

Children are entitled to full respect for their dignity;
to grow up free from physical and emotional violence



Illustration by Sou Mey

END ALL FORMS OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT OF CHILDREN

Save the Children has a definition of corporal punishment that identifies two categories of punishments that can occur separately or together: physical punishment and humiliating/degrading punishment.

Physical and humiliating/degrading punishment consists of punishment or penalty for an offence, or imagined offence, and/or acts carried out for the purpose of discipline, training or control, inflicted on a child's body, by an adult (or adults) - or by another child who has been given/or assumed authority or responsibility for punishment or discipline.



Physical punishment includes:

- Direct assaults in the form of blows to any part of a child's body, such as beating, hitting, slapping or lashing, with or without the use of an instrument such as a cane, stick or belt;
- Other direct assaults on a child's body, such as pinching, pulling ears or hair, twisting joints, cutting and shaving hair, cutting or piercing skin, carrying or dragging a child against his or her will;
- Indirect assaults on a child's body, through using power, authority or threats to force a child to perform physically painful or damaging acts, such as holding a weight or weights for an extended period, kneeling on stones, standing or sitting in a contorted position;
- Deliberate neglect of a child's physical needs, where this is intended as punishment;
- Use of external substances, such as burning or freezing materials, water, smoke (including from smouldering peppers), excrement or urine, to inflict pain, fear, harm, disgust or loss of dignity;
- Use of hazardous tasks as punishment or for the purpose of discipline, including those that are beyond a child's strength or bring him or her into contact with dangerous or unhygienic substances; such tasks include sweeping or digging in the hot sun, using bleach or insecticides, unprotected cleaning of toilets;
- Confinement, including being shut in a confined space, tied up, or forced to remain in one place for an extended period of time;
- Any other act perpetrated on a child's body, for the purpose of punishment or discipline, which children themselves define as corporal punishment in the context of their own language and culture, identified through scientific participatory research with children;
- Witnessing any form of violent conflict resolution;
- Threats of physical punishment;

Humiliating degrading punishment includes:

- Verbal assaults, threats, ridicule and/or denigration, intended to reduce a child's confidence, self-esteem or dignity.



Illustration by Kea Lida



Illustration by San Karada



Illustration by Phor Oudom

Research has demonstrated consistently that corporal punishment:

Does not work for children, parents, teachers or society

- Does not promote good behaviour;
- Does not nurture self-discipline in children;
- Does not stop bad behaviour of 'difficult' children;
- Is a reason for school drop-out and poor performance.

Threatens the healthy development and welfare of children

- Undermines the development of self-esteem and confidence of children;
- Can result in permanent physical and/or psychological damage;
- Creates a distance between child and parent/teacher;
- Is an obstacle to proper communication between child and parent/teacher.

Is an excuse for parents/teachers not to find more positive approaches to discipline

- Is an excuse for adults not to manage their own anger;
- Teaches children that it is acceptable to use violence to control others;
- Teaches children that it is acceptable to resolve conflicts by using violence;
- Does not promote a culture of respect and peace.

Non-violent discipline means working with children, not against children

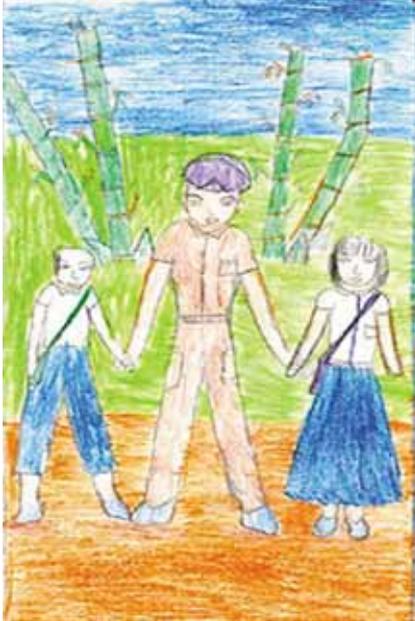


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To discipline children without violence you need to:

- Have knowledge of the individual child;
- Help children to respect authority rather than to fear it;
- Explain your real reasons for discipline (saying 'Because I am telling you' teaches nothing for the next time);
- Say 'yes' and 'well done' at least as often as 'no' and 'stop that';
- Avoid treating some children better or worse than others;
- Be consistent in your responses;
- Rely on rewards such as hugs and jokes, rather than punishments such as hitting and shouting;
- Provide positive behaviour yourself;
- Nurture children's self-confidence.

Even when you dislike a child's behaviour, never suggest that you dislike that child.

Sources: International Save the Children Alliance, 2003, Towards a strategy to address corporal punishment of children in Southeast, East Asia and Pacific: Proceedings of the International Save the Children Alliance Regional Workshop on Corporal Punishment of Children, 6-9 October 2003, Bangkok Thailand, Bangkok, International Save the Children Alliance SEAP Region;

UNESCO, 2005, Eliminating Corporal Punishment - A human rights imperative: Moving towards constructive discipline respecting the child's human dignity; Paris, UNESCO;

EPOCH SA Handbook 'Hitting people is wrong-and children are people too.' RAPCAN (Resources Aimed at the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect)