



Tips for Managing Children's Behaviour

How to Use Time Out

Use Time Out for:

- Non-compliance, after 2 warnings
- Tantrums, after 1 warning
- Aggression, no need for warning

Time out means 2-3 minutes on a chair, on your lap or in another room with the door closed if necessary. Bedrooms or bathrooms are ok as long as you've checked for safety. The location depends on the age of the child, whether they're kicking and hitting out and whether they'll stay put.

Rehearse it first so that your children know how it will work. Tell them what behaviour will earn time out and show them how it will happen.

When you notice an unacceptable behaviour occurring get your child's attention and tell them clearly and firmly to stop the behaviour eg "Stop screaming now". Do this as soon as you see the behaviour starting and every time you see it. Immediately praise your child if you see them respond to your warning.

If your child continues the behaviour tell them to "go to time out" and give the reason eg "...because you didn't stop screaming". Be sure your child gets to time out by firmly and calmly guiding them there. Shut the door if necessary. Do not argue, yell or threaten.

At time out tell them they "...can come out in 2 to 3 minutes as long as you are quiet". Take note of the time they went into time out or preferably set a timer. It's impossible to argue with a timer.

Do not talk to your child while they're in time out. Ignore them if they kick the door or scream. Do not allow them to come out until they are quiet.

When the timer goes and when they are quiet do not mention the incident just say "Time's up – you can come out now because you're quiet". Encourage your child to continue an activity and then praise them for behaving appropriately as soon as possible. Do not ignore good behaviour because of earlier bad behaviour.

How to Handle Problems with Time Out

If they wreck the room insist that the room gets tidied before they come out – help them if necessary. You can try another room as long as you've tantrum-proofed it beforehand.

If they have too good a time in the room that's ok if tantrums lessen but if not change to a less fun room.

If they come out before you let them, take them back in and tell them you have to start the time again but don't engage in any other conversation.

If they don't quiet down completely let them out when the noise dies down and ignore further grizzling. If it winds up again take them back to Time Out.

If they refuse to leave the room when time's up they may just be trying to be defiant so don't take the bait – leave the door open and walk away silently. They'll come out when they're ready or bored.

If they have another tantrum they may just be testing to see if you're really taking charge so keep returning them to their room. It will die down with your persistence and determination.

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