



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

## PUBLICATION

# Support is available to parents ahead of a smacking ban being introduced in Wales

The Welsh Government is reaching out to parents with a network of support to help them face the challenges of bringing up their children.

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The move comes ahead of its imminent new law that will see children being given the same protection as adults from assault.

All types of physical punishment, such as smacking, hitting, slapping and shaking, will be illegal when the legislation comes into force on 21 March.

The new law will apply to everybody in Wales, including visitors. More than 60 other nation-states across the world already ban the physical punishment of

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children, in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

## Help available to support - and thrive

The Welsh Government, through its flagship campaign, **Parenting. Give it time** offers free practical tips and expert advice on the alternatives for physical punishment and for all your parenting challenges with children of all ages up to 18.

There is advice on:

- Understanding and managing behaviour
- Positive parenting hints and tips
- The benefits of using praise
- Dealing with common parenting challenges such as tantrums, toilet training, bed times and routines, screen time, health and wellbeing and top tips for parents with teenagers
- Day to day challenges of being a parent , including a list of organisations who can provide help and support.

On the section entitled: Taking care of you and your family, it said: "Being a parent can be one of the most rewarding but challenging jobs in the world.

"If you're struggling with your child or have other pressures such as money worries or concerns about a relationship breakdown, know that you aren't alone."

**There is free helpline support found on the website, including [Family Lives](#) and [Parent Talk Cymru](#).**

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## Influencing children for the better

The new law has been welcomed by a couple whose professional background in youth and social work has illustrated the negative effects it can have on families.

Nadia and Sy Joshua, from the Vale of Glamorgan, have seen for themselves the potentially disruptive long-term impact physical punishment has on children, parents and carers through their work.

Nadia and Sy, who have two girls, aged nine and six, can draw on their work experiences to conclude that physical punishment is never the answer.

Sy said: “I come from a West Indian background, and a culture where physical punishment was often used in the home. The older generations would favour physical punishment – they believed ‘spare the rod; spoil the child’. I was never actually physically punished and I do not physically punish my own children; the cycle has been broken.

“The idea of using my physicality, my size, my masculinity to intimidate someone who is smaller than me to bend them to my will and even going further and putting my hands on them is something I find disgusting personally.”

Nadia said: “When we make decisions about our parenting, I think of my children as future adults and parents. How does what I say today influence them for the future and what they will say to their children?”

## There are always alternatives to the physical approach

Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) gives children the right to be protected from harm and being hurt. This includes physical punishment.

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In 1979, Sweden became the first country in the world to end the physical punishment of children. More than 60 countries have now done the same.

Wales will become the third part of the British Isles, after Jersey and Scotland in 2020, to make physical punishment illegal.

Physical punishment of children is not effective in improving children's behaviour and instead increases behavioural difficulties, according to a [review led by UCL](#).

Physical punishment will be illegal in Wales from 21 March 2022. [Find out more here](#).

[Parenting. Give it time](#) offers alternatives to physical punishment.

## Leading by example is the way forward

Dr Bethan McMinn, a consultant paediatrician, said: “Unfortunately, as part of my work I see bruises and marks caused by smacking. While some parents smack their child because they think it will improve behaviour, a recent large-scale study found this not to be the case. It found that physically punishing children is not effective and increases behavioural problems.

“No physical punishment is completely “safe”, as there is a risk that incidents can escalate or get out of hand unintentionally.

“I often hear, “smacking never did me any harm” – but it doesn’t make it right. Smacking children is never reasonable nor defensible and is not a necessary way to discipline a child.

“We should be leading by example. Hitting someone is not ok, regardless of age. I’m pleased the law is changing in Wales as it gives children equal protection from violence as adults.”

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**Help is available now**

**Parenting. Give it time** offers positive parenting support and practical hints, tips and expert advice to encourage good behaviour from children and young people as alternatives to physical punishment. The support page offers links to further support and helplines.

Find out about the new law in Wales [here](#).

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