

ALTERNATIVES TO HITTING CHILDREN



SOME GOOD REASONS TO AVOID HITTING OR PHYSICALLY PUNISHING CHILDREN

- When we lose control we want to lash out at someone and sadly, many of us take it out on our children. Children are dependent upon adults for care and protection and should not be subjected to physical violence.
 - Children never deserve to be physically hit or abused and learn nothing positive from such action.
 - Many parents and caregivers find caring for children a very difficult job. Seek help rather than hurt a child.
 - Physical punishment does harm children, even though there are many adults children need to be hit, strapped or punished in some other way and look on it as a “disciplinary” measure. They might say “It didn’t do me any harm” – so in the same way they discipline their own and others’ children.
- What they don’t realise is they are continuing the cycle of abuse, and the belief that physical punishment is a way to resolve conflict.
 - Violence creates conflict!
 - Physical violence against children is harmful and can cause serious injuries.

Alternatives to hitting your child or using physical punishment

- ❑ Stop and think! Step back, sit down.
- ❑ Take a few really deep breaths. Exhale slowly.
- ❑ Put your child in a safe place (cot, room) and leave for a few moments.
- ❑ Count to 20, or 100 if you like – say the alphabet out loud.
- ❑ Walk around your home, go outside until you calm down.

- ❑ Phone a friend, a relative and talk about anything- don't be afraid to ask for help.
- ❑ Still mad? Punch a pillow.
- ❑ Make yourself a warm drink.
- ❑ Put on your favourite music or radio program.
- ❑ Pull weeds out of your garden, water the pot plants.
- ❑ Write a list of all the things you like about your child
- ❑ Write a list of all the things you like about yourself
- ❑ Put your feet up and read
- ❑ If your child is old enough explain why you are angry

IT IS BETTER TO HUG THAN HIT!

- ❑ Ask yourself why you are going to hit your child?
- ❑ Ask yourself, will taking it out on your child really make things better?

REMEMBER: WHATEVER YOU DO - MAKE SURE, FIRST OF ALL - THAT YOUR CHILD IS SAFE.

TRY TO BE POSITIVE

Praise works better than punishment so use "DO" rather than "DON'T"

Show children what they should do- not just what they shouldn't

Explain reasons for asking them to do things. "Because I say so" teaches nothing for next time.

Try to avoid nagging - the more you nag the less they'll listen.

When children do something wrong, EXPLAIN the mistake and how to put things right.

GOOD DISCIPLINE MEANS WORKING WITH YOUR CHILDREN NOT AGAINST THEM

REMEMBER children learn by example

- Listen to them and respect their point of view but consider all aspects of the situation before making a decision.
- Respond when children are being a pleasure and the less they will try to get your attention by whining.
- Communicate and work out solutions with your child.

- Children learn right from wrong by copying their parents - **if you hit them, they'll think it's okay to hit too.**
- Set sensible and reasonable limits for their behaviour which are appropriate to the age, understanding and level of development of the child.

REMEMBER: Hitting people is wrong- and children are people, too!

Tell children you love them - they need to know that.

What is Physical Child Abuse?

Physical child abuse is any non-accidental injury or pattern of injuries to a child, that endangers or impairs the child's physical or emotional health and development.

It is frequently a pattern of behaviour occurring over a period of time. The longer it goes on, the more serious the effects on the victims - the child, the family and the community.

Children are people too

Children deserve the same level of protection from assault as adults. Physical punishment destroys a child's dignity. There is increasing evidence that physical punishment has serious long-term effects on some children. It teaches them that problems are best solved by using violence and does not lead to improved behaviour. Children learn self-control and responsible behaviour when treated with respect.

WHERE TO GET HELP?

Look under "Community Services" in your telephone directory, many States and Territories have Parent Help Lines

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