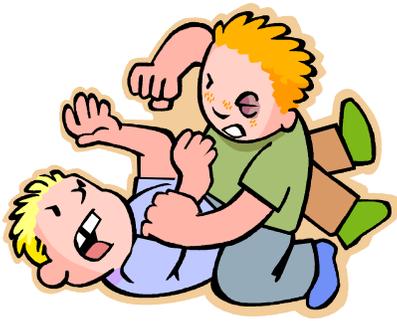


Designing Effective Time-Outs for Strong-Willed Children



A common parental complaint is that time-outs are not effective in changing a child's undesirable behaviors. Usually, ineffective time-outs are flawed in one way or another. Here is a list of what a time-out should and should not be:

What a Time-Out Is:

- ★ **A**ppropriate- discipline for willful misbehavior
- ★ **B**rief- generally one minute per year of child's age (set time-outs only)
- ★ **C**onsistent- given each and every time a child breaks the rules
- ★ **D**esigned well- removes all fun and social interaction for duration of time-out
- ★ **E**ducational- why did child get a time-out and what can s/he do differently?

What a Time-Out Is Not:

- ★ Punishment for honest mistakes
- ★ Long-term "incarceration" i.e. child feels like it's a prison sentence
- ★ Given inconsistently or only when you've "snapped"
- ★ Poorly thought out i.e. sent to room where there is a TV, Xbox, cell phone, etc.
- ★ Confusing for the child- child doesn't know what s/he did wrong or what to do differently in the future

An **EFFECTIVE** time-out is well-designed, involves the loss of fun things and social interaction, is an empty, boring and undesirable experience, and lasts only a short time so as to maintain the child's hope and motivation. It may follow a negative behavior or be used to motivate a positive behavior. There are **TWO** different types of time-outs: Self-Limiting and Set Time-Outs.

Self-Limiting vs. Set Time-Outs

Self-Limiting Time-Out:

- ★ All fun stuff and social interaction is taken away
- ★ Used when child refuses to do or complete a task, i.e. refuses to complete homework (to motivate a positive behavior)
- ★ Ends when child completes the task
- ★ Uses the phrase, "Take as much time as you need"
- ★ Teaches the child responsibility and self-discipline
- ★ Must be used consistently

Set Time-Out:

- ★ All fun stuff and social interaction is taken away
- ★ Used after child breaks a rule or exhibits unwanted behavior, i.e. hitting another child (to discourage negative behavior)
- ★ Ends when the mandated period is over (one minute per year of age)
- ★ Maintains the child's sense of hope and motivation
- ★ Teaches the child the connection between behavior choice and consequences
- ★ Must be used consistently

REMEMBER:

-Discipline is not about control; it is about influencing your child to decrease unwanted behaviors and increase desired behaviors.

-The ABC's of time-outs: **A**ppropriate, **B**rief, **C**onsistent, **D**esigned well, and **E**ducational.

