

Positive Behavior Strategies:

Temper Tantrums

Temper tantrums are an emotional behavior resulting in an explosion of rage. When a child has a tantrum they generally fall in two categories: a communication of frustration or a power struggle with an adult.

- **Catch the tantrum** before it escalates.
- **Recognize what signs lead to the tantrums** (tired, hungry, frustrated, overstimulated).
- If possible **take actions to redirect the behavior** and de-escalate the tantrum. When you recognize the triggers which lead to a tantrum, plan ahead for ways to prevent the triggers.
- When faced with a temper tantrum, follow the **directives to de-escalate** below.
 - As you begin to see signs of escalation it is best to try any of the following **strategies to de-escalate** the situation:
 - **Take a Break**
 - **Humor**
 - State an **incompatible behavior** to try (if hitting have them clap)
 - **Validate their emotion** (you look angry)
 - **Provide them with words** (if a child took their toy tell them to say “that’s mine)
 - **Ask** if they need help
 - **Avoid demands** until you are sure the child has de-escalated
- Once a child has a temper tantrum there is **no exact timeline**; de-escalation could take minutes or hours
 - **Be Safe** – Ensure the safety of the child and anyone near the upset child
 - **Have a plan** to move other children to another area/room
 - Make sure there is a **quiet area with no possible projectiles** for the upset child
- In the midst of a tantrum, avoid the following:
 - **Language/talking** (once a child escalates, language is not processed effectively)
 - **Eye contact** (but stay near enough to ensure the child’s safety)
 - **Physical contact** (do not touch or try to sooth)

