

Spanking to Discipline Children vs. Spanking is a Child Abuse

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Philosophy 341

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05/08/2021

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Introduction

In the debate about whether spanking disciplines or is a form of child abuse, there has been unclear agreement by those against and those for the idea. Notably, most children experience spanking by those close to them, like parents, guardians, and caregivers. It is therefore important to have a look at the two forms of arguments; whether spanking is a form of corporal punishment which when subjected to children, can affect their emotional and behavioral improvements because even though it might catch their attention, there is a high likelihood that they become rogue when out of their parents' sights or just a way of correcting children by those close to them. Most of the 80% percent of the American children who are spanked are associated with negative outcomes rather than the positive correctional intention of most parents who do it as a form of punishment to their children (Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor, 2016). There are many cases of spanking in American society, which has resulted in many debates about whether it is a form of punishment or child abuse.

Still, however, the debates have ended to an incomplete agreement but many meta-analyses associate spanking with more negative effects than good (MacMillan & Mikton, 2017). Spanking is viewed as the most common form of punishment to correct their unbecoming behaviors to children by their parents around the world (Pace et al., 2019). Therefore, the paper is a critical analysis of this incomplete debate to try to come up with patient arguments of both sides discussing whether spanking in children is a form of punishment or child abuse.

Arguments and Counterarguments

Many people and researchers believe that spanking in children is a form of child abuse. Specifically, their publications have pointed out how they feel spanking is a corporal punishment

that creates negative emotional developments in the children. They believe that children exposed to spanking get associated with more internalization problems and externalization in their growth processes (Pace et al., 2019). As they argue, these problems make the children exposed to extremely harsh environments that only make them obedient when around their parents and caregivers but do what they want when alone or next to the people they consider harmless to them (Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor, 2016). Additionally, in their perspective in the debate, those against spanking of children as put by Hudnut-Beumler et al. (2018), posit that parents should be taught how to embrace other healthy forms of punishments and stop children spanking or consider spanking their children less. Thus, because in their consideration, spanking abuse children in such a way that it causes emotional stress and torture to them.

Besides, those against spanking of children believe that spanking has been associated with other harsher and more dangerous forms of punishment. Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor (2016) believe that when parents are spanking their children by correcting them, they accompany spanking with other forms of harsher punishments like hitting with dangerous objects, which consequently cause a lot of pain to the children which becomes more abusive to them. The argument of those that are against spanking as a punishment form to children and considers the whole thing as child abuse relate it as a form of corporal punishment which is associated with major risks of detrimental outcomes like aggression, more antisocial behaviors, mental health problems, and poor relationship of such children and their parents (Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor, 2016). In their arguments, the opposers of spanking to children believe that spanked children are most likely to engage in deviant activities when grown or growing up because they were exposed to extremism when young. Psychologically, they are most likely to be introverted because of their fear when spanked at their younger ages.

In the same debate, however, a group of people argues that spanking is just a form of punishment intended to correct children's behaviors and not children's abuse as opposed to the idea. In their counterarguments towards the incomplete debate, they argue that spanking is not related to the said detrimental outcomes; therefore, the allegations are far-fetched. Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor (2016) in their determination of such a debate, noted that the allegations brought out by those opposed to the spanking of children had got critical limitations. Since the arguments have failed to directly link the said antisocial and psychological behaviors to children spanking and failure to point out the relationship between those two factors directly pokes a lot of weaknesses in their arguments.

Additionally, it is notable that pro-spanking believe that it is a way of controlling children's positive behaviors and social competence instead of those against the spanking issue who believe that it promotes antisocial behaviors in children. Altschul (2016) complimented this view and perception when he noted that most parents and children's caregivers believe that spanking has no negative effects on their children. Still, the safest way of correcting their children whenever they go wrong and largely spanking promotes children's social competence. Whenever they go wrong, they will get punished and try to engage in doing right in society. They believe that children who go unpunished are prone to making many mistakes and more often engage in antisocial activities such as criminality. As a result of lack of parental guidance through correcting children when they make a simple mistake; the mistakes that graduate to higher crimes when they grow. Spare the child, spoil the rod.

Normally, there is an argument by proposers that children who are softly handled have more risk of antisocial behaviors than spanked ones because such children will grow knowing that they can do whatever they want without being worried about their actions. Normally, mother's

warmth makes children engage in antisocial activities than children who are spanked (Altschul, 2016). For that reason, this group believes that spanking is a safe way of correcting children whenever they grow to be better people who respect societal norms and values.

Evaluation of Critical Thinking

While critically evaluating the arguments from the two sides of the debate, it is evident that the two sides present their sides of the argument with clear and precise evidence trying to make either of their sides win the conversation. Primarily, both sides are right or wrong because psychologically, children exposed to corporal punishments tend to develop antisocial behaviors that affect their mental health growth. After becoming old in life, most of them tend to offer resistance to society or lack self-esteem to achieve their life goals. As a result, such children may indeed observe aggression and become deviant when growing or after they have grown up. It is also true that spanking is a slight form of punishment to children that cause little pain to them and cannot cause bodily harm to the children's buttocks. Again, it is arguable that the children who severally engage in mistakes and go unpunished become more aggressive and resistant to those that might try to correct their behaviors during their older stages of life. Hence, this point that mothers' warmth is more destructive to children than spanking because they will tend to engage in antisocial behaviors without the fear of their action's consequences.

However, the psychoanalytic and social learning theories view spanking to develop aggression and other related antisocial behaviors in children when they become older in life. Benjet & Kazdin (2002) discussed that spanking children interfere with their psychological behaviors. Through social learning, they learn to be aggressive and antisocial in life and whether spanking corrects children or not is an irrelevant argument. First, the arguments of those who view spanking as a form of child abuse inductively support the scientific psychoanalytic and social learning

theories that children should not be spanked. On the other hand, those whose perception is that the children should be spanked as a way of punishment to them is inductively adding no value to the two scientific theories. However, the pro-children spanking debate challenges the authenticity of the other argument against spanking by noting that children who are left without being punished are at higher risks of becoming antisocial.

Conclusion

Spanking of children is popular not only in American society but also in other cultures globally. Having considered the arguments from both sides of the debate whether spanking is a form of punishment or child abuse. When growing up, I would get spanked on the buttocks as a form of punishment, however, it would not cause me to fear my parents. Now that I'm older, I know that that was not child abuse, if it had been child abuse, I would fear my parents and a lot more. However, I do agree that parents should not spank their children in the name of punishing them because spanking creates more harm than good to the children. Parents should look for more appropriate and transforming methods of punishment than spanking. I prefer behavior correction of children by engaging them to teach them how best to behave than involving them in spanking that will expose them to psychological and social problems.

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