

## CORPORAL PUNISHMENT ATTITUDES AND PRACTICES: WHAT IS THE RULE OF THUMB?

**Learning Objectives**

- Recognize risk factors for corporal punishment
- Describe alternatives to corporal punishment
- Promote safe discipline practices





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## Speakers

<p><u>CHAMP Faculty</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ann Botash, MD</li> <li>▪ Linda Cahill, MD</li> <li>▪ Lori Legano, MD</li> <li>▪ Ann Lenane, MD</li> <li>▪ Jamie Hoffman-Rosenfeld, MD</li> <li>▪ Alicia Pekarsky, MD</li> </ul>	<p><u>Medical Students</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Meghan Jacobs (2015)</li> <li>▪ Zev Minkoff (2015)</li> </ul>
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## Adrian Peterson Background and the Public Response

Nathan Zev Minkoff  
Meghan Jacobs  
SUNY Upstate Medical University

<http://www.nydailynews.com/sports/football/yankings-ib-adrian-peterson-accused-child-abuse-article-1.1937998>



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### Background and Timeline of Legal Action

- Born 1985 in Palestine, Texas. Son of star college athletes. Raised Southern Baptist.
- He was regularly beaten with objects such as belts and tree branches by family members. His mother is quoted, "When you whip those you love, it's not about abuse, it's about love."
- Has 6 children, one of whom died in 2013 due to injuries sustained during an alleged assault by the boyfriend of the child's mother. Peterson had learned about his son only a few weeks prior to his death and had never met him.

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### Background and Legal Action

- Sept. 12: Peterson indicted; told by team he would not play next game.
- Sept. 15: Told he could play following week.
- Sept. 16: Vikings lose first sponsor.
- Sept. 17: Team reverses course, hold him out of games until court case resolved.
- Oct. 8: first trial date set.

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### Media Coverage of Corporal Punishment

CRITICISM	SUPPORT
<p>NY Times Blog: "What we know now is that violence is the worst way to teach your children how to behave. Violence is just an outlet for anger. When used on children, it does great harm.... And we need to make violent discipline unacceptable."</p> <p>Spanking Isn't Culture. It's a Cycle of Abuse. By Thomas Meyers</p>	<p>ESPN: NBA Hall of Fame player and commentator Charles Barkley who grew up in Alabama said: "I'm from the South. Whipping is ... we do that all the time.... Every black parent in the South is gonna be in jail under those circumstances. I think we have to be careful letting people dictate how they treat their children."</p> <p>Charles Barkley Defends Adrian Peterson, Says 'Every Black Parent in The South' Hits Their Kids. The Huffington Post. By Cavan Sieczkowski</p>

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## Definition of Corporal Punishment

Use of physical force with the intent to cause physical pain but not physical injury, for the purpose of correction or control of the child's behavior.

Murray Straus, 2000

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### Definition:

Methods of inflicting CP -

- open hand on buttocks
- open hand on hand, face, leg
- hitting with implement
- enforced standing, starvation, cold bathing, etc.



AAP Practicing Safety Toolkit: Toddler Bundle, May 30, 2009

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## What does the law say?

Ann Lenane, MD  
Medical Director, REACH Program



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### Corporal Punishment: National Overview

- Allowed in the home in every state
- Allowed in public schools in 19 states
- Allowed in private schools (may require consent) in 48 states
- Allowed in day care in 14 states
- Allowed in alternate care settings in 10 states

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### States in Red Allow Corporal Punishment in Public Schools

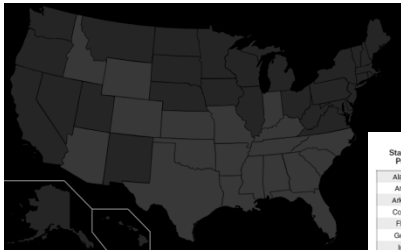


Figure 1.  
States That Allow Corporal Punishment in Schools

Alabama	Louisiana
Arizona	Mississippi
Arkansas	Missouri
Colorado	North Carolina
Florida	Oklahoma
Georgia	South Carolina
Idaho	Tennessee
Indiana	Texas
Kansas	Wyoming
Kentucky	

Source: Center for Effective Discipline, 2010.

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### New York State

- Allowed in the home but may be considered neglect/abuse or assault if "excessive"
- Prohibited in day care
- Prohibited in alternate care
- Prohibited in public schools
- Allowed in private schools (may need consent)




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**Texas**

- Allowed in the home but may be considered abuse or assault if "physical injury results in substantial harm"
- Prohibited in day care
- Prohibited in alternate care
- Allowed in public schools\*
- Allowed in private schools



\*Parents can sign a form to exempt their child. It must be re-signed every year.

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**The Culture of Hitting**

Jamie Hoffman-Rosenfeld, MD  
Medical Director, Queen's Child Advocacy Center




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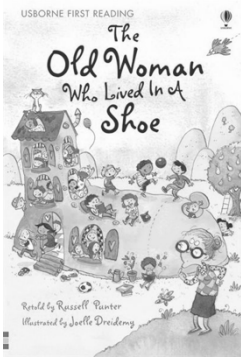
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There was an old woman who lived in a shoe.  
She had so many children, she didn't know what to do;  
She gave them some broth without any bread;  
Then whipped them all soundly and put them to bed.

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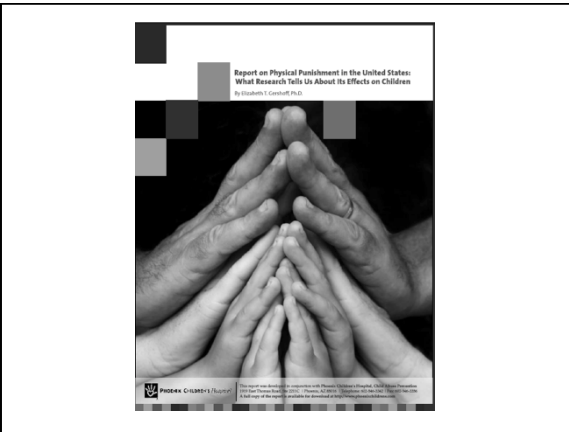
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**When is physical punishment most likely to be used by parents?**

- Strong belief in effectiveness
- Physically punished as a child
- A cultural background **perceived** to approve of physical punishment
- Socially disadvantaged
- Experiencing stress
- Report being frustrated or aggravated with their children on a regular basis
- Under 30 years of age
- The child is a preschooler (2-5 years old)
- The child's misbehavior involves hurting someone else or putting self in danger

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**Cultural Perspective**

- Cultures differ in endorsement of CP.
- When parents perceive that their culture accepts or approves of physical punishment, they are more likely to reject the idea that it is harmful or undesirable.
- Within every group there are thresholds of acceptable levels of physical punishment.
- Within every group there are people who accept or reject CP and people who exceed the threshold within that culture.

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### Cultural/Racial Differences Regarding the Effect of Physical Punishment

- Studies vary; some show differences in behavioral outcomes based on race while others don't. Some have opposite conclusions.
- This suggests there are other factors beyond race or ethnicity which modulate the effects of physical punishment on children's behavior (e.g. religion, regional differences, etc.)

Jennifer E. Lansford, The Special Problem of Cultural Differences in Effects of Corporal Punishment, 73 *Law and Contemporary Problems* 89-106 (Spring 2010). Available at: <http://scholarship.law.duke.edu/lcp/vol73/iss2/5>

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### Religious Affiliation as a Source of Differences in CP Beliefs

In a study of 132 mothers and fathers of 3-year-old children:

- Conservative Protestants reported using corporal punishment more than parents of other religious groups.
- No religious differences were found in parents' reported use of 8 other disciplinary techniques.
- Conservative Protestants' belief in the instrumental benefits of corporal punishment was associated with their frequency of corporal punishment use.
- More than parents of other religious affiliations, Conservative Protestants intended to use corporal punishment for children's moral, social, prudential, and escalated misbehaviors and expected it to prevent future transgressions.
- The conclusion of the article: Religious affiliation, particularly a Conservative Protestant one, appears to have a strong and consistent effect on child rearing.

Gershoff ET, Miller PC, Holden GW. Parenting influences from the pulpit: Religious affiliation as a determinant of parental corporal punishment. *Journal of Family Psychology* 08/1999; 13(3): 307-320.

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#### William Mitchell Law Review

Volume 40 | Issue 3

Article 3

2014

#### From Sticks to Flowers: Guidelines for Child Protection Professionals Working with Parents Using Scripture to Justify Corporal Punishment

Victor I. Vieth

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A. *The Influence of Christianity on Corporal Punishment Practices*

The Christian culture dominant in the United States has played a significant role in corporal punishment in American homes and schools. Throughout our history, courts have cited the Bible as legal justification for the physical punishment of children. In the State of New York, an appellate court concluded corporal punishment is a "recognition of the admonitions to parents contained in the Book of Proverbs of the Holy Bible which have been paraphrased, 'Spare the rod and spoil the child.'"<sup>26</sup> The Rhode Island Supreme Court has referenced the "spare the rod" Proverb in its rulings,<sup>27</sup> and the State of Ohio likewise credits King Solomon's Proverbs with granting parents the right to hit children as a means of punishment.<sup>28</sup> In addition to court decisions, "substantial research has documented associations between religious affiliation and the endorsement and use of physical discipline of children."<sup>29</sup>

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**Presbyterian Church Passes Resolution Against Spanking**

Religion Today

#PCUSA #children

The 220th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) narrowly passed a resolution Thursday against using corporal punishment on children, the Christian Post reports. The resolution, which passed 334 to 306 with nine voters abstaining, also states that the PCUSA will now encourage "all states to enact licensing laws prohibiting corporal punishment in schools and day and residential childcare facilities." Many Christians believe corporal punishment is a biblical practice - Proverbs 13:24 says, "Whoever spares the rod hates their children, but the one who loves their children is careful to discipline them" - while others believe children can be effectively disciplined in a non-physical way, and the resolution was controversial among General Assembly members. "Most people know the difference between discipline and abuse," the Rev. James Emig of the Denver Presbytery said. "I would like us to trust parents that most of them can responsibly [use] corporal punishment." Commissioner Susan Maara of the New Hope Presbytery argued, "If we can't stand against hitting and abusing children, what can we stand for? Let us love and not hit them."

MORE BLOG

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**The Bible**

- Over 66 books, several thousand pages, written over 15 centuries
- Written at a time when severe physical punishment was practiced
- Most explicit passages refer to punishment of adults
- However...



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With respect to the corporal punishment of children, the verses cited by conservative Protestants primarily consist of the following Proverbs:

- “Those who spare the rod hate their children, but those who love them are diligent to discipline them.”<sup>50</sup>
- “Folly is bound up in the heart of a boy, but the rod of discipline drives it far away.”<sup>51</sup>
- “Do not withhold discipline from your children; if you beat them with a rod, they will not die. If you beat them with the rod, you will save their lives from Sheol [the grave or premature death].”<sup>52</sup>
- “The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a mother is disgraced by a neglected child.”<sup>53</sup>

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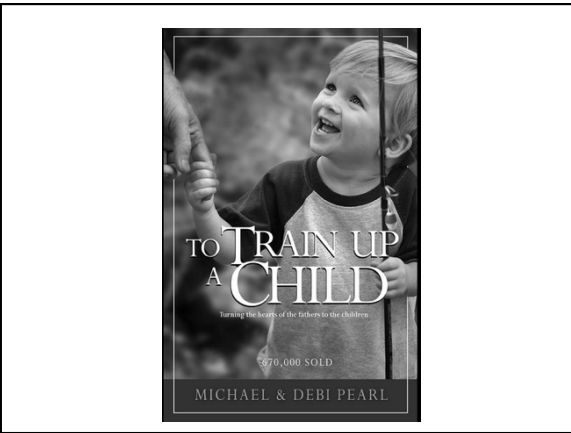
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**Counter Arguments**

- The rod can be interpreted in other ways.
- Does the parent subscribe to biblical passages that pertain to adult corporal punishment? (Blows that wound cleanse away evil; beatings make clean the innermost parts. Proverbs 20:30)
- In their belief system, is corporal punishment required or simply authorized?
- What did you learn about God by physical discipline; what will your child learn?

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**There is a growing consensus in the international community that physical punishment violates human rights laws.**

- In 2006, the Committee on the Rights of the Child issued a General Comment, the strongest type of statement it can make, in which it stated explicitly that physical punishment is a form of "legalized violence against children" that is prohibited by Article 19 of the CRC and thus should be eliminated through "legislative, administrative, social and educational measures."
- 24 countries have banned the use of corporal punishment in all settings.

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**Corporal punishment of children; from common to deviant parental behavior i Sweden**

Annapolis  
April 6, 2014

*Staffan Janson*  
Professor, Paediatrician  
Karlstad and Örebro Universities



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**Important Swedish lawmaking to prevent corporal punishment**

- **1858** prohibited to beat grown up servants
- **1920** prohibited to beat all servants, children included
- **1928** corporal punishment of pupils prohibited in higher education
- **1957** corporal punishment legally equalised to cruelty
- **1958** corporal punishment prohibited in all schools
- **1966** corporal punishment abolished as a method of upbringing of children in the Swedish Parental Act
- **1979** Corporal punishment of children prohibited by the Swedish Parental Act
- **1982** Corporal punishment of children incorporated under public prosecution
- **1990** Sweden ratifies the UNCRC.

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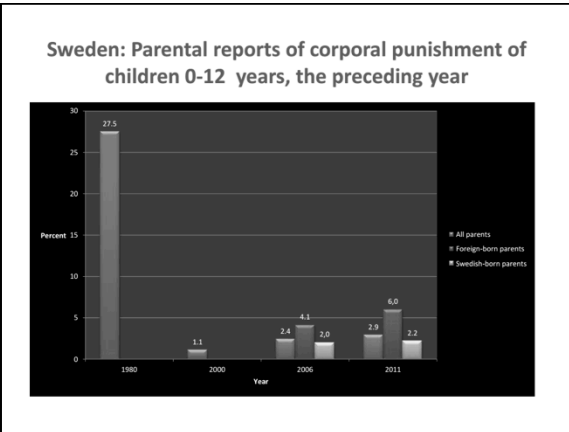
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#### burning down the woodshed

Posted on September 27, 2014 by LorraineHulst

[photography by LorraineHulst]

As my partner can attest to, one of the things that have struck with me from growing up in the Deep South is my reliance on idiomatic Southern expressions. In my area, "tip to the woodshed" was the most commonly used euphemism for corporal punishment, and while the adults who used this term obviously meant it humorously, hearing it made me feel a little sick. "I'm going to take you out back to the woodshed!" connoted smacks, for one, of laziness and beatitude and somewhat love.

And, then, one day, I read this:

"I was spanked as a kid, and I turned out just fine."  
We, we *you didn't*. You think hitting a child is ok.  
I don't even remember where I saw that, but it hit me like a ton of bricks full in the face.  
This is probably the only thing in my life that I changed my mind on so quickly and so utterly and without any more research. It was like a floodlight had flipped on inside of my head, and the sudden bone-deep knowledge wrecked me.  
Spanking is the physical and violent assault of a child.

A modern blogger

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## Effects of Corporal Punishment

Lori Legano, MD  
Bellevue Pediatrics

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## Effects of Corporal Punishment

Systematic review of 88 articles:

- In childhood:
  - Aggression
  - Delinquent and antisocial behavior
  - Poorer quality of the parent-child relationship
- In adulthood:
  - Aggression
  - Antisocial behavior
  - Poorer mental health
  - Abuse of their own child or spouse

Gershoff, 2002

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## Impact on Young Children

- Spanking at age 1 predicts aggressive behavior at age 2 and lower Bayley MDI score at age 3\*
- Low birth weight infants: in girls, harsh discipline at 12 and 36 months associated with an 8 point drop in IQ at 3 years old\*\*

\*Berlin LJ, et al, 2009, \*\*Smith JR, et al, 1997




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## Impact on School Age Children

- 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders: harsh discipline associated with internalizing and externalizing behaviors, but decreased by parental warmth.\*
- Spanking at age 5 years old associated with more externalizing symptoms and lower verbal score at age 9 years old.\*\*

Mckee, et al, 2007\*, Mackenzie MJ, et al, 2013\*\*

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## Impact in Adolescence

Use of harsh physical discipline related to:

- Depressive symptoms
- Externalizing behavior
- Less warm and engaged with their mothers



Bender HL, et al, 2007

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## Effects of Mild Spanking and Corporal Punishment

- Recent meta-analysis: spanking or CP has a small or trivial but statistically significant impact on externalizing and internalizing symptoms and cognitive performance.
  - No benefit was found to spanking and CP.
- (Note: Included spanking and mild forms of CP which did not produce lacerations or broken bones.)

Ferguson CJ, 2013

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## Attitudes and Policies

Linda Cahill, MD  
Butler Child Advocacy Center  
Children's Hospital at Montefiore



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### Research into Parent Attitudes on Corporal Punishment



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### Studies of Straus and Turner

- Corporal punishment is considered normative in our society. (Straus, 1991) Nearly all parents do it.
- "A good hard spanking is sometimes necessary": 84% of national sample. (Straus, 1991)
- Spanking and slapping considered not only acceptable but effective and necessary. (Turner, et al, 1996)
- Parents who do not hit their children are considered poor parents. (Turner, et al, 1996)

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### Socolar and Stein

- Questioned mothers in an inner city clinic and in a private pediatric office (100 each setting).
- 19% believed in hitting children < 1 year old; 74% believed in hitting children < 3 years old.
- High correlation between spanking and negative approach toward discipline raises questions about whether negative consequences of spanking are the result of spanking per se, the negative approach toward the child, or both.

Pediatrics 1995;95:105.

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### Straus and Stewart, 1999

- 991 American parents interviewed (1995)
- Addressed were slaps on the hand or leg, spanking on the buttocks, pinching, shaking, hitting on the buttocks with a belt or paddle, and slapping in the face
- 35% prevalence for infant
- 94% prevalence, ages 3 and 4
- Severity (hitting with belt or paddle) greatest ages 5-12 (28%)
- CONCLUSION: Pervasiveness of CP and the harmful side effects of CP, shown by recent longitudinal research, indicates a need for psychology and sociology textbooks to reverse the current tendency to almost ignore CP and instead treat it as a major aspect of the socialization experience of American children.

Straus, Stewart, 1999

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### Graziano, et al

- 17% never hit their children
- 12% reported that their most severe punishment caused considerable pain
- 5% admitted raising welts and bruises during the most severe punishment
- 86% noted anger, resentment, sadness, hurt feelings in the children

Pediatrics 1996;98:845

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### Runyan, et al

- International study
- 55% of families used physical punishment
- All families used verbal/psychological punishment
- Spanking low in India (15%), high in the Philippines (76%)
- Very harsh discipline such as burning, smothering extremely rare (9%) of children



Pediatrics 2010;126:e701

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**AAP Policies**

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS  
Corporal Punishment in Schools  
Committee on School Health  
*Pediatrics* 2000; 106:2 343.  
Reaffirmed in 2006

American Academy  
of Pediatrics  
DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™



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**What should parents do instead?**

Alicia Pekarsky, MD  
McMahon Ryan Child Advocacy Center



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**Positive Discipline Is**

- Non-violent
- Solution focused
- Respectful
- Based on child development principles



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## The Top 10 Principles of Discipline

- Demonstrate Respect Principle
- Make a Big Deal Principle
- Incompatible Alternative Principle
- Choice Principle
- When/Then Principle
- Connect Before You Correct Principle
- Validation Principle
- Good Head On Your Shoulders Principle
- Belonging and Significance Principle
- Timer Says It's Time Principle



Katharine C. Kersey, 2006

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## Staying Positive While Parenting

<http://champprogram.com/pdf/Staying-Positive-While-Parenting-pamphlet.pdf>

**Staying Positive While Parenting Tips**

**If you have a flare of anger, give yourself a 30-second break to calm down.**

- As long as your child is safe, look away.
- Take a couple of deep breaths and let them out slowly.
- Open your hands wide and shake them.
- Yawn to relax your jaw.

**Try these suggestions to help yourself relax.**

- Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths.
- Sit in a chair and breathe slowly and deeply.
- Repeat silently a saying that brings you comfort.
- Do yoga or stretching exercises.

**If you feel overwhelmed, give both of you a 15-minute break. Place your baby in the crib, walk out of room, then:**

- Eat a healthy snack.
- Do a relaxing or stress-releasing activity.
- Do an aerobic exercise like dancing or running in place.
- Lie down with a cool cloth on your forehead.
- Take a shower.

**Don't try to parent alone. Get support.**

- Talk to a friend or family member.
- If you can't calm your anger, ask someone to take care of your child so you can get away for 15 minutes.

Ann Botash, 2010

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## "No Hitting Zone"

- Campaign created by Lolita McDavid, MD, and Lauren McAliley, CNP, of the Child Advocacy and Protection Center at Rainbow Babies
- Posters and brochures for parents/caregivers
- Educational sessions for hospital staff
- Goals
  - Reduction in frequency of abusive discipline
  - Enhancement of staff comfort, competence and accountability re: intervening in instances of abusive discipline
- Has been effective there and other hospitals

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What to teach?

**Time Out?**




*Yelling?*

Spanking?

Reasoning?

Grounding?

*Removal of privileges?*



AAP Practicing Safety Toolkit: Toddler Bundle, May 30 2009

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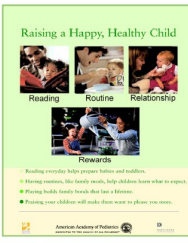
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Effective Discipline Tools

Raising a Happy, Healthy Child



AAP Practicing Safety Toolkit: Toddler Bundle, May 30, 2009

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PLAYING IS HOW TODDLERS LEARN



**Patient Educational Materials**

- Playing is How Toddlers Learn brochure
- Teaching Good Behavior: Tips on How to Discipline brochure
- Temper Tantrum brochure



AAP Practicing Safety Toolkit: Toddler Bundle, May 30, 2009

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**Peaceful Parents Achievement Award**

Congratulations for raising your children without the use of corporal punishment! You are a caregiver who believes in discipline of children. You want your children to grow up to be caring, responsible and self-disciplined adults. You believe that the best way to do that is to think of discipline as teaching. You teach your children what you expect of them. You give them reasons for your guidance. When your children make mistakes, you try to use reason, explanations, and consequences that are appropriate to their misbehaviors and to their age and development. You try to be a model of responsibility and non-violence. Like all parents, you sometimes make mistakes but hitting your children for misbehavior is not one of them!

**I am a peaceful parent:**

Father's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Or Person Raising Child (foster parent, grandparent, other) \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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**Summary and Public Advocacy Talking Points**

Ann S. Botash, MD  
McMahon Ryan Child Advocacy Center




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 **Back to Today's Objectives**

- What are the risk factors for corporal punishment?
- What are the alternatives to corporal punishment?
- How do we promote these safe discipline practices?

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### Risk Factors

- Parenting beliefs and practices
- Parents have a cultural background **perceived** to approve of physical punishment
- Parental age and socio-economic factors
- Experiencing stress
- Child risk factors (toddler/preschooler; dangerous behavior)

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The science of punishment:

**Drug trial criteria:**

- Phase I: is it **safe**?
- Phase II: is it **effective**?
- Phase III: is it **more effective** than the readily available alternatives?



AAP Practicing Safety Toolkit: Toddler Bundle, May 30, 2009

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The science of punishment:

**Conclusion:**

Corporal punishment of children, used appropriately, can be **effective** in the short term, but **can be dangerous**, and is **no more effective** than safer techniques.



AAP Practicing Safety Toolkit: Toddler Bundle, May 30, 2009

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### Alternatives to Corporal Punishment

- Non-violent
- Solution focused
- Respectful
- Based on child development principles




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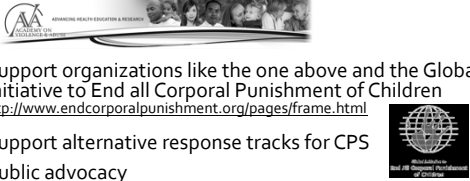
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### How do we promote safe discipline practices?

- Anticipatory guidance at well child visits
- Modeling practices in the office setting
- Become "trauma informed"  
[http://www.avahealth.org/videos/public\\_videos.html](http://www.avahealth.org/videos/public_videos.html)
- Support organizations like the one above and the Global Initiative to End all Corporal Punishment of Children  
<http://www.endcorporalpunishment.org/pages/frame.html>
- Support alternative response tracks for CPS
- Public advocacy




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### Media Advocacy

**New York Times Editorial**  
The Opinion Pages | Op-Ed Contributor  
Punishment or Child Abuse?  
By MICHAEL ERIC DYSON SEPT. 17, 2014



**NPR article**  
Is Corporal Punishment Abuse? Why That's A Loaded Question  
by Gene Demby September 19, 2014 10:03 AM ET

**npr**  
a-decision-about-your-children-that's-also-about-your-parents

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## Media Advocacy

Dr. Bob Sege  
Is Spanking Your Child Ever Okay?  
September 17, 2014  
RadioMD



<http://radiomd.com/show/healthy-children/item/23214-disciplining-your-child-is-spanking-ever-ok>

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## Talking Points

- Surveys show that many American parents do spank their children.
- No states currently have laws forbidding this, and spanking alone is not generally considered a form of child abuse. However, child abuse does occur when children are injured or made to fear for their lives or well-being.
- There are regional differences concerning whether it is legally permissible for adult caregiver to hit the child with an object.
- Corporal punishment violates children's human rights according to at least seven human rights treaties.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that parents not spank their children.

Adapted from an email from Robert Sege, MD, Helfer Society Listserv

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## Talking Points

- Corporal punishment is a risk factor for escalation to physical abuse.
- Spanking is ineffective --- children who are hit are in fact less likely to learn the lessons parents are trying teach.
- There are more effective alternatives that allow parents to teach their children right from wrong without hitting them.



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## Talking Points

- Spanking is linked to negative cognitive and behavioral outcomes.
- Physical punishment has the potential to break down the trust between parent and child that is so important for normal child development.
- Power-assertive and punitive discipline by either mother or father is associated with bullying perpetration by their children.
- Exposure to domestic violence as well as caregivers' psychological aggression (e.g., insults, yelling) and physical violence toward children are risk factors for children's mental health problems, physical injuries, and even death.



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## Talking Points

Pediatricians are trained to help parents teach their children right from wrong by using effective discipline. They are also trained to recognize injuries caused by child abuse and how to work with parents and the state agencies to help protect children from harm.

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## Thank You!



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