



## 6 Ways to Deal with Difficult Behavior When Caring for Kids

One of the most practical things that Safe Sitter® teaches is how to deal with difficult behavior. That's indispensable information for babysitters and parents alike! After all, having some go-to strategies to use when the going gets tough is important.

1. **PREVENT:** The best way to deal with difficult behavior is to prevent it from happening. Children tend to lose control when they are tired. Making sure your children are well rested or recognizing that they need a nap or an early bedtime can go a long way toward preventing that meltdown at dinner. Other reasons that children lose control: they are hungry, bored, frustrated, or simply need to be comforted. Now that I think about it, an awful lot of adults lose their temper in those situations too.
2. **DISTRACT:** Sometimes known as "redirect" in the child development world, this a great method of dealing with difficult behavior, particularly with toddlers. Distract them with something colorful or musical. For older kids, distract them with questions about their favorite band or who they're following on YouTube.
3. **GIVE CHOICES:** Kids like to feel that they have some control over their lives. Offer a couple acceptable choices while still insisting on what needs to be done.
4. **MAKE A GAME:** You can make a game out of even the most mundane chore. When the laundry is done, hand each child a folded pile of clothes, then time them to see how fast they can run to their rooms put the clothes away. The clothes might not get put away neatly, but they do get put away, and that's good enough for most busy moms and dads!
5. **WHEN...THEN:** Give children something to look forward to after they complete a chore or task: "When you put on your pajamas, then we'll read your favorite book." "When your room is clean, then we can go get ice cream."
6. **TAKE A BREAK/START OVER:** Sometimes, kids just need to take a break. Is your child playing with a toy too roughly, even after repeated warnings? Maybe he needs to take a break from that toy for a few minutes, or maybe even a break from playing. Just keep in mind that young toddlers are too young for this technique to be effective. In that case, you're better off distracting them with a different toy or activity.

Finally, don't forget to take care of yourself. Do what you can to make sure that you're getting enough sleep, that you're eating well, and that you occasionally have some time to yourself. A tired, stressed-out parent isn't going to feel any better than a toddler who missed her afternoon nap. Taking care of yourself will help you be patient when that temper tantrum is in full swing in the middle of the grocery store (trust us, we've been there).

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