

**Resolution Against Corporal Punishment (2012)**  
And Accompanying PCUSA and Other Resources on Nurturing Children

**The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):**

1.
  - a. **Encourages its members to adopt discipline methods at home, in schools, pediatric facilities, and institutions (e.g. hospitals, orphanages, clinics, state institutions) and child care facilities that do not include corporal punishment of children, and**
  - b. **Encourages congregations to offer opportunities for dialogue and education on effective discipline of children;**
2. **Calls upon all states to enact licensing laws prohibiting corporal punishment in schools and day and residential childcare facilities;**
3. **Directs the appropriate General Assembly committees to provide limited bibliography of resources presenting alternative effective methods of discipline to corporal punishment;**
4. **[Directs] That the following supporting documentation be posted online, hosted by the Child Advocacy or other appropriate office of the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) [The GAMC is now the Presbyterian Mission Agency].**

Re: Directive 3: **Bibliography**

The bibliography listed below is in two sections, following a brief introduction. The first (A) providing alternatives to corporal (and also damaging psychic) punishment, and the second (B) providing documentation on the detrimental effects of corporal punishment.

**Introduction:**

The Child Advocacy Program and the Child Advocacy Network of the Presbyterian Health Education and Welfare Association (PHEWA) produced a thorough booklet on ensuring child safety in all Sunday School, Childcare, and Nursery programs, available free online:

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/pcan-child-safe-church.pdf>

This bibliography could be seen as a supplement to that resource.

Discipline is part of child-rearing in any family configuration and should reflect consistency as well as genuine care for and attention to the child. Any family may face a disciplinary crisis, and should not be ashamed to contact someone with training or ask for a referral to a wise teacher, pastor, coach, or counselor. The resources in the bibliography are for all parents and guardians seeking to fulfill the baptismal vow to raise their children in love, in “the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” Every person is a child of God; we all seek to act as parts of God’s family.

**Note:** if you feel you or your partner are in danger of abusing a child in your care, or have abused a child and seek support for new paths in your childcare and child-raising, there is a hotline run by Parents Anonymous (<http://parentsanonymous.org/>), 1-855- 4A PARENT (1-855-427-2736), The National Parents Helpline. This 50-year old organization includes resources for parents and children facing a range of issues.

As this is a resource prepared at the direction of the General Assembly, we lift up some of the policies and resources of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), which ran a Child Advocacy office from the 1980's to 2010, following other family ministry programs. The Child Advocacy office (noted above) worked with the National Council of Churches of Christ and Children's Defense Fund in providing information for church-based childcare and nursery programs, as well as on public policy to protect children facing poverty, neglect, and abuse.

The church's more recent studies and policy statements go back to 1977, preceding the International Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), and also include General Assembly statements in 1993 and 1996. As of 2014, there has been an Education Initiative designed to continue the PCUSA's long support of high quality and equitable public education in the USA, as well as a focused program of World Mission that worked with education programs in several African nations.

**A. For positive nurture and structure for children in homes and institutional settings:**

Alternative effective methods of discipline begin with the recognition that love and forgiveness are the foundation of all family relationships, particularly those which are grounded in the faith of Jesus Christ in a loving and parental God. For resources on nurturing children in families of all kinds, most ministers and commissioned lay pastors will likely turn to the Christian Education and Pastoral Theology departments of their seminaries. Teachers and counselors will similarly turn to the college and university programs where they were trained, or to resources they were introduced to in those contexts. Thus all resources listed here are examples, non-comprehensive.

Nurturing Faith at Home, short bibliography from Prof. Bradley Wigger, Center for Congregations and Family Ministry at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary: [https://centerforcongregations.org/sites/default/files/Resource\\_Guide\\_Nurturing\\_Faith\\_at\\_Home.pdf](https://centerforcongregations.org/sites/default/files/Resource_Guide_Nurturing_Faith_at_Home.pdf)

Nurturing Faith and Family Life, short bibliography from The Indianapolis Center for Congregations: [https://centerforcongregations.org/sites/default/files/Nurturing\\_Faith%2526Family\\_ResourceGuide.pdf](https://centerforcongregations.org/sites/default/files/Nurturing_Faith%2526Family_ResourceGuide.pdf)

Diana Garland, compiler of the second short bibliography, is author of *Family Ministry: A Comprehensive Guide* (Intervarsity Press, 2012: <https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/family-ministry-diana-r-garland/1110927727?ean=9780830863297>) drawing on a journal by that name edited for a time by Bradley Wigger and herself.

*Minutes of the General Assembly*, UPCUSA, "On Being A Child: An Inquiry into the Needs and Rights of Children and the Commission of the Church," 1977. Also featured in *Church & Society* magazine, Nov/Dec 1977, with appendices on moral and religious education and resources for 1979, the UN-designated International Year of the Child.

Pitkin, Barbara *Are Children Human?* Theology & Worship Occasional Paper No. 12 (Available from Theology & Worship and ACSWP, Presbyterian Mission Agency)

Sawyers, Lindell, ed. *Faith and Families* (Philadelphia: Geneva, 1986)

Stine, Esther C. *Partners in People-Making: Towards a Theology of the Needs, Rights, and Responsibilities of Children* (NYC: PHEWA, United Presbyterian Church, 1979).

A United Methodist Church position similar to that of the PCUSA: <http://www.umc.org/what-we-believe/discipline-children-without-corporal-punishment>

Arnold, William V. and Carol Lakey Hess, eds. *Affirmation*, Vol 5, No. 1, Spring 1992 Special issue of the journal of Union Theological Seminary in Virginia on the family.

Brown, Carolyn C. *Raising Children to Love their Neighbors: Resources for Congregations* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2008)

McGinnis, Kathleen & James, *Parenting for Peace and Justice* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1981)

Sinclair, Donna and Yvonne Stewart, *Christian Parenting in the Real World* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/JohnKnox, 1992).

“Positive Parenting:” There are many for-profit sites related to this concept, some of which are introduced in this piece from Public Broadcasting:

[http://www.pbs.org/parents/talkingwithkids/positive\\_discipline\\_tips.html](http://www.pbs.org/parents/talkingwithkids/positive_discipline_tips.html)

“Peaceful Parents, Happy Kids:” This article in *Psychology Today* magazine also gives both tips and a bibliography of articles on more peaceful childrearing:

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/peaceful-parents-happy-kids/201404/10-ways-guide-children-without-punishment>

Physician’s Advice (concise): Carter, Sheena, “Alternatives to Physical Punishment,” Dept of Pediatrics, Emory University School of Medicine website:

<http://www.pediatrics.emory.edu/divisions/neonatology/dpc/alternat.html>

United Nations, Convention on the Rights of the Child, Adopted by the General Assembly, November 20, 1989. [The United States and Somalia are the only two non-signatories]

[https://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=IND&mtdsg\\_no=IV-11&chapter=4&lang=en](https://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=IND&mtdsg_no=IV-11&chapter=4&lang=en)

FOR THOSE ADVOCATING FOR CHILDREN WITH PUBLIC OFFICIALS AND BEFORE LEGISLATURES:

[http://www.phewacommunity.org/images/PCAN\\_Election\\_Resource\\_2012.pdf](http://www.phewacommunity.org/images/PCAN_Election_Resource_2012.pdf)

This resource provides questions and contacts for current information.

**B. Selected Supporting Bibliographic documentation on corporal punishment effects:**

(With thanks to Professor Marsha Fowler, PhD, RN, of Azusa Pacific University and member of the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy for these references.)

Berlin, Lisa J., Patrick S. Malone, Catherine Ayoub, Jean M. Ispa, Mark A. Fine, Jeanne Brooks-Gunn, Christy Brady-Smith and Yu Bai. Correlates and Consequences of Spanking and Verbal Punishment for Low-Income White, African American, and Mexican American Toddlers. *Child Development*, Vol. 80, No. 5 (Sep.-Oct., 2009), pp. 1403-1420.

Ellison, Christopher G. and Darren E. Sherkat. Conservative Protestantism and Support for Corporal Punishment. *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 58, No. 1 (Feb., 1993), pp. 131-144

Gregory, James F. The Crime of Punishment: Racial and Gender Disparities in the Use of Corporal Punishment in U.S. Public Schools. *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 64, No. 4 (Autumn, 1995), pp. 454-462.

Gregory, Robert. Is Corporal Punishment Degrading? *The North American Review*, Vol. 153, No. 421 (Dec., 1891), pp. 693-703.

Grogan-Kaylor, Andrew and Melanie D. Otis. The Predictors of Parental Use of Corporal Punishment. *Family Relations*, Vol. 56, No. 1 (Jan., 2007), pp. 80-91.

James P. Jewett. The Fight against Corporal Punishment in American Schools. *History of Education Journal*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (Autumn, 1952), pp. 1-10.

Rodriguez, Christina M. Parental Discipline and Abuse Potential Effects on Child Depression, Anxiety, and Attributions. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, Vol. 65, No. 4 (Nov., 2003), pp. 809-817.

Simons, Ronald L., Kuei-Hsiu Lin, Leslie C. Gordon, Gene H. Brody and Rand D. Conger. Community Differences in the Association between Parenting Practices and Child Conduct Problems. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, Vol. 64, No. 2 (May, 2002), pp. 331-345.

Turner, Heather and David Finkelhor. Corporal Punishment as a Stressor among Youth. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, Vol. 58, No. 1 (Feb., 1996), pp. 155-166.

Vandenbosch, Sue. Political Culture and Corporal Punishment in Public Schools. *Publius*, Vol. 21, No. 2, State Political Subcultures: Further Research (Spring, 1991), pp. 117-121.

Walsh, Wendy. Spankers and Nonspankers: Where They Get Information on Spanking. *Family Relations*, Vol. 51, No. 1 (Jan., 2002), pp. 81-88.]