

USE OF THE MINUTE DRILL AND PENALTY BOX

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The Minute Drill

PROBLEM: A parent snaps at a child to change a behavior. The child refuses to change. A power struggle between the parent and child escalates. The parent gets angry and resorts to over-kill (punishment or spanking).

Parents and children are in a constant adversarial role. It is impossible to build a positive relationship with a child when you are in a constant state of anger.

How To Use The Minute Drill

- A. Have two rules in your home:
 - (1) If you hit, you sit and
 - (2) We are kind to each other.
- B. The Minute Drill is used from age 3 through the teen years.
- C. It is used for behavior management and for time management.
 1. Give the child one free minute to change his/her behavior.
 2. For every minute after the free minute the child loses fifteen minutes off of something that child likes to do that day. (TV time, computer or media time, bedtime, story time, play time, etc.)

...What is difficult to transmit is that once the child believes a parent will enforce the Minute Drill, the child will stop the behavior within the free minute. The consequence will seldom be repeated after the training stage.

3. When the child is serving the (fifteen minutes) he/she may read a book or play quietly with a puzzle, Legos, stickers, etc. Nothing computer generated, no electronic gadgets are to be used. To the degree serving time for breaking the Minute Drill is boring will the child not want to be there again.

Examples Of Using The Minute Drill

Example #1:

"My nine year old son woke me up at five in the morning. He wanted to watch television. I told him he could not watch TV and gave him two choices of other things he could do. He began screaming and yelling. I took him into the bathroom and told him, 'You are on the Minute Drill. You have one minute to stop screaming. For every minute you continue to scream after the first minute, you will lose fifteen minutes off of your TV time today.' To my surprise, he

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looked surprised and yelled, 'You can't do that!' to which I replied, 'I am doing it and you have fifty seconds left.' He stopped his behavior. Now I was the one doing the staring! For my son, challenged with Asperger Syndrome, stopping a behavior immediately was impossible. The Minute Drill has restored peace to our home." Lynne Sturdivant

Example #2: When you want a child to get out of the bathtub or start homework or begin to pick up toys or get up in the morning-put the child on the Minute Drill. "You have 1 minute to do as I asked. For each minute after the free minute you will lose 15 minutes off your (TV, media, story, play, bed) time today."

(I learned the "If you hit, you sit" phrase in a Barbara Coloroso parenting seminar.)

THE PENALTY BOX

The Penalty Box is similar to the use of Time Out. Research indicates that time out does not work because there are too many variables in how it is enforced. A parent usually waits too long before giving a time out. Therefore the message to the child is that the parent has had enough, NOT that that child's behavior needs to change. An angry parent will leave a child in time out for too long a time. When asked, "Why are you in time out?" children responded, "Because Mommy is mad." To the question, "Why is Mommy mad?" the child responded, "Because I was bad." The problem is that the child did not know why he/she was bad. Behavior will not change unless the child gets consistent and immediate feedback that a behavior is not acceptable.

The Penalty Box is different from the use of time out in three ways:

1. The child sits for as many minutes as that child is old
2. The child is quiet while in the Penalty Box or the time starts over until the child sits quietly
3. The parent does not threaten to use the Penalty Box, the consequence of breaking a rule is to go to the Penalty Box.

How to Use the Penalty Box

1. Every home has two rules: (1) If you hit, you sit, and (2) We are kind to each other.
2. This technique is used from age one through the teen years.
3. From age one to three years, the Penalty Box is the parent's primary discipline tool. At age three, the parent may use a combination of the Penalty Box and the Minute Drill.

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4. The Penalty Box is always used when you want to stop a behavior immediately. For any behavior that is harmful or destructive, use the Penalty Box.
5. Always use the same place for the Penalty Box: a chair, a carpet square, a playpen or the child's bed. A parent can have an upstairs and downstairs Penalty Box.
6. The length of time the child is in the Penalty Box is determined by the child's age. The child must be quiet and stay in the Penalty Box. If the child talks, screams or gets out of the Penalty Box, the time starts over. (This is key to your success.)

How to Teach a Child to Use the Penalty Box

1. The child breaks a rule.
2. The parent walks the child to the Penalty Box.
3. The parent explains to the child why he/she is in the Penalty Box.

"It is not acceptable to hit. You will be sitting here quietly for (2) minutes. If you scream or yell or get up, your time will start over. You are here a short time or a long time, you choose how long you are here."

4. Set a timer. Give a visual clue to be quiet. Stay near. If the child gets up return him/her to the Penalty Box. If the child screams, turn the timer back and re-explain. After explaining three times, turn the timer back and say no more to the child. The child will learn to sit quietly in the Penalty Box for the prescribed amount of time.

When the child is released from the Penalty Box, no lecture is necessary.

* The length of the initial training session will be determined by how much power your child has been given to date. The child will stop pushing the boundary when he/she knows it will be enforced.

** The parent needs to be consistent in enforcing the Penalty Box. If a parent puts a child in the Penalty Box every time he/she chooses to hit, that child gets the message that hitting is never acceptable.

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Benefits of Using the Penalty Box

1. The child gets consistent feedback that a behavior is not acceptable.
2. The child learns how to sit quietly with nothing to do. We live in a world of constant input; the TV, radio, computer, CD is always on. Quiet time is an essential skill to learn in order to rest and to listen to your own thoughts.
3. Use of the Penalty Box does not require any anger whatsoever from the parent.
4. This discipline technique cannot be misconstrued as something the parent is doing to the child. The child chose a behavior and the Penalty Box is the consequence of that choice.
5. It is a reasonable consequence that is consistent, fair and is without judgment.

Real-Life Use of the Penalty Box

Example #1:

"A friend of mine has nine year old twins. She had raised her children on my methods and was concerned about the fact they were watching too much television. I suggested she limit TV consumption to one hour a day. The mother went into one of the twin's rooms and announced that there would only be an hour of TV a day. She gave the twin four colored pieces of paper, each representing fifteen minutes, which the girl could spend each day.

The mother left the room. The twin, not liking the television restriction, stormed down the hall saying, "This is stupid idea. I hate this idea and you are stupid for doing it." To her surprise the twin ran into the mother. With no comment from the mother, the twin turned and walked to the Penalty Box. She sat there for nine minutes."

Example #2:

"My five year old daughter hit her brother. I told her to go to the Penalty Box. She refused. I told her that if she walked to the Penalty Box she would be there for five minutes, if I carried her she would be there for ten minutes. She jumped up and went to the penalty box."

...Other examples of how to use the Penalty Box are in Sandy's Book, *Don't Feed the Dragon*. (I learned the "If you hit, you sit" phrase in a Barbara Coloroso parenting seminar.)