



## "Calm Down Spot" What It Could/Should Look Like

Positive time out is...

- **A chance for the child and adult to cool off.**

*Cooling off takes the "heat" out of the moment and creates more space between the upset feelings and the typically hurtful reactions of both the child(ren) and adult.*

- **A place where we go to feel better again.**

*We each do better when we feel better. Imagine a scene where you are eating a luscious ice cream sundae. Your spouse comes by and reminds you how fat you are and says you shouldn't be eating all those calories. Don't you immediately smile and thank him for his helpful words and toss the rest of the sundae to the dog? Probably not. Your spouse will be lucky if you don't toss the ice cream at his head. Discouragement does not motivate anyone.*

- **A means by which children learn to change disruptive behavior into constructive behavior.**

*One child lands a blow at a classmate's block tower and prepares for a second jab at the classmate. A teacher intervenes, sending both children to timeout. Time out gives both children a break, a chance to regain composure, and provides needed damage control.*

- **Most effective when the attitude of the adult is kind and firm.**

*The adult who sees time out as positive does not use it as a threat, try to manipulate children with it, or stomp around ordering a child into time out. Modeling self-control is the adult's responsibility.*

- **Discussed in advance and the details planned by both adults and children.**

*An explanation and discussion of positive time out takes place at a calm moment. Children help decide where time outs will take place and what objects (cuddly teddy bears, koosh balls, or silky fabrics) or furniture to use in the time out area. They understand that the time out area is a place where they may go to help them feel better again.*

- **Available to a child for as little or as much time as she decides.**

*Children have control over when they are ready to leave the time out area. Remember: The goal is for the child to feel better again.*

Children want parents and teachers to set reasonable limits, guide and teach them, and follow through with dignity and respect. Positive time out is a tool that meets these goals even when the adult is correcting misbehavior or helping a child learn more appropriate responses.

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