



## **12 Things to Know About Corporal Punishment in U.S. Public Schools**

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**#1: Corporal punishment is still legal in public schools in 19 U.S. states.**

- These states are: Alabama, Arkansas, Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Wyoming.

**#2: In the 2011-2012 school year, a total of 163,333 children, from preschool through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, were subjected to corporal punishment in their public schools. <sup>i</sup>**

**#3: Corporal punishment in schools is typically administered with a wooden paddle; a typical paddle is two feet long, 4 inches wide, and a half inch thick. <sup>ii</sup>**

**#4: There are dramatic disparities by gender, race, and disability status in who is corporally punished. <sup>iii</sup>**

- Black children are twice as likely to be corporally punished as are White children, on average.
- Boys are 3.5 times more likely to be corporally punished than girls on average.
- Children with disabilities are 50% more likely to be corporally punished than non-disabled children.
- These disparities appear to violate the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990 (known as IDEA) as well as Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

**#5: The most common reason children are subject to school corporal punishment is for fighting, aggression, and disruptive behavior. <sup>iv</sup>**

- Research on parents' use of corporal punishment has found it actually increases, not decreases, aggressive behavior over time. <sup>v</sup>

**#6: States that have banned school corporal punishment have not seen an increase in juvenile crime. <sup>vi</sup>**

**#7: School corporal punishment would be considered physical abuse if done by a parent.**

- The Society for Adolescent Medicine has estimated that, each year, between 10,000 and 20,000 students require medical attention as a result of corporal punishment. <sup>vii</sup>

**#8: Children are the only class of people whom it is legal to hit.**

**#9: School corporal punishment is opposed by a range of professional organizations in the U.S.**

- These include: American Academy of Pediatrics, American Medical Association, American Psychological Association, American Bar Association, National Association for State Departments of Education, National Association of Elementary School Principals<sup>viii</sup>
- Three religious denominations have also voiced their opposition to school corporal punishment: the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, the United Methodist Church, and the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations<sup>ix</sup>

**#10: The majority of Americans (77%) oppose school corporal punishment.**  
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**#11: The U.S. is one of only 2 of the 24 major industrialized countries that allow school corporal punishment.**<sup>xi</sup>

- School corporal punishment is now banned from 64% of the world's countries, or 126 of the 198 countries in the world.<sup>xii</sup>
- Corporal punishment is considered a violation of children's human rights by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.<sup>xiii</sup>

**#12: There are many effective alternatives to school corporal punishment.**

- 86% of school districts around the country have chosen to disciplining students in ways that do not involve corporal punishment.<sup>xiv</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> United States Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights. (2014b). *Civil Rights Data Collection: 2011-2012*. Washington, D.C.: Author.

<sup>ii</sup> Gershoff, E. T., Purtell, K. M., & Holas, I. (2015). Corporal punishment in U.S. public schools: legal precedents, current practices, and future policy. *Springer Briefs in Psychology Series, Advances in Child and Family Policy and Practice Subseries*. doi: 1-.1007/978-3-319-14818-2

<sup>iii</sup> Gershoff, Purtell, & Holas (2015).

<sup>iv</sup> North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. (2015). *Consolidated Data Report, 2013-2014*. State Board of Education, Public Schools of North Carolina. Retrieved from: <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/research/discipline/reports/consolidated/2013-14/consolidated-report.pdf>

<sup>v</sup> Gershoff, E. T., Lansford, J. E., Sexton, H. R., Davis-Kean, P. E., & Sameroff, A. J. (2012). Longitudinal links between spanking and children's externalizing behaviors in a national sample of White, Black, Hispanic, and Asian American Families. *Child Development, 83*, 838-843. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-8624.2011.01732.x

<sup>vi</sup> Gershoff, Purtell, & Holas (2015).

<sup>vii</sup> Society for Adolescent Medicine. (2003). Corporal punishment in schools: Position paper of the Society for Adolescent Medicine. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 32*, 385-393. doi: 10.1016/S1054-139X(03)00042-9

<sup>viii</sup> Gershoff, Purtell, & Holas (2015).

<sup>ix</sup> Gershoff, Purtell, & Holas (2015).

<sup>x</sup> SurveyUSA. (2005, August 24). *Disciplining a Child (#082405)*. Retrieved from <http://www.surveyyusa.com/50StateDisciplineChild0805Alphabetized.htm>

<sup>xi</sup> Global Initiative to End Corporal Punishment. (2015). Countdown to universal prohibition. Retrieved from <http://www.endcorporalpunishment.org/progress/countdown.html>

<sup>xii</sup> Global Initiative to End Corporal Punishment. (2015).

<sup>xiii</sup> United Nations. Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC). (2007, March 2). *CRC General Comment No. 8 (2006): The Right of the Child to Protection from Corporal Punishment and Other Cruel or Degrading forms of Punishment* (U.N. CRC/C/GC/8). Retrieved from <http://www.refworld.org/docid/460bc772.html>

<sup>xiv</sup> Gershoff, E. T., & Font, S. A. (2015, forthcoming). Corporal Punishment in U.S. Public Schools. *SRCD Social Policy Report*.