

Making it positive



Alternatives to smacking children

On the 21st March 2022 the law in Wales changed, it's now illegal to physically punish children.

We know it isn't easy coping with the demands of being a parent. Family life isn't always easy.

A few things to try if you're at the end of your tether!

- Make sure your child is in a safe place.
- Breathe and remember you're the adult.
- Take a few deep breaths and change your focus. Count to 50, recite the alphabet or sing out loud.
- Create a distraction to calm the situation or walk away from the argument.
- Do some stretching – exercise is great for relieving stress.
- Make yourself a cuppa and relax.
- Congratulate yourself on not hitting out.
- Remember the special things about your child and talk about them later.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help. Phone a friend or a relative.

Remember: children see – children do!

Your children learn by watching and listening you, they can also sense your mood. What your children learn from you stays with them for life, affecting how they deal with other people as adults... If you hit them, they'll think it's OK to hit others to get what they want.



Why smacking is a bad idea

- Hitting teaches children that violence is the way to get what they want.
- Hitting children means they don't learn to manage conflict.
- If you hit your children, they will likely be afraid of you when they are young, and angry when they are older.
- Smacking can become a habit. When it doesn't work most people hit harder.
- Adults are stronger than children. Hitting in anger can cause serious injuries.

Helping kids to behave without having to hit

- Recognise the problem – is your child feeling tired, hungry, cold or worried? Fix the problem and behaviour is likely to improve.
- Keep your expectations and rules simple and age appropriate.
- If your child is 'in a state' there is no point reasoning or hitting. Give everyone some time and space.
- When your child has calmed down, tell them clearly and firmly what they have done wrong and explain the consequences (example: if they threw a toy, it might break or hurt someone).

Focus on the positives!

Tell them what they can do instead of what they can't.

It is important the child knows what they should do, not just what they shouldn't.

If kids are 'good' we often ignore them, if they are 'bad' they get our attention.

When they do something good, tell them.



Make behaviour a family business

- Talk with your partner and extended family about how you want to bring up your kids.
- Don't undermine each other.
- Act as you want your child to act.
- Listen to your children and respect their points of view. We are teaching them to do this as adults.
- Work out family rules together.
- Set reasonable limits for behaviour – depending on your child's age and stage.
- Share the care between the adults in the family and support each other to have regular breaks.



Self-care for Parents

- List everything you're doing well as a parent.
- Find time for yourself each day – 15 minutes to put your feet up.
- Meet up with other parents regularly – form a support network.
- Maximise your sleep – being tired makes everything harder.
- Pop in or call your local family centre to find out what's going on in your area.



Useful contacts

There's lots of help available for families and ideas for parents on other ways to set boundaries for children:

Your local Family Centre Team

North – Llandudno  01492 574732

Central – Colwyn Bay  01492 576503

East – Abergele  01492 577757

South – Llanrwst  01492 574140

West – Conwy  01492 574546

 Email: family.centres@conwy.gov.uk

Or visit conwy.gov.uk/familylife for other ways to contact the teams.

Why not search:

conwy.gov.uk/familylife for lots of information, hints and tips.

[Parenting Give it Time](#) Welsh Government website for practical tips and advice for parents.


[NSPCC Take 5 campaign](#) how to cope with tantrums.

[Barnardos](#) 21 practical alternatives to smacking.

[NHS](#) coping with your teenager.

[Solihull online parenting](#) – 'in our place' for free lifetime access and use the code **NWSOL** if you live in North Wales. Sign up by 31st October 2023.



If you see a child being physically punished, or if you are concerned about a child, contact social services on  01492 575111 or ring 999 if the child is in immediate danger.

Family life can be fun

- Spend time playing a game with your kids.
- Spend time outside with your kids, create a treasure hunt by looking for objects or landmarks in your area.
- Paint on rocks or pebbles you find on a walk or create nature pictures with leaves and twigs, using flour and water as glue.
- Bake a cake with your kids, you'll all enjoying eating it.
- Cook a meal and eat together as a family.
- Let them choose what you do sometimes. This teaches them make decisions.

Things to remember

- **It's important to take 5 because if you lose your cool it's going to make the situation worse.**
- **Stop, breathe, and react calmly.**
- **Create a distraction to calm the situation down.**
- **Don't forget to take time for yourself.**