

## Physical Punishment

Most parents want their children to behave in an appropriate and socially accepted manner. Appropriate behaviors help to ensure the child's safety, promote harmony in relationships, and enable children to feel good about themselves and their place in society.

Parents who choose physical punishments often do so because that's what they know. Slapping your child helps to relieve your stress. Furthermore, hitting your child often has instant results—slapping your children is likely to stop their misbehavior now. There are three major problems with physical punishment:

1. Physical punishment loses its effectiveness, and eventually becomes unworkable
2. The parent/caregiver who finds that one slap no longer has the same immediate effect may escalate to spanking, or to hitting with a belt, wooden spoon, closed fist, or other implement. This progression is most often toward a harsher means of control
3. Physically punishing your child puts you at risk of losing control and causing serious physical and emotional damage to the child. You could kill your child while you're enraged

Resorting to physical punishment teaches your child the following *inappropriate* lessons:

- Violence is an acceptable way to control behavior
- If people do something you don't like, it's alright to hit them to make them stop
- Violence is an acceptable way to settle disagreements
- It's alright to hit someone when you're angry or stressed
- It's alright to use physical force when something is really important
- It's morally acceptable to hit
- Love and violence are associated. It's alright for people who love you to cause you pain, hurt, and humiliation
- It's important to learn ways to avoid punishment. In order to survive, you need to be sneaky and conduct your business in an underground fashion