

PARENTING & DISCIPLINE



KINDNESS

HONESTY

LOVE

COURAGE

OUR
VALUES

CARING

HUMILITY

TRUTH

WISDOM

SHARING

RESPECT





Children learn about your expectations for their behaviour through verbal cues, modelling, and meaningful consequences to their actions. Your child is learning how to process their reactions, emotions and feelings. Sometimes, this can be overwhelming. As they grow, they will push boundaries to become more independent.

As a parent, you are also learning. You are learning how to respond and provide meaningful consequences to your children when they act out. You may feel alone and unable to respond to your child's behaviour.

One goal as a parent can be to ensure children learn how to react and process their emotions and feelings in a healthy way.

When you are considering consequences to your child's behaviour, it is important to know the law related discipline in Section 43 of the Criminal Code.

Section 43 means that parents, caregivers or teachers who use reasonable force to control a child, or to keep the child or other children safe, may not be guilty of a criminal offence.

The concept of “reasonable force” is unclear in the law. The Supreme Court of Canada set guidelines to ensure discipline does not become abuse or violate a child’s human rights. The following chart describes these guidelines and offers alternative forms of disciplines.

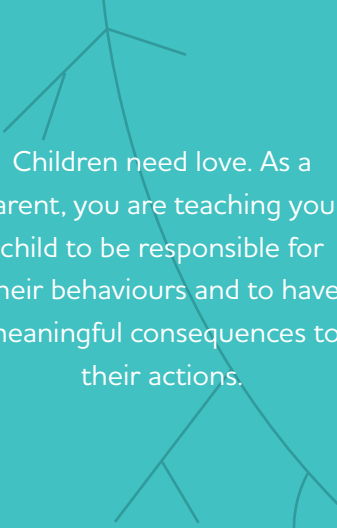
Caution! slapping, punching, pinching, kicking, restraining or even touching are examples of actions that may be considered assault. There is never a good reason to use these types of physical force with your child.




Supreme Court Guidelines for reasonable physical punishment ¹	Alternative parenting response
Physical discipline cannot cause physical harm or injury. It must be minor. If it leaves a mark or bruise, it would not be considered reasonable.	It is ok to remove a child from an unsafe situation. A light spanking is not recommended but is not illegal as long as the spanking is not humiliating or harmful.
Physical punishment cannot be used on children younger than 2 years old or older than 12 years-old.	Learn about discipline for each developmental stage. Go to the library, talk to Elders or family and friends, or attend a parenting class.
Physical punishment cannot be used on a child when you are angry or as a consequence for something a child did.	Be calm. If you feel you cannot control your own actions or emotions, remove yourself from the situation and wait until you have calmed down.
Objects, such as belts or rulers, must never be used on a child. A child must never be hit or slapped on the face or head.	Using objects to discipline is often mistaken as traditional parenting. Indigenous traditions use lessons and cultural protocol to handle misguided behaviour. Consult with an Elder to learn more.
Physical punishment cannot be used on a child who is incapable of learning from the situation because of a disability or some other factor.	Discuss the situation clearly with your child so they can learn from it. If your child has a disability, look for ways to deal with their behaviours in a way they can understand. Talk to an Elder, doctor, psychologist, if needed.
The seriousness of the child's misbehaviour is not relevant to deciding whether the force used was reasonable. The force used must be minor, no matter what the child did.	You do not need to use physical punishment to have a big impact on your child's behaviour. Ensure your child is responsible for their behaviour. Encourage them to respect themselves and others. These approaches can help turn a negative situation into a positive learning experience.

¹ Adapted from Department of Justice, Criminal Law and Managing Children's Behaviour -

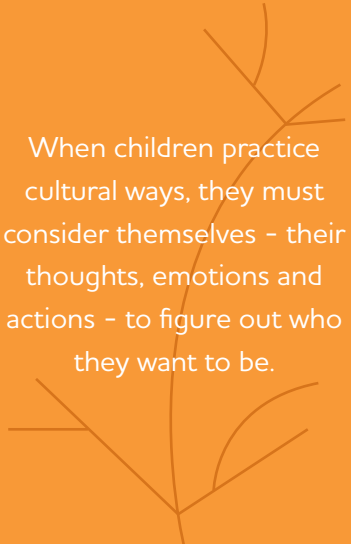
<https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/cj-jp/fv-vf/mcb-cce/index.html>



Children need love. As a parent, you are teaching your child to be responsible for their behaviours and to have meaningful consequences to their actions.



Children's understanding their own emotional, physical, mental and spiritual aspects is essential for their wellbeing.



When children practice cultural ways, they must consider themselves - their thoughts, emotions and actions - to figure out who they want to be.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

211 Edmonton and Area/Calgary and Area - Services and programs options

310-1818 Family Violence Information Line

1-800-387-5437 Child Abuse Hotline

For children and youth

1-800-668-6868

Text “Connect” to 686868

Native Counselling Services of Alberta – Family Programs

nca.ca or 780-451-4002



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