

End Corporal Punishment in Louisiana Schools

What Legislators Can Do: Abolish the use of corporal punishment in Louisiana schools.

Facts about the use of corporal punishment:

- Fourteen local education agencies serving thirty-three percent of Louisiana students report that they prohibit corporal punishment.ⁱ
- Thirty statesⁱⁱ and over a hundred countries ban the use of corporal punishment in schools.
- BESE voted to recommend abolishing corporal punishment in April 2008.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Corporal punishment tends to be disproportionately used on students who are minorities, male, poor, and/or have disabilities.^{iv}
 - Nationally, 41,972 students with disabilities received corporal punishment in the 2006-2007 school year.
 - This condones the otherwise illegal battery to the ‘infirm’^v
- The use of corporal punishment is already banned for people in the custody of the state of Louisiana.
 - Corporal punishment is banned as a disciplinary practice on inmates sentenced to the legal custody of the Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections (R.S. 15:829)
 - It is not permissible to use corporal punishment on students in state custody (i.e., foster care)^{vi}. The Department of Social Services recognizes that prohibiting corporal punishment will “break the intergenerational cycle of physical abuse.”
 - Corporal punishment is not allowed in the LA 4 program.^{vii}
- Parent requests for corporal punishment to not be used fails to provide any guarantee or protection if the school chooses to ignore their request.^{viii}

Corporal punishment is the use of physical force with the intention of causing a child to experience pain but not injury for the purposes of correction or control of the child’s behavior.

- The deliberate infliction of pain should not be an acceptable part of the learning and educational experience for our children.
- There is no research to support it as an ‘educational treatment.’
- No institution offers training in the ‘appropriate’ administration of corporal punishment.

What are the costs of corporal punishment? Research indicates:

- Corporal punishment results in higher levels of (children's) aggression and lower levels of moral internalization and mental health.^{ix}
 - Corporal punishment used on children :
 - Reduces the likelihood that they will internalize society morals and learn the reasons for behaving correctly.
 - Increases their aggressive behaviors and hostile attributions that are predictive of future violent behavior
 - Increases antisocial behaviors such as stealing
 - Results in higher arrest rates when they are ages 17 through 45
 - Increases the likelihood that the individual will act violently with an adult romantic partner
 - Increases rates of major depression^x
 - Increases rates of alcohol abuse/dependence^{viii}
- Corporal punishment is viewed along the continuum of physical abuse. This connection with physical abuse and the subsequent potential to cross the line beyond injury and associated risk for injury to children precludes any further research into its effectiveness.

ⁱ Survey conducted in 2008 by the Louisiana Department of Education (62 of 70 LEAs responded)

ⁱⁱ States banning corporal punishment: Ak, CA, CT, DE, DC, HI, IL, IA, ME, MD, MA, MI, MN, MT, NE, NV, NH, NJ, NY, ND, OR, PA, RI, SD, UT, VT, VA, WA, WV, and WI.

ⁱⁱⁱ Board of Elementary and Secondary Education April 2008 Meeting Minutes pg. 44
<http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/uploads/12496.pdf>

^{iv} [A Violent Education: Corporal Punishment of Children in U.S. Public Schools](#), ACLU Executive Summary, February 2009

^v [R.S. 14:35.2](#)

^{vi} Department of Social Services Foster Parent Handbook, Part 4 "It is never acceptable to slap, strike or hit a foster child." <http://www.dss.state.la.us/index.cfm?md=pagebuilder&tmp=home&pid=195>

^{vii} [Cecil J. Picard LA 4 Program Guidelines Summer 2008 p. 9](#)

^{viii} State of Louisiana Court of Appeal, Third Circuit, 04-404 Appeal from the Ninth Judicial District Court Parish of Rapides Setliff v. Rapides Parish School Board, et.al. <http://www.la3circuit.org/opinions/2004/12/120804/04-0404opi.pdf>

^{ix} Gershoff, E.T. (2002) Corporal Punishment by Parents and Associated Child Behaviors and Experiences: A Meta-Analytic and Theoretical Review. *Psychological Bulletin* 128, 4, pp. 539-579.

^x Afifi, T.O., Brownridge, D.A., Cox, B.J., Jitender, S. (2006). Physical punishment, Childhood Abuse and Psychiatric Disorders. *Child Abuse and Neglect: The International Journal* v30 n10, pp 1093-1102.