

CANADIAN PRESS / LEGER MARKETING

Child Abuse

Report



1.0 Study Highlights

- More than one parent out of twenty admitted to having inflicted painful corporal punishment on their children.

Question: *Do or did you or your spouse ever...?*

n=1041	
... reprimand your children	70.6%
... strongly reprimand your children	33.6%
... speak to your children in a violent manner	10.5%
... inflict light corporal punishment, like a slap, on your children	50.4%
... inflict painful corporal punishment on your children	2.8%
... inflict painful corporal punishment on your children using an object	2.1%
... inflict painful corporal punishment on your children that have led to injury	0.7%

- More than two parents out of ten that have received abusive and painful corporal punishment as children do or did the same thing to their own children.

Question: *During your childhood, did your parents REGULARLY, SOMETIMES or NEVER...?*

n=1516	Regularly	Sometimes	Never	Don't know / Refusal
... make comments that hurt your feelings	9.1%	51.4%	34.7%	4.8%
... make abusive comments that scarred or traumatized you	3.5%	11.0%	82.7%	3.0%
... inflict light corporal punishment like a slap	8.7%	62.0%	26.2%	3.0%
... inflict abusive and painful corporal punishment	2.4%	10.4%	84.5%	2.7%

- Mixed feelings about whether a light slap is an effective way to make a child think.

Question: *In your opinion, is a light slap an effective way to make a child think?*

n=1516	YES	NO	Don't know / Refusal
Canada	46.9%	46.6%	6.5%

- 70% of the population is opposed to legislation that would prohibit parents from spanking their children.

Question: *In your opinion, should the government pass legislation to ban parents from spanking their children?*

n=1516	YES	NO	Don't know / Refusal
Canada	21.9%	70.0%	8.2%

- Canadians are in favour of a 911-type telephone number specially created for mistreated children.

Question: *Would you be FOR or AGAINST the idea of an easily remembered phone number, much like 911, that would enable all children to obtain information on their rights or get help if they are mistreated?*

n=1516	YES, for	NO, against	Don't know / Refusal
Canada	79.9%	13.7%	6.4%

2.0 Results

2.1 More than one parent out of twenty admitted to having inflicted painful corporal punishment on their children

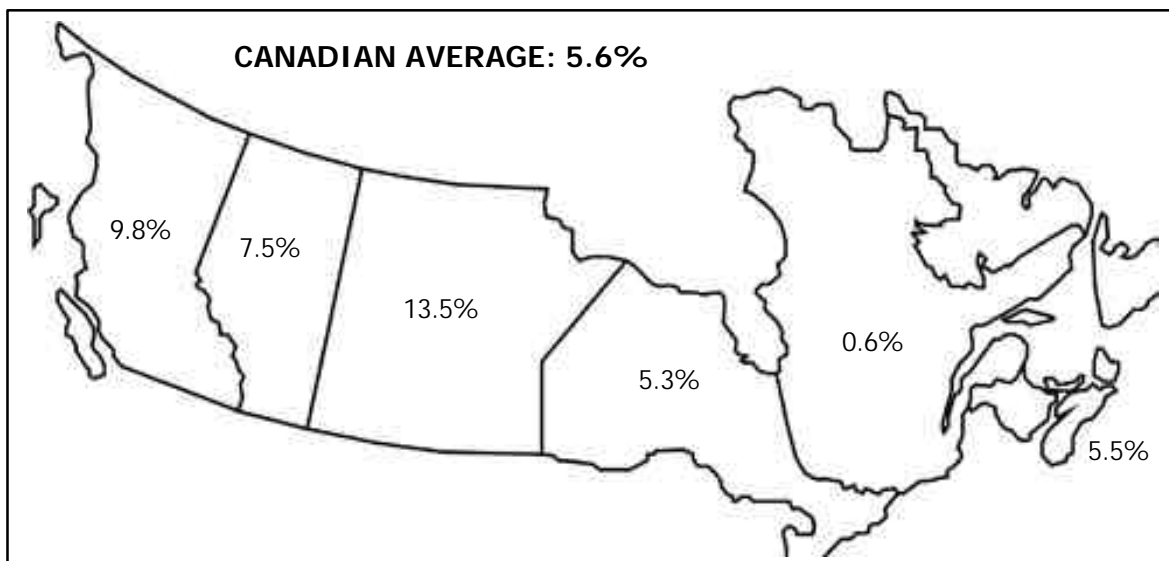
5.6% of Canadian parents admit that they themselves or their spouse have already inflicted painful corporal punishment on their children. This percentage can be broken down as follows: 2.8% have inflicted painful corporal punishment, 2.1% have had recourse to painful corporal punishment with an object and 0.7% have administered painful corporal punishment having led to injury to the child.

It is good to note, however, that parents aged 45 years and under are less likely to use painful corporal punishment. In fact, for all of these types of punishments, the percentage is 3.2% for parents 45 years old and under and 12.9% for those above 45 years of age.

We note that 50.4% admit to inflicting light corporal punishment. However, the study found that 9.7% of those persons also inflict painful corporal punishment to their children.

Although a significant difference was found between parents under 45 and those over 45 in terms of painful corporal punishment, the difference was much less significant when it came to violent language directed toward children. In fact, the rate is 9.1% for those under 45 and 11.5% for those above 45.

Percentage of Canadians who admit to having inflicted painful corporal punishment on their children



Question: *Do or did you or your spouse ever...?*

n=1041	TOTAL	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65 and over
... reprimand your children	70.6%	35.0%	64.8%	71.3%	77.3%	72.6%	66.6%
... strongly reprimand your children	33.6%	6.4%	26.3%	38.4%	39.7%	31.0%	28.4%
... speak to your children in a violent manner	10.5%	0.0%	7.0%	10.9%	10.1%	12.2%	13.0%
... inflict light corporal punishment, like a slap, on your children	50.4%	28.3%	44.7%	45.4%	52.3%	56.1%	60.0%
... inflict painful corporal punishment on your children	2.8%	0.0%	0.7%	1.9%	4.3%	3.4%	4.1%
... inflict painful corporal punishment on your children using an object	2.1%	0.0%	0.6%	1.5%	2.5%	2.6%	4.5%
... inflict painful corporal punishment on your children that have led to injury	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%	0.8%	1.2%	0.0%

Note: The total on the vertical axis may exceed 100% since respondents may have answered "yes" in more than one category.

Moreover, if 70.6% of Canadians reprimand their children, we also note that 33.6% of parents strongly reprimand them and 10.5% speak to them in a violent manner. Among those who admitted speaking violently to their children, 26.2% also inflict painful corporal punishment upon them.

Let us mention that there were no significant differences between men and women in terms of the language used to speak with children and the corporal punishment inflicted upon them.

2.2 More than two parents out of ten having received abusive corporal punishment as children do or did the same thing to their own children

21.6% of parents who mentioned having received abusive corporal punishment as children inflict or inflicted upon their own children the same type of treatment. 2.4% of Canadian parents mentioned having regularly received painful corporal punishment as children and 26.9% do the same thing to their own children. In the case of the 11.8% of Canadians who received this type of punishment occasionally, 20.5% give or have used the same type of punishment with their children on occasion as well.

We note that among the 70.7% of Canadians who were slapped as children, 87.5% slap or slapped their own children.

We also noticed that 27.1% of parents who speak or spoke to their children in a violent manner had been treated in the same way during their childhood.

Question: *During your childhood, did your parents REGULARLY, SOMETIMES or NEVER...?*

n=1516	Regularly	Sometimes	Never	Don't know / Refusal
... make comments that hurt your feelings	9.1%	51.4%	34.7%	4.8%
... make abusive comments that scarred or traumatized you	3.5%	11.0%	82.7%	3.0%
... inflict light corporal punishment like a slap	8.7%	62.0%	26.2%	3.0%
... inflict abusive and painful corporal punishment	2.4%	10.4%	84.5%	2.7%

2.3 Opinions are mixed when it comes to determining whether a light slap is an effective way to make a child think

46.9% of the Canadian population feels that a light slap is an effective way to make a child think while 46.6% do not share this view.

51.4% of men, 61.6% of those 55 years old and over, 52.0% of manual workers and 52.1% of those not in the labour force were more likely to be in favour of the light slap.

Question: *In your opinion, is a light slap an effective way to make a child think?*

n=1516	YES	NO	Don't know / Refusal
Atlantic provinces	35.4%	52.1%	12.6%
Quebec	47.8%	49.5%	2.6%
Ontario	46.4%	45.7%	7.9%
Prairies	53.9%	39.6%	6.5%
Alberta	49.6%	45.5%	4.9%
British Colombia	48.2%	45.1%	6.7%
Canada	46.9%	46.6%	6.5%

In that respect, 21.9% of Canadians believe that the government should pass legislation to prohibit parents from spanking their children while 70.0% mentioned being opposed to such a law.

24.4% of women, 27.9% of those 18 - 24 years old, 39.1% of Francophones, 37.5% of Quebecers and 34.0% of those in the lower income brackets were more likely to be in favour of such a law.

Question: *In your opinion, should the government pass legislation to ban parents from spanking their children?*

n=1516	YES	NO	Don't know / Refusal
Atlantic provinces	24.7%	61.8%	13.4%
Quebec	37.5%	57.5%	5.1%
Ontario	18.8%	71.8%	9.3%
Prairies	9.7%	79.7%	10.5%
Alberta	10.4%	82.4%	7.2%
British Columbia	15.3%	78.0%	6.7%
Canada	21.9%	70.0%	8.2%

Moreover, 79.9% of Canadians would be in favour of creating an easily remembered telephone number, much like 911, that would enable children to obtain information on their rights or assistance if they were being mistreated. This system exists in Scandinavian countries and in many European countries.

Question: *Would you be FOR or AGAINST the idea of an easily remembered phone number, much like 911, that would enable all children to obtain information on their rights or get help if they are mistreated?*

n=1516	YES	NO	Don't know / Refusal
Atlantic provinces	87.6%	5.5%	6.9%
Quebec	85.5%	13.2%	1.3%
Ontario	78.8%	12.7%	8.5%
Prairies	74.8%	17.9%	7.3%
Alberta	69.6%	24.1%	6.4%
British Columbia	78.4%	12.8%	8.7%
Canada	79.9%	13.7%	6.4%

3.0 Methodology

This study was conducted by Leger Marketing through telephone interviews among a representative sample of 1516 English- or French-speaking Canadians, 18 years of age or older.

The interviews were conducted from our Montreal and Winnipeg call centres between January 22 and January 27, 2002. Up to ten call-backs were made in the case of non-response.

Using data from Statistics Canada, the results were weighted according to geographic location, gender and language spoken at home to ensure a sample representative of the entire Canadian adult population. In the end, the maximum margin of error obtained for a sample of 1516 respondents is of $\pm 2.6\%$, 19 times out of 20.