



Steps for Giving Time out to Calm Down

Beforehand

- 1 Explain the idea of Time Out to Calm Down clearly to the child/children.
- 2 Discuss what behaviour will earn Time Out to Calm Down.
- 3 Pick a Time Out to Calm Down place that is both boring (e.g. bottom stair, landing) and close enough for parent and child to see and hear each other
- 4 Decide how long Time Out to Calm Down will last (between 30 seconds and 2 minutes)

When a rule has been broken

- 1 Give one clear warning, reminding the child of the rule that has been broken and that he or she has another chance (if you have a "no hitting" rule, this gets an immediate Time Out to Calm Down, with no second chance).
- 2 If the rule is broken again, tell the child to go to the Time Out to Calm Down place.
- 3 Ignore all comments, promises, arguing, pleading.
- 4 Remind the child how long Time Out to Calm Down will last.
- 5 Remind the child that Time Out to Calm Down starts only when he or she is sitting quietly; during Time Out to Calm Down, especially with young children, stay nearby but do not pay the child direct attention.
- 6 When the child is ready, set a kitchen timer, sand timer, stopwatch, etc. for the agreed time (you won't have to remember the time, and it helps to keep Time Out to Calm Down neutral).
- 7 When Time Out to Calm Down is over, praise the child for taking it well (without saying anything about the unwanted behaviour), and invite him/her to do something enjoyable with you (Time In).

Later (when you are both calm, and depending on the age of the child)

- 1 Ask the child how he or she was feeling just before making the choice that led to the Time Out to Calm Down.
- 2 Ask the child to suggest what he or she could do differently if the same situation comes up again.