

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT (British Columbia Specific Information)

Corporal punishment is the intentional use of physical force to cause bodily pain or discomfort as a penalty for unacceptable behaviour. Corporal punishment includes any action that produces discomfort, such as:

- Spanking, hitting, slapping, pinching, ear pulling, jabbing, shoving, or choking.
- Forcing a child to assume a position that becomes painful over time.
- Confining a child in an uncomfortable space.
- Denying bathroom privileges.
- Forcing a child to eat a noxious substance, such as soap or dog food.
- Withholding water and food.

Corporal punishment is not an effective method of managing behaviour. It does not teach a child how to act properly. At best, corporal punishment has only a temporary effect on behaviour. And it may even make it worse. Not only does it reinforce some problem behaviour, but also it teaches a child that physical force is the way to resolve conflict.

Corporal punishment can also have emotional and psychological effects, both short- and long-term, such as:

- Impairing a child's trust and confidence.
- Causing embarrassment, humiliation, a sense of worthlessness, anger, resentment, and confusion.
- Causing children to have trouble forming close relationships, especially intimate relationships, with others later in life.

Studies have shown that children who are physically punished are more likely to be physically aggressive with others.^{[footnote1](#)}

There are lots of other ways to discipline your child. Effective alternatives to corporal punishment depend on the age of your child and include:

- Using distraction.
- Using time-out.
- Talking about why a certain behaviour is wrong and what can be done instead.
- Discussing values.
- Creating consequences for actions that violate acceptable behaviours within your family.

Research has shown that positive reinforcement is more effective than corporal punishment. Catch your child doing something right and praise him or her. Don't wait until your child has done something wrong to notice his or her behaviour.

<https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/pregnancy-parenting/relationships-and-emotional-health/corporal-punishment>

Related Information

- [Anger, Hostility, and Violent Behaviour](#)
- [Bullying](#)
- [Child Abuse and Neglect](#)
- [Effective Parenting: Discipline](#)
- [Helping Your Child Build Inner Strength](#)