



Rifka Schonfeld STRATEGIES

THE NEWSLETTER FOR OPTIMUM SUCCESS

TIPS ON SOCIAL SKILLS FOR ADULTS & CHILDREN

IS THERE A SOLUTION TO TEMPER TANTRUMS?

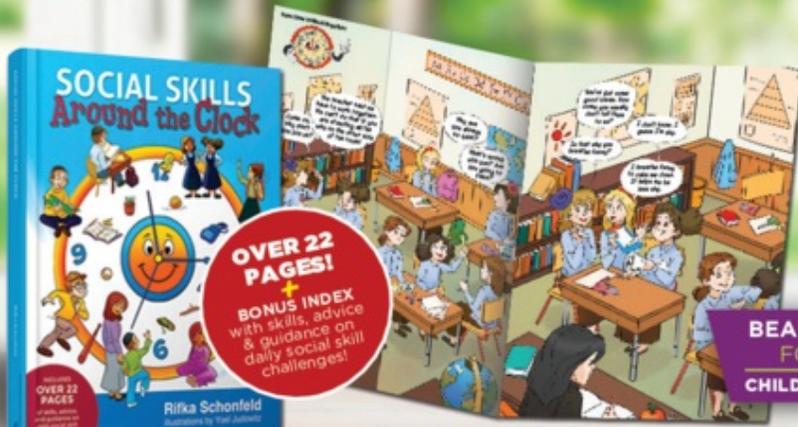
Dear Readers,

This week's newsletter includes a question on the topic of temper tantrums and helpful proven tips to help combat it

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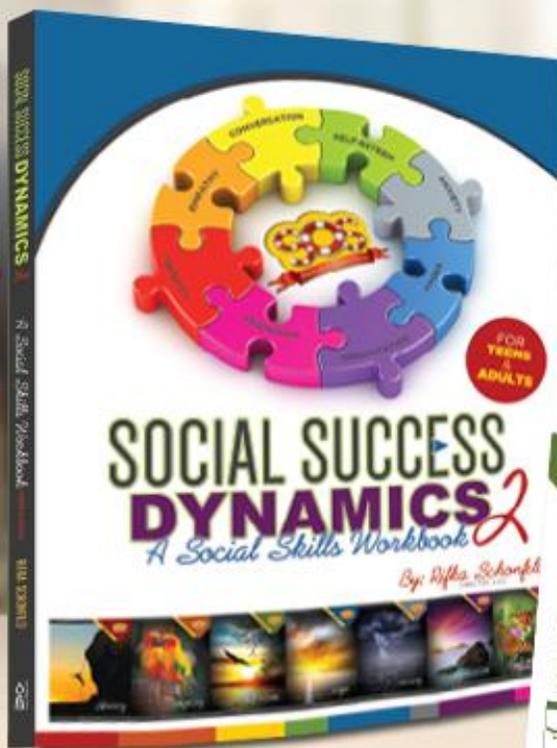
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QUESTION:

Is there a solution to temper tantrums?



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STRATEGIES

ANSWER:

The short answer to this question is “yes.” However, the longer answer is that depending on the age of the child and the type of tantrum, there are many different solutions.

For toddlers, Dr. Harvey Karp, a board certified pediatrician, suggests speaking in “toddlerese.” In other words, speak to the child in a way they can understand. We all do these actions when we are happy, but when our child gets upset, we often become calm and rational. Toddlers may not respond to that kind of reaction. Instead:

- **Reflect** their wants back to them in short sentences and syllables. For instance, if your child is upset because they want a candy bar in the store. Say, “You want a candy bar.” “I hear you.” “You want a candy bar.”
- **Use repetition.** In order to get your child’s attention, they need to recognize that you are listening to them.
- **Express yourself through facial expressions and hand motions.** These physical gestures are much easier for children to understand. Let them know that you are aware that they are upset.

Once your child recognizes that you are listening, chances are, he will calm down enough to rationalize with. This will be your chance to explain to him what he needs to do so as to get what he wants. Alternatively, this might be your chance to distract him. Either way, once he recognizes that he has been heard, he will calm down and be ready for a calm interaction.

When a child consistently and frequently acts out so much that it stands out when compared to other children of the same age and developmental level, there might be something more than regular temper tantrums going on.

“Explosive Children” or children with Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) exhibit a pattern of uncooperative, defiant, and hostile behavior that interferes with day-to-day performance.

Some signs of ODD are:

- Frequent temper tantrums

- Excessive arguing with adults
- Often questioning rules
- Active defiance and refusal to comply with adult requests and rules
- Deliberate attempts to annoy or upset people
- Blaming others for his or her mistakes or misbehavior
- Often being touchy or easily annoyed by others
- Frequent anger and resentment
- Mean and hateful talking when upset
- Spiteful attitude and revenge seeking

There are multiple treatments for ODD, among the most effective is social skills training to increase flexibility and lengthen frustration tolerance with peers.

In many ways, a child with ODD can be very difficult for parents. Below are some ways that the American Academy of Child Adolescent Psychiatry suggests dealing with children with ODD:

- **Build on the positives.** Give your child praise and positive reinforcement when he shows flexibility or cooperation.
- **Take a time-out.** Time outs are useful for yourself as well, if you are about to make the conflict with your child worse, not better. This is good modeling for your child. Support your child if he decides to take a time-out to prevent overreacting.
- **Pick your battles.** Since the child with ODD has trouble avoiding power struggles, prioritize the things you want your child to do. If you give your child a time-out in his room for misbehavior, don't add time for arguing.
- **Set up reasonable, age appropriate limits.** Make sure you can enforce the consequences if these expectations are not met.

Many children with ODD will respond to the positive parenting techniques and negative behavior will significantly subside. However, don't be afraid to reach out for extra help from doctors, health professionals, and educators – because, yes, there is a solution to temper tantrums.



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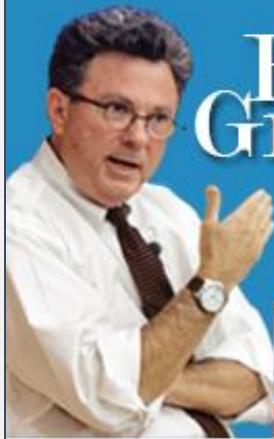
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