

# The clinical assistant professor at the university



The Question of Spanking Spanking a child is a controversial issue.

On one side of the debate are people who believe spanking is a necessary component of parenting. On the contrary are people who think spanking a child is destructive. Somewhere in the middle are people who believe spanking is legitimate only when used correctly.

Part of the reason for the debate is that some parents and experts define spanking differently. To some, spanking means slapping a child on the rear-end, while others believe it is a form of corporal punishment that does not cause injury. By showing how each perspective of spanking supports their claim and defining spanking, one will be able to form an opinion. In order to conclude an argument, it is first necessary to define any vague or ambiguous terms. Spanking is an unclear term in need of explanation. To some spanking means to slap a child on the buttocks, while others believe it is a mild form of corporal punishment which does not cause harm to the child. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) defines spanking as one or two flat-handed swats on a child's wrist or rear end (Rosellini 52).

The New American Webster Handy College Dictionary also agrees with the AAP when defining spanking as to strike with an open hand. Spanking does not infer a sustained whipping from Dad's belt, but a mild form of corporal punishment that does not cause injury. Spanking is alive and well today despite the antispanking prohibition. In a poll sponsored by Working Mother and the Epcot Center at Walt Disney World in Florida, 7, 225 adults and 2, 599 kids were surveyed (Hickey 48).

When asked When should parents spank their children, 51 percent replied When they think its necessary, 30 percent said Only in extreme circumstances, and only ten percent answered Never(Hickey 48). Twelve percent of young adults, ages 18 to 34, which responded to the poll, said spanking should not occur; in comparison with the seven percent of both the 35-49 and 50-64 age groups which responded Never (Hickey 48). The poll asked Which of these is (or was) most often used in your family to control childrens behavior? As the prevalent choice, 37 percent responded Taking away privileges, 23 percent said spanking, 18 percent replied reasoning with the child, four percent said bribes and three percent answered assigning extra work (Hickey 48). A different study headed by Rebecca R. S.

Socular, a clinical assistant professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, took a poll of 204 New York, NY mothers (Jet 15). The poll asked if a child less than one year old should be spanked. As a result, 81 percent of the mothers disagreed with spanking a child less than a year of age, and 19 percent believe a child under a year of age should be spanked (Jet 16). Then when asked if a child of 1-3 years old should be spanked, 26 percent disagreed with spanking at that age and an astounding 74 percent agreed with spanking a child of this age(Jet 16). When asked about the harshness of the spanking, 92 percent said they do not leave visible marks of damage while only eight percent say they do leave a mark upon the child (Jet 16). The results of both polls show consistent finding with the research of sociologist Richard J.

Gelles, PhD, and director of the Family Violence Research Program at the University of Rhode Island. He Believes Hitting children is so taken for  
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granted in our society that almost all parents view spanking as an inevitable part of raising children (Working Mother 48). He believes this ideology will remain apart of our culture because it is infused within each of us since birth (Working Mother 48). The American Academy of Pediatrics determined in a 1996 conference on corporal punishment that spanking could prove useful if used as reinforcement of other disciplines (Rosellini 52). S.

Kenneth Schonberg, a pediatrics professor who co-chaired the AAP conference said There's no evidence that a child who is spanked moderately is going to grow up to be a criminal or antisocial or violent (Rosellini 52). Spanking continues to be a prevalent form of child rearing