

Physical Punishment is Ineffective and Harmful

Effective discipline does not involve physical punishment of children. Recent studies have shown a direct link between physical punishment and several negative developmental outcomes for children including physical injury, increased aggression, antisocial behavior, difficulty adjusting as an adult and a higher tolerance towards violence. Research has also shown that physical punishment poses a risk to the safety and development of children. It is crucial for parents to gain an awareness of other approaches to discipline because it is all too simple for physical punishment to turn into child abuse and result in severe physical injury, detrimental emotional damage and even death. Each year thousands of children continue to die as a result of physical abuse. Children have a right to be protected from physical abuse, and laws in every state demand severe punishment for those found guilty of physically harming a child.

Most parents do not want to use physical punishment as a form of discipline. A child that lives in an abusive environment is likely to grow up and either be abusive themselves or have severe social, emotional, physical and cognitive delays in development. Parents' disciplinary methods serve as strong models to children that teach them how to deal with life's day-to-day challenges. It is important for parents to model appropriate behavior and to establish expectations as well as limits. Children have a right to live in a safe, secure and nurturing environment, and their dignity must be respected. Parents must consistently use fair and logical consequences whenever children fail to follow rules. They must keep in mind that a child is not a miniature adult, but only a child and that discipline must be age appropriate and fit the child's temperament and maturity.

Adults who recognize they have a problem with physically abusing their children should immediately seek professional help and ensure their children are taken to a safe environment to avoid harming them further.