

# Early Learning Parents' Pages

## April 2017



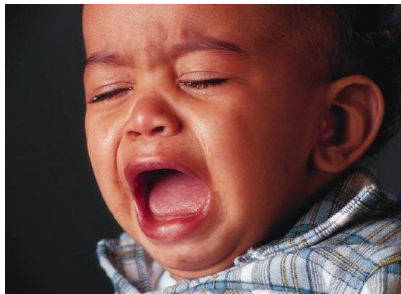
Preschooler parenting  
problem #3?  
**Meltdowns.**

Family fun for the Week  
of the Young Child.

## Minimize meltdowns

**Y**our 3-year-old is playing with a friend and suddenly picks up a toy truck and throws it at him.

You tell him to play nicely and he throws a toy car at you. Instead of listening to you, he has a temper tantrum and his friend begins to cry. In less than five minutes, a pleasant play date has turned into a disaster. You start to think either something is wrong with your child or you are not a good parent.



and emotional responses. When angry, our body sends blood to our brain with chemicals that make it hard to think rationally. So, instead of your child telling you he is angry his friend took his favorite toy truck and won't give it back, he throws the truck at his friend, the car at you and begins to cry. Using what we know of our senses, you can help him calm down and restore normal blood flow to his brain. Instead of a shrill, loud scream, use a soft, soothing voice. In place of yelling, "Stop crying! Be quiet and sit down!" whisper, "What's upsetting you; why are you angry?" Gently rub your child's shoulders, neck or face. Ask him to take deep breaths and slowly blow each one out, like smelling a flower and blowing it. Softly singing a familiar song to your child will also have a calming effect.

Once your child is calm, you can talk about the reason for  
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You are not alone. In her book *The Top 10 Preschool Parenting Problems*, Rosalyn Duffy ranks **meltdowns** as the #3 preschool parenting problem. She separates them into two categories – frustrations and tantrums. Typical 3-year-olds become frustrated and have tantrums when they get angry. He may not have the words to explain what happened to make him angry and does not yet have the social skills to find a way to seek help from others.

Anger and frustration are physical



## In This Issue

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## Safe Kids Day

Apr. 24 is **Safe Kids Day** – a day promoted all over the world to remind families to take action necessary to protect their children at home and when they travel. The leading cause of death for children in the United States is preventable accidents. More children die in car crashes, fires, falls and drowning than from diseases. Vigilance on the part of family and caregivers will help to reduce these avoidable deaths and injuries.

There are many ways to make your home and travel safer for your children. You can use [the Home Safety Checklist](#) from Safe Kids Worldwide to check areas of your home for safety hazards. There is also information on [safe sleep](#), [poison control](#), [toy safety](#) and many other safety tips for your home at this site.

Here are some ways to make sure your child is safe while traveling:

- + [Car Seat Safety](#)
- + [Booster Seat Safety](#)
- + [Seatbelt Safety](#)
- + [Heatstroke Awareness and Prevention](#)
- + [Driveway Safety](#)
- + [Trunk Entrapment Prevention](#)

You can get safety tips and updates by signing up for the Safe Kids bimonthly newsletter: [Get Safety Tips and Updates by Email](#)

## Social timeline for 3-, 4- and 5-year-olds

### 3-4 Years

Your child is becoming more independent and confident. He still needs your guidance and attention when interacting with unfamiliar people, but is learning how to carry on a conversation with other children and adults. He learns many social skills through watching and interacting with others including how relationships work. He will continue to ask many "What is ..." and "Why" questions.

Your child initiates play with other children and enjoys making up games and rules with her friends. She may argue with her peers, especially if she is strong-willed, but is very affectionate towards them also. She enjoys dramatic play, group games with simple rules like Duck, Duck, Goose and can take turns and share with friends without reminders from you or other adults. Developing empathy and the ability to play interactively happens as your child spends time socializing with other children. This occurs sooner in children who are in many social settings such as preschools or child care with other children on a regular basis.



**Video: Baby Steps: Learn the Signs. Act Early.**  
<http://bit.ly/2oe6jI5>

- + Your child at 3: <http://bit.ly/2neGi31>
- + Checklist for 3: <http://bit.ly/2lYKS6o>
- + Your child at 4: <http://bit.ly/2oe2ThW>
- + Checklist for 4: <http://bit.ly/2ovDNuo>
- + Your child at 5: <http://bit.ly/2mMkTTH>
- + Checklist for 5: <http://bit.ly/2o83SDB>

### 5 Years



By 5, your child will develop real friendships and care about her friends and what they think. She will be able to share much better and wants to "fit in" with other children. She is able to show empathy for others but will still have trouble seeing another person's point of view. She will still put her needs and wants above those of other family members and friends.

At this age, your child will become more independent and more confident in his own abilities as he enters kindergarten. He enjoys talking with family and sharing stories about his day with them.

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## Ways to celebrate April 24-28 ...

The National Association for the Education of Young Children has designated Apr. 24-28 as the [Week of the Young Child](#). During the week, parents, child care providers and teachers focus on the importance of providing fun, hands-on learning experiences for young children. Each day of the week highlights a theme families and child care providers can use to engage young children in purposeful activities filled with ways to have fun and learn at the same time.



**Music Monday** encourages adults to [use music to support young children's math and literacy skills](#). Play favorite children's



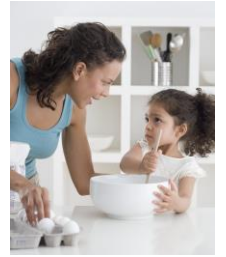
songs and ask your child to clap, stomp or drum to the beat. Count out the beats with him and write the number that matches the number of beats. Dance to the music together. Play your child's favorite song and sing along with her. Talk about the words in the song and explain the meanings of unfamiliar words. In "The Itsy, Bitsy spider climbed up the water spout," ask your child what a spout is and how you would use it. With every song you sing together, talk about the words and focus on the meanings as they relate to your family.



**Tasty Tuesday** [promotes healthy eating](#) and asking the family to join in the fun of preparing a meal or snack together. Letting your child count,

## ...Week of the Young Child

measure or mix the ingredients for a favorite recipe helps her learn many early math, science and literacy skills such as adding new words to her vocabulary, measuring and counting while having a great time together.



**Work Together Wednesday** is a wonderful day to [work on a project together](#). You may want to work on organizing the toy shelves or bookshelves; doing laundry together; building something using recycled boxes and containers you've saved or rocks, leaves and twigs you found outside. Working together encourages your child to learn about teamwork, cooperation and many other important social skills.



**Artsy Thursday** is time to take out the crayons, paints and markers and allow your child freedom to explore all the different ways to create art. Playdough, pipe cleaners, glue or tape, string, ribbons, safety scissors and different kinds of [paper will allow your](#) child to explore materials and create many types of art. This encourages critical thinking skills and creativity in your child.

**Family Friday** focuses on the [whole family doing fun activities together](#). Prepare a meal together. Go to a park or the library. Read books. Sing songs. Let family members make sugges-



tions for a family night such as [playing board games](#), taking a walk, dancing or singing songs together. This helps your child learn about the special role each family member plays as a part of the family.

For more information and activities, visit the following sites:

<http://bit.ly/2mQB1DC>

<http://to.pbs.org/1nvErBp>

<http://to.pbs.org/1Hbubum>

<http://to.pbs.org/1jnMeT8>

<http://to.pbs.org/1KEAfPa>

<http://to.pbs.org/2nkvHoE>

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## Minimize meltdowns

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the tantrum and ask how he could solve the problem. Ask him what happened and why that upset him. Then, discuss how he could solve the problem. "Perhaps you could take turns playing with the truck or find another truck for your friend." When your child is not angry, practice what he should do when he feels angry or frustrated. Ask him to take deep breaths and blow out the air to make him feel better or ask his friend to take turns playing with the truck.

To avoid temper tantrums, practice **preventive parenting**. Preventive parenting means you plan ahead and practice situations that might trigger a tantrum for your child.

Talk to your child about situations where she has had a tantrum in the past.

"Remember when we visited your friend and you were upset when it was time to leave? What could we do to make it easier for you to leave with me next time we visit?" Involve her in planning



ways to avoid a future tantrum. Does she need you to hold her hand or carry her to the car when it is time to leave? Ask her what she needs to do when you tell her it's time to go and what you will do to help her leave without getting upset. Talk to her about



expectations for leaving the friend's house. Tell her what will be unacceptable behavior in this situation. Then role-play leaving her friend's house. She may enjoy playing the part of the mother while you play the part of the child or use a doll or a stuffed animal as the child and let her be the mom. Role-play both acceptable and unacceptable behavior and what the child and the mom do in each situation.



Remember to model staying calm and acting respectful when you are upset. Children model what they see. If you react by yelling, throwing things or stomping away, expect your child to do the same.

Our children learn by watching and listening to the adults in their lives, so it is important to act and talk the way you want your child to act and talk.

## Coming in May...

- **Preschool Parenting Problem #4? Negotiation and Manipulation.**
- **Child Care Provider Day**
- **Mother's Day**
- **Foster Care Month**



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