Today’s story is prepared by Caroline Hogan, MD from a NPR story [What Happens When A Country Bans Spanking?](https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2018/10/25/660191806/what-happens-when-a-country-bans-spanking)

This story revolves around a new study that shows a correlation between corporal punishment bans and reduced adolescent violence. Specifically, the study measured the prevalence of frequent physical fighting (i.e., 4+ episodes in the previous year) among adolescents in 88 countries around the world. 30 of these countries have passed laws fully banning physical punishment of children (i.e., in schools and at home); compared with the 20 countries with no ban, they experienced 69% less fighting in adolescent males and 42% less fighting in adolescent females. The 38 countries with partial bans (including the U.S., which prohibits corporal punishment in schools but not at home) also reported less youth violence (56% the rate found in countries without bans).

The article presented the study results in an even-handed way, making sure to emphasize that the research merely showed an association – not a causal relationship – between national bans on corporal punishment and decreased rates of youth violence. It also acknowledged that it is unclear whether bans actually resulted in changes in child discipline or “reflected a social milieu that inhibits youth violence.” Regardless, the results of this study are consistent with a well-established body of literature demonstrating not only that spanking is ineffective as a form of discipline, but that children who are spanked are more likely to have mental health problems (particularly depression); use alcohol; hit their own children, peers, and significant others; and engage in crime and violence.

Given the prevalence of spanking in the U.S. (with some studies suggesting that 65% of 19- to 35-month olds and 85% of teenagers have been spanked at some point), it is important for providers to not only continue emphasizing the ineffectiveness and deleterious effects of spanking, but to provide parents with effective discipline alternatives.

**RESOURCES FOR PROVIDERS & FAMILIES:**

* [Disciplining your Child](https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/family-dynamics/communication-discipline/Pages/Disciplining-Your-Child.aspx) *from HealthyChildren.org – user-friendly website from the American Academy of Pediatrics that includes evidence-based recommendations regarding effective communication and discipline.*
* [Guidance for Effective Discipline](http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/101/4/723) *from the AAP – formal guidance from the AAP RE: counseling parents on a developmental approach to discipline, including strategies to implement at home.*

**FURTHER READING/REFERENCES:**

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And that’s today’s Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics: IN THE NEWS!