

Time Out

Caregiver Handout



Your child is participating in a time out intervention at school.

What is a time out?

- A **time out** is an intervention used to reduce problem behavior by briefly removing a student from classroom activities and positive attention, such as play or adult interaction.
- Once the time out is over and the student is showing appropriate behavior, they are able to rejoin the group activity.
- Time outs are used for short periods of time (3-5 minutes).
- Time outs can be used without taking your child away from important learning opportunities.
- Time outs are used sparingly, and in response to concerning or severe behaviors.

BENEFITS OF TIME OUT

Helps reduce disruptive behavior

Promotes learning and responsibility

Provides a consistent and predictable response to behavior

Helps students understand expectations and boundaries

Provides opportunity to practice self-regulation skills

How Caregivers Can Use Time Outs at Home

- **Identify a time out area in your home:** This should be an area removed from toys, materials, or objects that your child enjoys, but close enough to the main activity space. This way, your child in time out can hear and see what is going on. This space should be **clearly defined and free from unsafe objects** (e.g., within these four tiles in the floor; in the blue chair by the window; on this stair).
- **Decide what behaviors result in a time out:** For example, consider physical aggression or repeatedly not following directions. Clearly communicate this to your child before you start using time out (e.g., post the rules on the refrigerator). **Time outs are most appropriate for severe behaviors (e.g., hitting) than frequent but less severe behaviors (e.g., whining).**
- **Teach your child the time out procedures, expectations, and location.**
 - To maximize success, expectations should include:
 - Behaving appropriately while in the time out (e.g., keeping hands to self and remaining quiet enough to not disrupt others)
 - Staying in the time out area
 - Typically, the last minute of the time out should not involve any inappropriate behavior. This is a way for your child to show that they are ready to return from time out.
- **When your child does one of the behaviors that leads to time out, go through time out procedures.**
 - Direct your child to the time out area by **stating what behavior they have done, and how long they will be in time out.**
 - Let them know that the time out will begin when they are in the time out area. **Do not engage in arguing or discussion with your child.**
 - If your child is behaving appropriately, ask if they are ready to rejoin your family once the timer goes off.



Example

- **“Marco, because you hit your sister, you have earned a 5-minute time out. Please go to your time out chair. I will start your timer once you are there.”**
 - Return to the activity you were doing before and set a timer. If you have other children in the home, be sure to provide them with positive reinforcement if they are behaving appropriately. Ignore comments or behavior from your child in time out.
- **If Marco is behaving appropriately once the timer goes off: “Marco, are you ready to join us again without being physically aggressive?”**
 - Give them a direction to follow and praise them once they have appropriately followed your direction.
- **If Marco is not behaving appropriately once the timer goes off: “Marco, show me safe hands and a calm body for one minute, then you can come back and play.”**