

Corporal punishment should be banned essay sample



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A controversial topic has been in the headlines recently; whether corporal punishment should be banned or not. Corporal punishment is a form of physical discipline that inflicts deliberate pain to discipline a child. Doctors have been saying they want a ban on it because of the many long term effects that it can cause. Corporal punishment was popular in the 1950's, with 99% of parents smacking their children. These days, only 69% of families in Australia do.

Smacking children can cause mental health problems for them such as depression and violent behaviour. Children will come to believe that problems can be resolved by hitting other people. Extensive research data supports a direct correlation between corporal punishment during childhood and aggressive behaviour in the teenage and adult years. It is natural that children learn attitudes and behaviours through observation of their parents' actions. Therefore, it is the responsibility of parents to set a good example, and corporal punishment is not the way to do that. If parents physically punish their children when they aren't behaving well, children will believe that it is okay to hurt other people. Punishment distracts the child from learning how to resolve conflict in an effective and humane way. As the educator John Holt wrote, "When we make a child afraid, we stop learning dead in its tracks." They will believe that it solves dilemmas in the appropriate way. But when does it cross the line to child abuse? While abusing a child, you have no control over your emotions and you do severe damage. Corporal punishment must be controlled and no long affecting and severe damage should be done.

There are many more effective ways to discipline children than corporal punishment. For instance, when children say a 'bad word'; try reaching for the dictionary not the wooden spoon. The dictionary triggers interest in learning while the soap triggers anger and fear. Talking calmly and using words instead of actions results in self-awareness and thoughtful decision making. The word 'discipline' comes from the Latin word for 'teaching' or 'learning'. Disciplining is not causing pain to teach a lesson. Positive reinforcement will enhance the child's self-esteem when appropriate standards are met. Rewards and praise is more effective in obtaining long-term behavioural compliance than frightening and shaming punishments. For parents who believe that giving some sort of punishment to their children works to discipline them, corporal punishment is not the only kind. Things like confiscating electronics and toys or cancelling a play-date are much more appropriate punishments that cause no harm to children.

Children are just responding to the neglect of basic needs. In many cases of so called 'bad behaviour', the child is just reacting in the only way they can, given their age and experience, to the disregard of standard requirements. Among these requirements are: proper sleep and nutrition, fresh air, exercise and sufficient freedom. But the greatest need is for their parents' undivided attention. In these busy times, few children receive sufficient time and consideration from their parents, who are often too distracted by their own problems to be patient with their children. It is surely wrong and unfair to punish a child for acting in a natural way to having important needs ignored. For this reason, punishment is not only ineffective in the long run, it also clearly unjust.