



Health Care Agency  
Behavioral Health Services  
Prevention & Intervention

# Anger and Parenting



**All parents get angry at times. But it is never OK to hurt your children. If you have trouble controlling your anger (or are afraid you may do something to hurt your children), get help right away. You can call Childhelp at 1-800-422-4453.**

**It's OK to feel angry with your children. All parents do at times. It's how you act that makes a difference. Learn how to respond to angry feelings without hurting yourself or your children.**

## Think about when you get angry.

- Do you get angry when your children talk back? When they don't listen? When they whine or fight? If they spill or break something?
- Knowing what makes you angry can help you take steps to respond more calmly.

## Notice signs of growing anger – before you lose your cool.

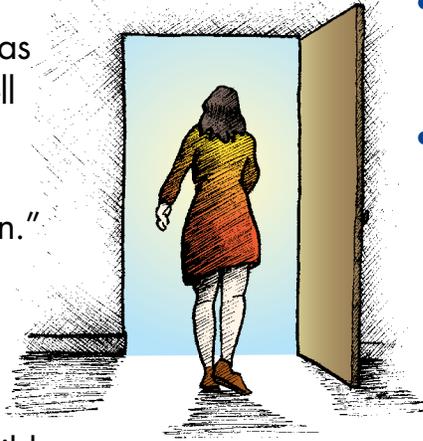
- Are you snapping at your children? Feeling trapped or out of control?
- Do your palms get sweaty? Does your heart race?
- These are signals to calm down.



*Think about what makes you mad – then take steps to deal with your feelings before you lose your temper.*

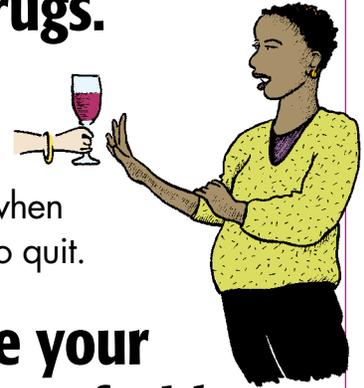
## Take a time-out before you act in anger.

- Place young children in a safe place such as a crib or playpen. Tell older children, "I'm upset. I need a few minutes to calm down."
- Leave the room.
- Count to 10. Take deep breaths. Think of a fun moment with your child.
- Say to yourself, "I'm angry right now, but I know it will pass."



## Avoid alcohol and other drugs.

- Alcohol and other drugs can make people more violent.
- If you lose your temper when drunk or high, get help to quit.



## If you lose your temper or are afraid you might...

- Get help right away. Call a friend, neighbor or family member.
- See a counselor, join a support group or take parenting classes. They can help you learn to discipline your children without anger or violence.
- It might be scary to ask for help around anger. But it's important for you and for your children.

## Express anger in a safe way.

- Talk to another adult – a friend, neighbor or relative. Even a short conversation on the phone will often help you calm down.
- Try crying or screaming into your pillow (away from your children so that you don't scare them).
- Take a long walk. Sing to your favorite music. Take a shower.

## Do not hit your children.

- It is not OK to hit children.
- Hitting children can hurt their body and spirit.
- It teaches children that it's OK to hit others.

## Watch what you say as well.

- Blaming and name-calling are both very hurtful to children.
- They will respond much better to problems if you talk to them without yelling.

## If your partner becomes violent ...

- Get children out of the house.
- You will need to have a plan to protect yourself and your children.
- Both men and women can call the local health department or domestic violence center to find resources in their area. Women can also call their local women's crisis center.
- If you or your children are in danger, call 911 or your local emergency number.



This pamphlet is not a substitute for professional medical care. If you have questions or concerns, please talk with a health care provider.

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