Corporal punishment (CP) has long been an accepted form of parental disciplinary action, but spanking may quickly become a thing of the past if parents and caregivers kept in mind the results of scientific research. After analyzing four decades worth of research, 106 studies are in agreement that though spanking may temporarily correct behavioural issues, it is not more productive than less violent forms of discipline.

Spanking is a form of corporal punishment intended to modify behavior usually defined as a physically non-injurious hit administered with an open hand to the buttocks. Corporal punishment is the use of physical force with the intention of causing a child to experience pain, but not injury, for the purpose of correction or control of the child's behavior.

- The National Library of Medicine
1. Ideological Beliefs
   **The Saying:** “Spare the Rod and Spoil the Child”
   This saying came from the 17th-century satirical poem “Hudibras” by Samuel Butler.

   **Proponents:** The idea is that children should be physically punished for bad behavior in order to become well-mannered adults.

2. Family Upbringing
   **The Idea:** “I was spanked as a child and I turned out just fine!”
   All children are different, including you and your own child.

3. Societal Norms
   **The Fears:** Peer pressure from family or others, seeming like a “weak” parent.
The line between spanking and child abuse is not always clear.

Legal definitions of corporal punishment in the U.S. vary from state to state with regards to "appropriate," "moderate" and "necessary" force.

Unfortunately, a consensus on where to draw the line on accepted corporal punishment and dangerous physical abuse is absent in the U.S.
WHAT DO PARENTS SAY ABOUT SPANKING?
In a 2013 survey of 2,286 adults:

Is it appropriate for parents to "spank" their children?
- Yes, sometimes: 81%
- Never appropriate: 19%

Were the parents spanked as a child?
- Yes: 86%

What percentage of parents say they have ever spanked their child?
- 1995: 80%
- 2013: 67%

WALKING THE GREY LINE:

PHYSICAL DISCIPLINE vs PHYSICAL ABUSE

"Refers to any system of teaching and care-giving that allows children to become competent and self-controlled through their journey of life."
According to The American Academy of Pediatrics

"Characterized by the infliction of physical injury as a result of punching, beating, kicking, biting, burning, shaking, or otherwise harming a child."
According to the National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information

"You want to be calm, in control, and focused. A parent who embraces corporal punishment is not an angry, insensitive person with a big club and a vicious agenda."
Chip Ingren
Focus on the Family

"There is good evidence individuals who use physical discipline are more likely to actually end up using physical abuse or getting to the point where there's physical abuse."
Tony D’Angelo, M.D., Ph.D. Professor of Psychiatry and
Behavioral Sciences; Tufts University
### Does Corporal Punishment Work?

In 2002, Elizabeth Thompson Gershoff conducted meta-analyses on studies on corporal punishment. The analyses included more than 36,000 individuals and 88 studies.

These are some of the findings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>pro</strong></th>
<th><strong>Con</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short-term positive effects</td>
<td>Short-term negative effects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Immediate compliance with the parent's request</td>
<td>✓ Increased aggressive &amp; delinquent behavior in children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Rarer relationship between parent and children</td>
<td>✓ Worsen health issues in children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Can't find any</td>
<td>✓ Increased physical abuse of children</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<th><strong>pro</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Long-term positive effects</td>
<td>Long-term negative effects</td>
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<tr>
<td>Findings suggested that childhood non-abusive corporal punishment can lead to a higher likelihood of similar behaviors later in life</td>
<td>✓ Adult aggression criminal behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Increased adult mental health problems, such as depression, anxiety, and drug dependency</td>
<td>✓ Increased rate of sexual abuse or child abuse as an adult</td>
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By 2014, 40 NATIONS AROUND THE WORLD HAVE ABOLISHED THE CAREGIVER OR PARENT’S RIGHT TO USE PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT ON CHILDREN.

UNICEF - the Convention on the Rights of the Child / Article 19. CHILDREN HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE PROTECTED FROM BEING HURT AND MISTREATED, PHYSICALLY OR MENTALLY.

...most countries' laws already define what sorts of punishments are considered excessive or abusive...

In terms of discipline, the Convention does not specify what forms of punishment parents should use. However, any form of discipline involving violence is unacceptable.

In the U.S., the spanking of children by a parent or legal guardian is legal in all states. Each state has different laws on permitted CP, but laws typically allow "non-excessive" measures to be taken.

THE U.S. AND CANADA ARE NOT ON THE LIST

Although, Canada has set strict guidelines for CP in the home:

In Canada, corporal punishment is banned for children under the age of 12.

No degrading, inhuman or harmful conduct.
No discipline using objects.
No slaps/blows to the head of any kind.
DOES CORPORAL PUNISHMENT WORK?

PRO CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

- to change negative behavior in a short-term setting
- when coupled with other disciplinary methods (e.g., reasoning and time-out)

ANTI CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

- to resort to physical violence to solve problems
- to focus on feelings of anger and revenge, not on logical ways of solving negative behaviors

Oftentimes when loving parents/guardians explain the reasoning behind spanking, can it can effectively shape children’s behavior.

HOW TO CHANGE UNDESIRABLE BEHAVIOR WITH HEALTHY DISCIPLINARY ACTION

ALTHOUGH 93% OF PARENTS JUSTIFY SPANKING,

85% SAY THAT THEY WOULD RATHER NOT SPANK if they had an alternative in which they believed

SO, HERE ARE SOME ALTERNATIVES YOU CAN BELIEVE IN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time-outs</th>
<th>Removing privileges</th>
<th>Verbal reasoning</th>
<th>Positive reinforcement of good behaviors</th>
<th>Establishing healthy rules and boundaries</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child must understand concept of “waiting”/”quiet” before utilizing time-out as a disciplinary action</td>
<td>Put favorite toys in “time-out”/Utilize “grounding” techniques, -i.e., loss of electronic devices for an evening, loss of social privileges</td>
<td>Stay calm and firm when giving instructions/discipline</td>
<td>Identify positive behavior and reinforce desired behaviors with praise</td>
<td>Provide clear expectations and goals for behavior</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expect the child to stay in the time-out period no more than one minute per year of age</td>
<td>Explain before and after the time out what appropriate behaviors are</td>
<td>Involve child in decision making to help improve moral judgement</td>
<td>Implement “special time” where positive attention from a parent or caregiver is integrated into the child’s daily routine</td>
<td>Make sure the child fully understands what is expected of their behavior, as well as the consequences for breaking rules/limits</td>
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<tr>
<td>Removes all positive parental attention during time-out period</td>
<td>Give the child a choice, e.g., “You may sit on the couch or jump rope in the yard.”</td>
<td>Communication is the base of a healthy parent/child relationship</td>
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Don’t use a BEHAVIORAL BAND-AID

—teach your children responsibility.