

PARENTING TIP

Stop Anger When It Starts

The child who is getting frustrated with a puzzle or struggling with a friend needs to learn how to deal with the building energy inside before exploding. We encourage children and parents to learn to stop. The size of the “stop” depends on the intensity of the anger. Sometimes the stop means engaging in another activity or leaving the situation. Other times it just means pausing for a moment and taking a deep breath. The child needs to recognize that frustration is present and anger is building.

Stopping is helpful whether the child is just becoming frustrated, or is already quite angry. This step is especially important for the child who is enraged. Rage is anger that controls you no matter how well you conceal it. The primary way to tell that children are enraged is that they can no longer think rationally and their anger is now controlling them. They have lost control.

The solution to rage is always to stop. When a child is enraged you might say, “You are too angry to talk about this right now. Spend some time alone. Come back when you can tell me in a calm voice why you’re angry and we’ll continue to talk about it.” One sign that the child is ready to address the issue again is that he or she will be able to put anger into words and talk about the problem rationally.

Whatever you do, don’t jump into the battle with your kids. When they are angry, children look for ways to draw you into a fight. Avoid it. It’s not productive and often escalates the problem. Rather learn how to stop and teach your kids to do the same. By slowing down the process you’ll see a greater ability to interact with your kids without the complications that anger brings.



This idea was taken from the book **Home Improvement, The Parenting Book You Can Read to Your Kids** by Dr. Scott Turansky and Joanne Miller, RN BSN