

Recognize Why Children Cry

- Crying is not always a reflection of sadness —sometimes, it's a way to process an emotion.
- Sometimes children cry when the request exceeds their capabilities.



- Children may cry out of anger, frustration, fear, excitement, confusion, anxiety, sickness, pain, or even happiness.
- Crying can be a healthy way for children to deal with different emotions.
- Children may also lack the verbal ability and self-awareness to explain how they're feeling. This means asking them, 'What's wrong?' will rarely yield a productive response.



Feeling Powerless



A child may cry because they are feeling powerless. This can wrongly be interpreted as wanting to escape a request, disobedience, or a form of a power struggle.

A child might have a hard time with change or transitioning from one thing to another.

Sometimes children cry when the request exceeds their capabilities.

A child might also cry because they have been triggered presently by something that happens to them often. The tone, volume, or words from a teacher may remind a child of a parent or caregiver who communicates with them in a way that may not be very tactful, compassionate, or patient at home.





Needs Attention

A child may cry because they need your attention and to spend time with you, but they can't or don't know how to ask for it.

Sometimes children cry because they are bored/understimulated and this comes across as needing attention.





Hunger



Hunger starts in the bloodstream with a dip in blood sugar after a period of time has passed without eating. Children generally need to eat three to four hours, for toddlers every 2 -3 hours. A child may cry because they have a physical sensation, related to a drop in blood sugar which changes their moods, sometimes very quickly.

A child may cry because they aren't capable of putting their hunger on hold and waiting to eat in the same way that adults can. They're much more likely to cry and meltdown when they are hungry,

If a child is approaching mealtime and they start to cry or to fuss, hunger is the first thing to consider. Their bodies are telling them they need food, but they do not have the tools to communicate this need.





Stressed

Children may cry because they can't solve a problem such as their toy isn't working the way they'd like.

Despite trying they can not figure out how to make the toy work.

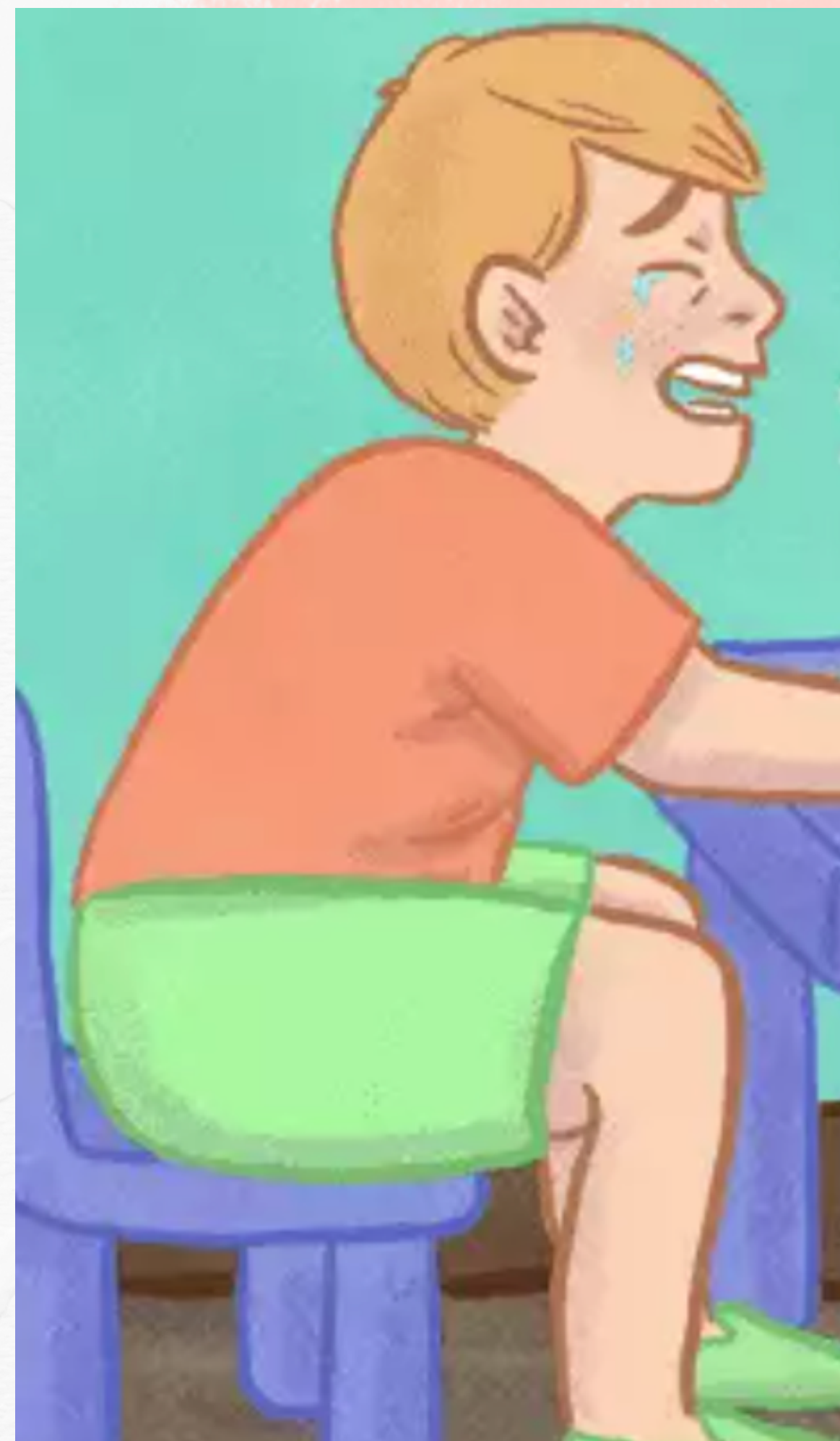
They feel frustrated and stressed but do not have the tools to resolve the problem.

Sometimes a child cries because of tension within their environments

They are sensing changes or challenges. At other times, their distress may be because they're incredibly empathic and sensitive to the distress of others around them.

Children may also cry because of social-emotional stress which is a result of how other children like classmates, siblings, and friends are treating them.

A child may cry due to academic and social pressures. Tests and the need to fit in, are major causes of stress. While extracurricular activities can be a useful outlet, over-scheduling adds to the pressure children may feel.



Fatigue



Needing sleep takes second place after hunger for the top reasons children cry.

A child may cry because they're too young to use words to indicate that they are tired. Crying and physical cues point to fatigue. Breaking eye contact, rubbing their eyes, losing interest in activities, yawning, or being irritable indicate it's time for rest.





Overstimulation



Some children are more sensitive to sounds, lights, and commotion than others. They can become overwhelmed and burst into tears in loud or chaotic situations, like birthday parties.

A child may cry when they are feeling overstimulated by their environment, as a result of too much noise, visual effects, or people. This can lead to a child looking around or trying to take shelter behind your leg or in a corner before they start crying.

Sometimes children cry as a result of a packed schedule, being on the go too much, and even a full school/programming day.





Wants Something



Sometimes a child may cry because they want something that they can't have right now such as a toy, your phone, to go outside, etc.

A child may cry because something is out of their reach. They have attempted a number of times and have not succeeded. They are feeling defeated and can't communicate this.

A child might also cry because they want something and they have to wait. Such as water, your attention, a snack etc. They have not fully developed the skill of patience and are having a hard time waiting.





Separation Anxiety

Children cry because they are afraid of unfamiliar people and places and appear clingy to familiar adults.

A child may cry because they have a fear of being lost from their family or of something bad occurring to a family member if they are not with the person.



Sometimes a child cries because they feel unsafe in some way and as a result feel anxious about separation. It may be something that may have thrown your child's world off-balance, made them feel threatened, or upset their normal routine, such as a change in routine, environment, stress, etc.





Grief



A child may cry because they experience feelings of emptiness, anger, confusion, desertion, and insecurity.

Children cry out of grief. Grief comes in many different forms such as relocations, divorce, new parental figures, a new child in the house, loss of a family member, loss of a pet, etc.

Sometimes children cry because of changes in friendships and they do not know how to feel or react. They experience a level of grief that they express through their emotions.





Scared



As a child's imagination blossoms, they may start to fear things that never bothered them before, like animals or the dark. This can lead to overwhelming feelings of being scared and crying.

Sometimes children cry because of nightmares and scary dreams. At a young age, children can struggle with the difference between real and imaginary.

A child may cry when something overwhelms their senses. Things that happen suddenly or unexpectedly are scary because a child has trouble making sense of them. For example, darting a cat or dog or a loudly flushing toilet can spark tears in a child.

Children cry because experiencing fear is a stressful event. Fear is a part of normal development, being afraid is a sign that children are gaining awareness of the world and trying to make sense of it, but this can be overwhelming ,





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When Your Child Cries...

Hearing your child cry can be a major source of discomfort for you, here are 11 ways you can respond immediately.



- It is important to note that:
 - Saying ' Don't Cry!' can make things harder for everyone
 - When our response is ' Stop crying!' or ' Don't cry!' children may think that you don't understand how they're feeling.
 - Their crying is therefore likely to become louder and more persistent.

