

# Spanking - Not a Good Idea

Psychologists, educators and doctors have a message for parents. *Please stop spanking your children. According to recent surveys, 80% of American parents think it is OK to use spanking as a form of punishment and discipline.*

All children display undesirable, ill-timed behavior. For years, spanking was an acceptable method to control this bad behavior. However, after years of research, experts tell parents that spanking is **ineffective**. Also, it imparts negative effects that often last a lifetime.

Parents should consider the overwhelming evidence against the use of spanking. Experts found frequent spanking to:

1. **Be ineffective for misbehavior.** Children misbehave again, some in as little as 10 minutes after the spanking.
2. **Have a negative effect on the parent-child relationship.**
3. **Be useless in controlling delinquent behavior.**
4. **Be ineffective at reducing aggressive behavior.** In fact, kids who are spanked increase their aggressive behavior over time.
5. **Cause children to score poorly on vocabulary and language-comprehension tests.**
6. **Be associated with mental illness that lasts into adulthood.** This is especially true for children who receive harsh physical punishment.
7. **Be useless as a teaching tool.** When a parent yells or inflicts pain, a child's brain cannot learn the lesson the parent attempts to teach.
8. **Put children at a greater risk for abuse.**

Anger and frustration cause parents to spank. This immediate and quick response is not a last resort.

According to studies, parents spank children for mundane reasons. Often, the offense is normal childhood behavior. Spanking becomes a habit. Parents may not even realize their pattern of spanking.

Spanking does provide immediate results. However, it does not teach the child how to cope with a problem or behave in a more acceptable way. Instead, the child learns the lesson that hitting can solve a problem.

Children must learn the behavioral social skills that please others. Teaching positive life skills is one of a parent's most important jobs. *Spanking does not and will not teach the skills your child needs to know.*



*Brought to you by Parent Help Line at HSHS St. John's Children's Hospital to help keep kids safe, healthy and happy.*



Call the Parent Help Line. Help is just a phone call away.

1-217-544-5808 or 1-888-727-5889  
10 a.m. to 10 p.m., 7 days a week  
[www.parenthelpline.org](http://www.parenthelpline.org)

Revised 2017

 **Children's**  
HSHS St. John's Hospital