



BRIGHT FUTURES HANDOUT ► PARENT

18 MONTH VISIT

Here are some suggestions from Bright Futures experts that may be of value to your family.

✓ YOUR CHILD'S BEHAVIOR

- Expect your child to cling to you in new situations or to be anxious around strangers.
- Play with your child each day by doing things she likes.
- Be consistent in discipline and setting limits for your child.
- Plan ahead for difficult situations and try things that can make them easier. Think about your day and your child's energy and mood.
- Wait until your child is ready for toilet training. Signs of being ready for toilet training include
 - Staying dry for 2 hours
 - Knowing if she is wet or dry
 - Can pull pants down and up
 - Wanting to learn
 - Can tell you if she is going to have a bowel movement
- Read books about toilet training with your child.
- Praise sitting on the potty or toilet.
- If you are expecting a new baby, you can read books about being a big brother or sister.
- Recognize what your child is able to do. Don't ask her to do things she is not ready to do at this age.

✓ YOUR CHILD AND TV

- Do activities with your child such as reading, playing games, and singing.
- Be active together as a family. Make sure your child is active at home, in child care, and with sitters.
- If you choose to introduce media now,
 - Choose high-quality programs and apps.
 - Use them together.
 - Limit viewing to 1 hour or less each day.
- Avoid using TV, tablets, or smartphones to keep your child busy.
- Be aware of how much media you use.

✓ TALKING AND HEARING

- Read and sing to your child often.
- Talk about and describe pictures in books.
- Use simple words with your child.
- Suggest words that describe emotions to help your child learn the language of feelings.
- Ask your child simple questions, offer praise for answers, and explain simply.
- Use simple, clear words to tell your child what you want him to do.

✓ HEALTHY EATING

- Offer your child a variety of healthy foods and snacks, especially vegetables, fruits, and lean protein.
- Give one bigger meal and a few smaller snacks or meals each day.
- Let your child decide how much to eat.
- Give your child 16 to 24 oz of milk each day.
- Know that you don't need to give your child juice. If you do, don't give more than 4 oz a day of 100% juice and serve it with meals.
- Give your toddler many chances to try a new food. Allow her to touch and put new food into her mouth so she can learn about them.

Helpful Resources: Poison Help Line: 800-222-1222

Information About Car Safety Seats: www.safercar.gov/parents | Toll-free Auto Safety Hotline: 888-327-4236

18 MONTH VISIT—PARENT

✓ SAFETY

- Make sure your child's car safety seat is rear facing until he reaches the highest weight or height allowed by the car safety seat's manufacturer. This will probably be after the second birthday.
- Never put your child in the front seat of a vehicle that has a passenger airbag. The back seat is the safest.
- Everyone should wear a seat belt in the car.
- Keep poisons, medicines, and lawn and cleaning supplies in locked cabinets, out of your child's sight and reach.
- Put the Poison Help number into all phones, including cell phones. Call if you are worried your child has swallowed something harmful. Do not make your child vomit.
- When you go out, put a hat on your child, have him wear sun protection clothing, and apply sunscreen with SPF of 15 or higher on his exposed skin. Limit time outside when the sun is strongest (11:00 am–3:00 pm).
- If it is necessary to keep a gun in your home, store it unloaded and locked with the ammunition locked separately.

WHAT TO EXPECT AT YOUR CHILD'S 2 YEAR VISIT

We will talk about

- Caring for your child, your family, and yourself
- Handling your child's behavior
- Supporting your talking child
- Starting toilet training
- Keeping your child safe at home, outside, and in the car

Consistent with *Bright Futures: Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents, 4th Edition*

For more information, go to <https://brightfutures.aap.org>.

American Academy of Pediatrics

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The information contained in this handout should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances. Original handout included as part of the *Bright Futures Tool and Resource Kit*, 2nd Edition.

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Temper Tantrums

It's hard for a young child to hold strong feelings inside. Young children often cry, scream, or stomp up and down when they are upset. As a parent, you may feel angry, helpless, or ashamed.

Temper tantrums are normal. They are one way a child learns self-control. Almost all children have tantrums between the ages of 1 and 3. By age 4, they usually stop.

What to Do for a Temper Tantrum

Try these tips when your child has a temper tantrum:

- **Try to stay calm.** *If you can't stay calm, leave the room.* Wait a minute or two before coming back, or wait until the crying stops.
- **Distract your child.** Point out something else to do, like read a book or play with a toy. Say something like, "Look at what the kitty is doing."
- **Let your child cool off or have a "time-out."** Take your child away from the problem. Give your child some time alone to calm down. Try 1 minute of time-out for every year of your child's age. (For example, a 4-year-old would get a 4-minute time-out.) Don't use time-out too much or it won't work.
- **Be ready to take your child home if your child has a "public" tantrum.** The best way of stopping "public" tantrums is to take your child home or to the car.
- **Ignore your child's crying, screaming, or kicking if you can.** Stand nearby or hold your child without talking until your child calms down. The more attention you give a tantrum, the more likely it is to happen again.

The following things are *not* OK. Don't ignore these actions:

- Hitting or kicking people
- Throwing things that might hurt someone or break something
- Yelling for a long time



If your child does these things, take him or her away from the problem. Hold your child. Say firmly, "No hitting" or "No throwing" to make sure your child knows what behavior is not OK.

What Not to Do

Never punish your child for temper tantrums.

Your child may start to keep feelings inside, which is worse.

Don't give in to your child's demands just to stop a tantrum. This teaches that a temper tantrum will help your child get his or her way. Tantrums are more likely to stop if your child doesn't gain anything from them.

Don't talk too much to your child during the tantrum. It is hard to reason with a screaming child. When your child calms down, talk about better ways to deal with anger and frustration.

What to Expect

Your child should have fewer temper tantrums by age 3 1/2. Between tantrums, he or she should seem normal and healthy. Every child grows and learns at his or her own pace. It may take time to learn how to control his or her temper.

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A Word About Safety

Sometimes you have to say “no” to protect your child from harm. This is a common cause of a tantrum. So, what can you do?

- Childproof your home as much as you can.
- Make dangerous places and things off-limits.
- Keep an eye on your child at all times. Never leave small children alone, especially if there may be danger.
- Take away anything dangerous right away. Give your child something safe in its place.
- Be clear and firm about safety rules.

Call the Doctor If...

...your child shows any of these signs:

- Hurts himself or herself or others during tantrums
- Holds his or her breath and faints
- The tantrums get worse after age 4
- Has lots of other behavior problems

When tantrums are bad or happen often, they may be a sign of emotional problems. Your child's doctor can help you find out what is behind the tantrums. The doctor can also give you advice on dealing with them.



How to Help Prevent Temper Tantrums

You can't prevent *all* tantrums, but these ideas may help:

- **Make sure you give your child enough attention.** Children try to get attention in many ways. If being good doesn't do it, they may try being bad. To children, even “negative” attention (when you are upset) is better than none at all. So notice your child being good and reward the behavior.
- **Set limits that make sense.** Give simple reasons for the rules you set, and don't change the rules.
- **Keep a daily routine** as much as you can. This helps your child know what to expect.
- **Let your child make choices whenever you can.** For example, “Do you want apple juice or orange juice?” Or let's say your child doesn't want to take a bath. Make it clear that he or she will be taking a bath. But offer a real choice he or she can make. Try saying, “It's time for your bath. Would you like to walk or have me carry you?”
- **Try not to say “no” too much.** Choose your battles. Children need to have some feeling of control.
- **Give your child a few minutes' warning before changing activities.** This helps children get ready for a change.
- **Ask your child to use words to tell you how he or she is feeling.** Suggest words he or she can use to describe those feelings. For example, “I'm really mad.”
- **Be ready with healthy snacks when your child gets hungry.**
- **Make sure your child gets enough rest.**
- **Set a good example.** Try not to argue or yell in front of your child.

To learn more, visit the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Web site at www.aap.org.

Your child's doctor will tell you to do what's best for your child. This information should not take the place of talking with your child's doctor.

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