

Time Out



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The practice of using time out may be used with children who have attention problems, disruptive behavior or anxiety. This is an easy way for caregivers to let their children know that bad behavior will result in a time-out. Time-out removes a child from the attention of others and they cannot do anything fun for a limited amount of time. This allows both parents and child to “cool off” after unwanted behavior.

How does this practice work?

- Pick a time-out place that is boring like a corner away from toys or TV.
- Warn child that if they misbehave they will go to the time-out corner.
- Act quickly but calmly after the child misbehaves.
- Immediately take the child to the time-out corner after they misbehave.
- Tell child why they are doing time-out.
- Tell child when time-out it is over, usually 1 minute for each year of age.
- Ignore small misbehaviors during a time-out.
- Repeat time-out if the child breaks the behavior rules again.
- Practice until the rules are followed.
- Time-out will not work if the caregiver allows the rules to be disobeyed.

Example: Avery is 5 years old. They are told before playtime that throwing toys and hitting others is not allowed. Avery gets warned that they will sit in a quiet place all alone if they do not follow the rules. Avery has a story book and hits Mia on the head with it over and over again.

His mother calmly and quickly sets them in a quiet corner with only a chair. They are away from other kids and toys. They will sit there for 5 minutes, one minute for each year of their age. When time is up Avery’s mother comes to get them. She will remind him why they had a time- out and will repeat the routine until they stop hitting other kids.