



Guidelines for Timeout

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Timeout for Young Children

- ★ No matter how out of control the child is, remain cool, calm and collected.
- ★ If timeout is an appropriate response to the behavior, use timeout each and every time the behavior occurs.
- ★ Set a kitchen timer for the designated time the child is to be in timeout. The time is determined by cognitive age and understanding rather than chronological age. The child is not allowed to exit timeout until the bell sounds.
- ★ If the child leaves timeout before the timer sounds, talks or is inappropriate during timeout, return the child to timeout and reset the timer.
- ★ If the child refuses to go to timeout, physically place him in timeout. If using a timeout chair, use one with arms and stand or sit beside the child to make sure he remains in the chair. If the timeout area is a room, make sure it is free of objects that might harm the child if he becomes rageful. Always have the door open so that you can observe when the child is appropriate and he is safe.
- ★ After timeout is over, ask the child to tell you why he was in timeout. If he refuses to tell or says he forgot, remind him why the timeout occurred and give small additional timeouts until the child is able to verbalize the reason if age appropriate.

Timeout for Older Children

- ★ Timeout is effective with older children as well. Again, no matter how out of control the child becomes, remain calm, cool and collected.
- ★ State the reason for the timeout one time and do not engage in arguments or further discussion about the behavior.
- ★ Whether the timeout location is in the child's room or in another place, there should be no sources of entertainment available including phone or TV.
- ★ If the child leaves the timeout before you have given permission to do so, he must return to timeout and complete it before resuming any privileges.
- ★ After timeout is over, ask the child to tell you why he was in timeout, give small additional timeouts until the child is able to give you the reason. Then discuss the inappropriate behavior with the child and help him develop alternative strategies. If the child becomes argumentative, terminate the discussion and tell him you will resume when he is able to accept responsibility for his behavior and discuss what he can do to avoid the situation next time.
- ★ Timeout for adolescents may involve going to their room or withdrawal of privileges.

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