



# Two-Choice Time Out

## Strategies to Improve Compliance

For **YOUNGER CHILDREN** a time out is very effective in reducing problem behaviors IF you follow **the same specific sequence** every time you give a time out. The time out that we teach parents in PCIT-TC gives children a “choice” to comply and provides time for them to make a decision.

Parent Action	Example
1) Parent gives a direct command and child does not comply	“Please give me the yellow Lego.” (Child ignores parent)
2) Parent holds up hand, counts to five on fingers	“One, two, three, four, five.” (Child continues to ignore parent)
3) Parent gives two-choice warning	“You have two choices: either give me the Lego or go to time out.” (Child continues to ignore parent)
4) Parent holds up hand, counts to five on fingers	“One, two, three, four, five.” (Child continues to ignore parent)
5) Parent gives explanation and takes child to time out	“You didn’t do what I told you to do, so you have to sit on the time out chair.” (Parent stands and takes child to the time out chair)
6) Parent gives direct command to sit on chair and steps away from child	“Sit here quietly until I tell you to get up.”
7) Parent waits until child is sitting quietly (at least 5 seconds)	(Child sits quietly)
8) Parent asks child if ready to return and comply with original command	“You are sitting quietly in the chair. Are you ready to come back and give me the yellow Lego?” (Child says, “yes.”)
9) Parent waits silently for child to comply (may point or signal)	(Parent points to the yellow Lego)
10) Parent acknowledges compliance	“Thank you.”
11) Parent gives follow-up command	“Now please put the green Lego in the container.” (Child complies)
12) Parent gives enthusiastic labeled praise for compliance	“Great job of following directions!” ENTHUSIASM HERE!!!

**Commands and Compliance** An important part of the two-choice time out is to make sure that the **child complies with your initial command** after returning from time out. However, while practicing time out in clinic we will ask you to give another command after your child complies with that first command. This way, we make sure that your child understands that complying is easy and time outs can be avoided by complying right away.

**Counting out Loud** In the two-choice time out, we will ask you to hold up your hand, and count to five on your fingers out loud, twice! We ask you to count after you give the first direct command. Counting with your fingers out loud is a great way to communicate with very young children, and children with learning problems or special needs because it is very concrete. If used consistently, also a very quick way of letting the child know what's coming next—that you are expecting him/her to comply! The second time, we ask you to count after you give your child the choice to comply or go to time out. This choice, followed by time, gives the child a chance to calm down a little and reflect upon his/her behavior.

**Logical Consequences** can be given to a child of any age. The advantage of using logical consequences is that the consequence should feel fair and “fit the crime.” Logical consequences often match well with “real life” and what children will experience, as they get older. It is helpful for children to understand that actions have consequences, and not all are happy. An important part of maturing is taking the time to ask, “what will happen if I do this?”

## **Removal of Privileges**

Getting to do fun things is a privilege that children have when they follow rules and listen to their parents! You can use this logic to help your child see how much better it is to obey than misbehave. Make a list of the child's favorite treats or favorite things to do. When your child does not comply, you can give them a choice: either comply or lose a favorite activity. Count to five after giving the choice, so your child has time to decide to comply before losing a privilege. You need to know that removing privileges is an effective incentive to obey as long as the privilege is valuable, but it also must be something you are able to enforce!

**Predictable & Consistent** It is important to be predictable and consistent when giving a consequence for inappropriate behavior. If you have told your child that he/she will lose a privilege, you must follow-through! You may have to go through a long list of favorite things before you get compliance. But, if you follow-through consistently, your child will comply rather than lose his/her favorite privileges.

# **Strategies to Improve Compliance = Predictable & Consistent Consequences**