Teaching Children Not to Hit

The most important factor in teaching a young child not to hit is to make sure he doesn’t see hitting at home, or is not hit himself. If you are trying time-out, you are certainly on the right track.

A young child who hits should be immediately removed from the situation where the hitting occurred. If he is in a playground, pick him up and go home. If he is inside the home, he should go to the room where he sleeps, which represents a safe place for him.

As you remove him and put him in another place, such as his room, tell him that he needs time by himself to calm down. Don’t tell him anything else – he won’t be able to pay attention when he is upset. If he won’t stay in his room, it is important to walk him calmly back to his room.

Your child needs to understand that he is experiencing the consequences of his actions. Then, after he has time to compose himself, when he is calmer, you can talk more about your family’s (or the school’s) ‘no hitting’ rule.

Positive results will not happen overnight, but this method can be very effective if you are consistent.