



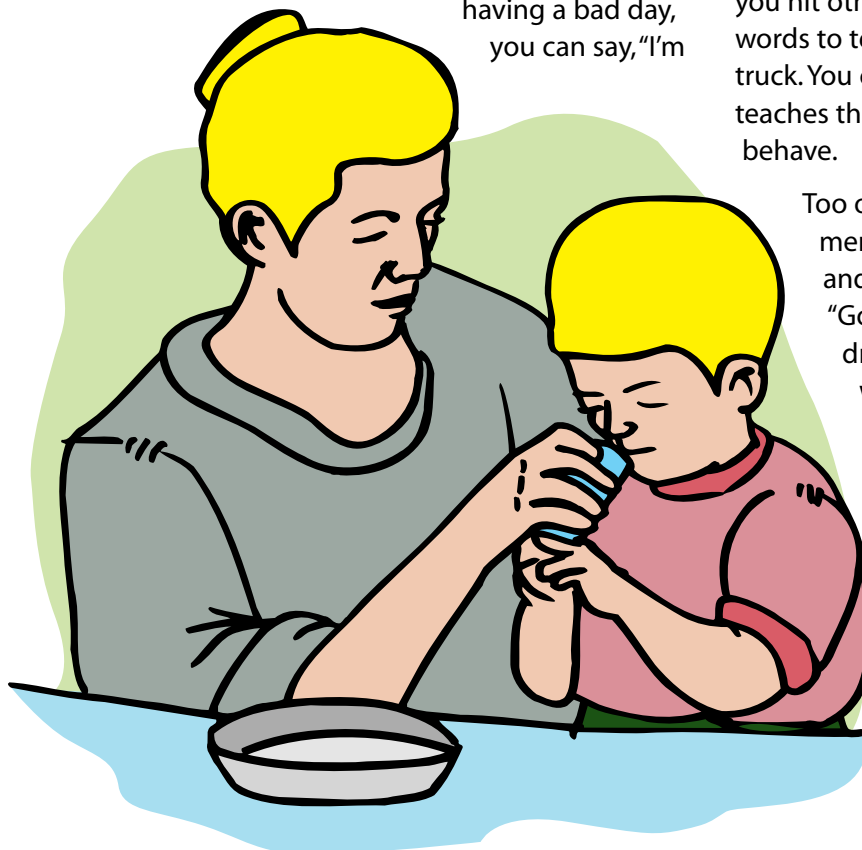
The Problem with Time-Out

Time-out can be a tool to help solve some problems with children, but time-out can make some problems worse. Think of time-out as a time for soothing, calming, and comforting an upset child or adult.

Time-outs that work

It can be scary for a child to be angry and out of control. Time-outs that really work with children may include gently hugging, rocking together in a rocking chair, or taking a walk together. Some caregivers have a quiet area with soft pillows on the floor. If someone is having a bad day — child or adult — he can go to the quiet area to calm down. Children

learn from adults. If you're having a bad day, you can say, "I'm



Time-out is often used as a punishment when the adult is angry.

having a rough day. I need to be in the quiet area for a few minutes."

If a child gets out of control, walk with him to the quiet area and say, "You need a few minutes to calm down." Stay near to hug or hold that child if he needs it. When the child has calmed down, it's important to talk with him about his feelings and behavior. "It makes you mad when John takes your toy, but I won't let you hit other children. Hitting hurts. Use your words to tell John, 'No, I'm playing with the truck. You can have it when I'm finished.'" This teaches the child how you want him to behave.

Too often time-out is used as punishment. A child does something wrong and the adult says in an angry voice, "Go sit in time-out." Punishing children doesn't teach them the way we want them to behave. Punishing children doesn't make them think about what they did and the way to do better next time.

Punishing often makes children scared or mad. This is not a good way to teach children how they should behave.

Sitting in a chair isn't calming for everyone

How do you know when time-out isn't working?

Here are some keys to know when time-out isn't working:

- If you're really angry with a child and you send her to time-out to get her away from the other children and you for a while.
- If the child spends time-out asking if it's over yet.
- If the child won't stay in time-out. You can't tie her in!
- If a child spends most of the day in time-out.
- If time-out is used every time a child does something wrong.

Sitting doesn't work for everyone

Many children and adults cannot calm down by sitting in a chair. They need to work off their tension in active ways like walking, running, hitting, or pounding. When children are acting out, that may be a sign that it's time to go outside and let them run off their extra energy. If you can't go outside, make indoor play time active. Get the children moving to music, jumping from square to square on the floor, throwing newspaper balls in a basket, pounding and working with play dough, etc.

Should children ever be punished?

Some people worry that children will feel they can get away with anything if they aren't punished when they do something wrong. That's not the case when adults remember their role is to teach children how to behave. Children want to please. We need to teach them the ways to do that. That may mean a child needs to fix or replace something that broke, clean up a mess, give up something, or help a friend who was hurt. These methods help children learn and that's what children need.



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Sources: "Is Time-Out Over?" by Elaine Wilson, "Time-Out," by Karen DeBoard, and "Good Ways and Bad Ways to Use Timeouts," by University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension

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