

NO HIT ZONES

Randell Alexander MD PhD

University of Florida – Jacksonville



THE PLAYERS[®]
Center for Child Health

Wolfson Children's Hospital
Institute for Child Abuse Prevention



ADVANCING HEALTH EDUCATION & RESEARCH



CHILD ABUSE PEDIATRICIAN

- We see victims of physical abuse regularly
- Let's prevent that
- NHZs – one tactic in changing social norms



SOCIAL NORMS



SOCIAL NORMS CHANGE

- Change is not “natural” for everyone
- Resistance is strong but ultimately futile
- Examples:
 - Civil rights
 - No smoking areas
 - Gay marriage



CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

DEFINITIONS



- Spanking: hitting with a hand or object with the stated intent of causing pain and therefore discipline
- Corporal or physical punishment: spanking and any other physical hitting with the stated intent of causing pain and therefore discipline

WORDS PEOPLE USE TO FEEL BETTER?

- Spanking
- Pop
- Tap
- Discipline

- All = hitting



ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO ADULT HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

A collaborative effort of Kaiser Permanente and The Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention

www.acestudy.org

SPANKING AS PART OF THE ORIGINAL ACE STUDY

- CDC – Kaiser ACE Wave II study data. N = 8316
- “Sometimes parents spank their children as a form of discipline. While you were growing up during your first 18 years of life how often were you spanked?”
- Spanking was coded as a “yes” if more than a few times per year
- 54.8 % of the respondents reported being spanked

SPANKING AS PART OF THE ORIGINAL ACE STUDY

- Spanking was compared to adult mental health impairment (ACE-Related Health Conditions)
- Beyond the ACE categories of physical abuse and emotional abuse alone, spanking increased the odds of:
 - Suicide attempts
 - Moderate to heavy drinking
 - Use of street drugs

SPANKING AS PART OF THE ORIGINAL ACE STUDY

- Spanking accounted for additional statistical model variance beyond physical and emotional abuse

Afifi T, Ford D, Gershoff E, Merrick M, Grogan-Kaylor A, Ports K, MacMillan H, Holden G, Taylor C, Lee S, Peters Bennett R. Spanking and adult mental health impairment: The case for the designation of spanking as an adverse childhood experience. Child Abuse & Neglect. 2017. 71:24-31.



RESEARCH ON SPANKING AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR INTERVENTION



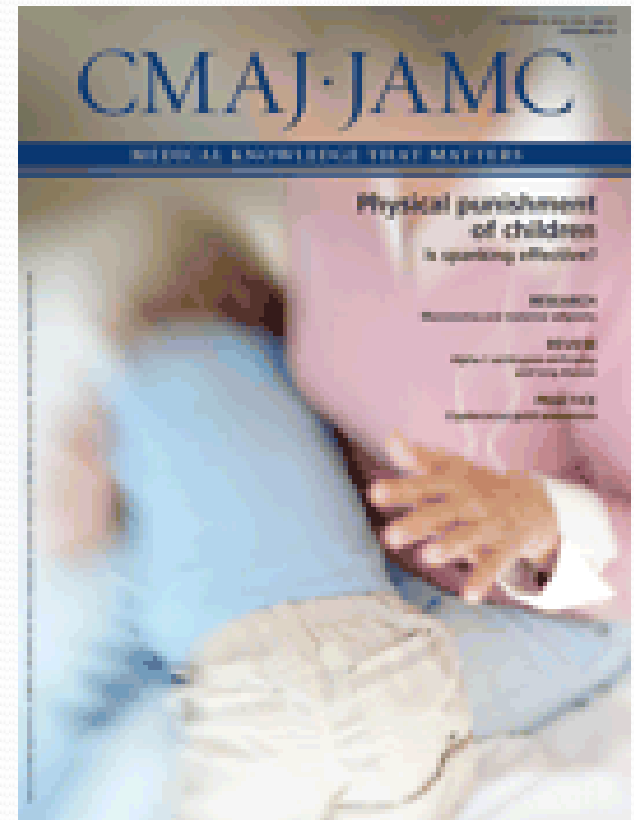
Elizabeth Gershoff, Ph.D.

*Associate Professor of Human Development & Family Sciences
The University of Texas at Austin*



CMAJ 2012

Importantly, there are **no** studies indicating that hitting a child as a means of discipline is beneficial for the child.



Durrant and Ensom, 2012



UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA | Rady Faculty of Health Sciences

Department of Community Health Sciences
MAX RADY COLLEGE OF MEDICINE

DOES SPANKING BY PARENTS IMPROVE CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOR?

Journal of Family Psychology

© 2016 American Psychological Association
0893-3200/16/\$12.00 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/fam0000191>

Spanking and Child Outcomes: Old Controversies and New Meta-Analyses

Elizabeth T. Gershoff
University of Texas at Austin

Andrew Grogan-Kaylor
University of Michigan

Whether spanking is helpful or harmful to children continues to be the source of considerable debate among both researchers and the public. This article addresses 2 persistent issues, namely whether effect sizes for spanking are distinct from those for physical abuse, and whether effect sizes for spanking are robust to study design differences. Meta-analyses focused specifically on spanking were conducted on a total of 111 unique effect sizes representing 160,927 children. Thirteen of 17 mean effect sizes were significantly different from zero and all indicated a link between spanking and increased risk for detrimental child outcomes. Effect sizes did not substantially differ between spanking and physical abuse or by study design characteristics.

- **75 studies, over 50 years, from 13 different countries**
- **160,927 children were included**

DOES SPANKING BY PARENTS IMPROVE CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOR?

- **Spanking does not make children more compliant in the short term.**

Spanking is also not linked with reductions in aggression or antisocial behavior.

Spanking is not linked with long-term compliance or internalization of morals.

DOES SPANKING BY PARENTS IMPROVE CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOR?

- **Instead, spanking is linked with worse, not better, behavior in children.**

In our meta-analyses, we found that spanking was associated with significantly more aggression and antisocial behavior problems.

None of the studies showed a link between spanking and better behavior.

IS SPANKING LINKED WITH UNINTENDED NEGATIVE OUTCOMES IN CHILDHOOD?

- **Our meta-analyses revealed that spanking is linked with several unintended outcomes:**
 - **Mental health problems**
 - **Difficult relationships with parents**
 - **Lower self-esteem**
 - **Lower academic performance**

IS CORPORAL PUNISHMENT LINKED WITH UNINTENDED NEGATIVE OUTCOMES IN ADULTHOOD?

- Our meta-analyses revealed that adults who report a history of spanking in childhood report:
 - **More mental health problems**
 - **More antisocial behavior**
 - **More positive attitudes about and use of corporal punishment with their own children.**
 - **Cycle of violence from generation to generation.**

ARE SPANKING AND PHYSICAL ABUSE CONNECTED?

- **Spanking is hitting.**
- **Research has repeatedly found that the more parents spank, the greater the risk that they will injure or abuse their children.**
- **The association between spanking and child outcomes is two-thirds the size of the association between abusive or injurious hitting and the same outcomes.**
- **75% of physical abuse cases in Canada started as corporal punishment to correct a perceived child misbehavior.**



TRENDS ABOUT SPANKING

STATEMENTS

- American Academy of Pediatrics

<https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/142/6/e20183112>

- APA

<https://www.apa.org/about/policy/corporal-punishment>

- UN Convention on the Rights of Children

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>

Opportunity for Norms Change

Corporal Punishment

In **63** countries, children are protected by law from all corporal punishment

There is emerging evidence it works to reduce violence and perhaps enhance well-being

Thought to decrease the crime rate in Europe

COUNTRIES BANNING CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

(AS OF NOW)

63 countries

3 North American countries = Costa Rica,
Honduras, Nicaragua

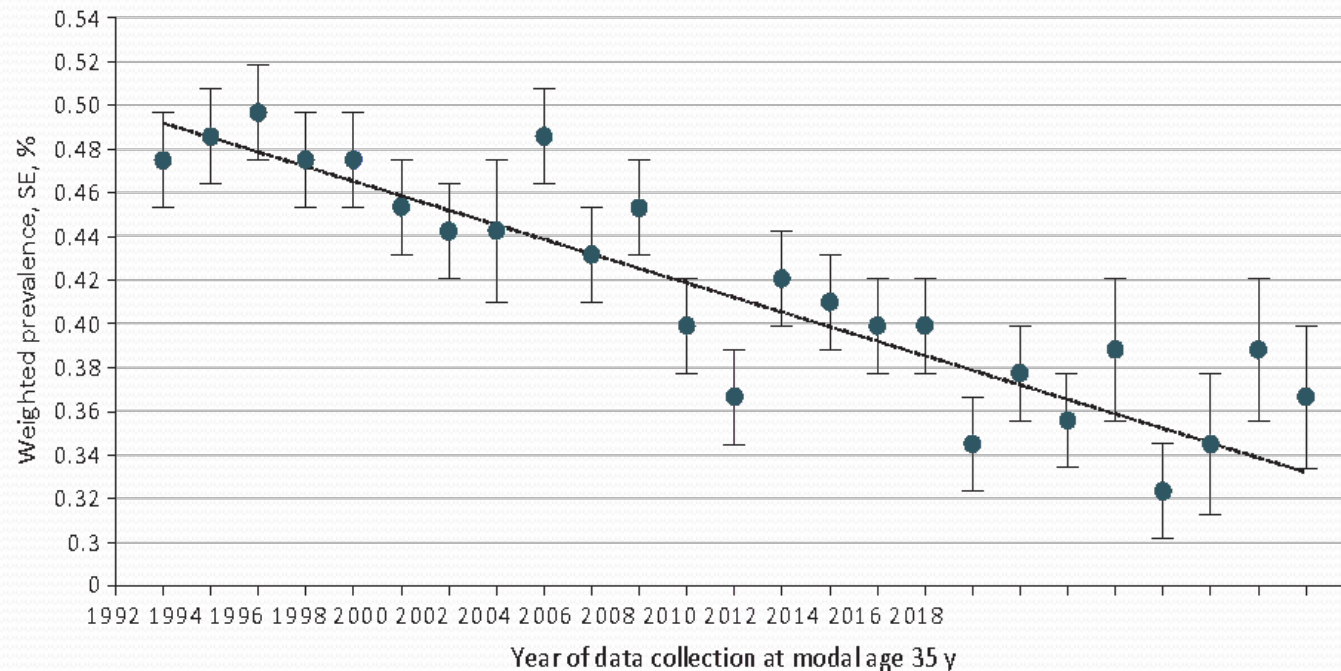
First: Sweden 1979

Last: Columbia, Korea 2001

But probably out of date soon if not already!

SPANKING DECREASING OVER TIME

Figure. Trend in Prevalence of Spanking Within the Past Year Among US Parents at Modal Age 35 Years From 1993 to 2017



Reduced Prefrontal Cortical Gray Matter Volume in Young Adults Exposed to Harsh Corporal Punishment

Akemi Tomoda, MD, PhD^{1,2,3}, Hanako Suzuki, MA^{2,3}, Keren Rabi, MA², Yi-Shin Sheu, BS², Ann Polcari, PhD^{1,2}, and Martin H. Teicher, MD^{1,2}

¹ Department of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA, USA

Defined Harsh Corporal punishment :

- 12x per year for at least 3 years
- object used 1x/year such as belt, hairbrush, or paddle
- disciplinarian was a custodial adult

Excluded:

- physical abuse that resulted in injury
- CP used for discipline, with parents in emotional control, and not striking out in anger

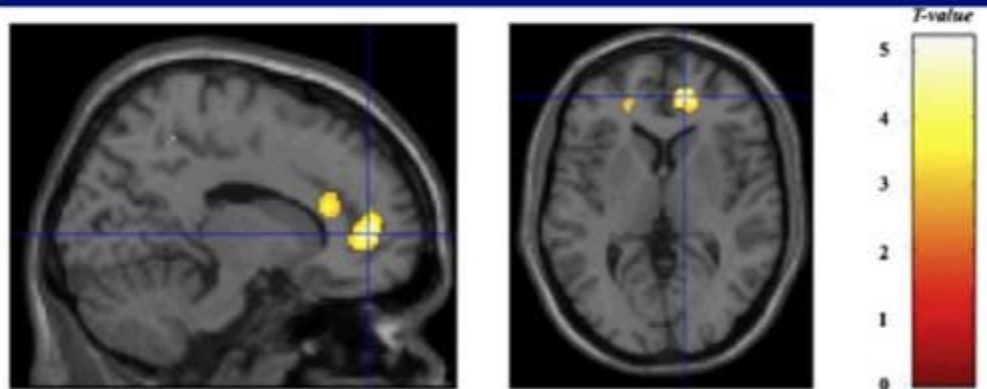


Fig. 1. Significant differences between corporal punishment (CP) subjects and controls. Significantly lower gray-matter densities in CP subjects were measured in the right medial frontal gyrus (medial prefrontal cortex, BA10). Crosshairs placed at $x=14$, $y=47$, $z=1$, the right medial prefrontal cortex. Color scale: 0–5 represent t -values.

- ## Results—Gray Matter was reduced by
- 19.1% in the right medial frontal
 - 14.5% in the left medial frontal
 - 16.9% in the right anterior
 - Significant correlations between these regions and performance IQ on the WAIS-II

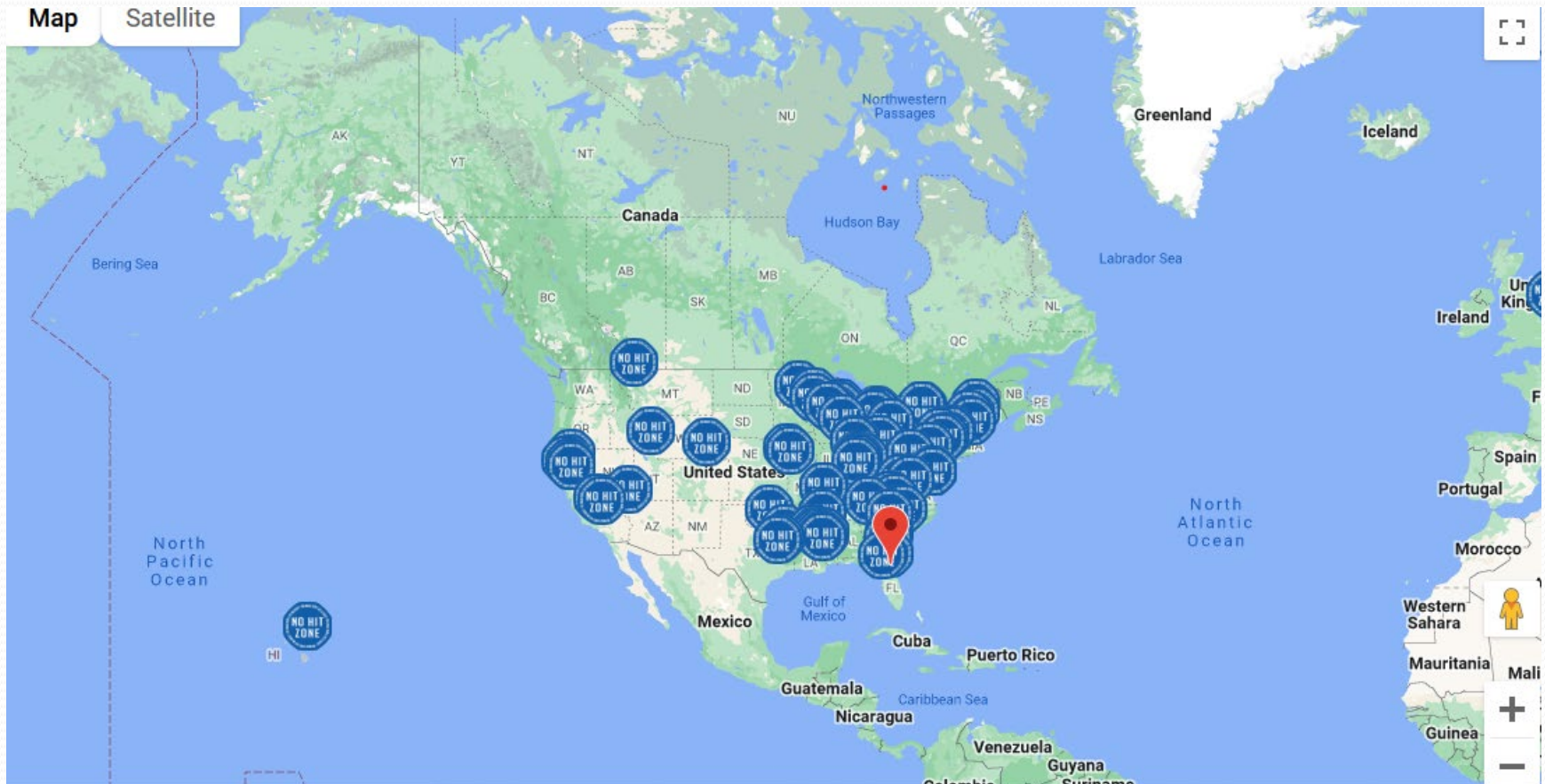
NO HIT ZONES

- Sometimes called “Hit Free Zones”
- Spanking is hitting

History of Hit Free Zones

- 1st “No Hit Zone” established in 2005 at Rainbow Children’s in Cleveland, Ohio
- Currently, many hospitals with established No Hit Zones
- Many more hospitals and other organizations establishing programs

NO HIT ZONES



<https://nohitzone.com/no-hit-zones/>

IMPLEMENTATION

- Signage
- Policy if applicable
- Train the staff about what this is
- APSAC Advisor article (Google search is easiest)

LeBlanc S, Alexander R, Mastrangelo M, Gilbert H. No Hit Zones: A Simple Solution to Address the Most Prevalent Risk Factor in Child Abuse. The Advisor. 2019; 31(1): 37-51.

https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/4700a8_9e3d91c8fcae403b8eeb43ab2362e42a.pdf



EXAMPLES OF SIGNAGE

POSTER EXAMPLES

NOTE THE REFERRAL TO A WEBSITE ABOUT ALTERNATIVES



Find out more about positive parenting solutions at wolfsonchildrens.org/positiveparenting



Find out more about positive parenting solutions at wolfsonchildrens.org/positiveparenting



Find out more about positive parenting solutions at wolfsonchildrens.org/positiveparenting



This is a



This facility is a “No Hit Zone.”
A “No Hit Zone” is an environment in which:

- No adult shall hit another adult.
- No adult shall hit a child.
- No child shall hit an adult.
- No child shall hit another child.

Staff members are happy to speak with you if you have questions or would like more information.

The “No Hit Zone” program was jointly created by:



NORTON
Children's
Hospital

- Norton Hospital and University of Louisville poster and brochure
- Thanks to Kelly Dauk MD and Erin Frasier MD



NORTON
Children's
Medical Associates

Affiliated with **UL** SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

You are entering a
NO HIT ZONE



Thanks to Debra
Jenssen and Lehigh
Valley Children's
Hospital

A **NO HIT ZONE** is a safe place where no adult hits a child, no adult hits another adult, no child hits an adult, and no child hits another child.

Bruises fade and disappear, but the emotional effects may be remembered forever.

Do Not Hit

Lehigh Valley Children's Hospital is proud to be a No Hit Zone.

This message is on behalf of Child Protection Medicine at Lehigh Valley Children's Hospital.



Hit Free Zone

This facility is a Hit Free Zone

When you are here:

- Adults will not hit another adult
- Adults will not hit a child
- Children will not hit an adult
- Children will not hit another child
- People will not hit animals

Staff members are happy to speak with you
if you have questions or for more information

POSTER EXAMPLES

NOTE THE REFERAL TO A WEBSITE ABOUT ALTERNATIVES

CH-46102-16

HITTING HURTS

**KEEPING YOUR COOL
PAYS OFF FOR LIFE**

UWHealth
American Family
Children's Hospital

Learn other effective ways
to discipline at
uwhealthkids.org/hittinghurts

HITTING HURTS

**KEEPING YOUR COOL
PAYS OFF FOR LIFE**

I might **cry, melt down** and **sass**.
But **I am little** and still **learning**.
Love me. **Don't hit me**.

Learn other effective ways to discipline
at uwhealthkids.org/hittinghurts

HITTING HURTS

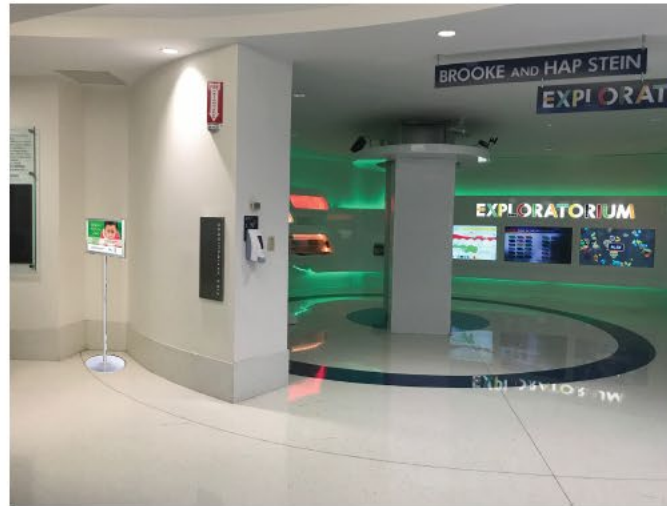
**KEEPING YOUR COOL
PAYS OFF FOR LIFE**

I might **cry, melt down** and **sass**.
But **I am little** and still **learning**.
Love me. **Don't hit me**.

Learn other effective ways to discipline
at uwhealthkids.org/hittinghurts

Floor stands

11 x 17



17 x 11 sign
\$70 each

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

We are a
Hit-Free
Zone.

That means we won't tolerate:

- An adult hitting a child.
- An adult hitting another adult.
- A child hitting an adult.
- A child hitting another child.

Love me. Don't hit me.



©2018 Baptist Health

We are a
Hit-Free
Zone.

That means we won't tolerate:

- An adult hitting a child.
- An adult hitting another adult.
- A child hitting an adult.
- A child hitting another child.

Love me. Don't hit me.



ELDER ABUSE



TEACHING THE STAFF

ELEMENTS OF A HIT FREE ZONE

- Team member education/ engagement
- Distraction tools/training on de-escalation
- Hospital website and brochure to include local and online resources for parents related to positive parenting and non-physical discipline techniques
- Posters/clings
- Brochures
- Social Media

Hit Free Zone

Purpose:

To create and reinforce an environment of comfort and safety for patients, families and staff working at our facility.

Hit Free Zone, an environment in which:

- No adult shall hit a child
- No adult shall hit another adult
- No child shall hit an adult
- No child shall hit another child

Why A Hit Free Zone

Patients and families who present to Wolfson Children's Hospital are often experiencing high levels of:

- Stress
- Anxiety
- Fear
- Uncertainty
- Confusion
- Lower tolerance for frustration, especially when faced with perceived problematic behaviors by their children

In these situations adults may become:

- Angry
- Raise their voice
- Hit a child/another adult

WHAT DOES A NHZ ORGANIZATION HAVE TO DO?

- Create a mission statement by becoming a NHZ
- Publically display posters, floor talkers, etc. to alert patients and public
- Teach staff about NHZs and how to de-escalate situations they may encounter
- Staff may be able to provide families with alternatives to hitting through brochures or other means.

Staff Education

Scripting Examples

- “You have been waiting for awhile. Let me check and see how much longer it will be?”
- “Most 2-year olds are not able to sit still/remain quiet for long periods of time. I have something that might help distract him/her?”
- “For the safety and well-being of everyone here, UW-Health is a NO HIT ZONE. We ask that you do not hit, so that everyone can feel safe and comfortable while here.”



RESOURCES

Age Appropriate Distraction

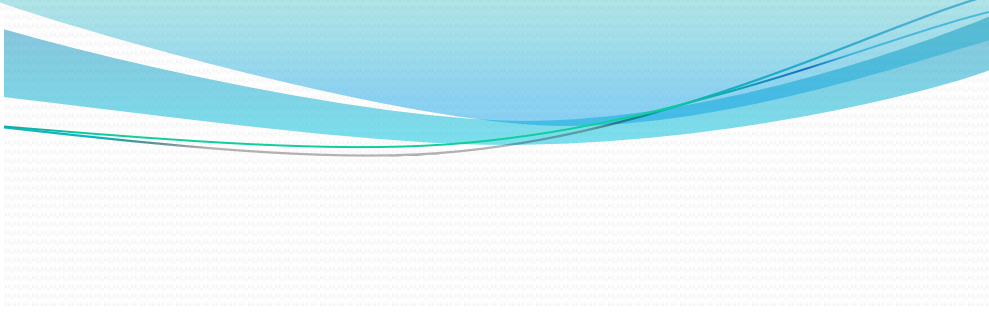
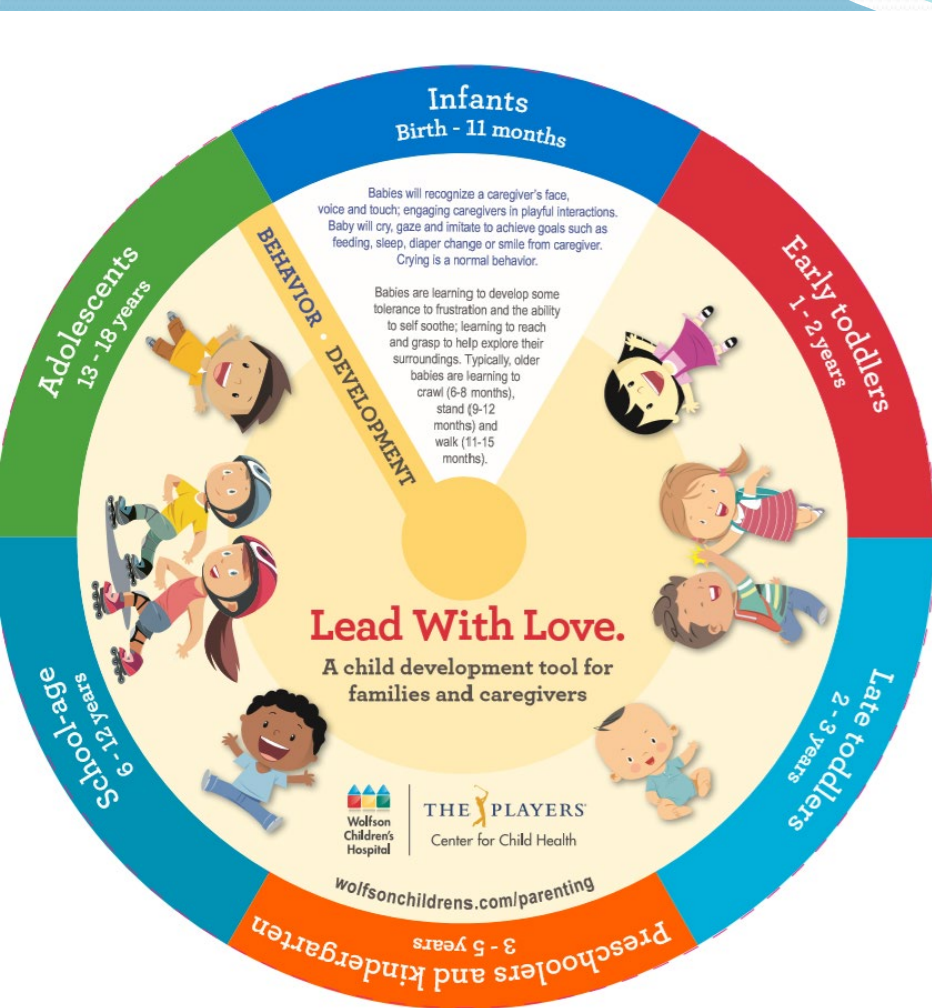
Pa



3-6 years

7-10 years





TOOLKIT

<https://nohitzone.com/no-hit-zone-toolkit>

- Sample policies
- Training resources
- Materials and signage



**NO HIT
ZONE**

NO CHILD SHALL HIT AN ADULT · NO ADULT SHALL HIT A CHILD · NO CHILD SHALL HIT A CHILD · NO ADULT SHALL HIT AN ADULT ·



CERTIFIED

NO HIT
ZONE

ADVOCATE

Level

No Hit Zone Development

1

Concept

At least one person formulating plan on how the organization can implement the NHZ .
Lead person has discussed creating a NHZ with other colleagues within their organization.
Have attended a NHZ presentation and/or established communication with other NHZs.

2

Progress

More than one person working on the NHZ.
Working on an implementation plan to develop materials and training.
Gained support for implementation from organizational leadership.
Communication with other NHZs (e.g. listserv and private Facebook group)

3

Basic

Training underway for personnel.
On-going training plan.
Signage and other declaration that the facility/organization is a NHZ.

4

Complete

Established training of all staff and training for new staff.
Prominent signage and notification that the facility/organization is a NHZ.
At least one person has NHZ as part of their job description.
Community awareness that facility is a NHZ.

5

Regional

Established organized training of all staff and training for new staff.
Prominent signage and notification that the facility/organization is a NHZ.
At least one person has NHZ as part of their job description.
Community awareness that facility/organization is a NHZ.
Provides outreach education about NHZ.
Enlists other organizations in the community/region to be a NHZ.

BEYOND HOSPITALS: SEVERAL EXAMPLES

1. Dane County WI Prosecutor's Office
2. Jacksonville FL Medical Examiner's Office
3. All catholic schools in New Orleans
4. County health departments around Norfolk VA
5. All Child Advocacy Centers in Florida
6. First Coast Child Protection Team – 8 counties in FL

No Hit Cities

Stoughton, WI

- City Council unanimously passed a “No Hit Zone” resolution for all city buildings.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J6Xjs6xXpSo>

Madison Heights, MI

- no spanking at 10 city-owned properties
- all designated as "no hit" zones.



PLAN FOR OTHER PLACES

- Every social services agency in town be a NHZ
- How about Target and Walmart?
- Other places?
- No Hit Homes



NO HIT ZONES

- Media attention
- Like smoking cessation, sometimes it begins with incremental actions
- Contact me
- Randell.alexander@jax.ufl.edu if you want to join in the effort

NO HIT ZONES

- APSAC Advisor special issue – includes how to set up a NHZ
- https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/4700a8_b123146033a84695a9e90ad414233d56.pdf
- randell.alexander@jax.ufl.edu

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

- Frazier, E., Liu, G., Dauk, K. (2014). Creating a Safe Place for Pediatric Care: A No Hit Zone. *Hospital Pediatrics*. 4, 247-250.
- Gershoff, E., Taylor, C. (2017). No Hit Zone Staff and Parent Evaluation Measures. Austin: University of Texas at Austin.
- Font, S., Gershoff, E., Taylor, C., Terreros, A., Nielsen-Parker, M., Spector, L., Foster, R., Garza, A., & Olson-Dorff, D. (2016). Staff intervention attitudes and behaviors when parents hit children in a hospital setting. *Journal of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics*, 37, 730-736.
- Gershoff, E., Font, S., Taylor, C., Foster, R., Garza, A., Olson-Dorff, D., Terreros, A., Nielsen-Parker, M., & Spector, L. (2016). Medical center staff attitudes about spanking. *Child Abuse and Neglect*. 61, 55-62.
- Holden, G., Coleman, S., Schmidt, K. (1995). Why 3-year-old children get spanked: Parent and child determinants as reported by college-educated mothers. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, 41, 431-452.