



Rosario Counseling & Associates

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Calming an Explosive Child

For many kids, temper tantrums don't stop after the age of three. Even as they get older, they continue to resort to yelling and screaming to display their anger. Some kids simply haven't learned appropriate ways to communicate their feelings, while others have learned that this behavior eventually gives them what they are seeking. This behavior creates stress and anxiety for the other family members, especially the parents.

When attempting to de-escalate an angry child or teenager, keep these tips in mind:

Keep calm

Do not escalate the situation by using the same behavior as your child. Take deep breaths, and change out with your spouse, if necessary.

Use a low, firm voice

Keeping your voice low will counteract the tension caused by your child's raised voice.

Suggest a "time out"

Suggest to your child that they take a few minutes to calm down. This allows them a few minutes alone to get control of their emotions and also gives you time to regroup.

Be consistent

Children learn through repetition. If you are consistently teaching them that this behavior is unacceptable and will not earn the desired response, then they will change the behavior.

Model appropriate alternatives

Kids learn how to behave based on the examples around them. Make sure that you are modeling appropriate and healthy ways of expressing anger and frustration. This may include taking deep breaths, counting to ten, requesting a few minutes of alone time, and using "I" statements to express your feelings.

Remember, you can't get to the core of the problem until everyone is calm and willing to speak and listen appropriately. Focus on de-escalating the situation before turning your attention to the problem at hand. Don't be afraid to ask for help if you feel overwhelmed.



Sara Bukowski, MA, LPCA

If you or someone you know is struggling to help an angry child, one of our experienced therapists can help. Please call (919) 649-5882 for more information.

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