

TIME-OUT!

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When your child is good, be sure to offer praise: "I'm proud of-you!" or "Good job!" However, every child occasionally needs to be disciplined. A time-out is a form of discipline that can be used when your child does something wrong on purpose.



This tip card is part of a series originated by R. Sege, MD, PhD, Department of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine, and the Department of Rehabilitation and Physical Medicine's Research and Training Center in Rehabilitation and Childhood Trauma, New England Medical Center/Tufts University School of Medicine, Boston, MA. Funding was provided by Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, US Department of Education, award #H133850006.

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How Do I Use a Time-Out?

- Warn your child: “If you don’t stop, you’ll have a time-out!”
- When your child ignores the warning, have your child go to a quiet place (like a corner of a room) and start the timer.
- Explain the reason for the time-out: “You hit your sister. That’s not allowed. Now you must have a time-out.”



How Long Does a Time-Out Last?

It lasts one minute for each year of age:

- two-year-old 2 minutes
- three-year-old 3 minutes
- four-year-old 4 minutes
- five-year-old 5 minutes

If it’s too long, young children can forget why they’re there!

If your child leaves the time-out area, have your child go back. You need to restart the timer and explain the need to stay put until the time-out is over.

When Do I Use a Time-Out?

Every time your child breaks an important rule. Make sure other adults (father, grandmother, baby-sitter) use the same rules.

Why Use Time-Outs?

- Young children respond best to praise for good behavior. However, sometimes they need to have limits set for them. Time-outs let you do this safely and effectively!
- Sometimes, children misbehave just to get your attention. A time-out teaches your child that misbehaving is not a good way to get your attention.
- A time-out stops the situation that led your child to misbehave in the first place.
- Children copy their parents. For example, if parents spank their child for hitting a brother or sister, the child gets a mixed message: “Mommy and Daddy can hit, but I can’t.”

Time-Outs Work!

But, if you are still having problems, talk with your doctor or nurse.

TIME-OUTS
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