



# Why Doesn't Spanking Work?

Spanking is not an effective way to change your child's behaviour. Spanking can harm your relationship with your child. Research shows that spanking teaches your child to solve problems with aggression.

**Your child needs your guidance.**

Your child needs you to be consistent and patient.



## What the law says:

Most forms of physical punishment are considered crimes in Canada. The provinces and territories also have laws to protect children.

**For more information on the law and parenting visit:**

<http://canada.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/cj-jp/fv-vf/mcb-cce/index.html>



## Download this brochure for free:

<http://healthycanadians.gc.ca/publications/healthy-living-vie-saine/spanking-2015-fessee/index-eng.php>

**This brochure is also available in French**

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# What's Wrong with Spanking?

**Tips to Guide Your Child's Behaviour in a Positive Way**

Sometimes parents feel frustrated by their children's behaviour and do not know what to do. All children need guidance to help them learn self-control. Positive guidance, or 'discipline', teaches children skills, raises their self-esteem, and strengthens the parent-child bond. Physical punishment is not positive discipline. Children need safe, stable and nurturing relationships with their parents.

**This pamphlet provides some tips to help parents guide their child's behaviour in a positive way.**





# Tips to Guide Your Child's Behaviour in a Positive Way

## #1 Calm down before you act.

When we get frustrated, we can react without thinking. If you react in ways that are hurtful, you can make the situation worse by scaring your child. Try to breathe deeply when you feel yourself getting frustrated. Wait until your body relaxes and you can think clearly before doing or saying anything.

## #2 Think about what you want your child to learn in this moment.

Your child will learn how to deal with frustration by watching how you deal with it. Children who are spanked are more likely to solve their own conflicts by hitting others. To teach children how to be respectful and non-violent, you need to treat them with respect and interact without violence. Show them how it is done.

## #3 Consider your child's point of view.

Most of the behaviours that frustrate parents are normal reactions to hunger, tiredness, boredom, restlessness, fear, illness, pain, discouragement, frustration or stress.

- Has your child missed her snack?
- Was he up late last night?
- Did she miss her nap?
- Does he need to run outside?
- Is she getting sick?
- Is there stress in the family?

Ask your child if something is bothering him. When you understand the reason for your child's behaviour, it is easier to handle the situation without losing your temper.



Remember,  
never shake a baby.  
Shaking a baby can  
cause serious brain injury  
and death.

## #4 Think about your child's stage of development.

**Babies** are just beginning to learn about the world. They need to know that they live in a safe place. They often cry because they do not have words to tell you how they feel or what they need. It can be hard to figure out what they are trying to tell you. **Babies never cry to make you mad.** They just need to be comforted and protected. They need to know that they are safe with you. You cannot spoil a baby.

When your baby cries, try:

- feeding her
- changing his diaper
- holding, cuddling and singing to her
- rocking or walking with him

If your baby cannot stop crying and you are feeling stressed out, put your baby in a safe place. Spend a few minutes alone until you feel calmer. Ask for help from family, friends, a doctor or other community resources.

**Toddlers** learn by touching and tasting everything. This is how they get to know the world. They are little explorers who want to know what everything is and how everything works. If a child's hand is slapped for touching things, they will be afraid to explore, so they will learn less. To keep your toddler safe while he explores:

- Put dangerous things out of reach.
- Distract her with a safe toy.
- Use words like 'hot,' 'sharp,' and 'ouch' over and over to teach him about danger.
- Always make sure she is in a safe place where you can watch her closely.

**Preschoolers** want to do things for themselves and make their own decisions. They cannot express or control their feelings very well. When they get frustrated, they often have tantrums. Their emotions take over and this can scare them. Spanking will only scare them more and make the tantrum worse. Instead, you can:

- Stay close and keep your child safe.
- Take deep breaths.
- Stay calm to help your child gradually calm down.

When your child has calmed down, hold him gently and help put his feelings into words. "You were mad because I cut your apple and you wanted to eat it whole." Show your child how to handle strong feelings without yelling or hitting. Teach her how to think of solutions to her problems. Help him to express his feelings using words. If something gets damaged, help your child learn how to fix it.

## #5 Create a loving and respectful home.

Adults are important role models. Children learn from watching how adults treat each other, as well as how they treat children. Talk with your child and explain things so she can learn. Show him and tell him you appreciate his efforts. Respect her need to grow, learn and explore. Teach him about safety and distract him from things that can harm him. Respect her need for sleep and healthy food, which greatly affect her behaviour. Have a daily routine. **Last but not least, have fun with your child!**



Parents are  
always learning.  
All parents need ideas  
and support.

## #6 Do not be afraid to ask for help.

To find out where to find support in your community, ask:

- your family doctor
- your local public health department
- your family support worker
- child care centres
- family resource centres
- child and family service agencies
- parenting programs such as Nobody's Perfect
- First Nation, Inuit and Métis organizations and health programs
- multicultural or newcomer centres
- social media support forums