Mann Mitra

10 Calm Sentences for Tantrums

What to say when your child melts down

A free printable from Mann Mitra. Stick it on the fridge for the next hard moment.

The 10 sentences

1 "I'm right here. You're safe."

Why it works: In a meltdown, your child's thinking brain is hard to reach. Your calm voice and presence help their body settle first (this is called co-regulation). Fewer words work better.

2 "You're really upset. It's okay to feel this. I'll stay with you."

Why it works: Naming the feeling helps a child begin to make sense of it. Accepting the feeling is not the same as accepting the behaviour.

3 "You wanted the biscuit, and I said no. That feels so unfair."

Why it works: You show you understand what they wanted, without giving in. Children calm faster when they feel understood.

4 "I won't let you hit. I'm going to hold your hands gently."

Why it works: Calm, firm limits keep everyone safe. You stop the action, not the feeling, and you do it without shouting or hurting.

5 "Let's breathe together. Smell the flower... now blow the bubble."

Why it works: Slow breathing calms the body. A picture ("smell, then blow") is easier for young children than "take a deep breath". Breathe slowly yourself; they will copy you.

6 "Do you want a hug, or some space? I'm here either way."

Why it works: Some children want closeness, some need room. Offering a choice gives back a little control, and "I'm here" means space is never a punishment.

7 "The answer is still no, and you can be sad about it."

Why it works: Kind and firm together. The limit stays the same, and the sadness is allowed. Over time, this teaches that tantrums do not change the answer, but feelings are always welcome.

8 "You can stamp your feet or squeeze this cushion. Hitting is not okay."

Why it works: Only saying "stop" leaves a child stuck. Offering a safe action they *can* do, while you stay calm, makes the limit easier to follow.

9 "I'm going to wait here until your body feels calmer."

Why it works: You do not need to fix the feeling or win the argument. Waiting calmly, without lecturing, shows the storm will pass.

10 "That was a big feeling. You came back to calm. What helped you?"

Why it works: Talk only after calm returns. This builds your child's words for feelings and their own calming skills for next time. Then reconnect: a hug, a snack, a story.

Many of us say this... try this instead

Many of us say	Try this instead
~~"Stop crying right now!"~~	**"It's okay to cry. I'm right here."**
~~"Big boys/girls don't cry."~~	**"Big feelings are hard at every age."**
~~"I'll leave you here if you don't stop."~~	**"I'm staying close until you feel calmer."**

Threats, shaming or smacking may stop a tantrum for a moment, but they teach fear, not calm. You don't need them.

How to use this sheet

- **Pick 2 or 3 sentences to start.** You don't need all 10. Say them slowly and quietly.
- **Calm yourself first.** One slow breath before you speak. Your calm is the most powerful tool here.
- **Fewer words during the storm, more words after.** Teaching and talking work only once your child is calm.
- **In public?** Move somewhere quieter if you can, get down to their eye level, and use sentence 1. Other people's looks don't matter as much as your child does.
- **Afterwards, take care of you too.** Tantrums are tiring. Losing your temper sometimes is human. You can repair it: "I shouted. I'm sorry. Let's try again."

Tantrums are a normal part of growing up, especially between about 1 and 4 years, when children feel big emotions but don't yet have the words or skills to handle them.

When to talk to someone

This sheet is general parenting education. It is not a diagnosis or treatment. Please speak to your paediatrician or a qualified child counsellor if:

- tantrums are very frequent, very long, or getting worse over time,
- your child often hurts themselves or others during tantrums,
- tantrums continue to be very intense well past the early school years,
- you are worried, or you feel you can't cope. Asking for help is a strong thing to do.

Free support for parents in India: Tele-MANAS **14416** (mental health support, free, 24x7). If a child is in danger: Childline **1098**.

Mann Mitra shares general parenting education based on well-known child-development ideas (emotion coaching, co-regulation, positive discipline). Mitra Didi is an AI-animated guide character. This printable is free. Please share it with other parents, but do not sell it.

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