	Behavioral Interventions and Strategies Series:
T eams I ntervening E arly to R each all S tudents	*Time-Out*
	When to use: To reduce problem behaviors that appear to be motivated by gaining access to attention.

Why use: Time-out is an evidence-based behavior management tool that is well-suited for students in preschool and elementary school classrooms. Time-out (or *Time-out from reinforcement*) involves placing a student in a less-reinforcing (or rewarding) environment when the student engages in inappropriate behavior. Time-out may also involve removing a reinforcing stimulus from the student, rather than removing the student from a situation, task, or environment. When implemented correctly and consistently, this procedure has been shown to be effective at reducing the occurrence of a variety of problem behaviors including aggressive and noncompliant behaviors. Time-out has also been shown to reduce problem behaviors of students who observe their classmates in Time-out.

Materials and Preparation Needed: Identified procedures and locations for Time-out (based on the type of Time-out used), parental permission (particularly for seclusion/isolation Time-out procedures)

Prior to Implementation
- Decide if a student may benefit from Time-out based on the **function of the behavior** (access to attention or tangibles).
- Determine **Time-out parameters** - What behaviors constitute a Time-out?
- Identify a Time-out area in the classroom as well as a Time-out area outside of the classroom (for isolation Time-outs)
    - Time-out areas in the classroom should be away from reinforcing activities, yet in an area that allows for supervision.
    - Time-out areas outside of the classroom should be in an area or room that is completely or mostly free from reinforcing stimuli and allows for supervision. Never use the hall for Time-out.
- Determine the **length of Time-out periods** - It is best to begin by using shorter Time-out periods, remembering to be consistent with the length of time each student spends in Time-out. Ideally, periods of *1 to 5 minutes* are appropriate.
- Determine if you want to use **warnings** - If used, warnings should be given only once using a calm tone. Warnings are generally not recommended as they allow students additional opportunities to engage in the inappropriate behavior before receiving a consequence and warnings provide additional attention for inappropriate behaviors.
- Determine if you will use a **contingent release** procedure - Contingent release procedures require a student in Time-out to engage in appropriate Time-out behavior (e.g., 5 seconds of silence while appropriately seated in Time-out) at the end of the Time-out period before being released from Time-out.
- **Teach Time-out procedures** to student (or entire class) by demonstrating appropriate Time-out procedures and behaviors and practice with students (letting them know they are not in trouble during the practice).

Implementation
- Immediately send student to Time-out following occurrence of behavior (or second occurrence, if using a warning)
    - Use a neutral tone of voice and a brief statement: "Because you _____, you must go to Time-out."
    - Escort student to Time-out, if necessary, avoiding interaction with the student (avoid speaking to the student). If a student must physically be placed in Time-out, ensure that the individual placing the student in Time-out is trained in appropriate physical restraint or holding procedures.
- When releasing child from Time-out
    - If using a contingent release procedure, extend the amount of time a student is in Time-out for a brief period until the student displays the appropriate behaviors
    - If not using a contingent release procedure, or if student meets behavioral expectations of the contingent release, release student from Time-out at the end of the pre-determined time period
    - You can also prepare a child for returning to the previous activity by asking the child if he/she is ready to return and engage in (appropriate behavior).
- Instruct student to return to the previous activity and reinforce all appropriate behaviors from the student
- If a child repeatedly leaves the Time-out area repeated returns (where the child is silently guided back to the Time-out area by an adult, can be used. A holding procedure, where the student is held in the Time-out chair/area, may also be used. However, holding requires additional time and individuals and can result in increased aggression and tantrums. Any holding procedure should be conducted only by individuals trained in safe holding procedures.

Forms of Time-Out

Exclusion Time-out in the Classroom
Student is removed from reinforcing activity but not from the room or area of activity

Location: Corner of room or chair in room (near activity area) facing away from activity

Procedure: Student is removed immediately to the Time-out area and is not allowed to view or be involved in any activity during Time-out period

Exclusion Time-out Outside of the Classroom/Isolation/Seclusion
Student is removed from a reinforcing environment to a nonreinforcing environment

Location: An area outside of the classroom such as another classroom or an office (do not use a hallway) that is mostly free of reinforcing stimuli (toys, people, etc.)

Procedure: Student is removed immediately to the Time-out area and is provided with supervision that is nonreinforcing. Isolation requires additional personnel and should be used in accordance with school and district policies

Nonexclusion Time-out
Student is removed from reinforcing activity but not from the room and is allowed to observe activity

Types of Nonexclusion Time-out
1. *Contingent Observation*: Student sits on perimeter of activity and observes appropriate behavior of peers (that is reinforced by teacher) for Time-out period. Ideal for periods such as recess and structured academic activities.
2. *Removal of Stimulus Conditions*: Student is separated from reinforcing stimuli (such as toys and play or activity materials) for a certain period of time. Access to removed stimuli is contingent upon display of appropriate behavior by the student.
3. *Ignoring*: Attention is withheld, without removing student from situation, until appropriate behavior is displayed. Ignoring can be difficult to use in a classroom setting, but can be highly effective. It is important to <u>immediately reinforce appropriate behavior</u> when ignoring inappropriate behavior. It is also important to remember that when ignoring behavior, it will likely get worse (extinction burst) before a student will engage in appropriate behavior. If behavior escalates, continue to ignore unless the behavior becomes dangerous or highly disruptive.

Time-out from a Favorite Toy
(younger students)
Reinforcing stimulus is removed

Location: In Classroom

Procedure: Student brings their favorite object (like a stuffed animal) to school and is told that the toy is there to sit on the student's desk and watch the student work and follow the rules. When the student misbehaves, the animal/object is moved to the teacher's desk or other area away from the student and is turned to face away from the student. The object is returned to the student's desk once the student engages in appropriate behavior.

Critical Components

◊ Time-out should not be used with students who use behavior to avoid or escape situations, tasks, or activities.

◊ Set specific rules and criteria for Time-out and ensure consistent implementation of Time-out across students and situations. Avoid making decisions based on emotions (e.g., frustration level).

◊ Time-out periods should be brief (up to 5 minutes) and may include contingent release to ensure appropriate behavior before a student leaves Time-out.

◊ Avoid using timers - timers take away your control of the length of time a student spends in Time-out. Use a watch or clock to keep an eye on the time and don't specify the amount of time to the student.

◊ Use brief statements regarding why a student is being sent to Time-out only when necessary. If a student begins to argue, tell the student that he or she can come to you to discuss the issue at a later time and send student to Time-out.

Function and Time-out

Function of Behavior	Preferred Method
Access to Tangible Reinforcement	Contingent Observation
Access to Adult Attention	Ignoring Contingent Observation
Access to Adult or Peer Attention	Exclusion
Escape Attention or Task/Activity	Avoid Time-out and implement other behavior plan

References
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Turner, H. S. & Watson, T. S. (1999). Consultant's guide for the use of time-out in the preschool and elementary classroom. *Psychology in the Schools*, *36*, 135-148.
Wright, J. (n.d.). Time out from reinforcement. Retrieved October 17, 2012, from http://www.interventioncentral.org/behavioral-interventions/challenging-students/time-out-reinforcement