

## Tantrums and Aggression

Some days, it may feel like no matter what you do, your toddler is unhappy. Your toddler may have tantrums or become aggressive. This can look like hitting, kicking or biting. You are not alone. These are some common behaviours displayed by toddlers.

### WHAT TO EXPECT

- Toddlers can throw tantrums if they feel misunderstood.
- There will usually be a trigger behind the tantrum or aggressive behaviour.
- Toddlers are not yet able to regulate or manage their emotions – they are still learning.

### REALITIES

- It can be difficult as a parent when your toddler is expressing themselves through aggression or tantrums.
- To support your child, be prepared for any triggers.
- Avoid taking your child out if they are tired, hungry or unwell.



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### SAFETY

- If your child is having a tantrum, stay close and calm.
- If your toddler is having a tantrum, ensure they will not injure themselves from their surroundings.

### TIPS FOR TANTRUMS AND AGGRESSION

- Try and stay calm whenever your toddler experiences a tantrum or aggressive behaviour.
- You are their role model – your toddler will learn how to manage difficult situations and their emotions by watching you.
- The CARES diagram may be helpful in challenging situations.

### TANTRUMS

- Try to divert and distract your toddler.
- Stay close and stay calm, offering soothing words e.g. “Daddy’s here if you need help”.
- Ensure that your toddler is safe.
- Once the tantrum is over, offer a cuddle (having a tantrum is scary for your toddler).
- Once they’re calm, speak about what upset them.
- Use words that describe their feelings to encourage their understanding of emotions.

### AGGRESSION

- Try to divert and distract your toddler.
- Be consistent and always address aggressive behaviour.

- If your toddler is aggressive, calmly get down to their eye level, gently hold their hands and say “no hurting”.
- Turn away and remove eye contact for 3 seconds.
- Make eye contact again and say “no hurting, gentle hands”. Your toddler may then need help to move to a different activity.
- Notice and praise gentle hands and gentle play.



- C – Come in calmly and get close to your child
- A – Assist your child when they have a problem
- R – Reassure your toddler and let them know you are there for them
- E – Emotional validation; talk about the emotion they are experiencing
- S – Soothe your toddler with your voice and touch