

Surviving the Terrible Twos

by Emily Fowler



We've all heard the expression "the terrible twos," but when it comes to you having to deal with the meltdowns that are inevitable at that age, how can you make sure you're prepared?

Toddler temper tantrums are truly something to behold – screaming, shouting, throwing, kicking, breath-holding – and if you're not ready, it can be hard to stay calm without going crazy. Remember, your toddler doesn't just wake up one day and suddenly decide to turn from a smiling cherub into a yelling, red-faced demon. They're going through some pretty significant developmental leaps at this stage.

They're starting to get more independent and gain more confidence, so often their behavior includes investigating how far they can take that independence, and getting frustrated when the answer is "not far enough!" So, how can you curb some of that frustration and diffuse those toddler tantrums?

Talk calmly

Keeping your cool is essential, no matter how much your own emotions threaten to bubble up in the heat of the moment. Just remember you're their role model for dealing with confusing emotions, so talk to your toddler in soothing tones and try to remain as calm as possible.

Empathize

Something must have triggered those strong emotions (even if it's them wanting to wear their shoes in the bath!) so while you might not see the significance yourself, try to understand what's

upsetting them and why. Letting them know you understand what they're feeling helps validate their emotions and remove some of that frustration.

Help them understand

Quite often part of the problem is that your toddler is unable to name their emotions and verbally communicate their frustration. Talking to them about the emotions they're feeling, for example, "I know you're angry and sad that you have to share your favorite toy," will not only let them know you're listening, but also help them verbalize those feelings in the future.

Hopefully these tips will help, and while you might not be renaming this time "the terrific twos" anytime soon, you'll be able to gently parent your tenacious toddler without losing your mind.

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