

## Temper Tantrums

By age 4 a child should be able to soothe themselves. If temper tantrums continue for 30 minutes or longer, it is a good idea to have the child evaluated. Temper tantrums continue because they are attempting to get what they want, or they do not have the coping strategies to manage their emotions. Temper tantrums are easily reinforced when a child gets what they want.

### Parent Strategies:

- NEVER, under any circumstances give into a tantrum. This only increases the frequency and intensity of the tantrum.
- Do not argue with the child. Model calm behavior responses to stress. Stay calm when your child exhibits stress.
- Tell a child what **to do**, not **what to not do**.
- Allow child to be frustrated, this is how children build up their ability to work through this emotion. It CAN be very hard for them ~~to be in~~ experience this feeling and hard for parents to witness.
- Limit “no” responses – i.e. “yes, you may have a cookie after dinner”.
- Listen to the feeling and longing a child is expressing, and let them know you get it! Know your child’s triggers (usually being tired, hungry, not getting what they want, transitions, getting up in the morning, going to bed at night, etc) and intervene early. You can get on eye level and say something like “Your motor is starting to get faster because you really wanted to play outside and it is time for dinner”. This brings awareness to their longing as well as being attuned to what may be going on with them physically.
- At this time you can use distraction. Allowing them to take some time away from the situation, you can ignore the tantrum if the purpose of the tantrum is to get undue attention...and giving due attention once the child is calmed. Hugs can calm the nervous system as they try to regulate themselves.

Leta LeRossignol, LCSW, BCD, RPTS

210-381-8662

[www.letacounseling.com](http://www.letacounseling.com)