



Hey Parents,

Have you ever looked at your precious child and wonder what has taken over their body? Do they ever misbehave to the point that you wonder where you went wrong as a parent? Know that you are not alone. Attitude problems are a common issue when raising preschoolers.

Bottom line: it's hard to deal with and can be extremely frustrating. It is easy to become angry and fed up with that behavior. James 1:19 says, "This you know, my beloved brethren. Everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger." Sometimes it is easier said than done. We must keep our temper in check when dealing with our children. You cannot take back words or actions that were said out of anger. If we're honest, we know that we could handle any parenting moment much better from a state of calm. But in the storm of our anger, we feel righteously entitled to our fury. How can this kid be so irresponsible, inconsiderate, ungrateful? Your child may be pushing your buttons, but he isn't causing your response.

Children sometimes will act out to get a reaction from parents. Lacking enough positive interaction, a child will develop negative tactics to re-engage the adults. Being scolded, nagged, reminded, and punished is far better than being ignored. Few parents set out to deprive their children of enough parental contact, but many parents are over-scheduled, working too hard, or in distress themselves. Even though they're doing the best they can, parents who are overwhelmed by the job may inadvertently create a situation where the kids have no choice but to misbehave to ensure a connection. James 4:10 says, "Humble yourself before the Lord and He will exalt you."

Tantrums also spring from your child's growing desire for independence. Despite your toddler's rapidly developing abilities, they no doubt still want to do much more than they can handle physically and mentally. This frustrating incompetence will drive your child over the edge. When their frustration reaches a certain level, it explodes as a tantrum.

Though it hardly seems like it much of the time, your toddler is actually trying to control themselves. And despite all the turbulence, your child will become increasingly self-aware throughout this year. By their third birthday, this self-awareness will probably awaken a previously unseen ability in your toddler: awareness of and identification with the feelings

of others. So in the end, your child's sometimes painful journey toward self-awareness will give birth to a degree of empathy.

Avoid any positive reinforcement of a meltdown. Don't offer candy or a cookie if they will stop and don't give them what they want. It's best to give temper tantrums as little attention as possible. If you're at home, you may try saying, "When you're done, we'll move on," and let the tantrum take its course. If you're in public, put yourself in a situation where you have time for the tantrum to play out. If you can leave a store, leave, and return after the tantrum has ceased.

Give your child the power of choice to help her determine the outcome. Try saying, "It looks like you're having a hard time being calm, do you need to sit down for a while or do you need some help?" Or leave a situation and say: "When you're calm you can come back." When you provide choice you empower your child. This not only helps end the current tantrum, but it can help prevent future tantrums from occurring.

Growing up is tough, so is parenting. By working together, we can navigate the tempers and attitudes and reach a peaceful conclusion.

Partnering with you,  
Pastor Greg

