

Smacking Children – The Facts

Here are some facts for you to read before you start your debate:

- Corporal punishment in the home is the formal term used for smacking.
- Smacking means that a parent smacks their child in the home, usually to discipline.
- In many cultures parents have been historically regarded as having a duty of disciplining their children, and the right to smack them when appropriate.
- Attitudes in many countries began to change in the 1950s and 1960s following the publication of *Dr Spock's Baby and Childcare* in 1946.
- The publication advised parents to treat their children as individuals, whereas the previous conventional wisdom had been that childrearing should be focused on building discipline and that babies should not be „spoiled“ by picking them up when they cried.
- The change in attitude was followed by new legislation in many countries.
- Since 1979 29 countries around the world have banned corporal punishment in the home.
- In Europe 22 countries have adopted legislation banning corporal punishment in the home.
- In Africa and parts of Eastern Asia corporal punishment of one's own children is lawful. In Singapore and Hong Kong, punishing one's child with corporal punishment is legal but not encouraged.
- In the UK, corporal punishment is legal, but it must not leave a mark on the body.
- In Scotland it is illegal to use implements other than an open hand when disciplining a child.
- A total ban on corporal punishment in the home has been discussed.
- In 2004, 71% of the population in the UK said they would support a ban on parents smacking their children.
- In a 2006 survey, 80% of the UK population said they believed in smacking and 73% said that they believed that any ban would cause a deterioration in children's behaviour.
- In a 2012 poll conducted by Angus Reid, 63% of Britons voiced opposition to banning parents in the UK from smacking their children.

What do Assembly Members say?

This topic has been discussed in the Siambr in Cardiff Bay by Assembly Members. This is what some of the Members had to say on the matter:

'To argue that a smack or physical chastisement of children is done under controlled and carefully thought-through circumstances is simply in the vast majority of cases a myth. But it is not a myth that what starts off in some cases as a simple smack can escalate hugely to some serious damage.'

–Kirsty Williams, Constituency Member, Brecon and Radnorshire.

'We have prayed for the last two weeks for our rugby team to be unbeatable. It's about time we started to pray for our children to be unbeatable.'

–Lindsay Whittle, Regional Member, South Wales East.

'The overall majority of parents, I believe, know where to draw a line between physical chastisement and abuse and we should trust their judgement.'

–Darren Millar, Constituency Member, Clwyd West.

'The Welsh Ministers' view is that it would be possible for legislation to be passed by the Assembly to make amendments to the criminal law whose effect would be to bring to an end the availability of the defence of reasonable punishment for those cases where it still applies to an offence of assaulting a child.'

–Carwyn Jones, First Minister of Wales.

Should smacking children be banned?

Advantages	Disadvantages

Here's a chance for you to note your opinion about the debate.

Did the debate succeed in your opinion? Why?

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Do you feel that you expressed your opinions clearly and concisely?

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If not, what could you do to improve this?

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If you had the opportunity to debate the same topic again are there any points you'd like to add for or against?

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