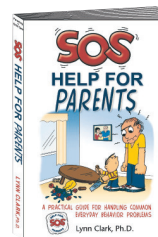


If Your Child Rebels Against Time-Out

"Time-out is not expected to work if parents make more than 2 or 3 time-out mistakes." - Lynn Clark



Chapter 12

Common Time-Out Mistakes And Problems



"Are you sorry for what you did? . . . Are you going to behave yourself when you come out? . . ."

Talking and arguing with a child *after* placing him in time-out is a common mistake which parents make.

The time-out method is easy to use, but it's also easy to make mistakes. *This chapter describes Nine Common Time-Out Mistakes which parents often make when using time-out.* These

The DVD Video SOS Help For Parents helps educators and counselors to easily teach over 19 behavior management skills, including time-out. Educators and counselors are invited to view a nine minute video clip from SOS Programs & Parents Press at www.sosprograms.com.

An eleven year old girl tells how she rebels against time-out and how her parents handle her rebellious behavior in the CD audio program, "How To Use Time-Out Effectively." Ordering information is at the end of this book.

mistakes reduce the effectiveness of time-out in changing your child's misbehavior. And making these nine mistakes also will cause your child to rebel against time-out.

If your child tries to rebel against time-out by refusing to go or stay in time-out read the second part of this chapter, "If Your Child Rebels Against Time-Out." This section tells solutions to common time-out problems. *However, first be sure you aren't making any of the Nine Common Time-Out Mistakes.*

Nine Common Time-Out Mistakes Parents Make

Mistake #1 Talking or arguing with a child *after* placing him in time out.

Correct Way — *Ignore your child during time-out.*

Mistake #2 Talking or arguing with a child *before* placing him in time-out.

Correct Way — *Use no more than 10 words and 10 seconds in quickly getting your child to time-out.*

Mistake #3 Using a small child's chair, rocking chair, or couch as a time-out place for toddlers and preschoolers.

Correct Way — *Use a large straight-back chair as a time-out place for your toddler or preschooler.*

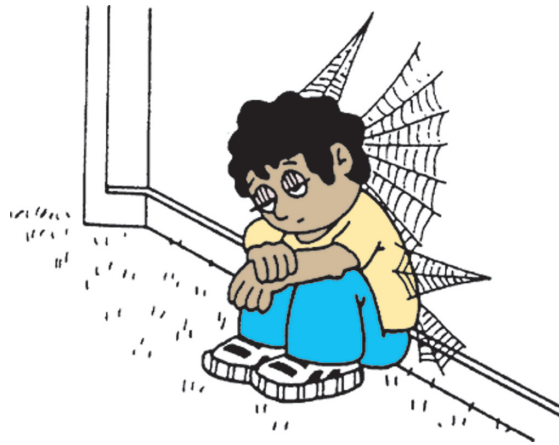
Mistake #4 Using a child's bedroom or an interesting place for time-out with older children.

Correct Way — *Use the bathroom or another boring place for time-out with your older child.*

Mistake #5 Keeping track of the time yourself or using a timer on the kitchen stove.

Correct Way — *Always use a portable timer that can ring — and place it out of reach, but within hearing of your child.*

TIME-OUT MISTAKES PARENTS MAKE



"Dad forgot to use a timer."

Mistake #6 Making a child apologize or promise to be good after he leaves time-out.

Correct Way — *After leaving time-out, your child can tell you the reason she was sent to time-out. If she doesn't remember, you tell her what she did.*

Mistake #7 Threatening to use time-out instead of using it.

Correct Way — *Actually use time-out each time the target behavior occurs. Don't just threaten to use it.*

Mistake #8 Trying to shame or frighten a child with time-out.

Correct Way — *Use time-out to bore your child and not to shame or frighten him.*

Mistake #9 Using very long, very short, or different periods of time for time-out.

Correct Way — *Time-out lasts one minute for each year of age.*

TIME-OUT MISTAKES PARENTS MAKE —
MERELY THREATENING TO USE TIME-OUT



"I've told you ten times to stay off the coffee table. If you get on the coffee table once more, you go to time-out! . . ."

Be sure to actually *use* time-out instead of *threatening* to use it. Merely threatening to use time-out is a common mistake.

If Your Child Rebels Against Time-Out

Be sure that you are not making any of the *Nine Common Time-Out Mistakes*. Read this following section if you are concerned about your child possibly rebelling against time-out. *If she resists time-out, select and follow a plan suited both to her age and to her particular type of rebellious behavior.*

Should your child resist time-out, you can manage this problem! Most children don't rebel beyond the first couple of weeks if their parents use time-out correctly. However, don't make any of the nine common time-out mistakes.

Your child may be clearly angry and upset when placed in time-out. Remember, she has several purposes for displaying anger and rebellious behavior. She wants to get your attention, to punish you for placing her in time-out, and to force you to stop using time-out. Resist your child's attempts to discourage you from being an effective parent!

"ESCAPING" FROM TIME-OUT



"I'm getting out of here!"

"Escaping" from time-out may be a problem when you first begin using the time-out method. However, this problem can be handled.

You have two major goals for using time-out. Your immediate goal is to abruptly stop your child's undesirable target behavior. Your long-term goal is to develop greater self-discipline and self-control in your child. Time-out is effective in helping to achieve both of these goals.

You love your child and naturally become upset when she is unhappy. Consequently, you and your spouse need to give help and emotional support to each other if your child becomes unhappy and hard-to-handle after being placed in time-out.

Parents should take specific steps to manage their child's resistance to time-out. If your child is *between two and four years old*, select a plan from the first half of this section to handle his rebellious behavior. If he is *between five and twelve years of age*, select a plan from the last part of this section.

Managing Two- To Four-Year-Olds Who Rebel Against Time-Out

Rebellion #1 Delaying or refusing to go to time-out.

Your Plan — Quickly carry all toddlers and preschoolers to the time-out chair, even those who don't resist going to time-out. Most four-year-olds will eventually learn to walk to time-out on their own.

Rebellion #2 Making noise in time-out. Your child may call out to you, cry, or have a tantrum on the time-out chair.

Plan A — Ignore your child. Turn away and avoid eye contact while he is in time-out. Noisemaking in time-out will usually decrease by itself if you consistently ignore it.

Plan B — If your child is three or four years old, tell him that if he continues making noise, you'll add minutes on the timer. If he is noisy when the timer rings, set the timer for one or two extra minutes.

Comments — Noisemaking is usually the only type of rebellious behavior that may continue for several weeks or longer. Recognize that your child is trying to force you to stop using time-out by making noise in time-out.

Rebellion #3 "Escaping" from the time-out chair. Your child steps down from the large straight-back chair and runs off.

Plan A — Repeatedly (ten times if necessary) retrieve your child and place him back on the chair. Stand next to the chair and harshly command him to stay on the chair. Say, "*Don't you dare get off that chair!*" If he continues trying to escape, consider the following alternative plans.

Plan B — Place your hand firmly on his leg or shoulder and look away from him. Command him to stay on the chair. Say nothing else.

Plan C — Kneel behind the time-out chair and firmly hold your child on the chair. Cross his arms on his chest and grasp his wrists. Be sure that you are using a large time-out chair. Tell him that he will be released when he stops trying to get away. Say nothing else. Before beginning this method, you must be determined to win this power struggle.

Plan D — Firmly hold your child in your lap and sit in the chair yourself. Tell your child that you will start the timer after he

stops trying to get away. You must be determined to win before beginning this method.

Comments — If the above plans are not effective, you will need to consult a family counselor regarding ways to help your child to improve his behavior. Refer to Chapter 22, "When And How To Get Professional Help."

Most children will stay on a time-out chair when commanded to do so. When escaping from time-out is a problem, most parents find that this problem rarely lasts more than one or two weeks after beginning the time-out method. Always use a large straight-back chair and a portable timer.

Rebellion #4 Not leaving time-out after the timer rings.

Your Plan — Tell your child that the timer rang and that it's okay to get off the chair. Then use *active ignoring* or leave the room.

Rebellion #5 After leaving the time-out chair, your child continues to cry or scream.

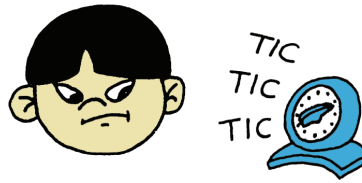
Your Plan — If your *two- or three-year-old child* continues to scream or cry loudly after leaving time-out, walk out of the room and don't give her any attention. If your *four-year-old child* continues to cry loudly or verbally abuse you after leaving time-out, place her back in time-out for another four minutes. Do this only once.

Rebellion #6 After leaving time-out, your child is annoyed with you, but does not cry or scream.

Your Plan — Ignore your child's annoyance. Don't insist that he be pleasant after leaving time-out. He has a right to his own feelings.

Rebellion #7 Child intentionally hurts herself while on the time-out chair.

Comments — A child who intentionally hurts herself usually has demonstrated this same behavior at other times when angry or disciplined. A child who hurts herself when corrected has "accidentally" learned this undesirable behavior. This behavior can be changed, but you may need to work with a family counselor. A counselor can give you specific suggestions suited to your child.



Managing Five- To Twelve-Year-Olds Who Rebel Against Time-Out

Rebellion #1 Delaying or refusing to go to time-out. Your child does not immediately go to time-out or refuses to go.

Your Plan — If your child delays or resists going to time-out, tell him that he must go immediately or he will have to spend additional minutes in time-out. For each ten seconds he delays going to time-out, add one more minute on the timer. *Silently* count from one to ten in order to keep track of ten seconds. Then add as many as five additional minutes on the timer.

After you add five additional minutes on the timer, warn your child that he will receive a particular *behavior penalty* (a loss of certain privileges) if he does not immediately go to time-out. After giving this warning, silently count from one to ten. If he does not go to time-out by the time you reach ten, announce the behavior penalty and walk off. Do not count out loud, become angry, or argue. Simply walk off. See Chapter 5 for a description and examples of behavior penalty.

Consider the following example of how a mother dealt with her ten-year-old daughter, Kelly. Kelly was attempting to avoid going to time-out by arguing with her mother.

Mother refused to argue and said, "*Kelly, you already have ten minutes of time-out. Now you have one more minute for not going right away. That's a total of eleven minutes.*" (Mother pauses and counts silently to ten.) "*Okay, you now have eleven minutes plus one more minute and that makes twelve minutes.*" Kelly stopped arguing, turned, and reluctantly walked off to time-out.

If Kelly had continued to delay going to time-out, her mother would have added as many as five additional minutes to the original ten minutes. If Kelly had not gone to time-out by then, her mother would have announced that Kelly's privilege of watching television for the rest of the day was revoked — a *behavior penalty*. After announcing this particular penalty to

Kelly, her mother would have walked off and refused to discuss the matter any longer. If Kelly had wanted to watch television that day, she first would have had to go to time-out for fifteen minutes.

Comments — If your child refuses to go to time-out, give her a *behavior penalty*. However, also permit her to go to time-out later in the day in order to remove the behavior penalty. For children five to twelve, a behavior penalty backs up time-out.

When you first use time-out with your child, you and your spouse should be present so that your child knows that you agree with each other. If she delays going to time-out, you might need additional practice in giving *effective commands* — a skill discussed in Chapter 2. Don't scold or argue with your child if she resists going to time-out. Children who resist going to time-out usually resist only the first week or two.

MAKING NOISE IN TIME-OUT



"I don't like time-out!"

Some children attempt to rebel against time-out by making noise or having a tantrum. Be calm! You can handle this problem also.

Rebellion #2 **Making noise in time-out.** Your child may continuously call out to you, cry loudly, stomp his feet, say he hates everyone, or have a full tantrum.

Plan A — Ignore your child, stay away from the time-out

room, and do not try to calm him down. Don't scold, reassure, or answer your child. Be sure not to reward his noisemaking by paying attention to this behavior. The best way to decrease noisemaking is to use *active ignoring* — to withdraw all attention from your child.

Plan B — Add extra minutes on the timer for noisemaking. If your child is noisy when the timer rings, reset the timer for two more minutes.

Comments — Remember that your child's purpose for making noise is to get your attention, make you angry, and force you to stop using time-out. Don't get angry or scold him for making noise, as this rewards this undesirable behavior. Simply ignore him and set extra minutes on the timer. Be sure that you're using a *portable timer* so that your child doesn't learn to keep calling out to you to "see if he can come out now."

Making noise in time-out is one type of rebellious behavior that may continue for some time. Many parents go to a distant part of their house or apartment to avoid the noise. Going to another part of the house until the noise stops is a good idea since this reduces stress on you and also ensures that your child will receive no attention.

Time-Out At The Motel

Although in a motel, mother and father needed to handle their six-year-old son's temper tantrum. They placed him in time-out in their motel bathroom. However, his crying was so loud and obnoxious that they had to leave their motel room.

They found themselves standing on the sidewalk outdoors until their son's time-out was over! Mother and father correctly handled their son's noisemaking by actively ignoring it.

Rebellion #3 **"Escaping" from the time-out room.** Your child leaves time-out before the timer rings.

Your Plan — For each ten seconds that your child is absent from the time-out room, one more minute is added to the timer, up to a maximum of five additional minutes. If she doesn't return to time-out, or is absent more than one or two minutes, she receives a *behavior penalty* (such as no television for the rest of the day). Refuse to get angry, announce the behavior penalty, and walk off. Don't argue with your child. Be sure to follow through

with the behavior penalty that you announce.

Comments — Escaping from time-out is usually not a problem. If it is a problem, it rarely lasts past the first two weeks.

Rebellion #4 Making a mess in the time-out room. Your child may scatter objects about the room or spill water on the floor.

Your Plan — Be matter-of-fact and require your child to clean up the mess before he may leave the room. Don't act shocked or scold.

Comments — Recognize that making a mess in time-out is just another attempt at punishing you or forcing you to stop using time-out. The day after placing his nine-year-old son in the bathroom for time-out, one father discovered that his new aerosol container of shaving cream was empty! His son apparently had emptied the entire container into the bathroom sink and rinsed the lather down the drain!

Rebellion #5 Damaging the time-out room.

Plan A — Your child must clean up the room and help pay for damages. One way that he may pay for damages is to do extra chores at home. You may need to select and arrange another room for time-out, a room that is safe but less easily damaged. However, do not use your child's bedroom.

Plan B — You may need to meet with a family counselor for professional help to determine specific methods to help a child who loses control when disciplined. Refer to Chapter 22, "When And How To Get Professional Help."

Rebellion #6 Not leaving time-out after the timer rings or your child says he "likes" time-out.

Your Plan — If your child doesn't leave time-out after the timer rings say, *"The timer rang. You can come out now if you want to, or you can stay in there — whatever you want to do."* Then turn and walk away. Say nothing else. A bright child may say that she "likes" time-out. Don't take her statement seriously. This is just another attempt at manipulating her parent into not using time-out.

Rebellion #7 After leaving time-out, your child continues to scream, yell, and cry.

Your Plan — Immediately place your child back into time-out for another full period of time-out.

Rebellion #8 After leaving time-out, your child is annoyed with you, but does not cry or scream.

Your Plan — Don't insist that your child be cheerful after leaving time-out. Ignore his annoyance. Be sure that you don't appear or act angry after time-out is over. Also, don't "apologize" for timing-out your son or daughter.

Rebellion #9 Your child intentionally hurts herself while in time-out.

Comments — A child who intentionally hurts herself usually has engaged in this behavior at other times when angry or disciplined. She is trying to punish and control her parents. It's especially important to help your child to overcome this pattern of self-destructive behavior. You probably will need to work with a family counselor who can tailor recommendations and a plan to fit your child. Read Chapter 22, "When And How To Get Professional Help."

You will need professional assistance if your child physically attacks you or runs out of the house to avoid time-out. If your child refuses to go to time-out and ignores the consequent *behavior penalty*, day after day, you may need to get professional help.

Main Points To Remember:

- Used correctly, the time-out method is effective and easy to use.
- Used *incorrectly*, the time-out method is ineffective and difficult to use.
- Be sure that you are not making any of the *Nine Common Time-Out Mistakes*. Time-out won't work if you are making these mistakes.
- If your child rebels against time-out, select a plan from this chapter to effectively handle her resistance. Be sure to use a plan suited to her age.