

Dear Parents,

Did you know that –



- Spanking **shrinks brains.**

Harvard Medical School found that kids who are spanked just once a month had **14-19% smaller brains in the decision-making area.**¹ These were children who remembered being spanked at least 12 times a year and once with a belt, paddle or brush, but were not injured or spanked in anger.

- 1,574 studies found that **spanking is harmful.**

- Even ‘everyday spanking’ is **consistently associated with:**

- **More** aggression
- **More** negative relationships with parents
- **Lower** cognitive ability
- **Substance** abuse
- **More** fighting
- **Weaker** moral values
- **Delinquent** behavior
- **More** mental health problems
- **Lower** self-esteem
- **More** antisocial behavior
- **Lower** self-control²

- Spanking **lowers IQ.**

The University of New Hampshire found that American children who are spanked at ages 2-4 have **5 less IQ points** than non-spanked children, even years later. Children spanked at ages 5-9 have **2.8 less IQ points.**³

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- **Does this mean that everyone who was spanked as a child has problems?** No, it means that spanking doesn’t help children learn what we want them to learn. Every time we spank a child, we raise the risk that the child will develop problems.
- **Why is this so?** Spanking focuses on the behavior and misses the underlying need. It might stop a child from doing something in the moment, but the child hasn’t learned how to do things differently. And it can lead to built-up resentment and hostility, and prevent some children from telling about sexual abuse for fear of further punishment.
- **But I was spanked and turned out okay?** Today, we have a tremendous amount of knowledge about how children learn and develop. We know other ways of teaching children that don’t have these risks and harms.

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1. Tomoda, A., Suzuki, H., Rabi, K., Sheu, Y., Polcari, A., & Teicher, M.H. (2010). Reduced prefrontal cortical gray matter in young adults exposed to harsh corporal punishment. *Neuroimage*, 47(Suppl. 2), T66–T71.

2. Gershoff, E. T., & Grogan-Kaylor, A. (2016). Spanking and child outcomes: Old controversies and new meta-analyses. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 30(4), 453–469. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/fam0000191>

3. Straus, M. & Paschall, M.J. Corporal punishment by mothers and development of children’s cognitive ability: A longitudinal study of two nationally representative age cohorts. (2009). *Journal of Aggression Maltreatment & Trauma*, 18(5): 459. doi:10.1080/10926770903035168





Tips for Parents of Infants (0-12 months)

CRYING AND FUSSING

Babies cry and fuss for a variety of reasons – hunger, sleepiness, need for a diaper change. Sometimes for no apparent reason at all. They need to be held and cuddled and to hear your gentle voice to help them feel safe and secure.

TRY ...

- Checking to see if baby's **diaper** needs to be changed, offering a bottle or breast to **feed** them, or just picking them up, **cuddling** and talking sweetly to them.
- Wearing baby in a sling or carrier, taking a walk outside or car ride.
- Giving baby a pacifier.
- Singing, humming, and cooing, as well as moving (gentle **rocking, swinging, walking**), which often calms baby down.

PUTTING EVERYTHING INTO MOUTH

Child is learning hand-mouth coordination or is teething and needs safe objects to chew on.

TRY ...

- Putting a **damp washcloth into freezer** for baby to chew on.
- **Child-proofing** by removing small, chokeable objects from reach.

WON'T STOP CRYING NO MATTER WHAT YOU TRY

TRY ...

- Turning on children's music with singing or ocean/water sounds.
- Placing baby safely in a crib **without** any blankets or pillows.
- Getting a glass of water, walking around, singing to yourself, making long exhales slowly – this helps your nervous system stay calm
- Taking turns being with the baby with your partner or family member.
- Driving in the car with baby in a secure car seat.

WON'T SLEEP THROUGH THE NIGHT

Babies double their birth weight by 4-6 months and triple their weight by 1 year, so they have to eat frequently. Some babies may start sleeping through the night around 4 months. Many do not.

TRY ...

- Sleeping when the baby sleeps.
- Taking turns with your partner or family member feeding your baby.
- Leaving the room to take a short break – take deep breaths.
- Feeding and soothing baby.

THROWING THINGS ON THE GROUND

It is very common and normal for an older infant to throw things on the ground every 2.5 seconds on purpose. This is how your child learns about gravity and cause and effect. Children enjoy the sound falling objects make.

TRY ...

- Distracting baby – stop the drop game by using safe tethers or rings that can't wrap around a child's neck.

REMEMBER

- Babies don't spoil when held. Denying a baby food, touch, or attention is harmful to their development.
- Shaking, hitting, or tossing a baby is harmful.
- Understand the harms of spanking and sign the pledge today.