

Tantrum!: A Be You, Be Me Game



What Is “Tantrum!”?

Tantrum! is a game in which children swap roles with adults to better understand the impact of tantrums on themselves and those around them. By planning their “day” as an adult and then occasionally seeing it get disrupted by a tantrum, children begin to viscerally understand what happens in real life, by living through frustrating, though often humorous, events in games they can play with their adults.

How Do You Play Tantrum!?

To setup, each player draws 15 cards from their deck, puts markers on the scoreboard and tantrum track and then play begins. Each card has a time cost, an individual score, a family score and an icon in the top right corner if there is a dependency on an adult (e.g., an adult is needed to drive the child to soccer practice). The sequence of each turn includes:

- Child (playing as an adult) draws 3 cards and allocates 3 time markers according to card costs
 - Some cards are mandatory and must be paid for first
- Adult (playing as a child) does the same, but has only 2 time markers
 - Tantrums drawn are immediately resolved by each player losing time & adjusting markers
- Roll die to see if tantrum occurs whether tantrum card was drawn or not & adjust accordingly
- Score cards based on individual and family points

When no more cards are left, add the individual scores and subtract them from the family score for players’ final score. There is no “win” condition other than having good conversation through the game. Ok, if you are really competitive, then you can try to improve your score next time. Playing as the child, an adult can model behaviors they’ve seen in real life to help emphasize certain points in a game that annoy kids enough to make them more quickly realize tantrums’ impacts in real life (e.g., playing a card that will lower the final score and saying, “...but I *really* want to play video games today!” is extremely frustrating for a young player who is trying to get the family score up and is a lesson that sticks long after the game is over!

How Do You Know Tantrum! Works?

I’ve played it with kids who have literally (and in serious tones) said to me while playing, “You don’t get to play video games today until you stop having tantrums!” I’ve also had kids tell me who are on the verge of having a tantrum in real life say, “This is just like the game...” then do their best to stay calm.

Tantrum! is simple, fast, fun - and it works.

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