



# SHOULD CORPORAL PUNISHMENT BE OUTLAWED?



privacy | invasion | consist | secure | corporal

## USE THE FOCUS WORDS \* and alternate parts of speech

**privacy** (*noun*) freedom from the attention of others

➞ **Sample Sentence:** Some parents believe that having the courts decide what they may do in their own homes interferes with their **privacy**.

🗣️ **Turn and Talk:** Many famous people complain that they have no **privacy** because of the news media. Do you think celebrities have a right to complain about their lack of **privacy**?

**invasion** (*noun*) unwanted interference

➞ **Sample Sentence:** Many American elm trees died as a result of Dutch elm disease carried by an **invasion** of beetles.

🗣️ **Turn and Talk:** There is strong disagreement about whether **invasion** of a foreign country can ever be justified. What do you think?

**consist** (*verb*) to be made up of

➞ **Sample Sentence:** Sometimes discipline may **consist** of spanking or hitting children when they are behaving badly.

🗣️ **Turn and Talk:** Would you prefer it if school **consisted** only of online projects? Explain.

**secure** (*adjective*) safe, certain

➞ **Sample Sentence:** In 1997, the United States Court of Appeals ruled that parents do not have a **secure** right under the U.S. Constitution to physically punish their children.

🗣️ **Turn and Talk:** What are some ways to create a **secure** password for your email account?

**\*secure** (*verb*) to get something

➞ **Sample Sentence:** After a difficult test and long application, Jamar **secured** a spot at a competitive high school.

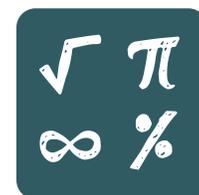
🗣️ **Turn and Talk:** How might a person **secure** tickets to the Olympics?

**corporal** (*adjective*) related to the body

➞ **Sample Sentence:** Some parents claim that **corporal** punishment by teachers violates children's rights.

🗣️ **Turn and Talk:** **Corporal** punishment used to be common in homes and schools. Why do you think this has changed?

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## DO THE MATH

According to a 2002 poll by ABC News, most Americans think that good family discipline can **consist** of occasional spankings. But while most Americans feel **secure** in the right to spank their children in the **privacy** of their own homes, they also tend to disapprove of **corporal** punishment in school. Is spanking in school an appropriate response to bad behavior?

| Spanking Approval Poll                       | Yes | No  |
|--|-----|-----|
| Approve of spanking children at home         | 65% | 31% |
| Think spanking should be permitted in school | 26% | 72% |

**Option 1:** Which of the following statements is true?

- A. More people disapprove of spanking at home than approve of spanking in school.
- B. Most people disapprove of spanking at home.
- C. Most people approve of school spanking.
- D. Seven out of ten people approve of spanking in school.

**Option 2:** What is the maximum percentage of people polled who could both approve of spanking at home and disapprove of spanking in school? Would you expect the actual percentage to be lower or exactly equal to the maximum?

A maximum of 65% of the people polled could both approve of spanking at home and disapprove of spanking in school. We might expect the actual percentage who both approve of spanking at home and disapprove of spanking in school to be lower, more like 41% (72%-31%), because we could reasonably assume that the 31% who disapprove of spanking at home also disapprove of spanking at school.

 **Discussion Question:** Why do people change their opinions about **corporal** punishment depending on where it happens? If people disapprove of **corporal** punishment in school, does that mean it shouldn't happen anywhere? Or should families have the right to their own **privacy**?

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## THINK SCIENTIFICALLY

Ms. Kahn's students are discussing **corporal** approaches to punishment in schools and at home.

"Spanking and all physical punishment should be against the law for everyone," exclaims Viet Ly. "If I have kids when I'm older, I won't ever spank them. And I definitely don't think teachers should be able to hit kids."

"I understand Viet Ly's point," says Jonah, "but Americans really value their **privacy** and independence. Parents won't like being told they can't raise their own children the way they want to in their own homes. It's a violation of their rights."

"Maybe they won't like it, but the law already **consists** of rules telling people what to do at home and at school," argues Rashad. "Hitting kids to make them behave better doesn't even work, does it Ms. Kahn?"

"Well, Rashad, there is a lot of research suggesting that **corporal** punishment may do more harm than good," said Ms. Kahn. "But doing scientific research on something like **corporal** punishment is difficult. Can you, Jonah, and Viet Ly get together and brainstorm reasons why?"

Here are some of the ideas Ms. Kahn's students had about the challenges of doing research on corporal punishment.

I don't think people would tell the truth to researchers on this topic. So interviews and surveys might be misleading.

Do you agree with Jonah? Why or why not?



Jonah

Note: While a great deal of research suggests that corporal punishment is associated with depression, anxiety, and aggression in children, it is unethical and probably illegal to do the kind of longitudinal, randomized, controlled studies that would prove causality. Does spanking cause aggression and antisocial behavior, or do aggressive and antisocial children get spanked more? You cannot assign children to treatment groups where they will be hit, and then see years later what the effects are.

I think that doing experiments involving hitting children would be wrong and dangerous. So it would be hard to come up with experimental evidence to prove anything.

Do you agree with Rashad? Why or why not?



Rashad

For a review of research on corporal punishment and consideration of some of the challenges for this kind of research, see Elizabeth T. Gershoff, "More Harm Than Good: A Summary of Scientific Research on the Intended and Unintended Effects of Corporal Punishment on Children":

<http://scholarship.law.duke.edu/lcp/vol73/iss2/3/>

I think **corporal** punishment might seem to work in the short term—it might stop children from doing something bad at the moment. But I think it would do harm in the long term. The long-term effects would be hard to measure.

Do you agree with Viet Ly? Why or why not?



Viet Ly



If you were a researcher trying to gather information about sensitive issues like **corporal** punishment, how could you **secure** honest information and guarantee **privacy** to your participants?



