

Why not try one of these 10 **time-out alternatives**. They may be a little unconventional, but in the long-run, they will help build loving, trusting relationships with your child while helping them to behave in a positive manner.

Successful

Alternatives



to Time Outs

the Stir

1. **Offer a hug.** We've all been there. We're at a party and our kid suddenly has a melt-down and runs off. It's embarrassing, concerning, and of course we think everyone is judging us. What do we do to quickly defuse the situation? Try offering a hug. "It might sound strange to offer a hug, like we are condoning the behavior we've just seen in our children," says McCrohan. "But connecting before correcting is important. When a child is misbehaving, we first want to restore connection. Offering a hug is one way to join with your child, give them that deep but gentle pressure they need around their bodies, and connect with each other before addressing the behavior."
2. **Help her describe her feelings.** When your child is reacting in a way you'd rather them not, acknowledge them by helping them to name what they are feeling. "Address, acknowledge, and name feelings first before jumping into how they shouldn't have done

such and such or need to go and apologize, etc.," suggests McCrohan. It will help them calm down and get in touch with their emotions.

3. **Hang out ... together.** Many experts agree that time-in can go a long way with children of all ages. With time-in, you invite your child to sit somewhere with you so they can express their feelings and cool down. The goal of time-in is two-fold: One, hopefully, your child will have lost the desire to engage in whatever negative behavior he was prior to time-in, and two, this is a good opportunity for you to empathize with your child's feelings and address whatever inappropriate behavior they were partaking in. Your child will be more likely to hear what you're saying, and heed your advice, when he's calm and feeling loved and listened to. "When you see a child misbehaving, simply say, 'You must need some extra special time with me. Why don't we do this together,'" notes McCrohan.
4. **Tell him how good he is.** Sadly, many of us are wired to notice the negative -- about both ourselves and others. But with practice, we can change this. "When you wake up, start your day by bringing to mind what you love about your children," says McCrohan. "And share with your children how you see the innate goodness in them." This lays a positive blue-print for the day -- for both you and your children -- and hopefully disciplinary tactics won't be needed.
5. **Stay and listen.** When a child is really losing it, he isn't going to hear all the explanations and reasonings you give -- and he certainly isn't going to understand the point of his time-out. "Instead, go to your child and say, 'I'll be with you,'" suggests McCrohan. "Rub their back (depending on if they like that touch) and just be present. Don't say anything, reason with them, ask them what's wrong, or try to rush them through the process. Just stay and listen." By doing this, your child will learn that he matters, and that you can handle her emotions no matter what.
6. **Let her express emotions in a different way.** If your child is feeling angry, which is a perfectly fine emotion, let them know that you get that they're feeling angry and give them something to do other than taking it out on you, their siblings, or classmates. "When a 'bad' behavior occurs, address the feeling underlying it by naming it, and giving the child another way to express it," suggests Tovah P. Klein, Ph.D, author of *How Toddlers Thrive*. "Putting words to feelings is part of how children learn to regulate or handle them." For instance, say, "I know you're angry that we can't do that now, but I won't let you hit me. Here is a pillow to hit." This is a more "acceptable" way to express anger, and it lets your child know that they haven't lost your love and approval.
7. **Teach him to tune-in to feelings.** Instead of offering your child candy or a high-five every time he does something good, ask him how his good behavior made him feel. "Questions like: 'How did it feel to offer your friend your last cookie?' or 'What did it feel like to help

set the table for dinner?' encourage a child to tune into their inner experience," says McCrohan. When children are more in touch with their feelings, they're less likely to act out.

8. **Pretend to be a stuffed animal.** For some kids, having their stuffies teach them a lesson works like magic. If they throw something, have the stuffed animal "tell" them why they shouldn't do that. No offense, but they'll probably prefer hearing it from them than from you.
9. **Redirect them.** Child climbing on the stove? That's a big no-no, and you certainly want to convey the message that that's not okay. Instead of making a giant scene and trying to send your little one to time-out (which is never good after a giant scene), tell them, "Wow, you're a great climber, but we never climb on the stove. You can get a big boo-boo like that." And then redirect your child to a more appropriate place to climb, such as the couch or a on a pile of pillows.
10. **Ask yourself if a time-out is really necessary.** Sometimes, it's a knee-jerk reaction for us to get annoyed when our kids don't do "as they should." But take a moment and ask yourself: Is this really cause for punishment? Are they intentionally being naughty, or are they just being a kid? The book, *Positive Discipline for Preschoolers* encourages parents to walk a mile in their kid's tiny shoes before criticizing their actions. "Before you can help your child choose different behavior, you must understand why your child is behaving this way, and what he is trying to accomplish with his behavior," the book explains. "Behavior actually is a coded message that reveals a child's underlying beliefs about himself and about life. When your child misbehaves, he is telling you in the only way he knows that he is feeling discouraged, or that he doesn't belong. As you learn to decipher the code, you will find that your responses, and eventually, your child's behavior will change."

What time-out alternatives work for you?

No Bad Kids – Toddler Discipline Without Shame (9 Guidelines)

POSTED BY JANET ON APR 29TH, 2010



A toddler acting out is not shameful, nor is it behavior that needs punishing. It's a cry for attention, a shout-out for sleep, or a call to action for firmer, more consistent limits. It is the push-pull of your toddler testing his burgeoning independence. He has the overwhelming impulse to step out of bounds, while also desperately needing to know he is securely reined in. There is no question that children need discipline. As infant expert Magda Gerber said, "Lack of discipline is not kindness, it is neglect."

The key to healthy and effective discipline is our attitude. Toddlerhood is the perfect time to hone parenting skills that will provide the honest, direct, and compassionate leadership our children will depend on for years to come.

Here are some guidelines:

- 1) **Begin with a predictable environment and realistic expectations.** A predictable, daily routine enables a baby to anticipate what is expected of him. That is the beginning of discipline. Home is the ideal place for infants and toddlers to spend the majority of their day. Of course, we must take them with us to do errands sometimes, but we cannot expect a toddler's best behavior at dinner parties, long afternoons at the mall, or when his days are loaded with scheduled activities.
- 2) **Don't be afraid, or take misbehavior personally.** When toddlers act out in my classes, the parents often worry that their child might be a brat, a bully, an aggressive kid. When parents project those fears, it can cause the child to internalize the negative personas, or at least pick up on the parent's tension, which often exacerbates the misbehavior. Instead of labeling a child's action, learn to nip the behavior in the bud by disallowing it nonchalantly. If

your child throws a ball at your face, try not to get annoyed. He doesn't do it because he dislikes you, and he's not a bad child. He is asking you (toddler-style) for the limits that he needs and may not be getting.

3) **Respond in the moment, calmly, like a CEO.** Finding the right tone for setting limits can take a bit of practice. Lately, I've been encouraging parents that struggle with this to imagine they are a successful CEO and that their toddler is a respected underling. The CEO corrects the errors of others with confident, commanding efficiency. She doesn't use an unsure, questioning tone, get angry or emotional. Our child needs to feel that we are not nervous about his behavior, or ambivalent about establishing rules. He finds comfort when we are effortlessly in charge.

Lectures, emotional reactions, scolding and punishments do not give our toddler the clarity he needs, and can create guilt and shame. A simple, matter-of-fact "I won't let you do that. If you throw that again I will need to take it away" while blocking the behavior with our hands is the best response. But react immediately. Once the moment has passed, it is too late. Wait for the next one!

4) **Speak in first person.** Parents often get in the habit of calling themselves "mommy" or "daddy". Toddlerhood is the time to change over into first person for the most honest, direct communication possible. Toddlers test boundaries to clarify the rules. When I say "Mommy doesn't want Emma to hit the dog", I'm not giving my child the direct ('you' and 'me') interaction she needs.

5) **No time out.** I always think of infant expert Magda Gerber asking in her grandmotherly Hungarian accent, "Time out of what? Time out of life?" Magda was a believer in straightforward, honest language between a parent and child. She didn't believe in gimmicks like 'time-out', especially to control a child's behavior or punish him. If a child misbehaves in a public situation, the child is usually indicating he's tired, losing control and needs to leave. Carrying a child to the car to go home, even if he kicks and screams, is the respectful way to handle the issue. Sometimes a child has a tantrum at home and needs to be taken to his room to flail and cry in our presence until he regains self-control. These are not punishments, but caring responses.

6) **Consequences.** A toddler learns discipline best when he experiences natural consequences for his behavior, rather than a disconnected punishment like time-out. If a child throws food, his or her mealtime is over. If a child refuses to get dressed, we don't go to the park today. These parental responses appeal to a child's sense of fairness. The child may still react negatively to the consequence, but he does not feel manipulated or shamed.

7) **Don't discipline a child for crying.** Children need rules for behavior, but their emotional responses to the limits we set (or to anything else for that matter) should be allowed, even encouraged. Toddlerhood can be a time of intense, conflicting feelings. Children may need to express anger, frustration, confusion, exhaustion and disappointment, especially if they don't get what they want because we've set a limit. A child needs the freedom to safely express his feelings without our judgment. He may need a pillow to punch — give him one.

8) **Unconditional love.** Withdrawing our affection as a form of discipline teaches a child that our love and support turns on a dime, evaporating because of his momentary misbehavior. How can that foster a sense of security? Alfie

Kohn's *New York Times* article, "[When A Parent's 'I Love You' Means 'Do As I Say'](#)," explores the damage this kind of "conditional parenting" (recommended by experts like talk show host Phil McGraw and Jo Frost of "Supernanny") causes, as the child grows to resent, distrust and dislike his parents, feel guilt, shame, and a lack of self-worth.

9) **Spanking – NEVER.** Most damaging of all to a relationship of trust are spankings. And spanking is a predictor of violent behavior. *Time Magazine* article, "[The Long-Term Effects of Spanking](#)", by Alice Park, reports findings from a recent study: "the strongest evidence yet that children's short-term response to spanking may make them act out more in the long run. Of the nearly 2,500 youngsters in the study, those who were spanked more frequently at age 3 were much more likely to be aggressive by age 5."

Purposely inflicting pain on a child cannot be done with love. Sadly however, the child often learns to associate the two.

Loving our child does not mean keeping him happy all the time and avoiding power struggles. Often it is doing what feels hardest for us to do...saying "No" and meaning it.

Our children deserve our direct, honest responses so they can internalize 'right' and 'wrong', and develop the authentic self-discipline needed to respect and be respected by others. As Magda Gerber wrote in *Dear Parent – Caring For Infants With Respect*, "The goal is inner-discipline, self-confidence and joy in the act of cooperation."

I offer a complete guide to respectful discipline in my new book:

NO BAD KIDS: Toddler Discipline Without Shame

Alternatives to "No"

AND NEGATIVE PARENTING LANGUAGE



"Stop hitting"



"Please keep your hands to yourself"

"Don't say that"



"Please choose another word"

"Quit whining & crying"



"Please use your words"

"I can't hear you"



"Please speak louder/
more clearly"

"I won't buy you that"



"Instead of that, what if
we _____"

"Don't get upset"



"It's ok to feel that way,
but _____"

"That's not for you"



"That's _____'s, can I
offer you _____?"

"We can't play"/"Have
to stop playing"



"Maybe we can play
later after _____"/"We
have to go"

