

## Tantrum vs. Meltdown

The Scout is upset and acting out. Is he having a tantrum or a meltdown? Many parents and Leaders use these terms interchangeably. But they are different behaviors that require different approaches. Here's how to tell one type of outburst from the other.

	Tantrum	Meltdown
What it is	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An angry or frustrated outburst.</li> <li>• A child might yell, cry, lash out, and hold his breath.</li> <li>• A child typically has some control over his behavior during a tantrum.</li> <li>• The behavior tends to stop when he gets what he wants. (But tantrums can become overwhelming and evolve into meltdowns.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A reaction to feeling overwhelmed.</li> <li>• A child might yell, cry, lash out, run away and/or shut down and withdraw.</li> <li>• Meltdowns are out of a child's control.</li> <li>• The behavior tends to stop when he wears himself out or when there's a change in the amount of sensory input he is experiencing.</li> </ul>
What Triggers it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A desire to get something, avoid something or elicit a specific reaction.</li> <li>• Frustration.</li> <li>• Not being able to communicate needs and wants.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sensory, information or emotional overload.</li> <li>• Intense frustration.</li> <li>• Sudden changes in routine or expectations.</li> <li>• Not being able to communicate needs and wants.</li> </ul>

Signs  
You  
May  
Notice

- You know what your child wants or is reacting to.
- Your child is choosing to engage in the behavior.
- He's able to pay attention to what's going on around him.
- He watches other people's reactions and adjusts his behavior to match it.
- He may be trying to bargain for a solution while he's yelling.
- Behavior ends once when he gets what he wants or realizes he *won't* get what he wants by acting out.

- You may not know what your child wants or is reacting to.
- Your child doesn't seem to have control over his behavior and appears panicky.
- He is shutting down or trying to escape. He's not able to process what's going on around him.
- He doesn't respond to people's reactions or attempts to talk to him.
- He loses his ability to problem-solve and negotiate solutions.
- He needs time to calm down and recover, even after a situation has been resolved.