

Crisis Connection

Please Don't Spank Children

Violence generates more violence:

Many of us were raised in families and communities where spanking is a common form of child discipline. While many people believe that spanking a child is acceptable, battered women's advocates have long promoted no violence policies in our programs and communities. We believe that spanking children excuses the very violence we are working to eliminate in our families and society. Our "no violence" or "no spanking" policy means that adults are not allowed to use physical violence or threats of violence with their children while in any of our facilities. It makes no sense to provide emergency shelter or advocacy for women who are being battered at home and then allow their children to be hit. We believe that modeling a "no violence" standard for child discipline is a very important part of our social change movement to end violence against women and their children. Imagine a world where no child was ever spanked and all children were taught that **"Hands are not for hitting."**

Since many parents spank their children at least occasionally, we recognize that a no spanking policy takes away an option that women have used to control their children. Many battered women may have faced serious consequences from their abusers if they could not control their children's behavior. Also, in the wider community there are serious consequences, particularly for working class children and children of color, if parents fail to control their children's behavior. The Crisis Connection, Inc. staff is sensitive to a mother's fear of losing control. We teach and demonstrate non-violent discipline techniques.

Use time-outs:

The most common non-violent alternative to spanking is using "time-outs". The time-out is not punishment, but a means to remove a child from a troublesome situation so the child can regain control of his/her behavior. Use a time-out when a child is behaving in an unacceptable way. Go to the child, face her/him, and tell her/him which behavior is not okay (hitting, spitting, refusing to pick up toys or get dressed, etc.) and that s/he needs a time-out. Speak to the child in a serious tone but do not yell, grab, or jerk the child. Move the child away from other children and adults. Tell the child that he needs to stay in the time-out for "x" number of minutes. (Keep it short, one recommendation is one minute per one year of the child's age, example: if the child is 5 years old, the child would receive a 5 minute

time-out.) Repeat to the child that the behavior was the problem, not the child. Tell the child that you love him/her but that the behavior is not okay. Tell the child that you will come back for him/her in minutes. Return to the child and explain once again which behavior was unacceptable and ask if the child understands. Reassure the child that you love him/her and allow the child to return to previous activities. You will be surprised—children respond very well to time-outs.

Other non-violent discipline techniques:

😊 Catch a child being good. 😊 Notice and praise behavior you like. 😊 Give stickers or stars for desired behaviors. 😊 Keep children busy and happy—don't expect them to sit idle with nothing to do. 😊 Distract young children who are quarreling by changing activities or toys. 😊 Spend time with children and give them individual attention and warmth. 😊 Ignore minor attention-getting behavior. 😊 Firmly tell a child to stop a behavior and restate your rule or expectation. 😊 Remove from a group any child who repeatedly fails to follow the rules of the group. 😊 Remove privileges from older children who misbehave.

Adapted from: "Who Will Speak for Me: Training Manual for Children's Advocates, Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women



***PLEASE* don't spank because:**

1. Spanking teaches children two dangerous lessons: that hitting people is okay and that violence works.
2. Spanking destroys self-esteem, damages children's ability to learn and sets the stage for future emotional problems.
3. Children learn good behavior by imitating good behavior. They learn respect by being respected.



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