

Time-Out: A Tool for Dealing with Children Who are Out of Control

Time-out is a tool parents can use to help a child get control of his/her behavior.

Time-out can give a child the chance to calm down. Generally, one minute for each year of age up to a maximum of 5 minutes is a good guideline. Time-out should not be used with children under 2 years of age.

Try other ways to help an upset child settle down before using time-out. One example is by distracting your child from the situation, getting him/her involved in something else. Give choices; that might solve the problem. For misbehavior, try ignoring. When a child doesn't get attention for the misbehavior, sometimes he/she will stop.

There will be times you try to help your child calm down but s/he continues to misbehave or to act out, such as having a "fit." Then you can use time-out. If time out is used too often or is used as a type of punishment it will not be effective.

Using time-out means putting the child in a place where s/he can settle down without hurting others, then talking with the child about the behavior.

Pointers for Parents:

- ✓ Time out should not be used before a child is 2 years old.
- ✓ Use time out when your child is getting out of control. Examples: aggressive, harmful or dangerous conduct or behavior that cannot be ignored such as throwing or destroying things, or playing too roughly.
- ✓ Time-out should be in a quiet place where your child can calm down and you can monitor them.
- ✓ When the child is calm, talk about what went wrong. Keep it simple. Don't lecture.
- ✓ Don't forget to watch the time and never leave the child in time-out for more than a few minutes.
- ✓ After talking, give your child a hug and express confidence in their ability to deal with the situation better in the future.