

Could it be language? An observation sheet

Note each meltdown for a week or two, then bring this sheet to your appointment (doctor, speech-language pathologist or other professional). This sheet is not a diagnosis.

When, where, with whom	Just before (instruction, "no", transition, waiting)	What happened, how long, how it ended	Emotions before / after	My best guess: why?

Questions to ask yourself

- Do meltdowns mostly follow an instruction, a change or a moment when they needed to ask?
- Is it calmer with you than at daycare or school, or the reverse?
- Any big recent change (new baby, move, new daycare)?
- Are they developing as expected in motor skills, relationships, emotions and language?
- Has their hearing ever been checked?

Who does what

- SLP: understanding, expressing, being understood (private: no referral needed)
- Doctor or CLSC: a good first step; Québec: Agir tôt (0 to 5); Ontario: Preschool Speech and Language program
- Psychoeducator, psychologist: behaviour, emotions
- Occupational therapist: motor skills, sensory needs

Get help without waiting if your child hurts themselves or others, meltdowns last over 25 minutes or happen several times a day, or you're at the end of your rope. Emergency: 911 · Québec: Info-Social 811 (option 2) · Ontario: Health811

Sources: Naître et grandir (2023); Belden et al. (2008); ASHA; OOAQ; Québec.ca; Ontario.ca. General information: this sheet does not replace an assessment.