WHAT CAN WE DO TO HELP CHILDREN BEHAVE?

ALTERNATIVES TO CORPORAL PUNISHMENT
Goals of Effective Discipline

- Children will become able to determine right from wrong without being told
- Children will more likely want to do what’s right even when no one is watching
- Children who do wrong will be more likely to:
  - Acknowledge the wrong-doing
  - Apologize
  - Make up for the wrong doing if possible
  - Learn from the wrong-doing—not do it again
- Healthier family functioning
- Children become responsible adults
Let’s Talk About Discipline: Starting Points for Discussion

- Discipline should be something to which parents give thought & about which parents make plans, not something that just happens.

- No single approach works all the time with children of all ages and in all situations.

- There has been some helpful research in recent years.
Children Are Not Property With Whom We Can Do As We Wish

Children are our responsibility. We must provide:

- Sense of Caring
- Sense of Security
- Nutrition
- Shelter
- Clothing
- Health Care
- Education

Parents have a duty to provide effective discipline in order to keep children safe and to raise them to become adults who fulfill their potential --- potential to do well and do good and become responsible members of adult society.
Parents have the right to determine how best to discipline their children. However, that right is not without limits. The following are unacceptable.

- Punishment that is excessive and results in or puts child at foreseeable risk of injury (whether intended or accidental outcome).
  - No punishment should leave permanent marks on the body or even temporarily impair function.
- Intentional behavior that is foreseeably psychologically destructive—significant potential to interfere with a child’s self concept and social competence.
There Are Some Critical Distinctions To Be Made!

- There is a difference between **discipline** and **punishment**

- There is a difference between a child who behaves out of **fear** of his parent and one who behaves out of **respect**.
## What’s the Difference?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Punishment</th>
<th>Discipline</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Imposed consequences for failure to behave in accordance with rules, values or expectations.</td>
<td>An attempt to teach children to be responsible for their own behavior and to want to do the right thing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Add a negative consequence</td>
<td>Praise and sometimes other rewards for good behavior</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Spanking</td>
<td>Discussion of rules and values and of consequences for failing to adhere to them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Extra chores</td>
<td>Appropriate punishment can be a part of the discipline process but it is not at all the same thing. Its not enough by itself.</td>
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<td>- Monetary fine</td>
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<td>- Early bed time</td>
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<td>Remove something positive</td>
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<td>- Confiscate cell phone</td>
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<td>- Grounding (can’t attend party, go to mall, hang out)</td>
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<td>- Lose TV/computer time</td>
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**Punishment is an event. Discipline is a process**
# What’s the Difference?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A Child Who Behaves out of Fear</th>
<th>A Child Who Behaves out of Respect</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Becomes Resentful</td>
<td>Is motivated to do well and be good and to earn parent’s respect</td>
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<tr>
<td>Becomes evasive &amp; may be more likely to lie to get out of trouble</td>
<td>Will be more likely to admit mistakes, apologize (mean it) and make amends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May take pride in breaking rules and getting away with things</td>
<td>Is more likely to internalize rules and values and act in accordance with them rather than having to have them imposed by other people</td>
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<tr>
<td>May want to strike back</td>
<td>Wants to maintain a relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May actually strike back</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wants to avoid parents</td>
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</table>
Our Own Stories: How I Was Disciplined As A Child

Everyone has his or her own stories to tell and our stories are important—they are part of who we are, decisions we make and actions we take.

How does the way your parents disciplined you influence the way you discipline your children?

What else influences your decisions about how to discipline your children?
Effective Discipline Requires a **LOT** on the Part of Parents

- True partnership
  - shared goals and beliefs
  - thoughtful discussions
- **Consistency**
- Time, attention and emotional energy
- Ability to control angry feelings
- Access to a variety of discipline strategies to suit different situations and changes in the child’s development.
Corporal Punishment

The use of physical force with the intention of causing a child to experience pain but not injury, for the purposes of correction or control of the child’s behavior

Simons & Wurtele, 2010, Child Abuse & Neglect
## Another Critical Distinction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPANKING</th>
<th>BEATING</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hitting with an open hand on the seat of the pants without leaving permanent marks.</td>
<td>Hitting with a fist, a belt, a cord, a switch, a spoon, a brush or other object; hitting with an open hand any place other than seat of the pants; spanking that leaves permanent marks. . .</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
What Do People Think About the Use of Corporal Punishment?

What are some arguments that support the use of corporal punishment?

What are some arguments against the use of corporal punishment?
What Some People Say. . . .

“Well, my parents spanked me and I turned out OK”

“It’s what we’ve always done.”

“The Bible tells us it’s our duty.”

“I got spanked for stealing a candy bar from the store and I NEVER forgot that spanking and never stole another thing so it clearly works.”

How would I know my parents really loved me if they didn’t spank me once in a while?

Parents who don’t spank have spoiled children
Religious Perspectives Regarding Use of Corporal Punishment

- The stance of any given religious body may change over time.
- The formal stance of the religion often changes ahead of the beliefs and actions of the members of the religion.

Do you believe you are familiar with the formal recommendations of your religion regarding the use of corporal punishment?
Fundamentalist Christian: Spare the Rod, Spoil the Child

Proverbs 23:13, 14
Withhold not correction from the child; for if thou beat him with the rod, he will not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul.

Proverbs 13:24
Whoever spares the rod hates their children, but the one who loves their children is careful to discipline them.

Proverbs 22:15
Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline drives it far from him.

Proverbs 29:15
The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother
"...be it resolved that the United Methodist Church encourages its members to adopt discipline methods that do not include corporal punishment of their children. And be it further resolved that the United Methodist Church encourages congregations to offer opportunities for dialogue and education on effective discipline of children."

2004 General Conference Resolution passed by a vote of 892 to 7.
The nation's largest Presbyterian denomination says it's wrong to spank children.

Delegates to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) narrowly passed a resolution calling for "an end to the practice of corporal punishment in homes, schools and child care facilities."

Fifty-one percent of the church leaders meeting in Pittsburgh voted for the measure, while 47 percent opposed it.

Several speakers argued that it improperly intruded on parental prerogatives. But a woman supporting the measure cited Jesus' love for children and said, "Let's love them, not hit them."

July 2012  WMTW.com
Jewish Perspective

- The two most relevant statements of advice in the Jewish tradition are likely: 1) King Solomon’s reminder to: “Educate your child according to whom he is” (Proverbs 22:6); and 2) the Talmudic statement to “have your left hand push away and your right hand bring closer”

- Clearly, every situation must be approached with love, as the Talmud implies. It is only the proverbial left hand, the weaker hand for the majority, that can discipline children, and it must be guided by the dominant right, loving hand.

- King Solomon states that “Whoever spares the rod hates his son but if you love him, you will chasten him at an early age” (Proverbs 13:24). While this would seem to allow hitting one’s child in extreme situations, Jewish law takes very clear stands against the physical and emotional abuse of children, and thus hitting one’s children (beyond constraining them if they are acting wildly) stands outside normative Jewish practice.

jewishvaluesonline.org
Muslim

**Hadith - Dawud, Narrated As-Saburah** “the prophet said: Order your children to pray at the age of seven. And beat them [lightly] if they do not do so by the age of ten.”

- It should be borne in mind at all times that beating is the final resort.
- The first and foremost rule to remember is NEVER to punish a child in the state of anger or emotion. In this state, the intellect becomes clouded and proper reasoning is impossible.
- As a last resort, if the child is to be beaten, never strike the face, head or any other sensitive part of the body. Never inflict wounds, wheals or bruises to any part of the body. This is forbidden in Islam.

  *haram.worldpress.com*

  *Disciplining of Children: An Islamic Perspective*
Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormons)

- Joseph F. Smith, the church’s tenth president, advised parents to “use no lash and no violence” with their children.
- Gordon Hinckley, the fifteenth president, said, “I have never accepted the principle of ‘spare the rod and spoil the child . . . .’ Children don’t need beating. They need love and encouragement.”
- The church’s magazine *Ensign* publishes articles calling corporal punishment ineffective and promoting other methods of discipline.

*Rita Swan*

*childrenshealthcare.org*
Amish child-rearing literature abounds with references to obedience because it’s a core value of their faith. In Amish eyes, disobedience is a sin, a signpost on the road to eternal damnation. (Obedience to parents is a path to obedience to God).

...when children are about two years old, their wills need to be broken. If it's not done at that stage, they will likely become disobedient, rebellious adults (Amish parent).

...when children learn to fold their hands at prayer time, they are old enough to be reprimanded with light spanks when disobedient (Amish parent).

Parents are quick to say, however, that spanking and other forms of physical discipline should never be done in anger or frustration. The child should understand the reason for discipline so that punishment ends on a happy note....

Donald P. Kraybill “The Patient and Disciplined Faith of the Amish”
Jehovah’s Witnesses

- Proverbs 8:33 says, “Listen to discipline” not, ‘Feel discipline.”
- Deuteronomy 11:19 recommends preventive discipline, taking advantage of casual moments to instill moral values in our children.
- The Hebrew word used for "rod" is the same word used for a shepherd's staff. This context indicates the rod of authority and suggests loving guidance, not harsh brutality. A shepherd doesn't use his staff to beat his sheep, he uses it to direct and lead the sheep.
- Proverbs 29:15 says that “the rod and reproof are what give wisdom.” (Balance is important/spanking rare)
- **Discipline is not an emotional outlet for parents. It is supposed to be a method of instruction.**

Online summary of Sept 1992 edition of “AWAKE”
Health Care Providers Thoughts on Spanking: American Academy of Pediatrics

Despite its common acceptance, and even advocacy for its use, spanking is a less effective strategy than time-out or removal of privileges for reducing undesired behavior in children. Although spanking may immediately reduce or stop an undesired behavior, its effectiveness decreases with subsequent use. The only way to maintain the initial effect of spanking is to systematically increase the intensity with which it is delivered, which can quickly escalate into abuse. Thus, at best, spanking is only effective when used in selective infrequent situations.

Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child & Family Health, Pediatrics, April 1998
Health Care Providers Thoughts on Spanking: National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners

As advocates for children, NAPNAP:

- Advocates for child-rearing practices that develop caring, responsible, and self-disciplined adults.
- Supports research to further explore effective parental discipline techniques that produce positive child outcomes.
- Opposes the use of corporal punishment in the home, schools and all institutions where children are cared for or educated.
- Opposes without exception, the use of objects such as belts, cords, switches, and paddles to inflict pain and punishment on children.
- Opposes, without exception, discipline involving the use of soaps, Tabasco, pepper or other caustic substances to “wash a child’s mouth.”

NAPNAP Position Statement on Corporal Punishment PS 2011 (select points)
Health Care Providers Thoughts on Spanking: American Psychoanalytic Association

The American Psychoanalytic Association condemns the use of physical punishment (corporal punishment) in the discipline of children and recommends alternative methods which enhance children's capacities to develop healthy emotional lives, tolerate frustration, regulate tensions, and behave in socially acceptable ways.
United Nations (Unicef) Convention on the Rights of the Child

**Article 19**
States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.

- What does this mean?
- Is spanking “violence?”
- Is spanking “abuse?”
- Does failure to set & enforce limits or rules constitute neglect?
Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children

- Launched in April 2001, the **Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children** aims to speed the end of corporal punishment of children across the world.
- Endorsed by UNICEF, UNESCO and dozens and dozens of international dignitaries, religionists and charitable organizations.
- **Statement of the then UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mrs Mary Robinson, on the occasion of the launch of the "Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children"**
  - "I am particularly sensitive to the protection of the human rights of children, and the issue of corporal punishment is one of great importance to child rights."
States With Full Abolition of All Forms of Corporal Punishment of Children

In the following 32 states, children are protected by law from all corporal punishment (most recent first):

What Does Research Suggest?

Meta analysis of 88 studies covering 62 years of data: Corporal punishment leads to more immediate compliant behavior in children, but is also associated with physical abuse and (to a lesser extent) with aggression, mental health issues, likelihood to abuse own child. Does not result in internalization of moral values and lasting change in behavior.

Elizabeth Gerschoff, Psychological Bulletin, 2002 (APA)
Smacking (Spanking) Not So Harmful According to New Zealand Study

2006 New Zealand Press Association

- Smacking children does not necessarily make them more likely to become aggressive and antisocial, new local research shows.
- Research by the Dunedin multidisciplinary health and development study shows children who are smacked lightly with an open hand on the bottom, hand or leg do much the same in later life as those who are not smacked, The New Zealand Herald reported today.
- The study has followed 1000 children born in Dunedin in 1972-73. Later this year the findings, based on interviews when the subjects were 32-year-olds, will be published.
- The project appeared to be the world's first long-term study to separate people who had merely been smacked with an open hand, lead author of the physical punishment part of the Dunedin study psychologist Jane Millichamp said.
- "Study members in the 'smacking only' category of punishment appeared to be particularly high-functioning and achieving members of society," she said.
- In terms of aggression, substance abuse, adult convictions and school achievement, this group had "similar or even slightly better outcomes" than those who were not smacked.
Physical Punishment and Mental Disorders  

Afifi, Pediatrics, July 2012

Harsh physical punishment in the absence of child maltreatment is associated with mood disorders, anxiety disorders, substance abuse/dependence and personality disorders in a general population sample

- $N = 34,653$ (age 20 or older)
- Harsh punishment: (pushed, grabbed, shoved, slapped or hit --sometimes, fairly often or very often)
- Study excluded those reporting severe physical, emotional, sexual abuse and neglect and exposure to intimate partner violence

Association with delinquency, aggression, substance use/abuse, personality disorders, mood disorders

- Mania, hypomania, major depression, panic disorder, social phobia, PTSD, agoraphobia, paranoid, schizoid, schizotypal, antisocial, histrionic, borderline, obsessive-compulsive, etc.
Common Sense Thinking About Spanking

- A spanking doesn’t teach how to control impulses
- A spanking doesn’t teach values
- A spanking makes a child sad or angry or embarrassed and may make the child want to strike back.
- A spanking is confusing to a child who is told by parents that he shouldn’t hit other people.
- A spanking teaches children that violence is the way to solve problems
- A spanking can get out of control when administered in anger and can cause unintended injury.
- If you are spanking often, it isn’t working.
- A spanking makes a parent look out of control and is disturbing to others who witness it
Rejecting Spanking Isn’t The Same Thing As Permissiveness

- Still must set clear limits/rules
- Still must impose consequences
- Still must be consistent
- Still must teach rules and values to children
- Still need to catch children behaving well and praise them
Alternatives to Spanking

What can we use instead of spanking when punishment is called for as part of the discipline process?
Positive Attention Reinforces Good Behavior & Reduces Bad Behavior

- Children want the attention of their parents---if the only way they can get it is to misbehave, they will misbehave.
- Catch children behaving well and praise them or otherwise reward them.
- Praise them at the time and praise them later.
- “I’m going to read you an extra bedtime story now because I’m so proud of you for sharing your toy with your brother this afternoon.”
Parents As Role Models

- Children learn as much from how we behave as they do from what we tell them.
- Children who see parents lie, cheat, steal, use bad language, hit or threaten to hit people, call people names, whine, make lame excuses, etc. will follow their example.
Use Knowledge of Child Development to **PREVENT** Misbehavior

Infants & Young Children:
- Have a short attention span
- Generally can focus on only one thing at a time and can be easily distracted
- Are impulsive---don’t give thought to potential danger
- Don’t do well when sleepy or hungry
- Need some reminders about rules
- Have trouble applying old rules to new but related situations (“don’t color on the walls” doesn’t get translated into “don’t color on the furniture”)
- Can’t remember complex instructions---instructions that have several steps.
Developmental Accommodations

- Don’t put valuable/dangerous items within eyesight and reach
- Schedule shopping and appointments around nap and meal time
- Bring toys and snacks with you to keep child busy/distracted—one toy won’t be enough because of short attention span---Your attention is as good as a toy.
- Expect a mess when child first learning to feed self—don’t get dressed up before meal, use bibs and mats, clean up spills immediately before they harden and are difficult to remove. Give adequate time for the meal and cleanup.
- Keep instructions simple--one step at a time (not “get ready for bed” but instead, one at a time, “wash your face,” “brush your teeth,” “put on your pajamas,” “get me your bedtime story book.”)
Most useful with infants & toddlers who are too young for reasoning but sometimes works with older children
Works because of short attention span and difficulty focusing on more than one thing at a time
Example: Children arguing in back seat of car. Parent gives them something to do or something to concentrate on ("Bobby, let’s see how many blue cars you can find and Suzy, let’s see how many red cars you can find by the time we get to the store.” OR “Let’s take turns naming animals we saw at the zoo.”

- Parent may choose to ignore the negative behavior (arguing) or to comment on it briefly, saying “remember the rule about no arguing” before starting the distraction.
- Don’t forget to praise the children for stopping the arguing and playing together once you get to the store.
Alternatives to Corporal Punishment

TIME OUT

- Works best for children age 3 to 7
- Gives child time to cool down and to think
- Most useful for tantrums, arguing, hitting, throwing or breaking things
- Doesn’t work if used too often, if the time out period is too long, if the time out place is wrong, if the parent gets drawn into discussions with the child during time out
- Rules should be discussed in advance
- Child should be given ONE reminder of rule before time out
- Keep voice calm, tell child she needs time out, guide her to time out location.
- Afterwards praise for sitting quietly, briefly talk about how to behave better next time and give a hug.

(Time out + 1 minute per year of age (3 min for 3 yr old, 6 minutes for 6 yr old) and begins when child sits quietly)
Purpose: to create new habits (taking asthma medicine on time and without complaint) or stop hard-to-break habits (thumb sucking)

Chose behavior you want to stop (or start)

Create chart of calendar child may help decorate and explain how this will work

When child goes a certain period of time (hour--1/2 day--day) without the bad behavior or each time he performs the good behavior, place a checkmark or star or sticker on chart

Decide together how many checks or stickers it takes to get an award & what the award will be (small gifts, food item, later bedtime, extra computer time, family outing, etc.).

Start small---make goals reasonable

Praise when doing well and express hope/encouragement child will succeed next time when not doing well.
Useful for school-age children & and teens. Doesn’t work if children aren’t involved or parents don’t follow through.

Sit down as family & set rules for curfews, chores, fighting, talking back, foul language, homework and phone use for example. There may be rules for parents, too!

Avoid setting up rules for EVERYTHING---get’s burdensome.

Choose consequences for breaking rules—make sure they appropriate.

When rule is broken, always be willing to listen to the child’s reasons if she feels the rule was unfair in a certain case or she feels breaking the rule was beyond her control—sometimes she’ll be right. Most of the time she’ll just be rationalizing and the consequences should be enforced (“I’m glad you told me how you see this but I disagree with you this time and the rule stands”).
Purpose is to teach that unwanted behaviors result in natural or logically related outcomes and that the child will have to live with the consequences of the choices he makes. This doesn’t work if the consequences are acceptable to the child or if the parent “saves” the child from suffering the consequences. This should never be used if the outcomes are dangerous to the child.

- If you don’t put your toy away, it will be taken from you one week the first time, one month the second time and permanently the third time---it will not be replaced.
- If you get to dinner late, you won’t get dinner.
- If you forget about your special project until the night before it is due, you won’t have one to turn in (parent won’t drive to the store and get the supplies and help with the project so it gets done in time.)***
- If caught without a helmet, you don’t bike for 3 weeks.
Alternatives to Corporal Punishment

Behavioral Contracts

To correct major, ongoing problems (always late for school, cheats on diabetic diet and doesn’t check blood sugars—results in hospital visits)

Best for older school-age and adolescent children

Put in writing desired behavior of child, duties of parents, consequences for failing to follow contract, rewards for meeting expectations

Compare to job contract spelling out expectations between boss & worker including consequences for poor performance (losing pay, getting demoted/fired) & rewards for doing well (bonus, promotions)

Discuss what it means to give your word and sign your name

Both parent and child sign contract

ALWAYS enforce the terms: Administer consequences/rewards

Renegotiate contract as circumstances change.
Review: General Approach to Child Discipline

- Set developmentally appropriate rules as a couple (and later, as a family)
- Agree on reasonable/appropriate consequences
- Enforce rules consistently
- Praise and otherwise reward good behavior
- Learn about child development and have realistic expectations of child’s behavior
- Set up environments and keep schedules such that children are less likely to misbehave
- Be knowledgeable of & involved in the child’s daily life
- It takes a village---talk with other parents (will they be home when your child is there, what are their rules, will they enforce your rules and will they inform you of significant behavior violations)
References


References

