



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



Ending physical punishment in Wales

Physically punishing children is illegal in Wales. We want to protect children and their rights, to give them the best start in life.

What is physical punishment?

There are lots of types of physical punishment. It can mean smacking, hitting, slapping and shaking.

But there are other types too.

It isn't possible to give a set list of what makes up physical punishment because it can be anything where a child is punished using physical force.

Research suggests that any type of physical punishment could be harmful to children.

What's the law on physical punishment in Wales?

- All physical punishment is illegal in Wales.
- Children have the same protection from assault as adults.
- This means the law is clear - easy for children, parents, professionals and the public to understand.



Does this law apply to everybody in Wales?

Yes, it applies to everyone - parents or anyone who is responsible for a child while the parent is absent.

And as with other laws, it applies to visitors to Wales too.

Physical punishment has been illegal in schools, children's homes, local authority foster care homes and childcare settings for some time.

For more information on ending physical punishment in Wales go to:
gov.wales/EndPhysicalPunishment

For positive parenting tips and expert advice go to: *Parenting. Give it time:*
gov.wales/giveittime

Stopio Cosbi
Corfforol

Ending Physical
Punishment



What happens if people physically punish a child?

Anyone who physically punishes a child:

- will be breaking the law
- risks being arrested or charged with assault
- may get a criminal record, which is the same for any criminal offence.

Information, advice and support is available for anyone who needs it, to help them find positive ways to manage children's behaviour and to help avoid such a situation ever happening.

What should I do if I see a child being physically punished or if I am concerned about a child?

- Contact your local social services department.
- You can also call the police in an emergency, or if a child is in immediate danger.

Where can I get advice and support?

- ***Parenting. Give it time*** offers positive parenting practical tips and expert advice to encourage good behaviour from children and alternatives to physical punishment. Their [parenting support page](#) offers links to further support and helplines.
- Universal parenting support and advice is provided by midwives, health visitors, GPs and your local authority.
- Early help programmes such as [Flying Start](#) (if you live in a Flying Start area) and [Families First](#).



Positive parenting

top tips

- Give genuine praise for positive (good) behaviour.
- Have clear family rules suitable for your child's age and ability.
- Plan ahead for times where children tend to behave in challenging ways (e.g. take a snack or toy on shopping trips).
- Try and think about what's going on under the surface of tricky behaviours – is your child Hungry, Angry, Lonely or Tired (HALT)?
- Connect a feeling to the behaviour e.g. 'I think you are throwing the toys because you are cross, but we don't hurt people.'
- Develop a routine that works for your family.
- Model the behaviour you want to see - a child won't understand that hitting or shouting is not allowed if that is what they see adults do.

Visit ***Parenting. Give it time*** for more information.

**Times have changed. Attitudes have changed.
There is no place for physical punishment in a modern Wales.**