Exposure to harsh corporal punishment over time has been found to decrease the total gray matter volume in a child's brain. The three specific areas of the brain found to be affected were: the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex, the right medial frontal gyrus, and the right anterior cingulate gyrus. Damage to these areas has the potential to increase a child's risk of experiencing many things including "depression, aggression and addictive behaviors."

Researchers at the University of Texas at Austin and the University of Michigan have concluded that there is "no evidence that spanking is associated with improved child behavior." Instead, spanking was found to be associated with more detrimental outcomes for children, such as aggression, decreased cognitive ability, mental health issues, and low self-esteem, among others.

In a 4 year research study from the University of New Hampshire and the Prevention Research Center, scientists found that the more a child is spanked, "the lower the child's cognitive ability score four years later."

Corporal punishment, a common type of physical discipline, is defined as "the use of physical force with the intention of causing a child to experience pain but not injury for the purpose of correction or control of the child's behavior."

TOXIC STRESS is considered to be the "most dangerous form of stress response" that our bodies can experience. Examples of behaviors that cause this type of stress are child abuse, neglect, and parental substance abuse. Toxic stress has the capability to change the structure and function of a child's brain for the rest of their lives.

The effects of spanking have been found to be "highly correlated and reflect a similar underlying process" as the effects of physical and emotional abuse. Additionally, being spanked as a child "was associated with increased likelihood suicide attempts, moderate to heavy drinking, and street drug use in adulthood."

For alternatives to spanking: www.stopspanking.org
To join the No Hit Zone movement: www.nohitzone.com

Become a certified No Hit Zone advocate today!

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