

Anatomy of a Meltdown

STAGE	CHILD BEHAVIOR	RESPONDING
Rumbling Stage	Shows signs of approaching meltdown <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pacing• Loud speech• Defiant	Focus on redirection Avoid threats, yelling Stay calm
Rage Stage	Tantrum, crying kicking, shouting	Keep child and property safe Swaddle young child
Recovery Stage	Child calming down	Avoid discussion of incident “Walk don’t talk” This means Parents should take a break if angry or fatigued.

Tips: The rumbling stage is your best opportunity to turn the cycle around. Once the child is in a rage the opportunity has past and the cycle must run its course.

Try to predict what sets the child off and prevent needless sources of frustration.

Children cannot learn when they are in the rage stage- focus on safety and calming the child. Do not give in to what the child wanted however.

Revisit the situation well after the recovery stage. Ask child to identify why they became so upset. Offer alternatives to having a tantrum such as talking, physical activity, playing games.

Reference: Myles and Southwick, (1999). Asperger’s syndrome