



Joint Statement on Physical Punishment of Children and Youth



Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario
Child Welfare League of Canada Family Service Canada Canadian Child Care Federation
Canadian Institute of Child Health Canadian Public Health Association Canadian Association for Young Children

KEY FINDINGS

- There is no clear evidence of any benefit from the use of physical punishment on children.
- There is strong evidence that physical punishment places children at risk for physical injury, poorer mental health, impaired relationships with parents, weaker internalization of moral values, antisocial behaviour, poorer adult adjustment and tolerance of violence in adulthood.
- Few parents believe that physical punishment is effective, most believe it is unnecessary and harmful, and a majority think the most common outcome is parental guilt or regret.
- Parents are more likely to use physical punishment if they approve of it, experienced it themselves as children, feel anger in response to their children's behaviour, are subject to depression, or are burdened by particular forms of stress.

CONCLUSION

"The research evidence now available permits us to move beyond the debate about whether physical punishment is harmful to children and youth or is even effective as discipline."

"On the basis of the clear and compelling evidence—that the physical punishment of children and youth plays no useful role in their upbringing and poses only risks to their development—parents should be strongly encouraged to develop alternative and positive approaches to discipline."

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. delivery of public awareness messages to inform all Canadians that physical punishment is harmful to children's development and is ineffective as discipline
2. development of universal parenting education
3. provision of the same protection of children from physical assault as is given to Canadian adults and to children in a growing number of countries

Responsibility for action lies within the jurisdiction of national, provincial/territorial and local levels of government, the mandates of organizations, and the expertise of professionals who serve children and youth.

The statement as a whole may be considered an urge to action by professionals and by parents and caregivers—within and beyond their families.

ENDORSEMENTS

By April of 2007, the *Joint Statement* was endorsed by over 250 organizations and a number of distinguished Canadians. Endorsements are national, provincial/territorial, regional and community in scope and represent many sectors of Canadian society:

- child/youth/family services
- health
- education
- child welfare
- recreation
- rehabilitation
- human/legal rights
- provincial child advocates
- women's groups
- aboriginal organizations
- professional associations
- military
- anti-violence
- business

Endorsements continue to be welcome. See contact.

IMPACT

KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

- broad dissemination to professionals, parents, public
- endorsement process requires study & discussion

ADVOCACY

- impetus & support for individual & organizational action

POLICY, POSITION & GUIDELINES

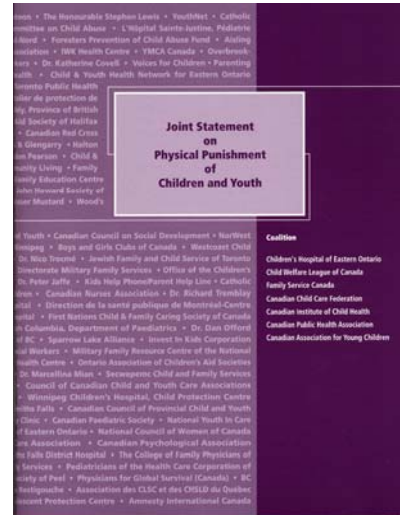
- impetus & support for organizations to create/review/revise policy & positions re discipline

LAW

- support for changes in provincial/territorial & federal legislation

CASE ASSISTANCE

- support for parents in difficult family circumstances & for professionals involved in particular cases



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for additional information about the *Joint Statement* visit the CHEO website at www.cheo.on.ca