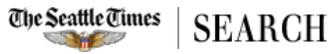




The Seattle Times Company

Jobs | Autos | Homes | Rentals | NWsource | Classifieds | seattletimes.com



Home Local Nation/World Business/Tech Sports Entertainment Living Travel/Outdoors Opinion Jobs Autos Rentals Real Estate NWsource

Advanced search

Your account | Log in | Contact us

Living: Saturday, August 18, 2007

E-mail article Print view

Tantrum tips

By **Stephanie Dunnewind**
Seattle Times staff reporter

Taming tantrums

Prevention

Watch transitions. Heading out to do errands, "parents think, 'Oh, it's only half an hour,' but they're trying to pack 20 things into that," said Redmond parent educator Bridgett Blackburn. All that in-and-out activity can set off some kids.

Avoid tense situations. If Maria Brown's family plans a restaurant outing and her 3-year-old daughter is "in a mood," "I don't even try to sit down," said Brown, a Richmond Beach resident who also has children ages 13 and 14. "I just order food to go." Deborah King, owner of Final Touch Finishing School, agrees the situation must be "appropriate for the age and skill level of the child." "It's unfair to the child and other guests to bring a 2-year-old who is used to eating at McDonald's into a fine-dining establishment."

Make lifestyle changes. "If a child is prone to a lot of tantrums, the first things to look at are sleep and nutrition," said Lynne Reeves Griffin, author of "Negotiation Generation." "A lot of kids go to bed too late and eat food that is not healthy." Other factors: too much screen time and not enough exercise (a positive outlet for energy). Also, look at how much a child is doing each day. "Many kids live a lifestyle that is way too stressed for their age."

Arm yourself. "The only weapon I have is a rather oversized bag that carries most everything I feel may be helpful," notes Kathryn Harrison, a Silverdale mom of two preschoolers. "I always have bubbles, lollipops and crackers, as well as five packets of wipes!"

Set expectations. Give kids an agenda and guidelines. "If you tell kids when you go into a store, 'You're not getting any treats today,' they know where they stand," said Linda McDaniels, associate director of Parent Trust for Washington Children. "But if you've said that before and then got them anyway, they're going to test you."

Don't push it. Sometimes a tantrum comes out of nowhere. But in other cases, parents ignore the buildup (which often starts with whining or crying). "We do it to ourselves when we want to accomplish our agenda," Blackburn said.

In the moment

Stop talking. "The biggest mistake parents make is to keep trying to explain a non-negotiable rule in midrant," Griffin said. "If you're talking about it, then the child assumes it's still on the table."

Stay calm. If your goal is to get through it as quickly as possible, yelling or threatening will likely just escalate (and thus prolong) a tantrum. "If a child is in an overstimulated state, any sensory input you give just makes them go bigger," Griffin said.

Don't give in. Kids who learn tantrums work will keep pushing until parents capitulate. Parents will find tantrums get worse before they get better as kids test parents' resolve.

Forget timeouts or ignoring a tantrum. This rarely works, McDaniels said. Staying with your child acknowledges he or she needs help coping.

Don't take it personally. McDaniels likens a tantrum to an overheated, spewing tea kettle. "Kids didn't decide to make your life miserable," she said. "They're just overwhelmed by emotion and have fewer tools to deal with it."

Bribe. Yourself, that is. Mentally promise a latte or ice cream as a reward for keeping your cool, suggests McDaniels.

Work it out later. "You can't problem-solve when they're out of control," McDaniels said. "You can name what they're feeling, but don't try to talk them out of it." Later, when they've calmed down, talk



Marketplace

Win a trip to Paris from NWsource

Fall fashion revealed: step inside the NWsource style guide to see the latest fashion trends. Win a Paris trip for two.

Enter to win Ten fashion trends for fall

The season's best denim
Hot fall coats

Most read

Most e-mailed

1. Girl, 15, flew without parents' OK
2. Guillen one gamble that paid off big time | Steve Kelley
3. Reporter's journal | Jerry Brewer on covering Gloria Strauss
4. Holmgren: "It's just unacceptable ..."
5. Taiwan grounds its 737s after one burns at Okinawa
6. Families fight for custody of boy whose dad was slain
7. Hurricane pummels Jamaica on its way to Mexico
8. Vancouver teen killed when towed on skateboard

about different ways they could have handled their disappointment/frustration/anger.

For bystanders

Keep that eye-rolling to yourself. Acting rudely "only raises your own blood pressure," says Corinne Gregory, president of The **PoliteChild**. "Children don't have the impulse control adults do," she said. "I try to lead with an attitude of kindness and give the benefit of the doubt." If parents are oblivious to unruly children, the best solution is just to remove oneself from the situation, rather than hope to change it, she advises.

Be supportive. Parents say one positive comment can help restore their battered parenting esteem after a tantrum. Brown sent a note to The Times' Rant & Rave column after earning angry glares when her preschooler threw a brief tantrum at the Richmond Beach Library. A librarian told her she handled the situation well. "I needed to hear it so badly," Brown said.

Stephanie Dunnewind,

Seattle Times staff reporter

Copyright © 2007 The Seattle Times Company



ADVERTISING
Buy a link here

Puget Sound Real Estate
Free NW Listings search. Updated 4x/day. 234,000 home photos, maps!
www.ZipRealty.com

Refinance at 5.35% Fixed
Get \$300,000 loan for \$875/month. Calculate Your New Payment. Act Now!
Refinance.LoanOffer.com

Site map

News

- Home
- Local
- Nation/World
- Business/Tech
- Entertainment
- Living
- Travel/Outdoors
- Real Estate
- Sports
- Opinion

Marketplace

- Jobs
- Autos
- Homes
- Rentals
- Classifieds
- Shopping
- NWsource
- Personals
- Post an ad

Services

- Contact us
- webmaster@seattletimes.com
- Submit listings
- Send us news tips
- Newspapers in Education

Search
Advanced search

Membership

- E-mail newsletters
- Sign up
- Already registered? Log in
- Subscriber services
- Home delivery
- Manage your account

- Other editions
- News by e-mail
 - Wireless services
 - RSS feeds
 - e-Edition
 - Low-graphic

- The Seattle Times Company
- Employment opportunities
 - Seattle Times store
 - Advertise with us

by car

9. Eagles' smoking ban defiance snuffed in Yakima
10. Competing in Danskin Triathlon is a success for many

nwjjobs JUST POSTED

Updated 3:30 PM

CABINET / APPLIANCE INSIDE SALES.
Tukwila, WA Confidential
2007-08-20

APARTMENT MANAGER.
Seattle, WA Confidential
2007-08-20

Domestic Care and Services.
Seattle, WA Classified Ads
2007-08-20

OFFICE ASSISTANT.
S Everett, WA Confidential
2007-08-20

CARPENTERS/LABORERS.
Lynnwood, WA Confidential
2007-08-20

[More jobs](#) | [Post a job](#)

Search jobs

NWsource shopping



Daily find
Indulge in spa sweets at Theo Chocolate
Wednesday at Theo's factory, Sweet Beauty's Lisa Françoise talks chocolate scrubs and balms.

More shopping

- Sales & events
- Articles
- Store guides