



## SOME FACTS AND MYTHS ABOUT "TIME OUT" - OUR FIRST HEALTHY AND EFFECTIVE DISCIPLINE TOOL



Almost everyone has heard of Time Out – we’ll bet that you have. However, many people don’t *really know* what Time Out is, how it works or when to use it. This section will explain those things and will hopefully do away with some of the myths about Time Out that just are not true!

*What is Time Out Anyway?* When kids misbehave or break the rules, they get something out of doing so – they get a reward or payoff. However, it is often very hard to figure out what the reward is in any given situation. So rather than trying to figure out what their reward is, Time Out was created to remove kids from the reward/payoff when they doing things they shouldn’t. “Time Out” is actually shorthand for the expression “Time Out from reward/payoff.” Let’s think about an example:

- John’s sister picks up one of his toys;
- John kicks his sister;
- Sister drops the toy and runs off crying.

*What payoff does John get for kicking his sister?* She is gone, and he has all the toys to himself – he doesn’t have to share.

*What happens if John is placed in Time Out for kicking his sister?* He is removed from the toys he is refusing to share and is placed in a boring situation for a period of time. The payoff for kicking his sister has been removed!



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*Isn't Time Out really mean?* No, it is not! In fact, Time Out builds a strong link between behaviors and their consequences. If a child breaks a rule, it simply keeps him or her from receiving a payoff for doing so and can motivate them to try more appropriate ways to earn it!

*Should Time Out be saved for really big problems?* Absolutely not! Time Out is a small consequence and should be used when the behaviors first begin and are small. Waiting until the problem is really big before using Time Out usually doesn't work very well.

*Isn't spanking better than using Time Out?* In general, physical discipline techniques cause more problems than they solve. When kids are regularly spanked, the following things may happen:

1. Kids learn to *fear* their parents/caregivers rather than *respect* them.
2. Kids who are spanked regularly may become *more aggressive* and hostile with parents and caregivers.
3. Kids learn to use aggression and hitting with other kids.
4. Kids who are spanked often become angry adults.
5. Kids who are spanked are more likely to hit their spouses when they become adults.
6. Spanking often leads parents down the path to inappropriate physical discipline.

What should be done for really big problems? Work chores and the loss of privileges – things like watching TV or playing video games – are very useful effective and healthy discipline tools to use for bigger problems or as a backup to Time Out.

**Let's go to the next tip sheet for the steps to using Time Out.**