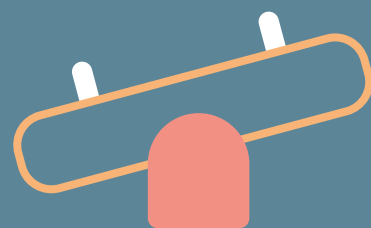
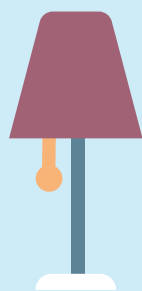
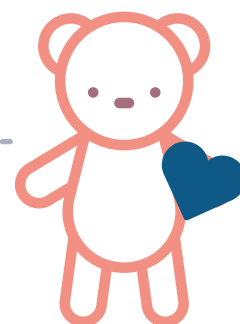
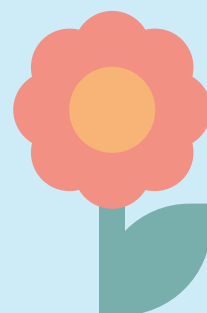


Parenting for non-violent childhoods

Positive parenting to achieve an end
to corporal punishment




NON-VIOLENT
childhoods



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the non-violent childhoods programme

Changing the World: Making Non-Violent Childhoods a Reality

The adoption of a national law that prohibits the corporal punishment of children in all settings, including in the home, is a milestone achievement. It makes a clear statement that corporal punishment is a form of violence against children which is no longer socially acceptable nor legally condoned. Once a prohibition is in place, societies and states have a duty to invest in ensuring its effective implementation. Countries all over the world are confronting this challenge and the goal of ending the corporal punishment of children is now firmly on both national and regional agendas.

The Baltic Sea Region is almost a 'no-corporal-punishment zone' for children as 10 out of the 11 countries in the Region have prohibited corporal punishment in all settings. Sweden was the first country in the world to enact a legal ban in 1979; Finland (1983), Norway (1987), Denmark (1997), Latvia (1998), Germany (2000), Iceland (2003), Poland (2010), Estonia (2015) and Lithuania (2017). The Russian Federation has yet to introduce a legal ban.

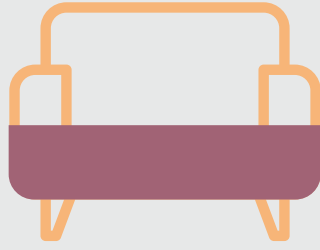
The Baltic Sea Region is diverse. While some countries in the Region have almost 40 years of experience of implementing a legal ban, others have only just embarked on the journey to ensure childhoods free from violence. The Non-Violent Childhoods Programme draws on the outstanding commitment and leadership demonstrated by changemakers in the Region. This includes politicians, public officials, service providers, practitioners, researchers, advocates, the media and citizens, including children, young people and parents.

The developments in the Baltic Sea Region show that it is possible to change attitudes and behaviours and that social norms can be transformed in favour of positive, non-violent child rearing. Since the national bans have come into force, more and more parents have rejected the use of corporal punishment in the upbringing of their children. But despite the progress achieved, too many children continue to experience physical and emotional violence or humiliating and degrading treatment.

The aim of the Non-Violent Childhoods Programme is to promote the full implementation of a ban on corporal punishment of children in the Baltic Sea Region through collaborative, multi-stakeholder planning and action. Its programme of work is managed by the Council of the Baltic Sea States Secretariat with co-funding from the European Commission. Five country partners are supporting the project drawn from ministries and national institutions in the Baltic Sea region: the Ministry of Social Affairs, Estonia; the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Finland; the Ministry of Welfare, Latvia; the Ombudsman for Children's Rights, Poland; and the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Sweden. The Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children is an international partner to the Programme.

The Non-Violent Childhoods Programme has developed a set of guidance reports and a campaign, aimed at parents, children, practitioners, advocates and policy makers. Each report focuses on a specific theme – a step-by-step guide, implementing the ban in the domestic setting, positive parenting, awareness-raising campaigns, service provision and tracking progress. In addition, the campaign raises awareness of the harmful impact of corporal punishment and the importance for children to have trusted adults to turn to. The reports and campaign offer inspiration and provide guidance standards and practical tools aimed at transforming societies and making non-violent childhoods a reality. While the reports are based on the experience of the Baltic Sea Region, they convey key messages and highlight best practices that have relevance not only to the 11 states in the Region but also to Europe and beyond.

More information on the reports and campaign can be accessed at www.childrenatrisk.eu/nonviolence



01

introduction and key messages

Non-violent, positive parenting is the key foundation for the successful implementation of national laws to prohibit the corporal punishment of children.

Today, there are a number of positive parenting initiatives which aim to help parents cope with the challenges of being a parent. They seek to support the parent to develop strategies and skills to shift away from the use of corporal punishment to non-violent action that builds and reinforces a strong and positive relationship with the child. Positive parenting reduces the likelihood of parents physically and emotionally abusing their children and improves parent-child relationships.

This guidance report takes as its starting point a discussion of how parenting has evolved in a changing world. It looks at what positive parenting is and provides a brief overview of universal, indicative and selective initiatives. The key principles that guide initiatives to promote positive parenting are introduced. The guidance report concludes with recommendations to guide States in selecting positive parenting initiatives, drawing in particular on the experience of countries in the Baltic Sea Region.

KEY MESSAGES

This guidance report provides the following key messages:

- There is a strong legal, social and scientific foundation to end the use of corporal punishment of children. Progress around the world shows us that it is possible to change parents' attitudes and behaviour.
- Positive parenting is an umbrella term for different approaches to raising children without violence, including corporal punishment. Positive parenting recognises that structure and boundaries are important to parenting, and that there are more effective and less harmful ways than using corporal punishment to raise children.
- There are a number of different positive parenting programmes, including universal preventive campaigns, support through service provision and individual and group education programmes. The programmes aim to change norms, attitudes and behaviour of parents to end the use of corporal punishment of children. The programmes employ different methodologies, have different target groups and are used in different contexts.
- There are different approaches to positive parenting, including behaviourist and rights-based. These approaches have inspired a number of different positive parenting programmes, including 'universal' preventive campaigns, 'selective' support through service provision and 'indicative' individual and group education programmes.
- There are five key principles for effective and child-centred action to promote positive parenting:
 - Children's rights
 - Research informed
 - Evidence informed
 - Inclusivity
 - Working together
- A framework has been developed to help choose the right programme for your context and target group, it focuses on the following considerations:
 - Purpose and objectives
 - Principles
 - Type of approach
 - Type of programme
 - Methods
 - Evidence
 - Resourcing
 - Implementation
 - Evaluation



02

parenting in a changing world

Historically, it has often been held that children can be punished by their parents with violence without being held accountable. Today, there is a strong legal, social and scientific foundation to end the use of corporal punishment of children. Progress around the world shows us that it is possible to change parents' attitudes and behaviour.

Throughout history, the status and perception of children has been central to parent-child relations and how children have been raised. Historically, children have often been seen as the property of their parents, without their own individual rights. As a result, it has been held that children could be punished by adults with violence.

Today, there is a strong legal, social and scientific foundation to end the use of corporal punishment of children, which clearly signals that all forms of violence against children are unacceptable. There is a growing global movement in favour of banning corporal punishment in law and increasing support to parents to build positive relations with their children. This progress has been achieved through multiple channels, including research, social transformation and legal reform.

The recognition of children as rights-holders challenges the perception that parents “own” or have absolute rights over their children. Parents and caregivers still have the primary role in children’s upbringing and development, but with an emphasis on the responsibility to act in the best interests of children and to help fulfil children’s rights, including the right to a non-violent childhood.

Research has provided new knowledge about child development and the negative impact of corporal punishment on children’s health and development, shifting the perception of effective parenting from

punishment to optimising and fostering children’s evolving capacities¹ Social progress, including in social security, gender equality, early childhood care and public health has provided a social context in which violence against children can be prevented and detected through, for example, pre- and post-natal care, regular health checks for children and family support from child protection services.

Children as Rights Holders: Another key development is the growing recognition of children as full human beings with rights to dignity, participation and protection from all forms of violence in international, regional and national law, including a near global adoption of the UN Convention on the rights of the child (UNCRC). The UNCRC explicitly prohibits all forms of violence against children.² The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has confirmed that all corporal punishment, however light, violates children’s rights, including when it is performed by parents in the home.³

Several other inter-governmental organisations and human rights bodies agree that there is a legal obligation to end corporal punishment. In Europe, the European Committee of Social Rights has found that a failure to prohibit corporal punishment by State Parties is in breach of the Revised Social Charter. Moreover, the Council of Europe’s Parliamentary Assembly, which brings together representatives from all 47 Member State Parliaments has adopted a Recommendation which calls for Europe to become a “corporal punishment-free zone”.

¹ Joan E. Durrant and Ashley Stewart-Tufescu, 'What is "Discipline" in the Age of Children's Rights?' (2017) 25(2) Intl J Child Rts 360.

² CRC Article 19; Article 38 which prohibits torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; and Article 28(2) which places an obligation on State Parties to 'ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child's human dignity and in conformity with the present Convention

³ Committee on the Rights of the Child, 'General Comment No 8 (2006) The Right of the Child to Protection from Corporal Punishment and Other Cruel or Degrading Forms of Punishment'.

There have been significant judgments from the European Court of Human Rights regarding corporal punishment. The Court has confirmed that corporal punishment of children at home or at school is a violation of Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights which prohibits degrading punishment.⁴ In specific cases, the Court found that the risk of systematic and regular caning of children justified taking the children into care.⁵ The Court has also emphasised that the rights to private or family life or to freedom of religious belief cannot be used as relevant arguments to reject banning all corporal punishment.⁶

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights also advocates for a legal ban on corporal punishment.⁷ Furthermore, there is an increasing number of states that have prohibited in law the use corporal punishment. To date, 54 states have prohibited all corporal punishment of children, including in the family home. At least another 56 states have expressed a commitment to full prohibition.⁸

Why Parents Use Corporal Punishment: However, many parents continue to use corporal punishment to “educate” their children. Parents may view violence as a normal and appropriate way to teach and control children. Some parents may feel obliged to uphold, or are influenced by, long-held attitudes, beliefs and cultural practices that condone violent parenting methods. Taking on the role of parenting at times presents significant challenges for parents. Sometimes the use of corporal punishment is a result of stress, tension and anger and limited knowledge of how challenging situations can be met with non-violent behaviour. Its use may also be as a result of poor communication skills or an inability to control or express emotions. In addition, parents may not be aware of how their actions affect children, and that violence has a negative impact on the health and development of children.

The fact that many parents continue to use corporal punishment, in spite of positive developments and incentives to end violence against children, shows that there is a need to support parents in finding alternative strategies and approaches to taking on the challenge of raising their children.

Progress around the world shows us that it is possible to change individual behaviour. To be successful there needs to be a strong foundation and action to break with obsolete attitudes and beliefs and to introduce new ideas and practice. Many societies regarded children as property or “adults-in-training”. Over time, societies have seen a dramatic change in the status of children in the family, and in the community more broadly. As a result, parenting has evolved, the

concept of discipline has been revisited and parents have been equipped with non-violent strategies to child rearing.

Sweden is a striking example of the change that is possible in terms of generating a high level of awareness and social support for the legal ban on corporal punishment. Leading up to, and in the past 40 years since the law was adopted, there has been a notable change in how children are perceived and how they are treated. Children are considered as rights holders and members of society with an absolute right to freedom from all forms of violence, including corporal punishment. The use of corporal punishment by parents in Sweden has decreased significantly.⁹

4 European Court of Human Rights, *Tyrer v. UK*, 1978, *Campbell and Cosans v. UK*, 1982; *Y v. UK*, 1992; *Costello Roberts v. UK*, 1993; *A v. UK*, 1998.

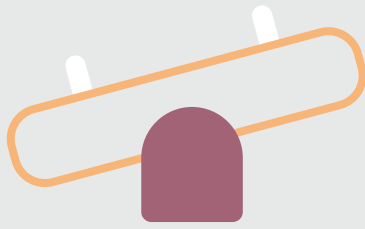
5 *Tlapak and Others v. Germany* (nos. 11308/16 and 11344/16) and *Wetjen and Others v. Germany* (nos. 68125/14 and 72204/14) https://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/FS_Minors_ENG.pdf

6 ECtHR, *Philip Williamson and Others v. UK*, 2000; application no. 55211/0.

7 See for example <http://cidh.org/Ninez/CastigoCorporal2009/CastigoCorporal1eng.htm> and http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/media_center/PReleases/2014/074.asp

8 See the website of the Global Initiative for updates <http://www.endcorporalpunishment.org/>

9 Jernbro, C. & Jansson, S.: Violence against children in Sweden 2016. The Children's Welfare Foundation, Sweden, August 2017



03

positive parenting

Positive parenting is an umbrella term for different approaches to raising children without violence, including corporal punishment. Positive parenting recognises that structure and boundaries are important to parenting, and that there are more effective and less harmful ways than using corporal punishment to raise children. There are different approaches to positive parenting, including behaviourist and rights-based, which have inspired a number of different positive parenting programmes.

Positive parenting is a broad umbrella term that captures different approaches to child rearing. These approaches have in common that they promote non-violent parenting and a shift away from corporal punishment.

It is a common misunderstanding that positive parenting fails to introduce boundaries and structure in child rearing. On the contrary, positive parenting approaches recognise that structure is central to parenting, but that there are other, more effective and less harmful ways than using corporal punishment to teach and raise children.

Constructive, two-way communication between the parent and child is an important cornerstone in positive parenting. As children grow and mature, their needs, abilities, interests and challenges change. Positive parenting involves ensuring that communication takes into account, and is adapted to, the developmental characteristics and needs of children of different ages. Communication should never be threatening or humiliating.

3.1 APPROACHES TO POSITIVE PARENTING

The approaches to positive parenting are sometimes categorised into two main strands: the behaviourist ('lite') or rights-based ('strong') positive parenting approach.¹⁰

3.1.1 BEHAVIOURIST APPROACH

The Behaviourist (Lite) parenting approach is based on behaviourist theories and the belief that the child's behaviour can be shaped by reinforcement and consequences. This approach promotes non-violent strategies, builds strong parent-child relations, reinforces the child's positive behaviour and teaches compliance with a set of rules.

3.1.2 RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH

The Rights-Based (Strong) parenting approach is based on a human rights perspective of the relationship between the adult and child. This approach promotes non-violent strategies and respect for the child as a growing and learning individual. Parenting is understood as a process of supporting and guiding the development of the child's knowledge and understanding.¹¹ The starting point is to stop all acts that humiliate, scare or hurt the child. The role of the parent is to provide warmth and structure, to guide the child, to help the child succeed and to support the child's growth.¹² It also involves providing children with opportunities to express themselves at each stage of their development.

Both the Behaviourist and Rights-Based approaches to parenting programmes are supported by research. The main difference between these two approaches is that Behaviourist programmes emphasise shaping children's behaviour, whereas Rights-Based

¹⁰ See for example George Holden, Andrew Grogan-Kaylor, Joan Durrant & Elizabeth Gershoff (2017) 'Researchers Deserve a Better Critique: Response to Larzelere, Gunnoe, Roberts, and Ferguson', 53(5) Marriage & Family Review, 465-490.

¹¹ Joan Durrant and Ashley Stewart-Tufescu, 'What is "Discipline" in the Age of Children's Rights?' (2017) 25(2) Intl J Child Rts 359-379.

¹² Ibid.

programmes emphasise mentoring children and guiding their development.

The choice of approach adopted (either Behaviourist or Rights-Based) will impact on the parenting methods taught in the programme. A Behaviourist approach may focus on teaching parents to set limits, apply reinforcements and non-violent consequences for violating rules, and on promoting strong parent-child attachment. A Rights-Based approach may focus on helping parents to recognise the developmental reasons underlying a child's "misbehaviour" and parent-child conflict and on how parents can use warmth, structure, problem-solving and good communication to address challenging situations and meet the child's developmental needs.¹³ Improving parents' communication skills is often an important aspect in both types of programmes.

3.2 POSITIVE PARENTING PROGRAMMES

There are a number of different positive parenting programmes, including universal preventive campaigns, support through service provision and individual and group education programmes. The programmes aim to change norms, attitudes and behaviour of parents to end the use of corporal punishment of children. The programmes employ different methodologies, have different target groups and are used in different contexts.

Initiatives to promote positive parenting include a wide range of different activities, including preventive campaigns, service provision and individual and group educational programmes. The overall purpose of such activities is to change norms, attitudes and/or behaviour of parents and to teach positive parenting to enable the shift from punitive parenting to positive parenting. Programmes offer a wide range of methodologies and tools, including public information campaigns, face-to-face or internet based training in positive parenting skills, therapeutic interventions, social networking, nurse-parent interventions and home visits.

Positive parenting programmes may have different target groups, use different methodologies and be categorised as either universal, selective or indicated programmes.¹⁴

3.2.1 UNIVERSAL PREVENTION PROGRAMMES

Universal programmes have a broad target group, including all parents regardless of their background or the risk posed in relation to violence against their children. They typically aim at changing attitudes so

that the acceptance and use of corporal punishment becomes less likely in the target group. Because they are proactive and universal, they avoid stigmatising a certain group or individual.

EXAMPLES

Examples of universal programmes include public education and media campaigns, which are a cost-effective means of reaching out to entire communities or populations. Due to the low intensity and wide reach, such campaigns often are the least expensive programmes per capita.¹⁵

In Norway, parenting support is offered universally through a digital platform, a website.¹⁶ The website, developed by experts and parents, offers consensus based knowledge, guidance, reflection exercises and short videos about issues parents most often seek guidance on. The platform builds on the International Child Development Programme (ICDP) and acts as a counterweight to informal chat forums.

Universal preventive initiatives, such as home visits for new parents, meetings with nurses and regular health controls can prove effective in reducing corporal punishment of children, since parents tend to listen to, and respect, advice from health care professionals. Some countries limit these types of preventive programmes to "at-risk" parents; however, a universal approach is an effective means of reaching a broad population and preventing stigmatisation.

Some positive parenting programmes offer both universal and selective programmes. For instance, the Triple P programme, a Behaviourist programme, consists of five levels of intervention with increasing levels of intensity. The first level consists of parenting information campaigns, including a coordinated information campaign using print and electronic media to raise awareness of parenting issues and to normalise participation in positive parenting programmes.¹⁷ Other positive parenting programmes offer online resources that reach out to whole populations, combining a focus both on change in attitudes and teaching positive parenting strategies.¹⁸

3.2.2 SELECTIVE PROGRAMMES

Selective programmes target specific groups of parents, in particular groups that are at increased risk of resorting to corporal punishment. The selective programmes typically focus on educating parents about the harmful effects of corporal punishment and teaching alternative, non-violent, parenting strategies.

¹³ George Holden, Andrew Grogan-Kaylor, Joan Durrant & Elizabeth Gershoff (2017) 'Researchers Deserve a Better Critique: Response to Larzelere, Gunnoe, Roberts, and Ferguson', 53(5) *Marriage & Family Review*, 465-490.

¹⁴ This categorization is based on the three levels of interventions identified by the Institute of Medicine (Mrazek & Haggerty, 1994) referred to in Elizabeth Gershoff, Shawna Lee and Joan Durrant 'Promising intervention strategies to reduce parents' use of physical punishment' (2017) 71 *Child Abuse & Neglect*.

¹⁵ Elizabeth Gershoff, Shawna Lee and Joan Durrant 'Promising intervention strategies to reduce parents' use of physical punishment' (2017) 71 *Child Abuse & Neglect*.

¹⁶ <https://www.bufdir.no/foreldrehverdag/>

¹⁷ Workshop on the prevention of child maltreatment: strengthening intersectoral working, Riga, Latvia 1–2 June 2017. World Health Organisation Regional Office in Europe and Nordic Council of Ministers p.18. *Compilation of Evidence Based Family Skills Training Programmes*, (UNODC) p.5.

¹⁸ UNODC, *Compilation of Evidence Based Family Skills Training Programmes*, p.19 (Strengthening Families Programme) and p.63 (Parenting Wisely)

There are a number of evidence-based selective positive parenting programmes. Because these programmes are more intensive and target individuals or smaller groups, they are often costlier than universal programmes. On the other hand, they can provide a more targeted effort to educate parents and to teach, train and practice alternatives to corporal punishment. Group-based programmes are more cost effective than individual programmes and have the added value of connecting parents and potentially generating peer support.

EXAMPLES

Examples of selective parenting programmes include Parenting for Lifelong Health (PLH), the rights-based Positive Discipline in Everyday Parenting (PDEP), the International Child Development Programme (ICDP) and The Circle of Security (COS).

The Parenting for Lifelong Health (PLH) consists of three programmes targeting different age groups. Evaluations have found that PLH can yield positive results in parental behaviour and the well-being of children.¹⁹ The International Child Development Programme (ICDP) is a group-based programme founded on the concepts of democracy and dialogue. It aims to promote positive development, prevent mental health problems and promote parental skills. The Circle of Security (COS) is also a group-based programme, based on attachment and child development theories. It promotes attachment, self-regulation and social competence. Evaluations of the COS programme in Sweden have demonstrated a reduction in parental stress and improved parent-child relations.²⁰

3.2.3 INDICATED PROGRAMMES

Indicated programmes target parents where there is a history of violence or a concern of increased risk of violence. Indicated programmes typically focus on building parental skills to promote positive parent-child relations and reduce the use of corporal punishment and other harsh parenting strategies.

The indicated programmes are offered to parents in groups, or sometimes to individual parents. Like selective programmes they are, therefore, more time and cost intensive than universal programmes. However, in cases where parents have a history of consistently resorting to violence, targeted interventions may be the only way to end the abuse. Studies show that such programmes can help parents who have used violence against their children before to reduce the use of corporal punishment.²¹

EXAMPLES

Examples of indicated programmes include the Incredible Years, the Nurturing Parenting Programme (NPP) and Parent-child Interaction Therapy.

The Incredible Years, a group-based programme, aims to prevent and reduce disruptive and aggressive behaviour among children and to promote their social, emotional and academic development. Parents are taught new skills, including positive parenting discipline, stress management and child directed play.²² Research has found that the Incredible Years programme can lead to a decline in corporal punishment and that this in turn is a key factor to the programmes' success in addressing disruptive and aggressive behaviour in children. The programme has been used worldwide, including in Denmark, Estonia, Norway and Sweden, and has been shown to work with many different cultures and socio-economic groups.²³

The Nurturing Parenting Programme (NPP) is a family-centred programme which focuses on building "nurturing" parenting skills and preventing child abuse and neglect. The programme aims to change parents' perceptions of, and attitudes to, the use of corporal punishment. Research has shown that the NPP has led to reduced approval for corporal punishment. This is an important starting point, since attitude is often a key determining factor on whether or not a parent uses corporal punishment.²⁴

Parent-child Interaction Therapy is focussed on improving the quality of parent-child relations and changing negative patterns, such as the use of corporal punishment, in the interaction between the parent and the child. It consists of intense one-on-one parent sessions to teach the parent specific skills which will help them to build a nurturing and secure relationship with their child, including non-violent child rearing. It also teaches a way of promoting the child's social development and discouraging negative, or aggressive behaviour. Studies have shown that this form of therapy can help parents who have previously used corporal punishment to reduce the use of violence.²⁵

19 http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/child/plh/en/

20 Neander, K. & Risholm Mothander, P. (2015): Trygghetscirkeln för ett reflekterande föräldraskap. COS-P i Sverige - kunskapsspridning och prövning av ett psykoedukativt föräldraprogram. An English version of the study has been published in Risholm Mothander, P., Furmark, C., & Neander, K. Adding "Circle of Security – Parenting" to treatment as usual in three Swedish infant mental health clinics. Effects on parents' internal representations and quality of parent-infant interaction. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, December 2017.

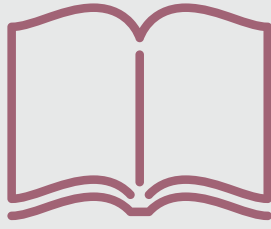
21 Elizabeth Gershoff, Shawna Lee and Joan Durrant 'Promising intervention strategies to reduce parents' use of physical punishment' (2017) 71 *Child Abuse & Neglect* 3-5.

22 Compilation of Evidence Based Family Skills Training Programmes, p.13.

23 Elizabeth Gershoff, Shawna Lee and Joan Durrant 'Promising intervention strategies to reduce parents' use of physical punishment' (2017) 71 *Child Abuse & Neglect* 3.

24 *Ibid.*

25 *Ibid.*



04

principles for positive parenting initiatives

There are five key principles for effective and child-centred action to promote positive parenting. Taking these principles into account promotes children's rights and ensures that children are placed at the centre of all action. It makes sure that programmes are informed by research and evidence on the impact of corporal punishment on parents and children. It also ensures an inclusive approach which involves a broad target group, engaging a set of actors in implementing diverse activities.

There are a five key principles which should underpin effective and child-centred action to promote positive parenting: children's rights, research informed, evidence informed, inclusivity, and working together.

4.1 CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Children's rights should underpin the design, implementation and evaluation of the positive parenting initiative.

The way children are treated is closely connected to how they are perceived. Positive parenting programmes can play an important role in informing parents about children's rights and encouraging a shift in attitudes so that children are recognised as full human beings with their own human rights. They can help parents adopt parenting strategies that respect and fulfil a child's right to physical integrity, human dignity and participation. As such, they can play an important role in empowering parents to play a positive role in the implementation of children's rights obligations, including national legislation that bans corporal punishment.

This implies, among other things, that children should enjoy equal protection against violence, including corporal punishment, as adults under law. It is also

important to note that protection against violence is not limited to saving children's lives or preventing injury. It includes an obligation to ensure children's physical, mental, spiritual, moral, psychological and social development. International, regional and national law provides that parents and caregivers play a primary role in their child's upbringing and development. However, this does not mean that parents "own" their children or can treat them in a way that violates their rights. Instead, parents have to help ensure their child's rights, including the right to survival, healthy development, protection from violence and to participation, are respected and fulfilled.²⁶

Positive parenting initiatives should, therefore, be informed by key principles including non-violence, respect for children's dignity, evolving capacities and individuality, for children's right to participation.²⁷ Special efforts should also be made to ensure that the programmes always fully respect children's rights, including making the best interests of the child a primary consideration in planning, implementation and evaluation of positive parenting programmes.

EXAMPLES

Examples include the Council of Europe "Raise Your Hand Against Smacking" campaign and the Positive

²⁶ The UNCRC and the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child acknowledges that parents' have the primary responsibility for the children, but that this responsibility has to be carried out in line with the best interests of the child. See UNCRC Articles 5 and 18.
²⁷ Joan E. Durrant and Ashley Stewart-Tufescu, "What is "Discipline" in the Age of Children's Rights?" (2017) 25(2) Intl J Child Rts 360.

Discipline in Everyday Parenting (PDEP) programme.

In Europe, the Council of Europe campaign “Raise Your Hand Against Smacking” has made available material and tools in several languages for national campaigns to introduce a legal ban on corporal punishment and to promote positive parenting.²⁸ It has a strong rights-based approach, corporal punishment is considered a violation of a child’s rights to respect for human dignity and physical integrity. The campaign has prompted a number of national campaigns across Europe.

The Council of Europe has also adopted a Recommendation on a policy to support positive parenting²⁹ accompanied by a series of materials to support parents in adopting non-violent parenting strategies.³⁰ The Recommendation states that all support to parents should adopt a “rights-based” approach, which recognises and treats both children and parents as holders of rights and obligations, affirming the approach set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Positive Discipline in Everyday Parenting (PDEP) is an example of a rights-based parenting programme offered to groups of parents. It focusses on shifting parents’ understanding of the reasons that underlie typical parent-child conflicts; helping them understand children’s rights to protection, dignity, and participation in their learning; providing them with information on children’s emotional, social and brain development from infancy to adolescence; and coaching them in implementing a framework for non-punitive problem solving.³¹ An evaluation of the programme across 13 countries found that most parents believe that PDEP will have a positive impact on their parenting and relations with their children, and that it will support them to use less corporal punishment.³²

A key element of taking a children’s rights approach is that there is a focus on developing the capacity and awareness of both adults and children. Positive parenting programmes should enable parents to teach children in ways that helps the child learn, grow and succeed. These programmes can be one element or goal in broader interventions, which involve both parents and children, such as Combined Parent–Child Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for families at risk of child physical abuse (CPC-CBT).³³

4.2 RESEARCH INFORMED

A research-informed approach should underpin the design of the positive parenting message to parents.

To ensure relevant and appropriate interventions, it is important that positive parenting programmes draw on research in the conceptualisation and planning of the programme. Research of relevance includes the impact of parenting on children and the impact of corporal punishment on children’s development, parent and child well-being and the relationship between the parent and the child.

There is strong and growing evidence that corporal punishment is associated with negative outcomes for the neurological, cognitive, emotional and social development and physical health of children, and that the outcomes for children are similar across different family, social and geographical contexts.³⁴

A large number of studies have found a correlation between corporal punishment and increased aggression and antisocial behaviour, mental health problems including depression and anxiety, low self-esteem, impaired cognitive ability and poorer academic achievements. Emerging results from neuroimaging studies suggest that corporal punishment may in fact change the structure and function in the brain and among other things make children more vulnerable to drug and alcohol abuse.³⁵

Research has also found that corporal punishment has a negative impact on parents. It can damage the relationship between parents and children and make it more difficult to adopt a constructive approach to parenting. Corporal punishment can produce feelings of anxiety and guilt and lead to increased and escalated violence. Research shows that the more children are exposed to corporal punishment, the greater the risk of escalating violence and physical abuse by their parents.³⁶

The message from academic, medical, public health and human rights organisations is one and the same: spanking is ineffective and potentially harmful to children.”³⁷

28 <https://www.coe.int/en/web/children/corporal-punishment>

29 Recommendation Rec(2006)19 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on policy to support positive parenting https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectID=09000016805d6dda

30 See for example <https://www.coe.int/en/web/children/corporal-punishment>

31 https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/7509/pdf/pdep_2016_4th_edition.pdf

32 Elizabeth Gershoff, Shawna Lee and Joan Durrant ‘Promising intervention strategies to reduce parents’ use of physical punishment’ (2017) 71 Child Abuse & Neglect 7.

33 Johanna Thulin and Cecilia Kjellgren (2017) Treatment in Barnahus: Implementing Combined Treatment for Children and Parents in Physical Abuse Cases https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-58388-4_4

34 Elizabeth Gershoff and Andrew Grogan-Kaylor, ‘Spanking and child outcomes: Old controversies and new meta-analyses’ (2016) 30(4) J Fam Psychol 453-69.

35 Joan Durrant and Ron Ensom ‘Twenty-Five Years of Physical Punishment Research: What Have We Learned?’ (2017) 28(1) J Korean Acad Child Adolesc Psychiatry 20-24.

36 Ibid.

37 <https://theconversation.com/hard-evidence-spanking-could-lead-to-health-problems-antisocial-behavior-58566>

4.3 EVIDENCE INFORMED

An evidence-based or evidence-informed approach should underpin the design, implementation and evaluation of the positive parenting initiative. In addition, evaluation should be built into the design of the positive parenting initiative.

Evidenced-based positive parenting programmes have undergone substantial research to ensure that the intended results can be achieved and that the programme is safe and beneficial to the target group. Different methodologies are used to measure the impact of programmes, including randomised control trials (RCT) and non-RCTs.

Which Approach? There is strong and comprehensive evidence that the Behavioural approach is effective and important for both children's and parents' well-being. Research demonstrates a positive effect on children's development and mental health, including reducing aggression and risk of alcohol and drug abuse.

The Rights-Based approach is comparatively new and more research into its effectiveness is needed. However, recent studies have demonstrated the positive impact of rights-based programmes on parental behaviour. In one 13-country study, a majority of parents from different socio-economic backgrounds who participated in a Rights-Based programme found that it helped them understand their children's development, communicate better with their children, understand their children's feelings better, control their anger and build better relationships with their children.

Studies into the comparative effectiveness of the two approaches indicate that the Rights-Based approach may produce better outcomes in terms of building stronger parent-child relationships and reducing parenting stress.³⁸

Which Programme? Research suggests that a public health approach, combining universal and targeted interventions appears more effective than other types of interventions.³⁹ In Estonia, evaluations of the implementation of an indicated programme show that positive parenting programmes are only meaningful if integrated into a broader system of social services for families.

Is it Transferable? It has been shown that many existing positive parenting programmes can be transferred to different countries, even where there are very different cultures and legal and socio-economic contexts. This works best when the intervention is well-established and has a clear training and certification system. An evaluation in Estonia of the impact of the

Incredible Years programme showed measurable, significant and sustainable results with just minor adjustments to the programme.⁴⁰

Different countries may experience different types of challenges in adapting programmes depending on their cultural context. Research shows that if programmes are adapted to a specific culture, it helps to encourage families to participate. However, there does not appear to be evidence that interventions need extensive adaptation when being transferred into different countries. Researchers have drawn the conclusion that it is highly likely that the basic principles of the positive parenting approaches, such as building parent-child relations through play and positive attention, are universal across cultures.⁴¹

It may, therefore, be more successful to adapt existing, evidence-based programmes than starting to develop a new one from scratch. One can translate material into local languages, and adapt it to represent local culture and religion. The changes to the structure and content of the programme should, however, not be too far-reaching since it may take away or distort some of the key components that have an evidenced impact.⁴²

Is it Cost Effective? In determining which programmes to choose, it may also be important to consider evidence of its cost effectiveness. Many of the positive parenting programmes are costly, in particular where they involve professional, commercial trainers. When independent research and evaluation is embedded in the quality assurance system of an intervention for parents, it is easier to make visible to decision-makers what investments today can expect to accrue in the future.

A cost effectiveness analysis in Sweden showed that parental support interventions in the form of selective parental support programmes are a profitable investment that pays for itself within a year. Each Swedish krona invested gives an average of two in return over a period of one to two years. In the Netherlands, a cost-benefit calculator has been created for local authorities to support informed decisions.⁴³

LIMITATION OF EVALUATIONS

It is important to note that evaluations of positive parenting approaches and programmes are not necessarily examined from the perspective of a child or children's rights. This means that even if research shows that a programme is effective from a parent's perspective or from a perspective of reducing "disruptive behaviour" in a child, it does not automatically mean that it is sensitive to children's

38 George Holden, Andrew Grogan-Kaylor, Joan Durrant & Elizabeth Gershoff (2017) 'Researchers Deserve a Better Critique: Response to Larzelere, Gunnoe, Roberts, and Ferguson', 53(5) *Marriage & Family Review*, 465-490.

39 Ruth Gilbert et al, 'Child maltreatment: variation in trends and policies in six developed countries' (2012) 379(9817) *The Lancet* 758-77.

40 Non-violent childhoods: Moving on from corporal punishment in the Baltic Sea Region, National Consultation Report Estonia (2017).

41 Frances Gardner, 'Parenting Interventions: How well do they transport from one country to another?' (2017) 10 *Innocenti Research Brief*.

42 UNODC: <https://www.unodc.org/documents/prevention/family-compilation.pdf>, p.4

43 <https://voorzorginfographic.ncj.nl/>

rights or takes into account children's feelings about their parents, the health of the relationship from the child's perspective, trust, a sense of being heard and of "selfhood". Further research into programmes from the perspective of a child or children's rights is required to better understand how positive parenting programmes contribute to achieving a child's rights to health and development, participation and freedom from violence.

When choosing programmes on the basis of evidence, it is important to recognise that the quality of evidence and the strength of recommendations can be assessed, graded and understood in different ways. Evaluation practices and capacity also vary substantially.⁴⁴ A recent study to identify, appraise and synthesise all the empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of interventions for families where children are exposed to abuse and neglect found that only two interventions have definite empirical evidence (proven by blinded RCTs) for decreasing child abuse and neglect. The study also concluded that this does not necessarily mean that the other programmes that were reviewed are ineffective, but that there is a great need to assess other promising interventions with well designed randomised trials.⁴⁵

It is also important to consider which programme is most likely to be successfully implemented in a certain context, depending on for example culture, infrastructure and resources. If it is likely that a programme will face major issues in terms of its practical implementation, evidence of its positive impact in other places does not serve as a sufficient ground for choosing the programme.

EVALUATION

To ensure effective outcomes for both parents and children, it is important that positive parenting programmes are evaluated over a long period to demonstrate the effectiveness, impact and outcomes of the intervention. Evaluation can also ensure that any unintended harm or negative effects of the programme come to light.

Experience in Latvia shows that evaluating parenting programmes provides important evidence to guide the review of programmes and amend or develop new ones that respond to identified needs and gaps. For example, fatherhood campaigns were developed on the basis of evaluations demonstrating that fathers are less involved in parenting and parenting programmes.

4.4 INCLUSIVITY

The principle of inclusivity should underpin the design, implementation and evaluation of the positive parenting initiative.

Experience shows that despite the wealth of available programmes, not all programmes are suitable or adequate for all target groups and their specific needs.⁴⁶ In order to reach all segments and groups and to target specific needs, attitudes and practice, it may be necessary to adapt strategies and/or to adopt special measures. For example, the "Good Parent, Good Start" programme implemented in Poland, offers a combination of support services, including targeted support to parents in different situations. One component of the programme targets parents who are doing generally fine, a second component is targeted at parents who experience some difficulties, and the third is for families at risk of harming their children severely.⁴⁷

Ensuring equality between women and men in their role and responsibilities as parents requires an effort to reach and target both mothers and fathers. One example may be to integrate messages about equality between men and women in parenthood in universal, preventive approaches.

Reaching fathers has proven to be a particular challenge in many countries. It may therefore be necessary to find ways of targeting fathers directly to motivate their involvement and a change in behaviour. For example, in Latvia, a campaign offered group programmes for fathers in partnership with churches and faith-based organisations, based on the message that stress levels and aggression can be prevented when fathers and mothers share the responsibility in the family and both actively engage in parenting.⁴⁸

Special measures are often also required to reach mothers who use, or are at risk of using corporal punishment. Learning from Finland shows that peer groups and group counselling can have a strong preventive effect and contribute to breaking cycles of transgenerational transmission of corporal punishment but that there needs to be easy access to information and counselling for women to grasp such opportunities.⁴⁹ In Poland, parents who are victims or perpetrators of violence can get support via a helpline, "the Blue Line", and specific positive parenting programmes. It is mainly women and mothers who contact the line, seeking support to end their own use of violence against their children. The support has proven essential to help mothers interrupt the dynamics of violence, tensions and aggressions in

44 See for example Brian Head, 'Toward More "Evidence-Informed" Policy Making?' (2015) 76(3) Public Administration Review, 472–484.

45 Öppenvårdsinsatser för familjer där barn utsätts för våld och försummelse. En systematisk översikt och utvärdering av ekonomiska och etiska aspekter. Stockholm: Statens beredning för medicinsk och social utvärdering (SBU 2018). SBU-rapport nr 280.

46 Anna Norlén, Overview of Preventive Programmes and Initiatives – Experiences from clinical treatment for children exposed to violence and abuse, Ericastiftelsen, Presentation, Stockholm, 8 May 2017.

47 Non-violent childhoods: Moving on from corporal punishment in the Baltic Sea Region, National Consultation Report Poland (2017) p.35.

48 Non-violent childhoods: Moving on from corporal punishment in the Baltic Sea Region, National Consultation Report Latvia (2017) p.29.

49 Non-violent childhoods: Moving on from corporal punishment in the Baltic Sea Region, National Consultation Report Finland (2017).

the home and to protect children from witnessing or experiencing violence in the family.⁵⁰

Many countries refer parents at risk to specific parenting programmes. For example, the programme “the Guardian Angel” in Latvia targets families at risk with children under the age of two years. Parents are usually referred to the programme by social services. The programme is mandatory if there are concerns about the safety and well-being of the child and for families where the child has previously been placed in alternative care due to neglect, violence or other behaviour that has put the child at risk of harm. Evaluations show that the programme has positive results with parents who have mild intellectual disabilities and with parents who had drug abuse problems and are part of a methadone programme.

In Estonia, parents and caregivers can also be referred to an indicated positive parenting training programme, the Incredible Years, by child protection services, which is organised by the municipalities with State funding. Learning shows that the programme is effective, but that it is only meaningful if it is integrated into a broader system of social services for families. Evaluations also show that parents who did not benefit significantly from the programme usually had other problems that needed to be addressed first, such as mental health issues, substance abuse and/or social exclusion.⁵¹

The national strategy on parental support in Sweden provides a range of activities in order to include families who are considered difficult to reach. They include local initiatives such as home visits by midwives that are conducted in cooperation with social workers. An important aspect of the strategy is to strengthen social networks that support parents in everyday life, including in accessing knowledge and information. This is considered particularly important for newly arrived migrants and refugees who do not yet have a social network. The strategy is proactive and universal so that parents do not have to actively seek help. This also reduces stigmatisation.⁵²

In Norway, the Nurse-Family Partnership programme is currently being piloted with first-time parents facing particular challenges in relation to their entry into parenthood, such as violent childhoods, mental health distress and/or poor social networks.⁵³ The programme, which has proven effective in reducing child abuse and neglect in other countries,⁵⁴ aims to ensure healthy pregnancies and healthy development of children through frequent home visits by trained nurses from early pregnancy until the child’s second year of life. The parent-child interaction and

attachment is measured and addressed throughout the programme duration and positive parenting is promoted through the use of PIPE (Partners in Parenting Education) materials.

Norway offers tailored versions of the group-based International Child Development Programme (ICDP) to parents with specific needs or challenges, such as parents in domestic violence survivor shelters, incarcerated parents, parents of children at risk of radicalisation or parents in asylum seeker centres. Evaluations have shown positive changes in parenting style, fewer challenges in relation to the children, less agitation at home, a decrease in loneliness and changes to parenting attitudes among ICDP participants versus control groups. The largest changes were seen in the parents with the most disadvantaged starting point.⁵⁵ The ICDP is also provided universally, through child clinics, kindergartens, family counselling offices and other local arenas for parents as part of the national programme for parental support.

Special efforts may also be required to reach parents with children who have special needs, mental health problems or are at risk of substance abuse. There is a wide range of positive parenting programmes, some of which are discussed above, that offer support for parents to adopt non-violent parenting strategies with children with severe behavioural problems and/or aggressive behaviour. However, research in Finland and Sweden has revealed that currently there are not enough programmes to support parents in building positive relations and solving conflict with children with disabilities.⁵⁶

It may also be necessary to take action to reach out to a specific group of parents, whose children are disproportionately affected by violence, for example LGBTQIA children (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex). For example, in Poland, the Lambda Foundation implemented a campaign directed at parents of LGBTQIA children to address mental abuse and humiliating treatment.⁵⁷

The Positive Discipline in Everyday Parenting (PDEP) programme has been commended for its children’s rights approach, its comprehensiveness and broad applicability, which has rendered it suitable for most contexts and target groups, irrespective of the national and socio-cultural context or background of the parents.⁵⁸

50 Non-violent childhoods: Moving on from corporal punishment in the Baltic Sea Region, National Consultation Report Poland (2017) p.34.

51 Non-violent childhoods: Moving on from corporal punishment in the Baltic Sea Region, National Consultation Report Estonia (2017).

52 Jenny Munkelt, Strategic Work with Parenting Support, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Presentation, Stockholm, 10 May 2017.

53 <http://www.hioa.no/Om-HIOA/Senter-for-velferds-og-arbeidslivsforskning/AFI/Prosjekter-AFI/Nurse-Family-Partnership-NFP>

54 Summaries and references available at <https://www.nursefamilypartnership.org/about/proven-results/>

55 Sherr et al 2014 quoted in Beret Bråten og Silje Sønsterudbråten, Foreldreveiledning – virker det? En kunnskapsstatus (Fafo 2016) 29.

56 Non-violent childhoods: Moving on from corporal punishment in the Baltic Sea Region, National Consultation Report Finland (2017).

57 Non-violent childhoods: Moving on from corporal punishment in the Baltic Sea Region, National Consultation Report Poland (2017) p.36.

58 Non-violent childhoods: Moving on from corporal punishment in the Baltic Sea Region, National Consultation Report Sweden (2017).

4.5 WORKING TOGETHER

The principle of working together across multiple initiatives should underpin the design, implementation and evaluation of the positive parenting initiative.

National and local authorities play a leading role in ensuring the implementation of a legal ban on corporal punishment and should assume responsibility for resourcing and implementing national and local efforts to encourage positive parenting. However, strong partnerships across sectors and a broad range of initiatives are crucial to generate a shift in parents' attitudes and behaviour. For example, in Sweden, the Family Law and Parental Support Authority provides knowledge and support for the counties, which are responsible for developing and implementing parental support programmes.⁵⁹ In addition to the national and local authorities, NGOs have an important role in developing and implementing parental support programmes.⁶⁰

Today, there are a number of different actors that offer various types of interventions that inform and support parents in their role as caregivers. Different actors typically have a particular focus, reach and influence. They can address issues from different angles and offer a range of solutions, for example from a legal perspective or from a child health and development perspective. Campaigns, awareness-raising, parent support programmes, preventive health care and positive parenting training programmes all form part of efforts to raise awareness and prompt behaviour change with parents.

Public health and social service professionals can contribute to positive parenting through their work with both universal preventive initiatives and efforts targeting families with a history of violence. For example, in Finland universal services to parents provide support through regular meetings with nurses who engage parents in conversations about their concerns and provide early intervention and support. The meetings are also used to assess risk factors and to establish if a family needs increased support.⁶¹ In Sweden, multidisciplinary and interagency services for child victims and witnesses of violence, so-called Barnahus, have implemented specialised interventions for families aimed at preventing further violence and increasing the well-being of children, including combined parent-child cognitive behavioural therapy.

Universal, preventive campaigns to encourage positive parenting have typically been implemented by Governments, international organisations and

national NGOs, often in combination with practical input on positive parenting strategies. The Council of Europe campaign "Raise Your Hand Against Smacking" combines awareness-raising with material that educates parents on positive parenting.⁶² Following the legal ban in Sweden, campaign material was distributed to all households about different ways of setting boundaries for children and building positive relations between parents and children in different age groups without using corporal punishment.⁶³ Media is an important partner in universal campaigns and can support awareness-raising, dissemination of information and public debates to encourage measures to prevent corporal punishment, including positive parenting and teaching strategies.

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are important implementing partners for national and local authorities, including involvement in rolling out positive parenting training programmes. For example, in Estonia, civil society, community-based organisations and local child protection departments together play an important and active role in sensitising citizens on child protection, the rights of the child and positive parenting.⁶⁴ In Finland, the Federation of Mother and Child Homes and Shelters develops and implements programmes that promote non-violent parenting. The programme "Encourage me and I will grow strong" provides leaflets with information, including about the impact of violence on children, how to adopt positive parenting and create a safe environment for children. It also encourages parents to seek help if needed. The Federation centres act as a contact point for parents who seek help.⁶⁵ In Poland, the Empowering Children Foundation offers positive parenting programmes in close collaboration with service providers, such as local social welfare centres, health care facilities and day-care centres.⁶⁶

Globally, NGOs, and inter-governmental organisations, such as UNICEF, have promoted, developed and implemented a variety of campaigns with a strong element of encouraging positive parenting to help parents to raise children without using corporal punishment. For example, Save the Children is a co-founder and partner of the Positive Discipline in Everyday Parenting (PDEP) programme.

Religious, spiritual and faith based groups can also play an important role in supporting their communities and individual members to break with traditions and practices that are harmful to children and in violation of the legal ban on corporal punishment. For example, support groups and individual counselling can provide

59 Myndigheten för familjerätt och föräldraskapsstöd, MfoF, <http://www.mfof.se/sv/foraldraskapsstod/>

60 Jenny Munkelt, Strategic Work with Parenting Support, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Presentation, Stockholm, 10 May 2017.

61 Workshop on the prevention of child maltreatment: strengthening intersectoral working, Riga, Latvia, 1–2 June 2017. World Health Organisation Regional Office in Europe and Nordic Council of Ministers p.17.

62 <https://www.coe.int/en/web/children/corporal-punishment>

63 Non-violent childhoods: Moving on from corporal punishment in the Baltic Sea Region, National Consultation Report Sweden (2017). The campaign was entitled "Can you raise and educate your children without hitting or spanking?" (Kan man klara barnuppfostran utan smick och dask?)

64 Irina Golikova, Sillamäe Child Protection Association, Activities and services of Sillamäe child protection association: Putting effort on psychological help and preventing violence, National Consultation Estonia, Narva, 16 November 2017.

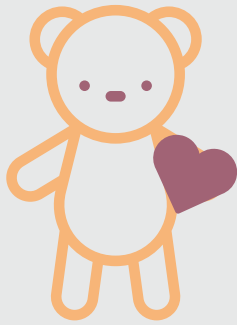
65 Non-violent childhoods: Moving on from corporal punishment in the Baltic Sea Region, National Consultation Report Finland (2017).

66 Non-violent childhoods: Moving on from corporal punishment in the Baltic Sea Region, National Consultation Report Poland (2017) p.35.

opportunities to promote positive alternatives to such practices.⁶⁷

Researchers and universities have provided invaluable insights to contextual analysis; data and research on the prevalence and impact of corporal punishment; evidence-based evaluation of the impact of initiatives; and innovative solutions to address violence. In many countries, research and data about child development, the impact of violence on children's health, parent-child relations and intergenerational transmission of violence have played a crucial role in informing positive parenting programmes and other forms of support to parents.

⁶⁷ Non-violent childhoods: Moving on from corporal punishment in the Baltic Sea Region, National Consultation Report Sweden (2017).



05

taking action for positive parenting

It is not always easy to choose the right programme, but there are a few considerations that can guide the choice of programme. These includes considering what the purpose of the action is, what principles should inform the action and what partners will be involved. Understanding the context and target group is essential so that you know if you need a universal, selective and/or indicative programme. It is also important to look at the available evidence on impact, implementation and cost effectiveness.

The final section of this report provides guidance on some of the considerations for choosing a positive parenting initiative. It addresses the programme's purpose and principles; the choice between universal, selective or an indicated programme; evidence; cost effectiveness and resources; and implementation partners.

Changing attitudes and behaviour is often a complex, sensitive and long-term process. It requires a mix of many different initiatives, which will constitute the most effective way to generate behaviour change and transform attitudes among parents and caregivers.

Taking a structured and analytical approach to the selection of action for positive parenting will help maximise impact in any given context. For example, developing a national strategy for parental support based on a solid context analysis can help ensure a comprehensive and targeted response at both national and local level. A national strategy can serve as an inspiration and a practical support tool in the planning, development, implementation and evaluation of programmes. It can also help identify roles, responsibilities and resources for the planned action.

5.1 PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES

The starting point for developing a strategy or deciding on actions to support parents and promote positive parenting is to establish the fundamental purpose and the principles that will guide the action.

The overall purpose may be to promote the health, development and well-being of children; to protect children against physical and mental harm; and/or to promote implementation of the legal ban. Specific objectives may include informing parents about the impact of violence on children; teaching alternatives to corporal punishment; early detection of violence; and promoting social networks. The purpose and objectives provide a framework for making decisions regarding the type of initiative, methodology and implementation partners.

It is also important to determine which principles will underpin the initiative, and consider how they will affect selection, development, implementation and evaluation of the programmes.

FOR EXAMPLE:

What implications does a children's rights approach have on messaging and methodology?

How does an inclusive approach, based on equality between men and women in their shared role and responsibilities as parents affect how and when positive parenting programmes are made available?

How will a non-discriminatory approach targeting parents with children who have special needs or newly arrived migrants affect the choice of specific programmes?

In this context it may also be helpful to consider if the programme should adopt a voluntary and/or mandatory approach. Mandatory approaches have been criticised for contradicting the message of positive parenting programmes that teach and model non-coercion and for potentially contributing to stigmatisation. On the other hand, it may be argued that it can be difficult to convince some parents who are in most need to join, and benefit, from voluntary initiatives.

Programmes at the selective or indicative level can adopt an inclusive and voluntary-based approach. The Nurse-Family Partnership programme is strictly voluntary, though focussed on parents in great need of support. In addition to parents voluntarily choosing to participate in the intervention, parents are included in decision making at all levels of the programme. When hiring nurses for the pilot in Norway, mothers in challenging life situations were included in the panel assessing candidates. “Experience consultants” (mothers who could have been included in the programme) sit on local and national level bodies in the organisation of the pilot. This was seen to enhance the programme’s chances of meeting the participating families’ needs and desire to provide their children with the best childhood possible.

5.2 CHOICE OF PROGRAMME

To maximise success it is important to carefully select the most appropriate programme (or mix of programmes) to suit the given context, taking into account the purpose, approach and principles that inform the basis for the action. It is important to understand and have clear criteria for this selection. A context analysis can be built around several different criteria, ranging from fairly general considerations, such as available resources, to very specific ones, such as the individual needs of a family or parent.

A strategic decision to adapt one approach (or programme) should not exclude the use of another. For example, a decision to implement a national universal, preventive programme through a public awareness campaign does not prevent the simultaneous adoption of a selective programme that supports a specific group of parents.

There are several articles, research reports and inventories on positive parenting programmes that can help guide this selection.⁶⁸

5.3 EVIDENCE AND EVALUATION

It is often recommended to select and adapt a programme that has been proven effective rather than starting from scratch to develop a new one.

When looking at evidence-based programmes, it is important to not only look at the results of the evaluation but to also look at the criteria used. Did the criteria reflect important guiding principles such as children’s rights, needs and views? Evidence can be rated and graded differently so it is also important to look at the methodology that was used, so that it meets the expectations or potential requirements for selecting a programme.

It is also important to plan and resource an evaluation of the programme during its implementation so that steps can be taken to further adapt it if needed. Efforts should be made, to the greatest extent possible, to integrate children’s perspectives in such an evaluation.

5.4 RESOURCES AND COST EFFECTIVENESS

Available resources are important determining factors in the choice of programme. Resources are often scarce and it can be a challenge to raise the necessary means to roll out comprehensive, inclusive and targeted initiatives.

Universal programmes are often the least expensive way to reach a broad target group. However, in some cases, it may be necessary, and more effective, to offer an indicative or selective programme that targets parents individually or in small groups. It may also be necessary to adopt specific measures to ensure that those hardest to reach are included.

It is, therefore, important to engage in a cost effectiveness analysis, which factors in not only the available resources, but also the characteristics, needs and situation of the intended target group and what might have the best added value and impact in a given context.

A key aspect of planning is to ensure adequate resources for implementation and evaluation. Positive parenting programmes are typically funded by State and local authority budgets, such as for public health. However, it is not uncommon that international donors or the private sector may contribute with additional resources. For example, the Latvian Guardian Angel programme is funded by the municipality of Riga and receives additional financial and in-kind support from the private sector and other sponsors.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ See for example UNODC, *Compilation of Evidence Based Family Skills Training Programmes*, <https://www.unodc.org/documents/prevention/family-compilation.pdf>
⁶⁹ Non-violent childhoods: Moving on from corporal punishment in the Baltic Sea Region, National Consultation Report Latvia (2017).

5.5 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Several actors can play a role in developing, implementing and evaluating positive parenting programmes.

Consideration should be given to the following actions:

- Organise a comprehensive response at national, regional and local level to capitalise on the roles and responsibilities of all relevant actors
- Organise the coordination, collaboration and exchange between all key actors that play a role
- Appoint a lead agency that has an overall role and responsibility in terms of planning, oversight, competence building, coordination and evaluation
- Identify who, or which partnerships, have the capacity and knowledge to implement a specific initiative
- Identify who has access, influence or best meets the needs of different groups or individuals. Credibility and position are important factors here. Geographical location should not affect access to, or the quality of, support provided to parents.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Geographic and demographic conditions may limit the feasibility of offering more intensive selective or indicative approaches, especially if delivered by especially trained staff and/or using methods such as home visiting.

5.6 FRAMEWORK TO DEVELOP A POSITIVE PARENTING INITIATIVE

Below is a framework posing a series of questions to support States develop positive parenting initiatives:

<p>Purpose & Objectives</p>	<p>What is the overall purpose and specific objectives of the positive parenting initiative?</p> <p>[Objectives - inform parents about the impact of violence on children; teach alternatives to corporal punishment; or early detection of violence]</p>
<p>Principles</p>	<p>What principles will guide the positive parenting initiative and how will these principles affect the development, implementation and evaluation of the programme?</p> <p>[Principles - children’s rights, research informed, evidence informed, inclusivity, and working together]</p>
<p>Type of Approach</p>	<p>Which approach will be adopted in the positive parenting initiative?</p> <p>[Approaches - Behaviourist or Rights-Based].</p>
<p>Type of Programme</p>	<p>What type of programme will be selected for the positive parenting initiative?</p> <p>[Programmes - universal, selective or indicated and can be either voluntary or mandatory]</p>
<p>Methods</p>	<p>What methodologies, methods and tools will be used?</p> <p>[Methods – public campaigns, parent support programmes, public health intervention etc]</p>
<p>Evidence</p>	<p>Are there existing evidence-based models that can be adapted?</p> <p>What are the key criteria that are of interest to us in terms of evidence-base?</p> <p>How do they correspond with the basic principles that we want to guide our action?</p>
<p>Resourcing</p>	<p>What is the most cost effective approach?</p> <p>How can impact and value for money be maximised?</p> <p>From where can resources be allocated?</p>
<p>Implementation</p>	<p>Who are the implementing partners?</p> <p>What steps need to be taken to involve and engage these actors?</p> <p>How can coordination, collaboration and exchange be organised and promoted?</p>
<p>Evaluation</p>	<p>What is needed to ensure adequate evaluation of the initiative?</p>

Non-Violent Childhoods

The Non-Violent Childhoods programme aims to promote the full implementation of the legal ban on corporal punishment in the Baltic Sea Region through collaborative, multi-stakeholder planning and action. The programme is managed by the Council of the Baltic Sea States and jointly funded by the European Commission. www.childrenatrisk.eu/nonviolence

Council of the Baltic Sea States

Established in 1992, the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) is a political forum for regional inter-governmental cooperation and dialogue. The member states of the CBSS are Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia, Sweden, as well as the European Commission. The CBSS operates through its networks and expert groups. In 1998, the CBSS initiated its work to implement the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The CBSS Expert Group on Children at Risk engages with national, regional and international stakeholders to end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against children. www.cbss.org

A Regional Initiative and Partnership

The Non-Violent Childhoods programme operates in partnership with ministries from Estonia, Finland, Latvia and Sweden and with the Ombudsman for Children's Rights in Poland. Representatives from government ministries, national parliaments, ombuds-offices for children, academia and organisations as well as children from most of the countries in the Baltic Sea Region have in addition participated in expert meetings and contributed to the programme and the guidance reports. Experts from other countries and institutions in Europe have also taken part.

Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children

The Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children works with governments and non-governmental actors towards universal prohibition and elimination of corporal punishment of children. It is an international partner to the Non-Violent Childhoods programme. www.endcorporalpunishment.org

Guidance Reports

A Step-by-Step Guide on implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child to achieve an end to corporal punishment

Ensuring Non-Violent Childhoods –
Guidance on implementing the prohibition of corporal punishment in domestic settings

Parenting for Non-Violent Childhoods –
Positive parenting to achieve an end to corporal punishment

Building Supportive Societies for Non-Violent Childhoods – Awareness-raising campaigns to achieve an end to corporal punishment

Service Providers as Champions for Non-Violent Childhoods – Service provision for children and parents to achieve an end to corporal punishment

Tracking Progress towards Non-Violent Childhoods – Measuring changes in attitudes and behaviour to achieve an end to corporal punishment

The Non-Violent Childhoods Programme is led by the
Council of the Baltic Sea States in partnership with:

Ministry of Social Affairs, Estonia
Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Finland
Ministry of Welfare, Latvia
Ombudsman for Children's Rights, Poland
Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Sweden
The Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children

More information on the Non-Violent Childhoods programme, including its guidance reports and the campaign, can be found at www.childrenatrisk.eu/nonviolence



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GLOBAL INITIATIVE TO
**End All Corporal
Punishment of Children**