

## TIME-IN



Time-out has become an extremely popular discipline technique. However, what determines the effectiveness of time-out or almost any other discipline technique is **time-in**. Time-in refers to the positive interactions and feedback children receive when they are not misbehaving. The quality of time-in is a critical ingredient in determining the parent-child relationship. Children often see their parents as the people who set limits for them and punish them when they misbehave. It is also important for children to view their parents as people who offer a lot of positive attention. The following suggestions can help improve time-in.

**\*Catch them being good.** It is important that parents monitor their children's activities frequently. This will give parents a chance to observe more of their children's appropriate behaviors. The goal is to catch children being good.

**\*Don't wait for a special occasion.** Parents should offer their children a lot of praise when they are behaving "ok." Parents should not wait until their children do something extraordinary to offer praise.

**\*Be specific.** When parents praise their children, it is often a good idea to tell them exactly why they are being praised. For example, "You did a great job of not interrupting me while I was speaking on the telephone. Thanks."

**\*Provide physical attention.** In addition to verbal praise, parents should offer a lot of physical attention. For example, hugs, smiles, kisses, pats on the back, or winks. Young children respond especially well to physical affection.

**\*Give immediate feedback.** It is important to give children positive feedback immediately. Parents shouldn't wait until sometime after the good behavior occurs to offer the praise.

**\*Avoid backhanded compliments.** It is important to avoid using backhanded compliments. For example, it is not a good idea to say something like "That's good; why can't you do that more often?"

**\*Use third-handed compliments.**

Third-handed compliments can be very effective. Third-handed compliments occur when one person tells another person about children's good behavior in the children's presence. For example, when one parent comes home from work, the other parent talks about the child's good behavior that occurred that day.

**\*Plan parent-child activities.** The use of a parent-child activity can be used to reward children's good behavior. For example, going to the park or playing a game. The use of parent-child activities is often preferable to the use of material rewards.

**\*Notice good behavior instead of just bad behavior.** The most important point is for parents to let their children know that they notice their good behavior as well as their misbehavior. It is the balance between time-in and time-out (or other punishment techniques) that is critical in changing children's behavior.



*Center for Effective Parenting*  
*Little Rock Center: (501) 364-7580*  
*NW Arkansas Center: (479) 751-6166*  
**[www.parenting-ed.org](http://www.parenting-ed.org)**