



himaya , in collaboration with **Moms & To Be** , aims to break the silence on children abuse which is still considered a taboo. This section is to help you recognize different forms of abuse and stop them from happening to ensure the safety and welfare of a child.

# WHY PUNISHMENT DOESN'T WORK

By definition, to punish is to deliberately make someone suffer, because it assumes that punishment will teach the child a lesson. The idea here is that when we make a child unhappy by forcing him to do something we find aversive, or by preventing him from doing something he enjoys, he'll become a better person.

What punishments really do is make the child angry, teach him that you get your way in life by using your power over those who are weaker, and make it less likely that he'll focus on how his actions affect others.

Punishment does not change the tendency to engage in the behavior that was punished. Instead, it makes the child want to avoid the source of punishment. As soon as the child thinks he's not being watched, the tendency to engage in the behavior will repeat itself. Punished children do what was punished for behind their parents' backs. Why, then, do we punish children? We do so for two main reasons. The first is that punishment looks like it works even though it doesn't. Because the child is inhibited in your presence, it's easy to think they would be inhibited in your absence. Punishment produces politeness, not morality.



Thus, the inhibited, obedient child inadvertently reinforces the parent's punitive behavior by acting obedient (for the sorts of parents who find obedient children reinforcing). The second main reason we punish children is because we are angry at them. Anger is the emotional state of finding damage to the object of one's source of anger. Uncontrolled and disobedient children make everyone angry some of the time and most people angry most of the time. What we can do instead of punishing when we are angry, is acknowledging our anger at our children and engineer a constructive application of it. Punitive responses and zero tolerance policies work by repressing inappropriate behavior, but they foster resentment and increase violence and aggression.

Punishment does not teach alternative behavior or give a children practice at using more appropriate behavior. When a child lacks skills in reading, math or science our response is not to punish them, but to provide additional support so that he can achieve. Children who struggle to behave appropriately, need prompts and support to learn how to relate to others and function productively.

Punishment undermines relationships. When we use punishment or punitive consequences, we risk losing the trust and connection that we have built with our child.

If you use punishment as a tool it may work to stop a particular action. If you send a fighting kid to his room he may have stopped fighting for the immediate present. Sometimes that is necessary to do. The error comes when we think that the punishment has taught the child what to do in the next situation. It has taught the kid NOT to do something... but it has not taught them what to do! That is our job as parents... teach them what to do and how to decide to do it! When a parent choose to punish, both the parent and the child begin to pay attention to the punishment, its fairness and its enforcement. This stops the child from thinking about the decision process that brought about the punishment in the first place. Next, the child is not engaged in creating a new thought process that will bring better decisions and outcomes next time. Punishment makes the child focus on the "consequences" he is suffering, rather than on the consequences of his behavior to someone else, so it makes him more self-centered and less empathic. Because kids invariably consider punishment unfair, it teaches kids that abuse of power is ok -- which makes kids less likely to make moral choices. Therefore, if you punished your child and it worked, know that it only worked for the wrong reasons and for a short period of time.