

spanking: PLEASE DON'T

spanking teaches children it's ok for adults to hit...

Raising a toddler or child can be very challenging, and many parents have questions about the best method to discipline their children. This discussion in many families centers around spanking: does it help? Does it hurt? Is this how your parents disciplined you? Everyone should know that the most recent research all points to the same answer: **don't spank**.

A recent study of almost 2,000 children from birth to age nine showed that more than half of American families spank their children and that spanking increases the frequency of **aggressive behavior**. It can harm their cognitive development! In fact, the country of Sweden has completely banned spanking! The *American Academy of Pediatrics* warns against spanking and strongly suggests other methods be used for discipline.

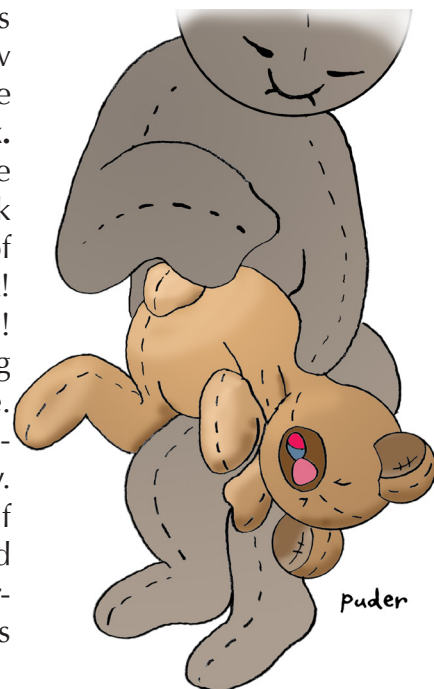
So how can you discipline your child? **"Time out"** and other non-physical methods of discipline are effective when used **consistently**. Children can have a special *Time Out* chair or area where they sit if they exhibit undesirable behavior. We suggest the *Time Out* period should last in minutes however long their age is in years. (A 2-year-old gets 2 minutes, a 4 year old gets 4 minutes, etc. –remember kids have short attention spans so a 15 minute *Time Out* is too long).

Younger toddlers can learn the concept of "No" but may not respond to it. Defiance is a normal part of their development of independence! Try gently removing your child from the situation while you calmly but firmly tell them "No"! For example, take your toddler away from a playmate if he hits.

Learning a technique to calm yourself down is an important skill to learn when dealing with children. Practice a relaxation technique that is fast and simple so that you can use it easily when you feel yourself getting angry. Examples include counting to 10 before you respond to a situation or breathing slowly and deeply for a few seconds.

Every child is different, so if you are having difficulty, your pediatrician is an excellent resource for help for your specific needs. Children learn best from your own behavior!

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