

Dear Parents,

Did you know that –



- Spanking **shrinks brains.**

Harvard Medical School found that kids who are spanked just once a month had **14-19% smaller brains in the decision-making area.**¹ These were children who remembered being spanked at least 12 times a year and once with a belt, paddle or brush, but were not injured or spanked in anger.

- 1,574 studies found that **spanking is harmful.**

- Even ‘everyday spanking’ is **consistently associated with:**

- **More** aggression
- **More** negative relationships with parents
- **Lower** cognitive ability
- **Substance** abuse
- **More** fighting
- **Weaker** moral values
- **Delinquent** behavior
- **More** mental health problems
- **Lower** self-esteem
- **More** antisocial behavior
- **Lower** self-control²

- Spanking **lowers IQ.**

The University of New Hampshire found that American children who are spanked at ages 2-4 have **5 less IQ points** than non-spanked children, even years later. Children spanked at ages 5-9 have **2.8 less IQ points.**³

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- **Does this mean that everyone who was spanked as a child has problems?** No, it means that spanking doesn’t help children learn what we want them to learn. Every time we spank a child, we raise the risk that the child will develop problems.
- **Why is this so?** Spanking focuses on the behavior and misses the underlying need. It might stop a child from doing something in the moment, but the child hasn’t learned how to do things differently. And it can lead to built-up resentment and hostility, and prevent some children from telling about sexual abuse for fear of further punishment.
- **But I was spanked and turned out okay?** Today, we have a tremendous amount of knowledge about how children learn and develop. We know other ways of teaching children that don’t have these risks and harms.

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1. Tomoda, A., Suzuki, H., Rabi, K., Sheu, Y., Polcari, A., & Teicher, M.H. (2010). Reduced prefrontal cortical gray matter in young adults exposed to harsh corporal punishment. *Neuroimage*, 47(Suppl. 2), T66–T71.

2. Gershoff, E. T., & Grogan-Kaylor, A. (2016). Spanking and child outcomes: Old controversies and new meta-analyses. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 30(4), 453–469. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/fam0000191>

3. Straus, M. & Paschall, M.J. Corporal punishment by mothers and development of children’s cognitive ability: A longitudinal study of two nationally representative age cohorts. (2009). *Journal of Aggression Maltreatment & Trauma*, 18(5): 459. doi:10.1080/10926770903035168





Tips for Parents of School Age Children (5-9 years)

FIGHTING WITH SIBLINGS

Child is learning about power and empathy.

INSTEAD OF SAYING ...

TRY...

“Stop fighting right now!”

“Let me give you both a good spanking/whooping so you stop fighting all the time.”

“No TV for a month!”

- “If we play together without fighting, we get to do more fun stuff.”
- “Let me set the timer so you and your [brother] can take turns.”
- “Your [sister] is younger than you and doesn’t understand how taking turns works yet. Can you show her/him?”
- “Let’s wait. I’ll hold the remote while we figure out what we want to watch.”

BAD GRADES

Some children learn easily, and some need your help to get their grades up. Make sure your child is getting enough sleep in order to learn. 9-11 hours is ideal for ages 6-13. Help child learn good habits by having daily routines around homework and studying.

INSTEAD OF SAYING ...

TRY...

“You are so stupid.”

“You are not good at [reading] at all.”

“This is so easy – why are you so bad at this?”

- “You just haven’t learned [multiplication] YET, but if we work on it together, you will get better.”
- “I notice the grade for this class is low. What is difficult about this class? How can I help?”
- “Do you have a friend we could ask to help you with this?”

MISBEHAVING AT SCHOOL

Listen to your child’s problems. Try to understand the need underneath the behavior.

INSTEAD OF SAYING ...

TRY...

“You are stupid for getting into trouble!”

“You are heading straight for jail!”

“Let me give you a whooping so you can remember to behave next time.”

- “Your teacher called me about something that happened at school. I want to help. Tell me what happened.”
- “If you could make school any way you wanted, how would it be?”
- “When you behave this way [whatever the behavior might be], what do you need?”

BEING AGGRESSIVE – HITTING, GRABBING THINGS FROM OTHERS

Instead of calling out child for assertive behavior, try helping them to stand up for themselves without aggression.

INSTEAD OF SAYING...

TRY...

“You are so mean – stop hitting!”

“You are a bad boy/girl!”

“Don’t hit!”

- “When you [hit, bite] your [brother], it hurts him, and he feels sad.”
- “Let’s find something else to play with.”
- “It’s OK to be angry, but I won’t let you hit. We need to keep everyone safe.”
- “It’s your [sister]’s turn with the [train]. I will help you wait until it’s your turn.”

CONNECTING WITH PRE-TEENS

INSTEAD OF SAYING...

TRY...

“You finally listened to me.”

“Why can’t you ever do what I tell you to do?”

- “I notice that you were so kind.”
- “I notice you feel really good today.”
- “Your jokes make me laugh.”
- “You bring me joy.”
- “I had such a good time with you today.”
- “It really feels good when you listen to me.”
- “Thank you for listening.”
- “I can see you are really engaged, and it’s hard for you hear me.”
- “I noticed you weren’t able to do... How can I help you?”