

Time-out verses a Feelings Area

Introduction

A range of TV programmes promote the use of *time-out*.

If you watch these programmes try to be analytical. If you look at the context in which time-out is used, it does not help children to learn how to make better decisions. Sometimes it becomes a routine and children will put themselves in time-out.

The purpose of time-out in these TV situations is primarily to give the adult time to calm down, and to give the child some respite from the shouting and reprimands.

Early years settings

In early years settings, adults aim to be calm and assertive. This provides a good role model for the children, and accepts that children need to express their feelings and emotions.

An alternative to time-out is to provide children with a *comfort* or *feelings* area where they can retreat to calm down.

The feelings area requires caring adults to support the children.

If you need further guidance please contact your Early Years and Childcare Advisor.

Comparing what time-out achieves in comparison to a feelings area

Refer to the table that follows to compare approaches.

Time-out	Feelings area
Used as a sanction	Supportive, acknowledges children's intense feelings
Child is isolated	Child will have an opportunity to express their feelings with the resources provided, and return to a relaxed state
Child is rejected	Adults support children, acknowledge and respond to their emotions
Child may become defensive	Children will learn to recognise and name their feelings, which is conducive to them understanding and managing their intense emotions'
Child labelled by others. As a result children live up to their reputations. The Bart Simpson syndrome! Eg. It's cool to be naughty!	Children accepted and supported according to their own stage of social and emotional development
Eventually the child may put himself in time-out. The message is that if you cross boundaries, you sit out and then can return to the same behaviours	Children are encouraged to self-manage
Unlikely to change behaviours over the long term	Builds on children's strategies to manage their behaviours and learn to make different decisions
Children are often encouraged to say sorry when they leave time-out. This also can become a cop-out. The message is that saying sorry rectifies the situation but it does not stop a child from repeating the same behaviour	Children are encouraged to recognise and respect other people's feelings. Empathy is encouraged