TIME-OUT WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

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Overview

I. The use (and misuse) of time-out
II. Time-out parameters
III. Study 1: Release contingencies
IV. Study 2: Mode of administration
V. Study 3: Schedule of time-out
VI. Recommendations for appropriate use of time-out
VII. Future directions for time-out research
5 Alternatives to "Time Out"

Gentle Discipline Basics
Ten Alternatives to Time-outs

Alternatives to Time Out
for Children 1-6 years

Take a 5 minute break, together
Give a second chance
Problem solve together
Ask questions
Read a story together
Use puppets to explain
Give two choices
Listen to a song
Go outside together
Try a breathing exercise
Draw a picture about the problem

invite child to use a chill-out corner

The Natural Child Project™
The Case Against Time-out
by Dr. Peter Haiman
Time-out (TO)

- American Academy of Pediatrics recommends TO for young children
- Many previous demonstrations of effectiveness (e.g., Fabiano et al., 2004; Mace et al., 1986; White & Bailey, 1990)
- Few evaluations of TO parameters
  - Duration
  - Location
  - *Release*
  - *Mode of Administration (physical or verbal)*
  - *Schedule*
General TO Procedure

- Enriched time-in environment
- Problem behavior $\rightarrow$ verbal statement to go to TO
- Physical guidance to TO, if necessary
- Contingent observation TO
  - Set timer
  - No attention during TO
  - Block escape
- Child returns to activity following TO
Study 1: Release Contingencies
Evaluation of Release Contingencies

- Participants: 4 pre-school aged boys
- DV: Problem behavior, individually defined (e.g., throwing objects, playground rule violations)
- Design: Reversal + multielement
- Conditions
  - Baseline: No TO
  - TO
    - Fixed-duration TO
    - Release contingency TO
- Cumulative records for 1 fixed-duration TO session
Study 2: Mode of Administration

- Getting a child to go to TO can be difficult
- One method to increase compliance with TO: Decrease TO interval contingent on compliance
- Participants: 6 pre-school aged boys
- DV: Playground or house rule violations
- Design: Reversal + multielement
- Conditions
  - Baseline: No TO
  - TO
    - 4-min TO
    - 1- or 4-min TO
Study 3: Schedule of TO

- Unreasonable to expect parents/teachers to implement TO following every instance of problem behavior
- Parents/teachers commonly use warnings instead of TO
- Participants: 3 young boys
- DV: problem behavior, individually defined (e.g., aggression, disruption)
- Design: Reversal + multielement
- Conditions
  - No TO, no warnings (BL)
  - No TO, warnings
  - TO, no warnings
  - TO, warnings
## TO Findings

- TO was effective at reducing problem behavior of all participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Stevie</th>
<th>Austin</th>
<th>Brandon</th>
<th>Ricky</th>
<th>Gary</th>
<th>Adam</th>
<th>Harold</th>
<th>Jackson</th>
<th>Forrest</th>
<th>Keenan</th>
<th>Damien</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% Decrease BL→TO</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>94, 94</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>97, 91</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above shows the percentage decrease in problem behavior for each participant, with the exception of Adam and Harold, whose values are highlighted in red.
TO Findings & Recommendations

• TO can be very effective at reducing problem behavior!
  • Enrich time-in
  • Use contingent observation/nonexclusion TO
  • Arrange contingencies to promote compliance with TO (1- or 4-min TO)
  • Keep TO brief (release contingencies?)
  • Skip debriefing after TO
  • Thin the schedule of TO
Future Directions

• What are the necessary and sufficient features of time-in required to make TO effective?
• How can we make TO easier to implement?
  • Can delayed TO be effective?
• Why does problem behavior occur during TO?
  • What is the best method to reduce problem behavior during TO?
Thank you

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