing their anger well. Parents, encourage each other when you see that your own behavior is changing your kid's negative responses. If all your attempts are failing to make a difference then get professional help.

Explain to your child that their whole life will be dictated by how they manage their emotions. It will affect their relationships with others, their careers, their play as well as their children's lives. Anger is a positive emotion when directed appropriately.

If you have any comments or questions on this subject, please do not hesitate to contact us at sally@forefrontfamilies.org. We invite you to also check out our website at www.forefrontfamilies.org and our blog site at www.forefrontfamilies.blogspot.com for further assistance.