

Practical Parenting Tips for Trying Times

Having kids at home all day is even more challenging with school and extra-curricular cancellations and the transition to remote work. Anxiety, cabin fever, limited alone time can influence kids to create new ways to get your attention, no matter what age they are.

If attention seeking behaviors and tantrums escalate, in no particular order below are some tips from a child-care professional who is also a former babysitter, current mother, aunt, older sister, daughter, and embracer of 'good enough' parenting:



Take care of yourself first!

- Sleep, a healthy diet, and exercise all contribute to a better mood and more patience.
- If you need community support, below are phone numbers and websites that may help.

Remain calm and remember that you are in charge, even if it feels like you're not.

- As a mother of 2 little ones, I used to sing at the top of my lungs "Home on the Range" when stressed to the max. It would break the tension and sometimes create much-needed laughter. Give it a try - sing your favorite song, loud and proud!
- If today was just a bad day all-around, remember that it's never too late to apologize or try again - tomorrow really is another day.

Praise as they go, even effort counts - and catch them being good!



Neatly side-step power-struggles:

- Stay focused on what you're asking, instead of getting caught up in the millions of ways kids have of distracting.
 - Don't get sucked into their arguments, just restate your request with the expectation of when it will be done: "Please pick up your room by noon today. If you do it by noon, you can have 30 extra minutes of X. If it's not done by noon then you will lose 30 minutes of X," (or whatever their known motivator is)
 - Say, "I'm all done talking about this. If you choose not to do it, you know the consequences." And move on.

Set limits that are clear and developmentally appropriate for your kids.

- See kidshealth.org for guidance

Break big tasks down into smaller ones.



Make consequences that are logical and enforceable.

- Immediate and brief are best approaches here, so no one is trapped in a week or longer of some punishment doled out in anger.



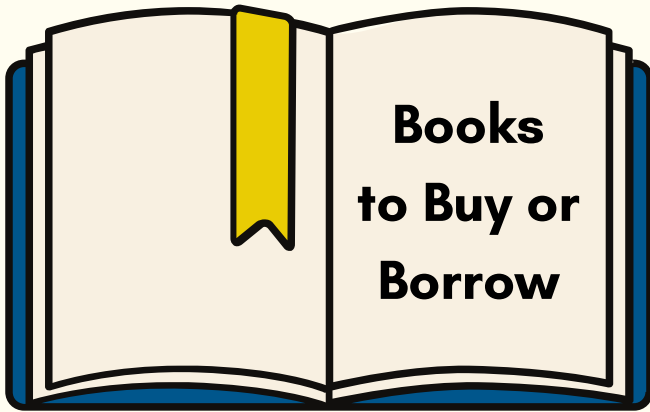
Time-out vs time-in:

- Sometimes young children can't tolerate a time-out and sometimes parents do not like this approach. If this happens to be your family, then a time-in: "Pushing your little sister is not OK. Keep your hands to yourself and use an inside voice while you sit with me. We can talk about what happened when you are done."

Label feelings:

- "You're really sad about missing your friends. How can we contact them? (shrug from sad kid) My suggestions are sending emails, chalk messages on the sidewalk, making a YouTube dance for them, or writing a letter to tape to their apartment door. What do you think?" Or, "You're really angry you can't go outside right now. You can be angry but kicking the wall is not okay. Let's find something you can throw instead."





Books to Buy or Borrow

For Kids:

[Something Bad Happened: A Kid's Guide to Learning About Events in the News](#)

by Dawn Huebner, PhD

See [other helpful books](#) about anxiety, negativity, bedtime, etc from this author.

For Parents:

[Without Spanking or Spoiling](#) by Elizabeth Crary

[How to Talk so Kids will Listen and Listen so Kids will Talk and Siblings without Rivalry](#) by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish

[The Explosive Child](#): A New Approach for Understanding and Parenting Easily Frustrated, Chronically Inflexible Children
by Ross W. Greene, Ph.D.

[1-2-3 Magic](#) by Thomas Phelan, Ph.D.



Community Support

[Parents Helping Parents](#): 1-800-632-8188

[Parent Professional Advocacy League](#): 1-866-815-8122