

# Exploring

## children's social-emotional wellness

*a tipsheet for parents and caregivers*



Capital District  
Child Care Council

## Tantrums

### How to resist giving into tantrums

- Stay calm. As your emotional state escalates the child's tantrum behavior will escalate.
- Evaluate what benefit the tantrum serves for the child.
- Avoid power struggles. No one wins.
- Ignore behaviors that are not harmful or destructive.
- Don't "punish" a tantrum but rather help the child learn appropriate expressions for anger and frustration.
- Remember young children's internal controls are not fully developed, so they will need your support.

### Things to remember during a tantrum

- Be consistent. Children need support and reminders to adhere to limits.
- Keep the child safe. Clear the area from furniture that could cause harm.
- Offer supportive and reflective communication such as; "I see that you are upset" or "I know that cleaning up toys can seem like a big job."
- Help tantrums lose their meaning. When there is little reward for tantrums, they lose effectiveness.
- Support the child in learning appropriate ways to get his needs met.
- Steer clear of negative labels. Early childhood is a sensitive period for social and emotional development. Labels such as "bad" can begin to define the child's social self.

**Witnessing  
a tantrum can  
make a caregiver  
feel helpless and  
embarrassed**

### From labeling to learning

- Avoid labeling behavior as "bad."
- Focus on what the child does well.
- Reinforce appropriate behavior.

