

Spanking

Why you should try other ways to discipline your child

Were you spanked when you were a child? Many of today's parents would answer, "yes."

Spanking is very common way that parents try to discourage unacceptable behavior. Almost 90 percent of all parents spank their children at one time or another.

In some cultures, spanking is viewed as the best way to punish children. Most parents spank because they think it works.

Why do parents think spanking works?

- Spanking shows you don't approve of whatever it was that the child did.
- Spanking is harsh. You know it gets a child's immediate attention.
- When a child is spanked, the bad behavior usually stops right away.
- Some people believe spanking creates respect for parents.

But spanking does not work as well as many parents believe.

On Back

There are good reasons to try other ways of punishing your children besides spanking.

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You & Your Child



Why you should try other ways to discipline your child

Spanking doesn't work as well as parents think it does

Spanking may stop bad behavior for the moment, but probably not over the long term.

For example, a boy who is spanked for hitting his sister may not hit her again if he knows Mom is watching. But when Mom isn't around to see him, he may hit again.

Spanking teaches the wrong lesson

Spanking teaches that when someone does something you don't like, you hit them. If it's OK for you to hit, it must be okay for your child to hit other people too.

In fact, children who are spanked by their parents are more aggressive to other children.

Spanking doesn't teach the parent the right lesson either

If you think spanking works, spanking and other harsh physical punishment can easily become a habit.

Children sometimes make parents very angry. When hitting becomes a habit, it is easier to lose control and seriously injure your child when you become angry.

Spanking can hurt your relationship with your child

Children don't like being hit. Spanking can color your children's feelings toward you, especially if you spank them frequently.

This is important when children get older and start spending more time away from you – at school and with friends, for example. Then, it will no longer be the fear of getting spanked that will keep them in line. It will be the strength of your relationship.

Spanking is an abuse of power

Most parents wouldn't think of spanking a 16-year-old. It probably wouldn't work, and a teenager might hit back. You probably wouldn't tolerate your neighbor hitting your child either. And if your neighbor hit you, you'd probably call the police.

If it's wrong or inappropriate for other people to spank your child, it is wrong for you to spank or hit your young child, too.

Spanking can make children feel helpless and lower their confidence and self-esteem

When you discipline your child, you want to change a specific undesired behavior. You don't want to make your child feel helpless or that he or she is a "bad" child. You want your child to learn and to feel good about himself or herself.

Spanking alone does not teach a child what he or she should do

Spanking mostly says "NO!" But children also need to hear, "YES." They need to know what they should do, not just what they shouldn't do.

If you don't spank, you still discipline

Spanking is not the only way to discipline your child.

- Try giving your child of 3 to 6 years of age a time-out. A time-out is nothing more than having your child sit in an isolated place with nothing to do for a short period of time – about 2 minutes for 3-year-olds and no more than 5 minutes for older children.
- For older children, try taking away some privileges, such as watching television.

