

## EFFECTIVELY USING TIME-OUT

Time-out is an effective method to reduce a child's inappropriate behaviors. However, it should always be used in combination with other techniques you have already learned. To effectively use time-out with a child, follow the guidelines below:

- **Give an appropriate command**
- **Wait 10 seconds**
  - You may want to count to yourself quietly (don't count out loud)
- **If the child does not start to comply, restate the command with a warning and wait 10 seconds:**
  - "If you don't \_\_\_\_\_ [repeat the command], then you will go to time-out."
  - After warning, wait another 10 seconds for compliance.
  - *Note:* When you are using time-out for something other than noncompliance (e.g., breaking a set rule), send the child to time-out immediately and do not use this warning statement.
- **If the child still does not comply, send/take child to time-out**
  - Say, "You did not do as I asked, so you must go to time-out."
  - Lead the child gently by the arm to the time out location. If necessary, carry the child.
  - Once the child is in the time-out location, say, "Stay there until I tell you to come out."
- **Do not attend to the child while he/she is in time out**
  - Do not talk to the child
  - Continue what you were doing but keep an eye on the child
  - When the child has remained in time-out quietly for the appropriate amount of time (see below), return to the child and say, "You may come out of time-out now."
- **Restate the command after releasing the child from time out**
  - If the child complies, praise him/her
  - If the child does not comply, send him/her to time-out again
- **Praise appropriate behavior**
  - Watch for the child's next appropriate behavior and praise him/her for it.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT TIME-OUT

- **How Long Should A Child Stay in Time-Out?**
  - General rule: 1 minute per year of age, not to exceed 5 minutes
  - Initially, release the child from time-out once he/she has been quiet for 10–30 seconds
  - Gradually increase the amount of time you require the child to remain quiet
- **Where Should My Time-Out Location Be?**
  - For most children, use a chair for time-out
    - Use an adult-sized dining-room type chair
    - Place it out of reach of all objects (including walls) that the child could kick or hit
    - Eliminate access to anything reinforcing for the child (e.g., TV, radio)
    - Place chair in a location that you can observe (e.g., in a hallway, not in a closet or bathroom)
- **What If the Child Leaves the Time-Out Chair?**
  - Immediately return the child to time-out
  - Say "You need to stay in time-out until you are quiet."
  - Stand close to the chair
  - Ignore squirming, bouncing, rolling around, standing, etc.
- **What Should I Do If My Child Says He/She Needs to Get Out of the Chair?**
  - Do not allow the child to leave the time-out chair to use the bathroom or get a drink
  - Ignore all requests the child makes