

Walk away from temper tantrum

Sometimes the fireworks start on the inside. The child goes out of control from within and the outcome is crying, hitting, screaming, kicking, biting, pinching and shouting. It's called a temper tantrum, and it is very unpleasant to see.

It is also very unpleasant for the child having one. He is engaged in an internal struggle. He wants to please, yet frustration, fatigue, excitement, overstimulation or simple attention-seeking interfere and may result in that internal explosion.

Unfortunately, tantrums get results. Sometimes the child simply gets his way. Other times the adult's embarrassment or anger at the child's behavior produce punishment. Worse yet, the adult may be brought down to the child's immature level by shaking, spanking or screaming back at the child.

But whatever the result, the child has caused something to happen because of his behavior. As long as he gets a reaction, he will persist in this form of communication, even if the reaction is negative as with punishment or yelling.

Actually, he may be as surprised as any on-looker the first time a tantrum spontaneously occurs. By the reaction of those around him, he knows his behavior is unacceptable. He may feel great guilt at behaving badly. He may also feel frightened at the power he possesses to cause such intense responses, and confused that the adult he relies on to help him has also lost control.

STILL, if the tantrum works, the child will rely on it. He will use tantrums over and over. Other communication tech-



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niques will not have an opportunity to develop.

So it becomes our job to help the child overcome this unpleasant form of expression. Tantrums are nearly inevitable, particularly in the youngest children who tire easily and have not perfected their muscle control and speaking ability. But tantrums can occur at any age when the child, reaching for independence, is not quite able to accomplish or is thwarted in his attempts.

What to do? First, anticipate problems: If you sense your child is tiring, suggest he either take a rest, have a nutritious snack, or somehow change his activity focus. Do this before trouble has a chance to develop.

The adult must stay under control and at least appear not to be amused or disturbed by this behavior. The adult can teach the child a better response just by his actions and example.

If a tantrum occurs, walk away. Without an audience tantrums become an ineffective means of communication.

If another child is involved and is being pinched or hit, firmly but gently separate the offending child. Then, firmly but softly indicate that people are not for hitting, and as soon as the child is calm, the two may resume playing together.

The child relies on the adult for help when it is needed. When a child's immature responses lead to a tantrum, he obviously needs support. When the tantrum has subsided, remember that the child has just gone through a struggle that was unpleasant for you and for him. Comfort your child after this trauma just as you would after any other trauma.

THIS CRACKED MARBLES project will remind you of how fragile children are on the inside, especially when things heat up outside. Use marbles that are either clear or have a tiger eye. Tinted or solid color marbles won't work because you can't see inside.

Place the marbles in a pan and cover with one to two inches of water. Bring the water to a boil and continue boiling for seven to 10 minutes.

Quickly plunge the marbles into a pan filled with ice cubes and cold water. Carefully examine the marbles. They will be smooth on the outside, but cracks will be apparent on the inside.

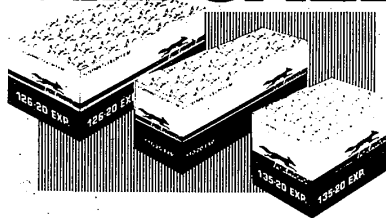
If you desire, the marbles can be mounted with glue to a bell cap and a chain attached to make a key holder.

Patricia Bordman, a free-lance writer and photographer, has a master's degree in early childhood education. She has taught elementary school and conducted workshops and lectures. Mrs. Bordman welcomes suggestions and comments. Please write her c/o the Observer & Eccentric Newspaper, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150. © PATRICIA BORDMAN

Monday, June 29, 1981

(Re-7B)OJC

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consumer mailbag

Are there fuel additives that will save gas and increase mileage?

W. J. Farmington Hills

As energy costs increase, so does the availability of energy saving devices of all types. While many products do save energy, an alarming number of items of little or no value are flooding the market. This is an area best described by the old adage, "cheapest emptiest" or "let the buyer beware."

In the world of energy saving devices, probably the best area to find worthless products is in "gas savers." If you're not a garage tinkerer, you'd be wise to stick to tried and true gas economy measures.

The Environmental Protection Agency

has tested many devices and additives, and the test results and guidelines are available from the Federal Trade Commission Consumer Education Office, Washington D.C. 20580.

I've accumulated several quarts of used motor oil. Is there anyplace to take it for recycling? I don't want to throw it out when I know how valuable it is.

Mike N., Rochester

If you are a do-it-yourself oil changer, you don't have to pour your used motor oil out where it will damage the environment. You can now take it to one of 95 collection sites located throughout Macomb County.

To receive a list of centers write to: Macomb County Cooperative Extension Service County Building, 9th floor, Mt. Clemens 48043.

ECO-TIP: Seasonal fruits and vegetables can help you stay within your food budget. They are easily prepared, economical and nutritious and will add variety to your diet. Many are conveniently packaged by nature in individual servings that can be slipped into a brown bag lunch for a healthful, low-calorie meal.

Consumer Mailbag answers your questions. Address mail to Grace R. Gluskin, Concern, Inc., Detroit, 1 Northfield Plaza, Troy 48068.

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