

MODELING SELF-CONTROL FOR OUR CHILDREN

The most effective way to teach children self-control is to model it. We “modern” parents have risen above spanking our children when we are out of control. Instead, we yell at them to go to their rooms or sit in this chair and they are in time out until we determine that they can behave. This teaches the child that the parent is in control of the child, not the child in control of himself. Here are some things you can do before you lose it with your children:

1. Count to 10 before you open your mouth
2. Step outside the back door and take eight to ten deep breaths
3. Step outside and scream (no loud enough to alarm the neighbors)
4. If your children are old enough, take a brisk five-minute walk around the block
5. Throw water balloons at the side of your garage or house, whichever is safest
6. Growl (it beats yelling and screaming)
7. Use the bathroom, properly
8. Stop what you are doing, sit down on the floor and don't say a word
9. Put on some music
10. Take some self-quieting time

Time out is most often used as a punishment. Here are some ways to use self-quieting time to teach children self-control:

1. At a calm time, create a quiet space with your child. It does not have to be in her room. Put some things there that help calm the child, i.e., books, a teddy bear, pillows and blankets, etc.
2. When the child is out of control, yelling, screaming, hitting, kicking, etc., get on her eye level and in a calm voice tell her it looks like she needs a break. Guide her or carry her to the self-quieting space and say, “When you are ready, come on back.”
3. If the child comes back and acts appropriately, acknowledge her for gaining control. If her behavior is still not appropriate, take her back to the space.
4. If you get into a battle about the child taking a break, remove yourself from the situation and take a break yourself.

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