

"HOW TO" CHECKLISTS

Setting Up an Effective Time Out for 3-5 Year Olds

Using structured time outs as a form of discipline can be an effective way to help your child get on the road to better behavior. The following checklist provides some guidelines in implementing productive and efficient time outs with young children.

- ❑ **Set Age Appropriate Limits** - Always consider your child's developmental stage when setting limits.
- ❑ **Communicate Expectations** - Be sure your expectations for appropriate behavior are clearly communicated to your child.
- ❑ **Determine the Rules** - Decide the rules for the time outs before you begin enforcing them. This will help you to stay consistent. For example, if you decide to give one warning before your child goes into time out, then stick with it. Consistency is everything when it comes to effective time outs.
- ❑ **Identify a Time Out Location** - Create a "time out" place for your child to go to when they need a moment. This place can be a chair, stair or room. The main point of a time out is to remove your child from the stimuli that is creating the problem. You want to ultimately encourage your child to tolerate the discomfort, learn to self regulate by calming themselves and recognize their negative behavior will not be tolerated or accepted by you.
- ❑ **Set a Time Limit** - Decide on a time limit for their time out. Some schools of thought are one minute per age, for example, if 5 years old then 5 minutes in time out. Another suggestion is that they stay in time out until they can calm themselves.
- ❑ **Communicate After** - Once the time has been served, speak to them at their level. First, look them in the eyes and ask them why they were in time out. This will help them learn to communicate their wrong. If they are having a hard time, then explain the reason they had a time out. Remind them what your expectations are for appropriate behavior.



- ❑ **Show Your Love** - Finally, give them a big hug and kiss and praise them for serving their time. No matter HOW long it took them! The point is to encourage them to behave better and acknowledging their success is a big part of empowering your child.
- ❑ **Stay Cool** - Most importantly, don't lose your cool. Stay in control and monitor your anger. If you feel too emotional, then take a time out yourself first until you can regroup. Remember, your kids are constantly watching you and observing how you handle your emotions.