

Distraction and Redirection - Techniques to prevent Tantrums

Instead of waiting until a child has reached his boiling point, it is possible to do some things differently to prevent those strong reactions. You can try to prevent situations that lead to meltdowns or fits using a couple of easy strategies.

Strategy 1: Distraction

Instead of waiting for a fit, divert the child's attention away from something he isn't supposed to do.

For example, when your child is reaching for something he's not supposed to have, you say, "Hey I think I hear the garbage truck!" Then your child stops what he's doing and listens for the truck. He may run off to the window to look for it. He then forgets about the item he wasn't supposed to touch because he's so excited about seeing the garbage truck.

Distraction is drawing his attention to something else!

Strategy 2: Redirection

You offer a new but similar alternative to something he should do or touch. For example, the child wants to grab his sister's iPad and he's not supposed to. As he's going for it, you grab one of his toys and say "look here's your ball!" and you throw it to him.

Redirection is guiding the child to make a better decision.

By providing proactive prevention techniques, you may help your child avoid the overstimulation of not getting his way.

Rather than addressing these situations by saying "I've told you to leave your sister's iPad alone!" Or "Stop and put that down!", offering a distraction or redirection may prevent those difficult to get out of meltdowns.