



Bournemouth Parenting Practitioners Tip Sheet

Smacking

As children get older, it is important that they learn how to behave and to control their behaviour. As a parent, you are a role model for your child in teaching them how to do this. Smacking your child as discipline has no long-lasting positive impact.

All parents experience frustration with their child at some point, and it is at these times that they may smack their child. But instead of being a useful way of influencing behaviour, this is actually an outlet for the parent to vent their anger.

Those who argue that smacking is an acceptable form of discipline suggest that it is not harmful in the long run, and is the most immediate form of punishment for bad behaviour. But it is much safer to reward positive behaviour by your child and to encourage this.

Teach your child from an early age by setting rules and explaining why these rules have been set. When your child behaves positively and accepts the limits, praise them and give them attention for the things they have done well. If they do behave badly and break the rules, use other ways to discipline them. Be firm and consistent in your discipline, and try to ignore trivial bad behaviour. Smacking your child to punish them only gives attention to the bad behaviour, and so encourages them to behave badly in order to get parental attention.

Parents are not allowed to harm their children physically, despite any individual beliefs or justification they may have. Child protection professionals will assess any incidents of ill treatment of children to prevent any future cases and to explain the consequences that any further incidents of smacking would have.





Warnings

Bruises and other marks on a child are signs of smacking with unnecessary force. A child who flinches when they think they may be hit could also imply that they are smacked by parents.



What to do

If someone you know smacks their child, speak to them and suggests practical alternatives to smacking as discipline. If you are worried about your own smacking, contact any of the Useful Contacts.



What to say

Let your child know if they have broken the rules. Use your tone of voice to instil the response to bad behaviour. Explain why you are punishing them.



Prevention

Make it a rule not to smack your child. Find alternative ways of disciplining him or her. Be firm and consistent when enforcing rules and discipline.

Useful Contacts

For more information, advice or support, contact:

- Barnardo's, telephone: 020 8550 8822
- Bournemouth Parenting Practitioners, telephone: 01202 453965

