



The Safe and Caring Schools (SACS) Initiative was launched by the former Minister of Education in 1996. In 1999, the mission of the SACS Initiative was incorporated into the *School Act*:

27(7) A board shall ensure that each student enrolled in a school operated by the board is provided with a safe and caring environment that fosters and maintains respectful and responsible behaviours.

There are many ways to promote safe and caring schools and encourage responsible and respectful behaviours in students. All behavioural interventions assume a regard for the well-being and dignity of students and staff. The use of timeout procedures is well documented in the professional literature and, when implemented correctly, has proven to be an effective method of reducing a wide variety of disruptive behaviours in children.

Timeout may not be effective for all children. Each child is unique and may require alternative strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviours. The use of timeout requires well-defined procedures, routines and interventions to prevent and modify problem behaviour before timeout is ever considered.

Timeout lies within a continuum of behavioural interventions and exclusion and seclusion timeout should only be used when less restrictive interventions have not been successful. The exception to this would be when a student presents with acting out behaviours that school personnel did not anticipate and the safety of staff and students is in jeopardy. Subsequent to this single, unpredictable incident, a behaviour plan must be developed.

- Educators, parents and other members of the school communities should work together to promote positive behaviour, teach and reinforce appropriate social skills and encourage the development of respect and responsibility in students.
- Early intervention is the first strategy to be used to prevent acting-out behaviour and promote academic and behavioural student success (see Appendices A and B).

If timeout is used, strategies must be systematically planned, delivered, supervised and evaluated to determine their effectiveness with individual students.

- Parental permission *must* be obtained in order to utilize seclusion timeout as a strategy in the behaviour management of their children. The *School Act* prescribes how schools must involve and communicate with parents in suspension and expulsion processes. Parents may not support the use of timeout. If that is the case, they must be involved in determining alternative strategies for dealing with inappropriate behaviours of their children.
- Administration *must* play a leadership role in the development, implementation and monitoring of the timeout procedures and processes. Administration must also provide opportunities for regular consultation and feedback with students, parents and staff about school behaviour requirements and expectations and timeout.

TIMEOUT DEFINITIONS

1. **Contingent Observation or Non-exclusion Timeout** — The student is removed from the reinforcing activity, but is still allowed to observe the activity. For example, a grade 4 student continues to disrupt the class by poking a neighbour and talking during a class project, despite attempts from the teacher to encourage the student to stop and focus on the task at hand. The teacher directs the student to a timeout area in the classroom where the student is able to listen to the discussion, but not allowed to participate for a period of time.
2. **Exclusion Timeout** — The student is excluded from the reinforcing activity and is not allowed to participate or observe the activity. For example, the student continues to talk while in contingent observation timeout. The student yells, throws a pencil and disrupts the class activity. The teacher asks the student to leave the timeout area and go to another supervised area until the student demonstrates appropriate behaviour and is ready to return to class.
3. **Seclusion Timeout** — The student is removed from the reinforcing activity area, placed in a separate room and is supervised during the entire seclusion timeout. For example, the student grabs a pair of scissors off the teacher's desk and runs around the room and then out of the class. The student threatens other students and is in danger of hurting self and/or others. The student is moved to a timeout room that is safe, where he or she is constantly supervised.
4. **Suspension and Expulsion** — These interventions are recognized as forms of timeout. School authorities are advised to abide by section 19 and 19.1 of the *School Act* when considering suspension or expulsion procedures.

EFFECTIVE TIMEOUT STRATEGIES

The effective use of timeout is contingent upon a number of factors. The strategies listed below are designed to provide guidance to schools and school communities as they refine, develop and implement timeout procedures.

- When implementing timeout consider the following questions:
 - Does the student understand the reason for the timeout?
 - Does the student have an opportunity to stop the misbehaviour and demonstrate appropriate behaviour?
 - Does the student have an opportunity to demonstrate responsibility for his or her own behaviour and have opportunities to practice self-control?
 - Does the student understand what the expectations are for a successful return to classroom activities?
 - Is the length of time in timeout reasonable and appropriate for the student's age and/or ability?
 - Is the timeout space reasonable, safe and respectful of the needs of all students?
 - Is data routinely collected and reviewed to evaluate the effectiveness of timeout?



- There must be a documented attempt to establish the cause of the behaviour leading to timeout. This documentation will also guide future education and behaviour programming decisions. Through the analysis of documentation and data collected, more effective prevention programs may be established.
- Research indicates that the degree of timeout effectiveness is tied to an understanding of why the student is misbehaving. A functional behaviour and/or communicative assessment should be conducted for students who display chronic, inappropriate behaviours. This may include, but are not limited to, an assessment of:
 - the student’s ability, areas of strengths and needs
 - the situation(s) that occur prior to the student’s behaviour
 - the frequency, intensity, duration and intent of the behaviour
 - previous attempts to deal with the behaviour and the result of those attempts
 - the environmental factors that may be contributing to the behaviour.
- The classroom environment must provide a nurturing, safe, and caring environment where the student benefits from a wide variety of positive reinforcements and instructional strategies.
 - Clear, concise expectations for behaviour, including pre-correction, must be communicated to the student, in a manner the student is best able to understand, prior to the use of timeout.
 - Positive reinforcement for appropriate behaviour, as well as negative consequences for inappropriate behaviour, must be stated clearly and in a manner appropriate for the student’s age and/or ability.
 - There must be a clear distinction between the amount of positive reinforcement the student receives when engaged in appropriate behaviours and when involved in a timeout from the activity.
 - Positive behaviour strategies may include, but are not limited to, praise and encouragement, positive behaviour contracts, positive phone calls and notes home. The praise and encouragement provided should be delivered frequently and provide the student with clear descriptions of expected behaviours. Strategies to deal with misbehaviour may include, but are not limited to, ignoring minor misbehaviour, redirecting students to another task, loss of privileges and timeout.
- If timeout is to be at all effective, the student must perceive the environment he or she is removed from as being considerably more reinforcing than the timeout environment.
- Timeout procedures for specific behaviours *must* be included as part of the student’s behaviour plan and clearly stated and communicated to the student, parent(s), staff and the administration. *A review of timeout procedures by a district specialist is strongly advised.*
 - The behaviours that result in timeout *must* be stated prior to the use of timeout. Staff should be able to identify the specific behaviour that has resulted in the timeout and the reinforcing situations that are allowing the student’s inappropriate behaviour to continue.

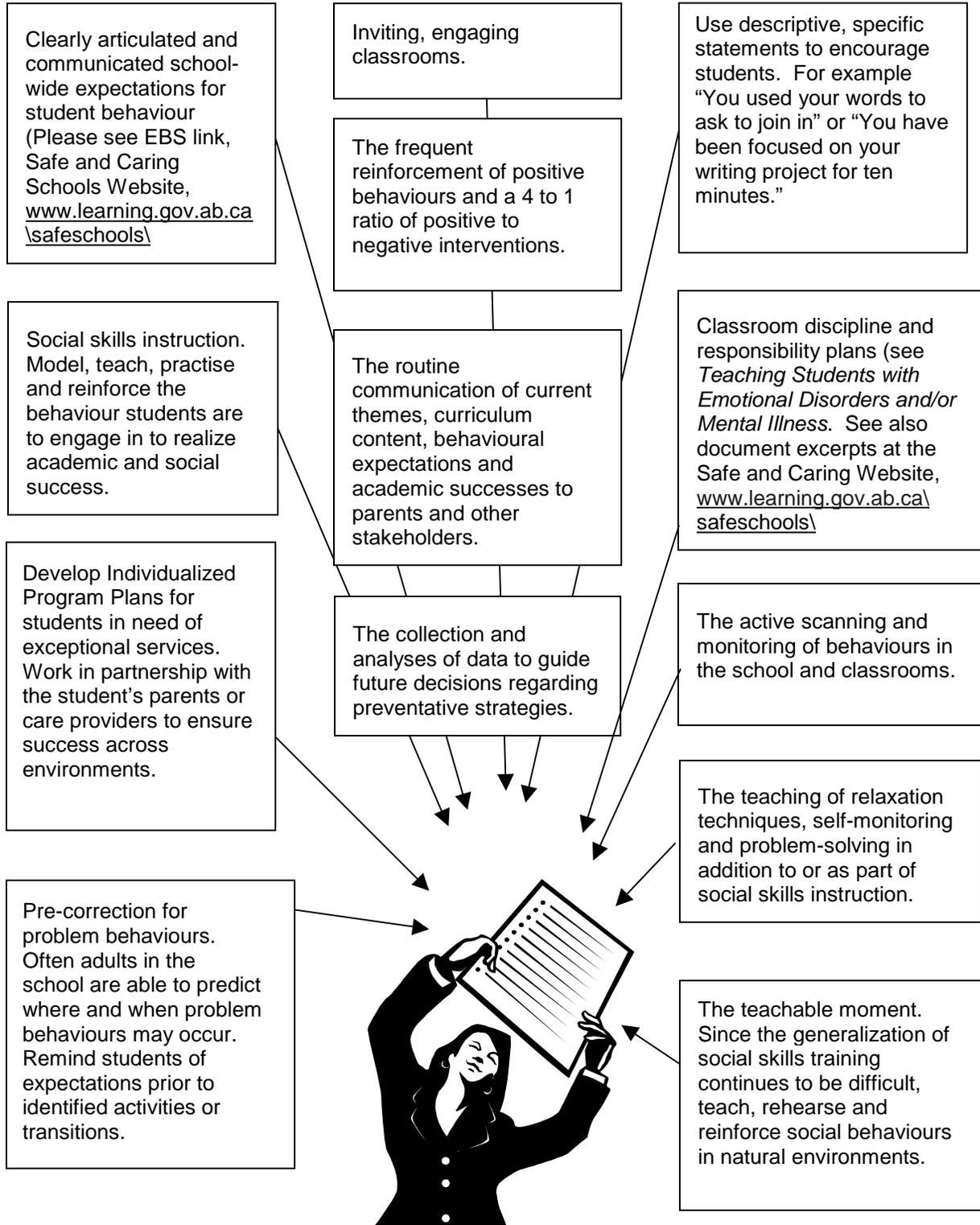


- Should a student present with behaviours that compromise the safety of others, and the student has never presented such behaviours before, the use of timeout, for safety reasons, may occur regardless of the contents of the IPP. This incident must be documented and reported to the parents. Revisions to the IPP are advised immediately after the incident.
- Milder forms of timeout *must* be tried prior to resorting to the use of seclusion timeout. Documentation that milder forms of timeout have not been effective with a student should be provided before using seclusion timeout.
- If exclusion and/or seclusion timeout is to be utilized as a strategy in the behavioural interventions continuum, the specific behaviour(s) resulting in timeout *must* be clearly communicated to the student, parent(s) and the administration prior to the use of exclusion and/or seclusion timeout. The plan should be documented on the student's Individualized Program Plan (IPP) and should include specific strategies to deal with the disruptive behaviour(s).
- When using seclusion timeout the following procedures should be utilized:
 - The use of seclusion timeout should be documented in the student's behaviour plan and/or on the student's IPP and signed by the student's parent and IPP team that includes the student, parent(s), teacher(s), administration and other appropriate personnel.
 - Administration *must* be informed of the student's need for seclusion timeout and involved in providing support and assistance, if necessary.
 - A staff member who is familiar with the student's behaviour plan must continuously supervise the student.
 - The staff member should document, in a central log available to all members of the team, the student's name, the behaviour resulting in seclusion timeout, the time of day that the student entered timeout, the time the student was released from timeout, the total time in timeout and the student's behaviour in timeout.
 - The effectiveness of the use of seclusion timeout should be evaluated on an ongoing basis.
- Timeout rooms *must* provide for the safety and security of the student and be shown to be effective in the reduction of dangerous behaviours and the promotion of appropriate behaviour. For example, timeout rooms must:
 - not be locked *from either the outside or inside*
 - meet Fire Marshal standards
 - be supervised at all times
 - not contain items or fixtures that may be harmful to students
 - be well ventilated
 - allow students to exit should there be an emergency (see Fire Marshal standards)
 - provide the means where adults can visually monitor the student at all times.



APPENDIX A

EARLY INTERVENTIONS THAT HELP TO PREVENT PROBLEM BEHAVIOURS



APPENDIX A

STEPS TO TAKE SHOULD ACTING-OUT BEHAVIOUR OCCUR

Provide individual students in need of additional support with private corrective feedback.

Provide support. At low levels of acting-out behaviour, a supportive stance may serve to prevent any further escalation of behaviour.

Refer students presenting with ongoing, severe acting-out behaviours for interagency assessment and intervention services.

Redirect the student.

Use planned ignoring and monitor its effects on behaviour change.

Establish monitoring and reinforcement systems for students in need of individualized services and supports.

Use proximity control to deliver private cues and shape student behaviour.

Impose established classroom and, if need be, school-wide consequences.



Develop and employ a specific contract for behaviour change with the student and his or her parents and include this in the student's IPP.

Collect and analyze data to guide future decisions.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Akande, A. (1997). "Treating anger: the misunderstood emotion in children." *Early Child Development and Care* 132(May): 75–91.
- Alberta Education (1986). *Behaviour disorders in schools: a practical guide to identification, assessment and correction*. Edmonton, AB: Alberta Education.
- Alberta Learning (2000). *Teaching students with emotional disorders and/or mental illness*. Edmonton, AB: Alberta Learning.
- Bacon, E.H. (1990). "Using negative consequences effectively." *Academic Therapy* 25(5): 606–607.
- Baine, D. (1996). *Guide to assessment and instruction: moderate and severe disabilities*. Edmonton, AB: University of Alberta Department of Educational Psychology.
- Betz, C. (1994). "Beyond time-out: tips from a teacher." *Young Children* 49(3): 10–14.
- Broussard, C. & Northup, J. (1997). "The use of functional analysis to develop peer interventions for disruptive classroom behavior." *School Psychology Quarterly* 12(1): 65–76.
- Buffin, L. (1996). "Hard joys: managing behavior with a creative mind and a playful spirit." *Child Care Information Exchange* 111(Sept/Oct): 58–60.
- Burton, M. & Parks, S. (1998). *Intensive time out program evaluation*. Moncton, NB.
- Clarke, J. I. (1999). *Time-in: when time-out doesn't work*. Seattle, WA: Parenting Press, Inc.
- Clark, L. (1985). *SOS! Help for parents*. (videocassette (VHS) and guide). Bowling Green, KY: Parents Press.
- Claycomb, P. (1994). "Bear hugs for time out: positive activities that promote reflection during time out." *Bear Hugs Series*, Eerett, WA: Warren Publishing House.
- Corwin, D.G. (1996) *The time-out prescription: a parent's guide to positive and long discipline*. Chicago, IL: Contemporary Books.
- Costenbader, V. & Reading-Brown, M. (1995). "Isolation timeout used with students with emotional disturbance." *Exceptional Children* 61(4): 353–63.

- Cuenin, L.H. & Harris, K.R. (1986). "Planning, implementing, and evaluating timeout interventions with exceptional students." *Teaching Exceptional Children* 18(4): 272–276.
- Drege, P. & Beare, P. L. (1991). "The effect of a token reinforcement system with a time-out backup consequence on the classroom behavior of E/BD (emotional/behavioral disordered) students." *BC Journal of Special Education* 15(1): 39–46.
- Duffy, R. (1996). "Time out: how it is abused – what it could/should look like." *Child Care Information Exchange* 111(Sept/Oct): 61–62.
- Erford, B. T. (1999). "A modified time-out procedure for children with noncompliant or defiant behaviors." *Professional School Counseling* 2(3): 205–210.
- Gast, D.L. & Nelson, C.M. (1977). "Legal and ethical considerations for the use of timeout in special education settings." *The Journal of Special Education* 11(4): 457–466.
- Guenther, L. A. (1997). *Application of time out as a means of behavior management for school-aged children and youth*. Master's Research Paper, University of Wisconsin, La Crosse.
- Harris, K.R. (1985). "Definitional, parametric, and procedural considerations in timeout interventions and research." *Exceptional Children* 51(4): 279–288.
- Hill, B.A. (1997). *Time-out for children*. Garden City, NY: Aery Publishing Group.
- James, F.R. (1994). "Aversive interventions for combating school violence: profiles and implications for teachers and directors of special education." *Preventing School Failure* 38 (Summer): 32–36.
- Johns, B. H. et al (1996). "Best practices for managing adolescents with emotional/behavioral disorders within the school environment." *Emotional/behavioral disorders*. Reston, VA: The Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders.
- Lang, L. (1997). "Too much timeout." *Teacher Magazine* 8 (May/June): 6–7.
- Lang, L. (1997). "Often effective, timeout target in abuse cases." *Education Week* 16(19): 1.
- Lohrmann-O'Rourke, S. & Zirkel, P.A. (1998). "The case law on aversive interventions for students with disabilities." *Exceptional Children* 65(1): 101–123.

- Marsh, M. (1996). "Norman and the bunny: a story." *Child Care Information Exchange* 111(Sept/Oct): 56–57.
- Miller, K. (1996). "Developmental issues that affect behavior." *Child Care Information Exchange* 111(Sept/Oct): 49–55.
- Nelsen, J. (1999). *Positive time out: and 50 other ways to avoid power struggles in the home and the classroom*. Rocklin, CA: Prima Publishing.
- Norton, G.R. et al. (1983). "Acceptability of time out from reinforcement procedures for disruptive child behavior: a further analysis". *Child & Family Behavior Therapy* 5(2): Winnipeg, MB: Department of Psychology, University of Winnipeg.
- Olmi, D. J. et. al. (1997). "Time-in/time-out as a response to noncompliance and inappropriate behavior with children with developmental disabilities: two case studies." *Psychology in the Schools* 34(January): 31–39.
- Parker, M., Kallusky, J. & Hellison, D. (1999). "High impact, low risk: ten strategies to teach responsibility." *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance* 70(2): 26–8.
- Poling, A. & Ryan, C. (1977). "Use of brief timeout to control physical assaults: a case study." *Mental Retardation Bulletin* 5(3): 136–142.
- Reitman, D. & Drabman, R.S. (1999). "Multifaceted uses of a simple timeout record in the treatment of a noncompliant 8-year-old boy." *Education and Treatment of Children* 22(2): 136–145.
- Rortedt, A. K. & Miltenberger, R. G. (1994). "Analysis of a high-probability instructional sequence and time-out in the treatment of child noncompliance." *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis* 27(2): 327–330.
- Rutherford, R. B. & Mathur, S. (1994). "Severe behavior disorders of children and youth-symposium. *Education and Treatment of Children* 17(August): 213–384.
- Schmid, R. E. (1998). "Three steps to self-discipline." *Teaching Exceptional Children* 30(4): 36–39.
- Shrier, M.D. & Allen, K. D. (1996). "The time-out grid: a guide to effective discipline." *School Psychology Quarterly* 11(1): 67–75.
- Smith, D. D. & Riera, D. P. (1995). "Discipline in special education and general education settings." *Focus on Exceptional Children* 27(January): 1–14.

- Smith, M. (1997). *Behavioral intervention program*. Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the Council for Exceptional Children (75th, Salt Lake City, UT, April 9 – 13, 1997) Georgia, USA.
- Stage, S. A. (1997). "A preliminary investigation of the relationship between in-school suspension and the disruptive classroom behavior of students with behavioral disorders." *Behavioral Disorders* 23(1): 57–76.
- Snyder, J. (1990). *How to use "time-out" and other positive alternatives to threats and punishment* (sound cassette). Skokie, IL: Parents Resource Network.
- Stephens, K. (1996). "Responding professionally and compassionately to challenging behavior." *Child Care Information Exchange* 111(Sept/Oct): 44–48.
- Taylor, J. & Miller, M. (1997). "When timeout works some of the time: the importance of treatment integrity and functional assessment." *School Psychology Quarterly* 12(1): 4–22.
- Tingstrom, D.H. (1990). "Acceptability of Timeout: the Influence of problem behavior severity, interventionist, and reported effectiveness." *Journal of School Psychology* 28: 165–169.
- 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(2): 135–148.
- Twyman, J. S., Johnson, H. & Buie, J. D. (1994). "The use of a warning procedure to signal a more intrusive timeout contingency." *Behavioral Disorders* 19(August): 243–53.
- Yell, M. L. (1994). "Timeout and students with behavior disorders: a legal analysis." *Education and Treatment of Children* 17(3): 293–301.
- "When children are difficult" symposium(1996). *Child Care Information Exchange* 111 (Sept/Oct): 43–50+.
- Whitham, C. (1994). "Time-out: A discipline technique that works when used correctly." *PTA Today* (January/February): 14–16.
- Wood, F. H. & Lakin, K. C. editors (1978). *Punishment and aversive stimulation in special education: Legal theoretical and practical issues in their use with emotionally disturbed children and youth*. Minneapolis, MN: Department of Psychoeducational Studies, University of Minnesota.