

## A Parent's Guide to Using Time-Out

Time-out is an effective way for parents to stop bad behaviors in their child. For time-out to work, you must do it the same way every time. Also, make sure to reward good behavior often when the child is not in time-out. For example, give a pat on the shoulder or a hug, give your child praise, or start a sticker chart.

### Preparing for the Use of Time-Out

- Put a timer where the child can see it. Although a smartphone timer is fine, an inexpensive, portable kitchen timer also works well.
- Pick a good spot for time-out. During time-out, the child should not be able to hear the radio or other music, hear or see the television, or be able to look out a window. The time-out spot shouldn't be the child's bedroom or someplace a lot of people will be walking through. It shouldn't be uncomfortable or confining (like a closet). There should be nothing dangerous or poisonous nearby.
- Only use time-out for the most problematic behaviors, like hitting a brother or sister or not following important directions.

- You should be very clear with your child about which behaviors will result in time-out and how time-out works. It may help to walk your child through the process of time-out and let your child know what happens if he or she does not stay in time-out. Only use time-out for the behaviors you have decided on ahead of time and have talked about with your child.

### Using Time-Out

- Once a behavior that you've decided will result in time-out occurs, quickly explain in a matter-of-fact way that the child must go to time-out and why. Stay calm and walk or carry the child to time-out. Don't speak to the child or make eye contact.
- Set the timer for one minute for each year of the child's age up to five minutes.
- If the child screams or gets up before the time is up, place the child back in time-out without talking to or looking at the child, and reset the time. The child must be quiet for the entire time before leaving time-out. Make sure to stay busy and out of view of your child during time-out. Remind brothers and sisters and others

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## **A Parent's Guide to Using Time-Out** *(continued)*

that they should not interact with the child who is in time-out.

- Once the time-out is over, the child should have a clean slate. Don't dwell on the problem behavior or let it influence how you treat the child after the time-out. If necessary, ask the child to apologize (for example, to the person he or she hit) or to clean up a mess caused by the problem behavior.
- Make sure that time-in is pleasant. Look often for chances to praise or reward your child for good behavior.

### **Tips if Time-Out Isn't Working**

- Make sure you are using time-out the same way every time
- Make sure the child isn't being warned multiple times before time-out is started
- When a child is in time-out:
  - Don't look at the child
  - Don't talk to the child
  - Don't talk about the child
  - Remain calm and do not show anger
  - Monitor from close by, but not in the same room
  - Be consistent and don't give up

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