

A woman with short dark hair is looking down at a young girl. The girl is making a pouting face and has her hand raised to her forehead. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light blue.

Anger

When your child makes you angry

Nearly every parent knows how angry you can become when a child doesn't behave. Here are some things to keep in mind:

- Remember, it is your child's behavior that makes you angry, not your child.
- Spanking and other punishments will not teach your child self-control and what to do instead.
- Be sure your child is capable of doing what you expect.

PARENT TIP

We all have really stressful days

Sometimes parents may react to a child's annoying behavior in a negative way because they are tired, stressed, or angry at someone or something else. If this happens often parents need to find ways to get more sleep, eat better, or talk to a friend or professional who can help think of ways to deal with anger and children's behavior.

Four steps to control your anger

1. **Stop!**—Take a moment to cool off. Wait until you are calm before you discipline your child.
2. **Look and Listen**—What is the problem? What has caused your child to misbehave? Do you know for sure that your child did misbehave? Is your child's behavior normal for the age of your child?
3. **Think**—What do you want your child to learn? What can you do to help your child learn self-control? How do you expect your child to behave?
4. **Act**—Carry out your decision.

PARENT TIP

Ideas to help you calm down

- Count to ten very slowly. Think about the counting, or something that makes you happy, instead of your child's behavior.
- Put your hands in your pockets. This will help you from using them to threaten or hit your child.
- Close your eyes. Take a deep breath, and let it out slowly. Pretend you are releasing steam from your body.
- Get away from the situation. Go to another room or take a walk. (Do this only if it is okay for your child to be alone or if there is someone to watch your child.)
- Talk about the problem with your partner, a friend, or a relative.
- If you want support as a parent contact Circle of Parents, a program of Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota at 1-800-CHILDREN, 1-800-621-6322, or www.pcamn.org.