

APPENDIX B

A Guide to Effective Time Out

Time out works very well to get rid of:

- Hitting
- Biting
- Talking back
- Refusing to cooperate
- Many other behaviors!

Time out only works if :

- The child is usually having fun and getting good attention
- Time out is very, very boring (but not unsafe or scary)

Rules of Time Out:

- No talking to your child
- No eye contact with your child
- No touching unless you are taking him/her to time out
- No activities (no tv, toys, books, music, games, etc.)

Step-by-Step Guide to Time Out:

- **Choose specific behaviors** to get rid of. If there are many behaviors, begin with 1 or 2.
- Put your child in time out **immediately after the behavior or after one warning**. **Explanation** should be **very short** (e.g. **“You hit. Time out.”**).
 - More than one warning teaches not to listen to the first several warnings.
 - **Warning** should be **very short**: **“If you _____, you will go to time out.”**
- Time out should happen **consistently, every time** the behavior happens.
- Time out should be for a **minimum** amount of **time**. 4-5 minutes is best. Length can be increased gradually. Length can be shorter for young children.
 - Set a timer
- Child must stay in time out until **calm and quiet**, even if the timer goes off.
- **An adult**, not the child, **must decide** when he or she can leave time out.
- **Return child as quickly as possible as many times as needed** if they escape.
 - Do not talk or make eye contact while returning them to time out.
 - It's best to lead your child to time out. If you have to pick child up, do not do it in a playful or soothing way.
 - A child may need to be returned again & again the first few time outs. The child is trying to avoid consequences for behavior. If you enforce limits, the child will learn to stay in time out, and time out will be shorter & easier down the road.
- **If the time out was for not listening, give the direction again** as soon as the child is out of time out. For example, if child wouldn't clean up his/ her toys, they must do so now.
 - If your child doesn't listen again, do another time out. Repeat until the child cooperates. The child is testing the limits and it is even more important to be consistent.
- When time out ends, **move on**. Don't lecture, nag, discuss, etc. Catch your child being good and **praise good behavior**.



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