

One Page Resource: Time Out

What is Time Out teaching children?

Time Out has historically been used as a method of discipline in early childhood classrooms, but let's take a minute to consider if it is truly teaching children what we hope it is.

Time Out Does:

- ✓ Teach the child to feel bad for losing control of emotions by separating them from the group
- ✓ Encourage extrinsic motivation, by placing responsibility on the teacher for children's behaviors and emotional control
- ✓ Sometimes give the teacher a "break"



Time Out Does NOT:

- ✓ Teach the child to identify in themselves impulsivity, anger or out of control behaviors
- ✓ Teach self-regulation & help the child to control their own emotions
- ✓ Develop intrinsic motivation, as the teacher is the "regulator"

"It's not the tool itself that is good or bad, it's how the tool is used and the intent behind the use that determines whether it is helpful or hurtful." - Bilmes (2004)

Instead of Time Out, try this...

- Teach self-regulation as a life skill. Talk to children about how when you feel anxious, or are afraid you might make poor choices, you stop what you are doing and go to a quiet place.
- Create a quiet, safe place in the classroom that children can use to regulate their own emotions.
- Talk to the class about when a fellow student is in the safe place- they need some time alone, and how it is important to leave our classmates alone when they need this.
- Observe children closely to identify times when they start to become anxious. Help students to identify this in themselves and help them to decide to go to the safe place as they need it.
- If a child struggles with this, or refuses to go to the safe space when they need it, spend some time one on one with them when they are calm. Bring them to your safe space and talk to them about how comfortable the spot is.
- Allow for individual needs, you know each child is different, and each child may need different things to calm down and regulate their own emotions. Keep trying different strategies until you find a good fit.
- Avoid forcing a child to use the safe space. This will defeat your purpose, and will not teach the child how to regulate their own emotions.

Remember: Your goal is to not have to follow around the child all day regulating their emotions for them. Gaining emotional control is just the first step. You also need to teach children how to resolve their own conflicts and problems!

