

## *What the Experts Say*

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# Spanking

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### **CONCERN**

Spanking is widely used form of punishment in the United States. Parents are most likely to use it during the preschool years<sup>1,2</sup> and generally stop by the time children are 8-10 years of age.<sup>3,4</sup> Parents generally consider spanking to be effective and to be necessary for disciplining their children. However, professionals and legal scholars have debated for years on the benefits and risks of spanking. Earlier research allowed room for this debate; however, more recent research is providing a strong body of evidence that spanking and other forms of corporal punishment are harmful to children in the long-term.

A major argument in support of spanking is that it will result in no discipline. A major argument against spanking is that in more than 80 studies of spanking, the findings indicate that the more corporal punishment a child experiences, the worse the behavior over time. A review of the literature provides a context for understanding how spanking affects children.

### **RESEARCH**

Corporal (physical) punishment is defined as 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.<sup>1</sup> In the United States, all but two states define corporal punishment in their statutes on child abuse.<sup>7</sup> Generally, spanking and slapping that do not result in significant physical injury are considered acceptable corporal punishment while behaviors that cause harm to the child are considered abuse (punching, kicking, burning).

### **Incidence**

Public support for and use of corporal punishment is strong in the United States. More than 90% of Americans report using physical punishment with their children.<sup>8</sup> In one study of spanking, 44% of mothers and 31% of fathers reported they had spanked within the past week.<sup>9</sup> Generally, younger children are spanked more frequently than older children.<sup>10</sup> Most American parents (94%) report spanking their children by the time they are three to 4 years old.<sup>8</sup> On average, parents report spanking toddler-age children three times per week.<sup>11</sup> African American parents and poor parents report spanking children

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the most often.<sup>8</sup> However, while most parents report they use corporal punishment, most parents also view physical punishment and repeated yelling and swearing at children as harmful.<sup>12</sup>

In an international study involving 11 countries, the United States and Canada had the highest approval rating toward the use of corporal punishment with children.<sup>5</sup> Twenty-one countries (Austria, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Norway, Cyprus, Bulgaria, Iceland, Romania, Ukraine, Hungary, Greece, Netherlands, New Zealand, Portugal, and Sweden) have banned parents from using corporal punishment as a means of discipline.<sup>6</sup>

### **Factors Associated with Parents' Use of Corporal Punishment**

Understanding the reasons why parents use physical punishment is necessary to determine effective interventions. Research has identified both preexisting factors and immediate, situational factors that contribute to the use of corporal punishment. Preexisting factors include characteristics of the parent, characteristics of the child, the parent-child relationship, and characteristics of the community. Situational factors are those that occur within the immediate timeframe of the misbehavior.

#### Parenting Characteristics

Factors that increase the likelihood that parents will use physical punishment include their culture, knowledge and attitudes towards spanking, religion, income, and education. Parents who are most likely to spank have:

- Experience with physical punishment as a child<sup>13</sup>
- Lesser knowledge of child development<sup>13</sup>
- Lower socioeconomic level<sup>3</sup>
- Lower level of education<sup>3</sup>
- Greater religiosity<sup>9,3</sup> particularly conservative Protestants<sup>14</sup>
- Positive attitude toward use of physical punishment<sup>15,16</sup>

*Demographic Factors.* Age, race/ethnicity, education, and geographic location influence the use of corporal punishment. Mothers are more likely to use physical punishment than fathers.<sup>10</sup> Mothers who are younger, live in the South, or who are African American are the most likely to spank.<sup>10</sup> Fathers are less likely to spank than mothers across all age groups and Black, single mothers are most likely to spank.<sup>9</sup> At a closer look, Black, single mothers with young children tend to be young, religiously conservative, have more symptoms of depression, and are likely to live in poverty. Single mothers have been described as “understaffed” as they attempt to balance the demands of managing the household, children, and work which may contribute to the use of spanking.<sup>17</sup> Parents' income level only predicts spanking for White unmarried mothers with young children and Black married mothers with older children.<sup>9</sup> In general, older parents, higher levels of education and psychological well-being predict less spanking with the exception of African American mothers, whether they are married or unmarried.

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*Parenting Competence.* More competent parents are less likely to spank.<sup>18</sup> Competent parents are those who are warm, accepting, and sensitive toward children; who use firm, calm control, and nurturing communication; and who understand and respond to children's developmental capabilities. This warm, firm style of parenting fosters children's self-esteem, social skills, independence, and school success. Less competent parents use a harsh, negative, and coercive style of interaction and discipline. This style of parenting has generally been found to be harmful to children. For preschool children, harsh parenting (coercion, lack of a positive tone) has been found to predict behavior problems.<sup>19</sup>

*Perceptions.* Parents who believe their children intentionally misbehave are more likely to spank.<sup>15,16</sup> Parents are more likely to assume children intentionally misbehavior when they are stressed, have low parenting satisfaction, and feel emotionally overwhelmed by the child's negative emotions. When parents blame the child for misbehavior, they tend to use over-reactive discipline. Over-reactive discipline involves excessive negative emotions (e.g. anger, frustration). Over-reactive parents may hold grudges, nag, and getting into long arguments over the child's misbehavior. When mothers are angry with the children's misbehavior, they are more likely to spank.<sup>15</sup> Over-reactive discipline is concerning because it has been linked with an increased risk for child abuse.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, helping parents to develop discipline strategies that are delivered calmly and rationally may help prevent child abuse by preventing an act of discipline from going too far.

Typically, parents have the power and authority in the family. However, in some homes, parents feel overpowered by their children (e.g. the "tyrannical child"). Parents of tyrannical children are more likely to use harsh discipline and abuse their children.<sup>21,22</sup> Research on domestic violence describes this type of dysfunctional parent-child relationship within families. Families have poor communication characterized by accusing, blaming, lecturing, shaming, commanding, and ordering. There is little support and family involvement.<sup>23</sup> Punishment and reward are not given consistently. A cycle occurs where the child believes the parent's request /demand/ limit setting interferes with their activity and counterattacks with aggressive behavior. This forces the parent to relent, giving up their authority and inadvertently reinforcing the child's aggression. Later, tyrannical children are likely to act aggressively toward their parent as a teen-ager. To break this cycle, it is important to help parents set firm limits and enforce them consistently.

### Child Characteristics

Children's gender, age and temperament influence how likely children are to be spanked.<sup>24</sup> Young children are more likely to be spanked than older children and boys are more likely to be spanked than girls.<sup>25,9,3,8</sup> This is important because research strongly suggests that corporal punishment has different effects on children at different ages. For example, corporal punishment on middle school-aged children is more likely to cause aggression than it does when used in elementary or preschool- aged children.<sup>26</sup> The reasons for this age related effect are not clearly understood, but it is thought that this occurs because corporal punishment is not the norm for middle school-age children, causing them to react strongly. Second, middle school-age children who are very

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aggressive may elicit more corporal punishment from frustrated parents than preschool-age children because parents expect less from preschoolers. Third, the aggression may reflect the cumulative effects of corporal punishment over years.

Children who are perceived as difficult (i.e. temperamental, stubborn, and non-compliant) are more likely to be spanked than those who are perceived as competent and of an easier temperament.<sup>27,28</sup> Parents often respond to children's difficult and aggressive behavior with harsh discipline such as shouting, threatening, and spanking. Parents may find it difficult to use non-physical discipline strategies such as reasoning, time out, and natural and logical consequences in the face of a difficult temperament and personality.

### Parent-Child Context

The quality of the parent-child relationship is determined by the amount of warmth, degree of arguing between parent and child, the structure of the family (single-parent, step-parent, blended family), availability of family and friends to provide assistance and support, and the complexity of the home (i.e. number and relationships of children). Mothers and fathers who are warm are less likely to use of harsh discipline.<sup>25,29</sup>

Parental support is a key factor for understanding the impact of spanking. Research suggests that the lack of parental support may have more influence on negative outcomes than the use of physical punishment by itself. Warm and nurturing parenting may protect children from developing problems such as anxiety, helplessness, and depression, even when spanking is used for discipline. However, parental warmth does not protect against externalizing problems when both harsh verbal and physical discipline are used.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, children whose parents are warm and supportive and who also spank often show more psychological distress than children with less nurturing parents who are spanked. This may be because the punishment provided by the warm and supportive parent may be inconsistent and arbitrarily given.<sup>30</sup> It is important for parents to understand that harsh verbal and physical punishment increases children's acting out behaviors, which may in turn increase parents' use of harsh physical punishment.

Children who are physically punished and feel that they are rejected by their parents are more likely to have negative outcomes than children who experience love and acceptance from parents while receiving physical punishment.<sup>31</sup> Children may feel rejected by their parents' coldness, lack of affection, hostility, aggression, indifference, or neglect. Parental acceptance involves the children feeling the opposite – warmth, affection, caring and acceptance. Universally, children's mental health depends on the extent to which they feel they are accepted or rejected by the adults most important to them. Children who experience harsh physical punishment and parental rejection are more likely to develop conduct disorder, anxiety, and helplessness in later years.<sup>28</sup>

Parental support acts as a protective factor only under certain conditions. Mother support helps prevent children's depression, but not aggression, when the father uses physical punishment. In contrast, father support helps prevent child aggression, but not depression, when they mother uses physical punishment.<sup>32</sup> Regardless of how supportive a father is, physical punishment by a mother increases the likelihood the child will have depression.

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### Community Characteristics

The community where a family lives influences parenting in several ways. It helps determine parents' expectations, their concern for child outcomes, and how they respond to children's behavior. When corporal punishment is accepted and expected in their community, parents may feel justified or pressured to use it. In cultures where it is believed that corporal punishment is in the best interest of the child (i.e. will teach them how to behave), it may be used more routinely than emotionally, and may predict fewer negative outcomes.<sup>33</sup> This is one explanation for the findings that spanking in African American families results in less aggression in children than it does in Caucasian or Latino families.

### Situational Factors

Situational factors that occur at the time of the misbehavior influence the use of physical punishment. Factors that have been found to affect the use of physical punishment include the type of misbehavior, how parents interpret the cause of the misbehavior, and parent's emotional state at the time. Parents are more likely to approve of the use of physical punishment for child behaviors such as:

- Self-endangerment such as running into the street<sup>34</sup>
- Aggression<sup>35</sup>
- Violating property rights of others<sup>34</sup>
- Direct challenge of parental authority or disobedience<sup>13</sup>
- Attributing the cause of the misbehavior as intentional<sup>36</sup>

Parents' emotional state before and after the child's misbehavior affects the type of punishment they use and the intensity. A parent's negative mood immediately before the misbehavior and anger following the misbehavior are both likely to trigger the use of physical punishment.<sup>15,35,37,28</sup> Straus found nearly half (44%) of parents indicated that more than half of the times they used physical punishment was a result of losing control of their emotions.<sup>38</sup> This is of particular concern for young children because angry adults may use force out of proportion to the child's misbehavior<sup>39</sup> and risk harming the child. The research on child abuse clearly links anger with the potential for child abuse.

### **Impact of Physical Punishment**

In the debate on whether the benefits of corporal punishment outweigh the risks, some researchers suggest that corporal punishment is both effective and desirable,<sup>40</sup> while others maintain that it is ineffective at best and harmful at worst.<sup>41,26,42,11</sup> Researchers have been studying the impact of corporal punishment for more than 45 years. The research focuses on the impact of corporal punishment on antisocial behavior, mental health, overall development, the parent-child relationship, and child abuse. Overall, there is strong evidence that corporal punishment is a risk factor for negative physical and mental health outcomes. Additionally, less use of physical punishment with toddlers increases the likelihood children will have higher cognitive growth.<sup>11</sup> A growing body of increasingly sophisticated research provides more evidence that corporal punishment increases the likelihood of 11 negative outcomes for children. These are listed below:  
43,44,45,26,46

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- Decreases in
    - internalization of moral values and prosocial behavior
    - quality of relationship between parent and child
    - child mental health
    - adult mental health
  - Increases in
    - child aggression
    - child delinquent and antisocial behavior
    - risk of being a victim of physical violence
    - adult aggression
    - adult criminal and antisocial behavior
    - risk of abusing one's own child or spouse

*Antisocial Behavior.* Corporal punishment tends to increase antisocial behavior (e.g. cheating, lying, bullying, cruelty to others, lack of remorse for misbehavior, breaking things deliberately, disobedience at school, and difficulty getting along with teachers) over the long term across all socioeconomic groups, races, and gender of children.<sup>11</sup> Corporal punishment models aggression and promotes hostile attributions (e.g. thinking “they are out to get me”). Aggression and hostile attributions lead to violent behavior and begins a cycle of negative behaviors between parent and child. The strongest predictor of adolescents’ aggression is the parents’ use of corporal punishment in childhood.<sup>26</sup> This suggests that teaching parents alternative, positive discipline strategies may reduce later aggression and other antisocial behaviors during adolescence.

The effect of physical punishment on aggression may be tempered by the child’s age. Gunnoe and Mariner found that for toddlers and African American children, corporal punishment is associated with less fighting at an older age. They suggest that this may be because younger children and African-American children tend to regard physical punishment as a legitimate parental behavior rather than an aggressive act or an act of rejection.<sup>47</sup>

*Compliance.* Most parents’ primary goal in using corporal punishment is to gain immediate compliance. Research supports the notion that corporal punishment is effective in securing short-term compliance.<sup>48</sup>

*Moral Development.* Although corporal punishment may be effective in gaining short-short-term obedience, it may work against moral development which may be more important to children’s successful socialization in the long-term. Moral development involves the internalization of moral values. Internal moralization involves learning the values and attitudes of society so that eventually socially acceptable behavior is motivated by intrinsic (i.e. internal) factors rather than by external consequences (i.e. punishment or reward).<sup>49</sup> Internal moralization is evident when children are independently compliant in the long-term and across settings, when they show feelings of guilt following a misbehavior, and when they have the tendency to “make it right” upon harming others.<sup>26</sup>

Parenting discipline strategies thought to promote children’s internalization of morals, a component of self-control, include:<sup>50</sup>

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- Limited use of power-assertive discipline: Power-assertive discipline (i.e. corporal punishment) results in the child making external attributions for behavior (behave to avoid punishment rather than because it is the right thing to do).
  - Promotion of choice and autonomy: Corporal punishment has been found to decrease internal moralization and increase reliance on external consequences to guide behavior.<sup>26</sup> Giving children developmentally appropriate choices helps them learn to make good decisions.
  - Providing explanations for desirable behavior: Corporal punishment, while it may stop behavior immediately, does not teach children the reasons for correct behavior and may teach children the desirability of not getting caught.<sup>51</sup> Providing explanations helps children understand the reasons for specific expectations and promotes reasoning skills.

*Behavior Problems.* In considering the longer-term goal of self-control, corporal punishment often has the opposite effect to what parents intend.<sup>52</sup> Recent research indicates that corporal punishment is an ineffective discipline strategy with children of all ages and, in extreme, may be dangerous: produces anger, resentment, and low self-esteem in victims; teaches aggression as a solution to problem; and if children imitate what they see adults doing, repeats cycles of violence.<sup>42,26</sup> Overall, parents who use harsh verbal and physical discipline report higher levels of child behavior problems.<sup>25</sup> When mothers use of harsh physical discipline, their children's are more likely to have internalizing problems (anxiety, depression, helplessness). When mothers use harsh verbal discipline combined with harsh physical discipline, children are more likely to display externalizing behavior problems (acting out, aggression, tantrums).<sup>25</sup> For fathers, harsh verbal discipline is associated with internalizing problems.

*Child Abuse.* Preschool age children are particularly at risk for physical injury during physical punishment because of their immature development and lack of the physical capacity to withstand the force applied. Injury is likely because physical punishment often occurs in emotionally charged circumstances that can lead to the parent's loss of control.<sup>68</sup> Because the definition of corporal punishment includes pain, causing pain can lead to injury. Many forms of child abuse are considered to be acts of discipline carried to extremes.<sup>39</sup> Studies of child abuse indicate that most cases are the result of physical discipline in which parents have lost control or underestimated their strength.<sup>69</sup> From these studies, researchers conclude that acceptance of physical punishment as disciplinary strategy is directly linked to physical child abuse.

In summary, research provides evidence of the following consequences of corporal punishment:

- When parents use corporal punishment to control antisocial behavior, children show more antisocial behavior over time, regardless of race and socioeconomic status, and regardless of whether the mother provides cognitive stimulation and emotional support.<sup>53,54</sup>

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- There is a pattern of physical abuse that generally starts as corporal punishment and escalates into physical maltreatment.<sup>55,56</sup>
  - Adults who experienced corporal punishment as children are more likely to be depressed or violent themselves.<sup>45,44,1</sup>
  - Corporal punishment increases the probability of children assaulting the parent in retaliation, especially as they grow older.<sup>57,58,44</sup>
  - Corporal punishment sends a message to the child that violence is a viable option for solving problems.<sup>53</sup>
  - Corporal punishment is degrading, contributes to feelings of helplessness and humiliation, robs a child of self-worth and self-respect, and can lead to withdrawal or aggression.<sup>59</sup>
  - Corporal punishment erodes trust between a parent and a child and increases the risk of child abuse. As a long-term discipline measure, it does not decrease children's aggressive or delinquent behaviors.<sup>59</sup>
  - Children who get spanked regularly are more likely over time to cheat or lie, be disobedient at school, bully others, and show less remorse for wrongdoing.<sup>53</sup>
  - Physical punishment has been associated with significant increases in aggression in children and adults and to criminal and antisocial behavior.<sup>60,61,62,58</sup>
  - Regardless of family income or family history of psychiatric illness, harsh physical punishment during childhood has been found to increase the likelihood of depression, externalizing behavior, suicidal ideation, alcoholism, child abuse, wife abuse, and problems with autonomy and relationships.<sup>63,26,32,44,30</sup>
  - For young children, physical punishment has been found to contribute to negative behavioral adjustment in children at 36 months and first grade with the effects more pronounced in children with difficult temperaments.<sup>64,65</sup>
  - When mothers display angry and punitive behaviors (physical punishment and/or threatening), children are likely to become angry and non-compliant and distant themselves from their parent.<sup>66, 67</sup>

### **Moderating Factors**

Not all children who experience physical punishment suffer negative consequences. Baumrind, Larzelere, and Cowan argue that correlational data must not be used to make causal inferences regarding the detrimental effects of spanking.<sup>40</sup> These authors suggest that the undesirable child outcomes associated with corporal punishment may be a result of the inept harsh parenting and that mild spanking used as a back-up to other discipline strategies (reasoning, time out) could increase the effectiveness of the alternative strategies in preschoolers with behavior problems; however, spanking by itself cannot promote children's competence, moral character and mental health.



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Research on risk and resiliency suggests that exposure to protective factors may limit the harmful consequences of risk factors on children's functioning.<sup>70</sup> Spanking, a risk factor, varies in frequency and intensity and is delivered in many different contexts that may moderate its impact. Research suggests that parental support may neutralize the effect of physical punishment. The *conditional corporal punishment* view notes that the effects of spanking are not necessarily negative or positive, but may be either depending on other conditions.<sup>71</sup> This view does not advocate spanking, but does argue against a "blanket injunction" against spanking that cannot be supported scientifically using correlational data.<sup>72</sup> It is important to note that research in the past few years is much more rigorous. While families cannot be randomly assigned to a spank or no spank conditions, recent longitudinal studies are prospective – measuring parent and child beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors at multiple points in time, rather than relying on parent and child memory.

Resiliency research identifies factors that can buffer or protect children from multiple risk factors and, therefore, provide targets for parenting education. Education that enhances parents' demonstration of love, acceptance, and responsiveness (i.e. protective factors) and reduces nagging and arguing (risk factors) may limit the negative consequences of physical punishment. A second target for parent education may be to decrease overreactive discipline (risk) by teaching parents to display a calm demeanor when disciplining (i.e. avoid excessive intense, negative emotions, nagging and arguing with children). A third strategy is to teach non-physical discipline strategies such as time out, logical and natural consequences and positive discipline strategies such as distraction, redirection, limit setting, and modeling. Overall, studies indicate that non-physical strategies are as effective as corporal punishment to obtain immediate compliance.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that parents be taught and encouraged to use discipline methods other than spanking for managing their children's undesirable behavior.<sup>73</sup> No corporal punishment does not have to mean no discipline. Many parents lack knowledge of discipline strategies beyond spanking. Parent education can enable parents to make an informed choice about when and how to use spanking.

Parents must be taught about the negative consequences of physical punishment, age appropriate expectations for children, and alternative age appropriate strategies. The role of practitioners is to discourage the use of physical punishment and teach age-appropriate alternatives. Many parents are unaware of alternative strategies to physical punishment or how to prevent the occurrence of misbehavior. Alternatives to physical punishment for preventing and responding to misbehavior include:<sup>67</sup>

- Consistently enforcing firm, age-appropriate, and acceptable limits
- Teaching problem-solving skills such as listening, speaking clearly and giving age appropriate instructions, showing trust, being reliable and predictable, accepting differences, negotiating, and mediating conflicts.
- Reasoning (talking) with children in age-appropriate ways to teach correct behavior and enhance children's language and cognitive ability.

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- Modeling desired characteristics such as patience, kindness, empathy, and cooperation.
  - Providing daily opportunities for children to practice problem solving by brainstorming solutions, discussing the effect of each alternative, choosing the best solution, trying it out, and then evaluating if it worked.
  - Encouraging and praising children using verbal and nonverbal responses (smile or a nod) to motivate children and build children's confidence.
  - Allowing children to participate in setting rules and identifying consequences for breaking them to help them learn to understand the relationship between their actions and consequences and to learn to manage their own behavior.
  - Providing consistency, structure, continuity, and predictability in children's lives.
  - Encouraging children's autonomy (thinking for themselves, monitoring their own behavior, letting their conscience guide them).

### **Strategies for Parents, Schools, and the Community**<sup>74</sup>

A public health approach to effective child discipline has recommended the widespread dissemination of information on positive parenting practices, teaching parenting in school, establishing support groups and phone lines for parents, and changing the law to prohibit physical punishment.<sup>36, 75</sup>

At the community level, recommendations include:

- Provide parents access to information on child development and behavior management through workshops, parenting classes, mentoring, conferences, books, newsletters, brochures, flyers, and bulletin board materials.
- Improve pre-service and in-service programs for teachers, principals, and other school staff that teach techniques for developing children's social-emotional skills and providing positive guidance in the classroom.
- Develop linkages between the school and community through mental health and family counseling programs to support families in stress.
- Develop linkages with community programs serving young children and their families.

To prevent misbehavior, it is recommended parents:

- Child-proof the home to prevent dangerous situations that may result from children's natural curiosity and exploration.
- Provide predictable routines, schedules, and rules and limits to help children manage their own behavior.
- Give advance warning before changing activities.
- Recognize children's positive behaviors ("catch them being good").

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- Model self-control and use of positive strategies such as problem-solving and prosocial skills (sharing, caring, turn-taking, problem-solving, etc).

#### Respond to Misbehavior Using Non-Physical Strategies

- Monitor children closely and, in the event of trouble, use distraction (offering something else to do or refocusing attention to another interesting activity) or redirection (teach a new way to play) early.
- When stopping misbehavior, offer an explanation for stopping the behavior (harm to self, environment, or others), interpret and validate emotions, and teach an acceptable behavior.
- Focus on the actions (what to do and what not to do) and avoid making negative statements about the child to protect a child's self-esteem.
- Use age-appropriate logical and natural consequences to help children understand the consequences of their actions.

### RESOURCES

The American Academy of Pediatrics: <http://www.aap.org/>

Child Welfare Information Gateway: <http://www.childwelfare.gov/index.cfm>

#### Books

Coloroso, B. (1995). *Kids are worth it: Giving your children the gift of inner discipline*. Toronto: Somerville House.

Crary, E. (1993). *Without spanking or spoiling: A practical approach to toddler and preschool guidance*. Seattle: Parenting Press.

Dacey, J.S. & Packer, A.J. (1992). *Nurturing parent: How to raise creative, loving, responsible children*. Toronto: Simon & Schuster.

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Nelson, J., Lott, L., & Glenn, S.G. (1993). *Positive Discipline A to Z: 1001 solutions to everyday parenting problems*. Rocklin, CA: Prima.

#### Videos

Coloroso, B. (1989). *Winning at parenting without beating your kids*. Accompanying booklet. 125 minutes.

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Kidsrights Video. (1990). *Shaking, hitting, spanking: What to do instead*. Accompanying booklet. 30 minutes.

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**Quick Sheet for Teacher Reference**

**Spanking 07-B1  
Parent Messages**

- **Most research suggests use of corporal punishment is a risk factor for negative behavioral, psychological, and cognitive outcomes.**
- **Children who experience love and acceptance from a punishing parent tend to have positive psychological, social and academic outcomes despite the use of corporal punishment.**
- **Encourage disciplinary strategies that promote positive parent-child relationships and keep children's self-esteem and bodies healthy and intact.**

**Parent Skills:**

1. Uses age appropriate, non-physical discipline strategies.
2. Speaks positively about child.
3. Provide children with experiences of love and acceptance.
4. Prevents misbehavior by providing clear limits with consequences, a consistent home environment with routines and schedules, and offering choices.
5. Reminds child of expected behavior.
6. Models self-control using a calm, rational, empathetic approach to solving problems.
7. Decreases use of over-reactive discipline (i.e. highly emotional negative responses, holding a grudge, picking and nagging at child, and arguing).

**Spanking**

Parents,

All children need rules, limits, and consequences for their behavior. Research shows that while spanking may work immediately (i.e. stop the bad behavior), it can lead to later problems. Young children are likely to be hurt during a hard spanking because of their small size. Spanking too hard or too often can harm your relationship. Your child may learn to avoid parents, to think hitting is okay, and to sneak and lie to avoid getting spanked. As teens, spanked children are more likely to develop behavior, criminal, mental health, or even alcohol and drug problems.

There are many ways to discipline that really work. Ask your child's teacher for tips on effective discipline. In all cases, let children know they are loved. Say good things about them, and give lots of attention and hugs. When they misbehave, move them to a quiet area and remind them what to do.

**Palmadas**

Padres,

Todos los niños necesitan reglas, límites y consecuencias por sus comportamientos. Investigaciones muestran que mientras las palmadas pueden trabajar de inmediato (e.j. Parar el mal comportamiento), esto puede conducir a problemas mas tarde. Niños pequeños están predispuestos a ser heridos con palmadas muy fuertes debido a su tamaño pequeño. Dar palmadas muy duro o muy a menudo puede dañar su relación. Su niño puede aprender a evitar a los padres que piensan que pegar esta bien y esconderse o mentir para evitar ser golpeado. Cuando adolescentes, niños que recibieron palmadas están más predispuestos a desarrollar comportamiento criminal, problemas mentales y aun de drogas y alcohol.

Hay muchas vías en las cuales la disciplina realmente trabaja. Pregúntenle a la profesora de su niño por concejos para una disciplina efectiva. En todos los casos, deje a los niños conocer que son amados. Diga cosas buenas acerca de ellos y déles mucha atención y abrazos. Cuando ellos se comporten mal llévenlos a un lugar callado y recuérdendes que es lo que tienen que hacer.