Kiddo Connections

# TANTRUM VS MELTDOWN

## Understanding the Difference. Responding with Support.

## TANTRUM



A tantrum is a behavior in response to not getting a want or to gain something.

**GOAL**
To get something or avoid something.

**TRIGGERED BY**
Not getting a want, limits being set, or attention.

**AWARENESS**
Child is aware and in control.

**DURATION**
Often short-lived.

**CAN BE REASONED WITH?**
Yes. Distraction or logic may help.

**WHAT HELPS**
Stay calm, set limits, offer choices, and redirect.

## MELTDOWN



A meltdown is an involuntary response to feeling overwhelmed in the environment.

**GOAL**
No goal. The child is not trying to get or avoid something.

**TRIGGERED BY**
Overstimulation, sensory overload, change in routine, stress, or anxiety.

**AWARENESS**
Child is not in control and may not be aware of their behavior.

**DURATION**
Can last longer and may come in waves.

**CAN BE REASONED WITH?**
No. The brain is overwhelmed.

**WHAT HELPS**
Reduce demands, provide a safe space, calm presence, and sensory support.



## REMEMBER:

**It’s not about behavior—**
**it’s about communication.**

Connection, compassion, and understanding help our children feel safe and supported.