

## Hong Kong child rights group calls for total ban on corporal punishment

**Elizabeth Cheung**

elizabeth.cheung@scmp.com



- Almost 70 per cent of the children said they received punishment occasionally, while 5 per cent were punished daily. Photo: SCMP

More than half of the children in a four-month study have corporal punishment inflicted on them by their parents, a children's rights group has revealed.

The survey, by **Against Child Abuse**, interviewed 1,562 children aged from six to 13. It found 847, or 54 per cent, of the children had experienced corporal punishment by their parents.

Hong Kong introduced a law in 1991 banning corporal punishment in schools. The legislation does not include homes.

**Dr Jessica Ho Oi-chu, director of Against Child Abuse**, urged the government to bring in a total ban on corporal punishment.

Conducted between November and February, the study found 75 per cent of the children were hit with hands, and objects such as hangers or rulers were also used.

Almost 70 per cent of the children said they received punishment occasionally, while 5 per cent were punished daily.

Children were punished due to unsatisfactory academic performance, daily habits such playing computer games, and refusal to obey parents.

Ms Li, a mother of two who came to Hong Kong from the mainland in 2012, used to spank her child at least once a month. She said she often got irritated by her eldest daughter who did not listen to her and did her homework slowly.

"I always scolded her and beat her with hangers ... she never held my hands when going out. It was always either she or I at the back," Li said.

The study, in which 608 parents were also polled, found more than half understood that corporal punishment worsened parent-child relationships. But the parents were not aware of a proper way to teach children.

Li said she became less angry with her daughter after visiting a child protection home as part of a scheme in which volunteers shared positive teaching methods. "I now encourage and praise her more when she has homework problems ... she is more willing to hold my hand," Li said.

Reference:

<http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/article/1766558/more-hong-kong-parents-register-their-newborn-babies-later-legal>