

For more information

Local services

Your local health visitor can give advice on how to discipline your child without smacking. Health visitors support no smacking.

National Childminding Association

8 Masons Hill
Bromley BR2 9EY
Tel: 020 8464 6164
Advice line: 0800 169 4486
Website: www.ncma.org.uk

Works to improve the working conditions of childminders and the standards of care for children through training and support for childminders and parents. Can provide useful information about choosing a childminder.

EPOCH

94 White Lion Street
London N1 9PF
Tel: 020 7713 0569
Website:
www.endcorporalpunishment.org

Campaigns internationally to end physical punishment of children. Publishes information on alternatives to smacking.

Home-Start

2 Salisbury Road
Leicester LE1 7QR
Advice line: 08000 686368
Website: www.home-start.org.uk

Volunteers offer support, friendship and practical help to young families in their own homes.

Parentline Plus

Unit 520 Highgate Studios
53 -79 Highgate Road
London NW5 1TL
Helpline: 0808 800 2222
Textphone: 0800 783 6783
Website: www.parentlineplus.org

Parentline Plus is a national charity offering help and information for parents, carers and families via a range of services including a free 24-hour confidential helpline, workshops, courses, information leaflets and a website.

NSPCC

Weston House, 42 Curtain Road
London EC2A 3NH
Tel: 020 7825 2500
Website: www.nspcc.org.uk

The NSPCC Child Protection Helpline is a free 24-hour direct service which provides counselling, information and advice to anyone concerned about a child at risk of abuse.
Helpline: 0808 800 5000
Textphone: 0800 056 0566

With thanks to the working group of representatives from National Childminding Association, Children's Rights Development Unit and Parent Network, and to parents from NSPCC Family Centres who commented on text and design.

The NSPCC offers a wide range of resources including parenting publications. For a copy of our parenting pack, please send an A4 SAE (with five 1st class stamps) to:

NSPCC Publications
Weston House
42 Curtain Road
London EC2A 3NH
Email: infounit@nspcc.org.uk

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Registered Charity Number 216401

NSPCC 
Cruelty to children must stop. **FULL STOP.**

BEHAVE YOURSELF!



A guide to better parenting

NSPCC 
Cruelty to children must stop. **FULL STOP.**

Positive choices for parents

- **Show your child how to behave well by example**

Children learn by copying behaviour and they will copy yours.

- **Change the environment, not the child**

It's better to keep precious, dangerous or fragile objects out of reach than to punish your child's natural curiosity.

- **Be positive!**

Tell children what you **want** them to do, not just what you **don't** want.

- **Make reasonable demands**

Remember to ask yourself if your requests are reasonable for your child's age and situation. You will need to be more patient with a very young child or one who is tired or ill.

- **Don't rely too much on rewards and punishments**

As children get older, the power of rewards or punishments gets less. Explain the reasons behind your decisions. Negotiate with older children, use diversion tactics with little ones.

- **Choose not to smack or shout**

Smacking may seem to work at the time, but parents may find themselves hitting harder and harder in order to achieve the same result. Shouting at children or constantly criticising them can be just as harmful, and can lead to long-term emotional difficulties. These punishments do not help children develop self-control and respect for others.

It makes you think!

Some facts that may surprise you...

Sometimes naughtiness and disobedience is a healthy sign!

Children are naturally enthusiastic and curious. This can make them behave in ways adults call naughty, but it would be very odd if a child never tried things out or made mistakes.

This does not mean children should be allowed to do anything! They need to learn your family rules and how to co-operate with others. Helping children learn self control takes time and patience.

Often children do not understand why they were punished

Studies show that children are often very confused by adult rules. They do not always understand what they did wrong. This is particularly true if a child has been smacked, because they become too angry and upset to think clearly.

Children have a right to positive discipline

The United Kingdom Government has agreed to abide by the rules of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. This states that children have rights, and that one of these is the right to be protected from all forms of physical and mental violence and deliberate humiliation.

Giving children choices helps them to behave well

Don't get into a power struggle with children about things that don't matter. Try to let them make some choices for themselves: what to wear or what to eat, so they don't feel resentful at always being controlled. This helps to cut down tantrums and difficult behaviour.

What some parents have told the NSPCC



I don't think smacking works, and you do alienate them by smacking when they are older. We do use some forms of discipline, like sending them to their room."

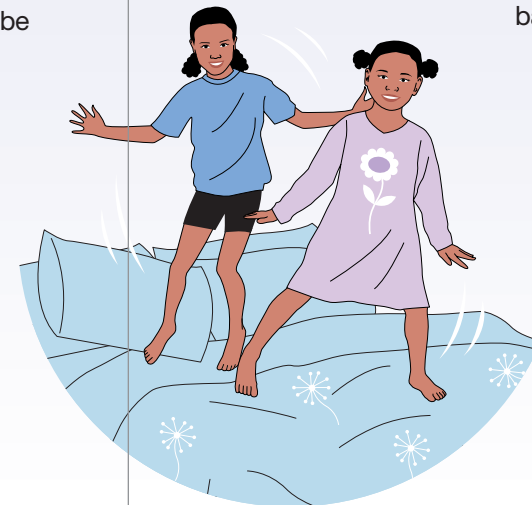


It all depends on what mood I'm in. I try to explain why something is wrong, or I ignore the behaviour – both work well. But if I'm in a bad mood or lose control – that's when I shout or smack."

Parents are only human, and sometimes it all feels too much like hard work, particularly if other things are getting on top of you. When you are stressed, you may take it out on your child, but this usually makes you feel guilty afterwards!

Though this is understandable, the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) believes it is wrong to hit children. Research shows that many parents do not want to smack their children and feel bad when they do.

Smacking children is not an effective way of getting them to behave well.



Helping children to behave well

Most parents worry about whether they are getting things right. Of course there is no such thing as the “perfect” parent. Any parent can have difficulties and all worry about the effect they are having on their children. One of the things that parents worry about most is the question of discipline and how to get children to behave well. It can be a very difficult subject for many parents. Everyone seems to have an opinion on how to raise children successfully. Will too little discipline mean they are out of control? Will too much turn them against you? We know children need limits to feel secure, but it may not be easy to set them.



This leaflet is about positive ways of encouraging good behaviour in children.

A positive approach means praising and encouraging the behaviour you want and making sure you give children attention when they are behaving well – it does not include smacking. Some parents worry that their children will be out of control if they do not smack

them, but the opposite is true.

The more you show love and respect, and the more children understand your reasons for wanting them to do things, the more they will want to please you. Using this approach will help to ensure that any punishment will be a last resort.

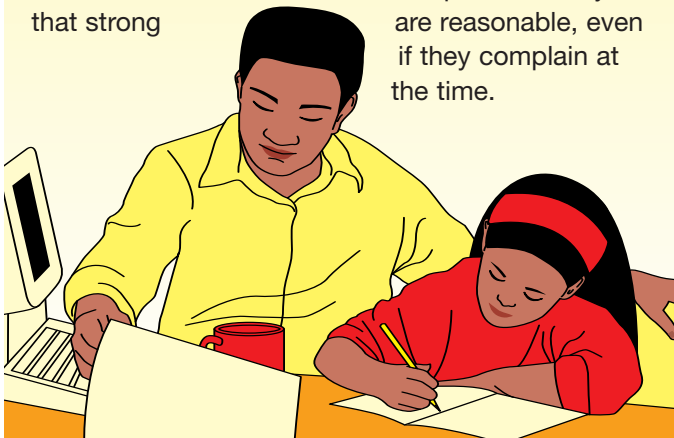
Ten steps to better parenting

1 **Love** is the most important need for all children. It is also an important part of positive discipline. The **more** you show love to your child, by giving them hugs and kisses, by saying "I love you", the more they will want to prove they deserve it. Love builds confidence and self-esteem.

feelings are fine – if they are expressed in the right way. The more you do this, the less you will need to discipline at all.

3 **Limits** have to be set, even in the most loving, listening relationships. Part of being a parent is creating boundaries. Remember that it is **natural** and **normal** for children to test these boundaries. This is not naughty, it's part of the learning process. Children feel more secure if you **stick to the limits you have set**, provided they are reasonable, even if they complain at the time.

2 **Listen** carefully to what your child is telling you. Take an interest in what they are doing and feeling. Reassure them that strong



4 **Laughter** can help defuse an angry situation. Sometimes parents get so serious that the **fun** goes out of parenting. See the funny side and allow yourself to laugh whenever possible.

5 **Seeing things from your child's point of view** and imagining how your child feels is the key to understanding behaviour. Remember how it felt when you were a child and how confusing the adult world seemed when you felt unfairly treated.

6 **Praise and encourage your child.** Expect them to behave well and encourage all their efforts. Praise the good behaviour and try to ignore the bad. The more you nag, the less your child will listen.

7 **Respect your child as you would another adult.** Involve them in decisions, especially if something affects them, listen to their point of view. If you are tempted to say something hurtful, think how it would sound if you said it to an adult. Apologise if you sometimes get things wrong.



8 **Set routines.** Small children feel more secure and conflict can be avoided if there is a clear pattern to their day. They feel happier with regular meal times, bed times, or times for noisy play.

9 **Some rules are necessary in every family**, but try to be flexible with very small children. Once you decide on your family rules, be consistent. It can be very confusing for children if you enforce a rule one day, then let it go the next. Sometimes you need different rules outside the home which must be explained to children.

10 **Don't forget your own needs!** If it all feels too much like hard work, and your patience is not up to it, take some time out for yourself. Do something that makes you feel good. If you ever feel you are losing control or may start shouting, putting your child down or smacking, walk away, calm down and count to ten.

