

# Time-Out

Time-out is a mild but effective way to deal with repeated noncompliance, aggression (e.g., fights between brothers and sisters), and other significant misbehavior. It involves sending the child to a relatively isolated place for a few minutes immediately after each misbehavior. Time-out serves several purposes. It takes away the attention that may be encouraging your child's misbehavior; it stops the conflict; it reduces the likelihood that your child's behavior will get worse; and it gives your child a chance to settle down.

## DIRECTIONS

1. Describe the types of behavior that will be handled by using time-out.

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2. Name a place where your child will go for the time-out. Avoid using either your child's room (too many distractions) or a chair in the corner (still in sight of other people). Also using bathrooms or laundry rooms can be dangerous.

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3. One minute for each year of age is recommended for time-out. For example, for a six-year-old child, time-out should last 6 minutes.

4. You will need to remove from the time-out location "fun" items (toys) or things that your child might get into or damage (pills, makeup). Enter the items you need to remove here.

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5. Keys to the effective use of time-out are: (a) tell your child that what he/she did is unacceptable; (b) tell your child in a firm, calm manner to go to time-out.

**PARENT:** Michael, I asked you to stop fighting with your brother. In our house, hurting is not allowed. Go to time-out.

6. Once your child is in time-out, set a timer or check the clock and leave the child alone. Avoid talking to the child or paying any type of attention to him/her once in timeout.

7. Your child doesn't need to be absolutely quiet while in time-out. However, if your child yells or fusses loudly while in time-out, add minutes until he/she has stopped screaming for the required time.

8. Expect your child to test you and the time-out procedure. If the child is under 6 years of age and refuses to go to time-out, gently but firmly take your child to the time-out place. A child 6 years old or older should be given one calm warning to go to time-out or lose a privilege for 24 hours. Later, if the child repeats misbehavior and again refuses to go, remove another privilege. List the privileges you can remove.

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9. Should your child make a mess while in time-out, insist that it be cleaned up before he/she may leave time-out.
10. If your child is sent to time-out for not doing something he or she was told to do, tell your child to do what you wanted after coming out of time-out. Be prepared to back up this second command with another time-out.
11. Once the time-out is over, do not scold or lecture your child.
12. Don't be concerned if your child tells you time-out doesn't bother him or her; the child may be bluffing. If you continue to use it, you'll find that the misbehavior happens less and less often.
13. Be careful not to use time-out too much. If it is overused, it will lose its effectiveness. Instead, you want to rely on a combination of discipline strategies.