

## Time Outs Help Reinforce Positive Behavior and Discourage Misbehaving

Disciplining a young child using the time out method can be very effective, and will work with children as young as 18-24 months old. By using this method of discipline parents are giving the child time to sit quietly and alone after misbehaving, without becoming angry or agitated with the child.

Designate an appropriate area in the house where the child is isolated from interacting with others. It can be a corner in their bedroom, a space on the kitchen floor or a special chair that's labeled specifically for time outs. The length should be age appropriate. A good rule of thumb is generally one minute per year of age. A kitchen timer is helpful in counting down your child's punishment time.

Time out for toddlers is used to give them a chance to regroup and calm down. It's doubtful they will sit completely still, and they should not be forced to try.

All children should be asked in a firm but pleasant tone to complete a designated task or stop an undesired behavior. If their behavior persists, they should be verbally directed to behave once again, with eye contact being made and the time out spot pointed out. If after this warning the behavior still persists, they should be escorted to the time out location and told exactly why they are being sent there. Maintain a calm but firm tone with them. Once they've quietly served their time in the time out location it's important to discuss with the child why they were sent there and that if the behavior occurs again, they will again be sent to time out. Older children should then agree to do what you told him to do or cease misbehaving. Children who leave their time out location before their time is up must be made aware that privileges will be lost as a result.

It's likely that your time out method will have to be modified to fit the temperament of your child and your own parenting style. And remember to reinforce positive behavior with praises, hugs and smiles. Time out can successfully be used outside the home such a grocery stores, restaurants, or shopping centers. It's important to emphasize to the child that time out will be enforced should they misbehave while there. Be consistent and place the child in time out should they misbehave in the store. If you don't, they'll get the message early on that you're inconsistent and will be more likely to test your boundaries.