

# TRANSPARENTING<sup>SM</sup> Toolbox

## USING TIME OUT EFFECTIVELY

“Time Out” is a great tool for helping change behavior when used appropriately. It is used for children from 18 months through the teenage years. There are some important things to remember when using Time Out that will keep it an effective consequence for problem behaviors.

### Guidelines

- Use Time Out for some misbehavior, not all misbehavior. Choose one or two problem behaviors you are going to respond to with Time Out. Every time this misbehavior is observed, a Time Out must be given. If overused, Time Out will lose its effectiveness.
- Choose a Time Out location that does not have anything to look at or play with. The child should be in parent’s view while in Time Out. DO NOT have Time Out in a child’s room.
- Time Out should occur immediately after the misbehavior occurs.
- Time Out needs to be given in a very “matter of fact” way without a great deal of attention. Take the child to the designated spot without lecturing or reasoning. Guide the child by the shoulder or arm and don’t make eye contact.
- Limit the time in Time Out to one minute per year of child’s age.
- If the child misbehaves while in Time Out, they are not allowed back to the positive activity or situation until they have spent the required number of minutes behaving appropriately.
- Children should always be able to earn their way back into the positive activity or situation.

### When getting the child out of Time Out—

- Ask them to tell you what they did that they were not supposed to do.
- Ask them what they could do differently next time.
- If the misbehavior involved harm to anyone else, child is taken to the person to make an apology.

Time Out only works when it removes a child from an activity they liked or a situation that was enjoyable to them (example: playing in a sandbox, watching TV, swinging). Do not use Time Out when the child is doing something they don’t like and leaving is seen as a reward, not a punishment.

### About Families First

TRANSPARENTING<sup>SM</sup> was developed by Families First, a premier not-for-profit organization providing critical, preventive services to strengthen and preserve families for more than 100 years.