

Press Release

“Spank Out Day, Protecting Children’s Growth” Carnival 2026 Calling for an End to Corporal Punishment, Promoting Positive Discipline, and Working Together to Safeguard Children’s Healthy Development (25/4/2026)

Against Child Abuse (ACA) was established in 1979. It has strived to eliminate all forms of child abuse in Hong Kong. Our mission is to promote a caring and non-violent environment for the optimal growth and development of our children through delivering quality services in the areas of prevention, training, crisis intervention, treatment and advocacy.

In support of International Spank Out Day on 30 April each year, ACA has organised community education and public advocacy activities since 2005 to convey a clear and unwavering message: corporal punishment is not an effective way to discipline children; love and respect are the foundation of healthy child development. Today (25 April), ACA held the “Spank Out Day - Protecting Children’s Growth” Carnival 2026 at Wong Tai Sin Square. The event featured a ceremony officiated by ACA’s Chairperson Prof. Patrick Cheung, BBS, along with children’s performances, game booths, parent-child interactive activities, and educational exhibitions. Through the event, ACA calls on all sectors of the community to end corporal punishment, promote positive discipline, and work together to build a safer, warmer and more caring environment for children.

Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse Ordinance Now in Force Greater Efforts Needed to Prevent Corporal Punishment and Strengthen Family Support

The Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse Ordinance came into force on 20 January 2026, marking an important step forward in Hong Kong’s child protection framework. The Ordinance helps establish clearer responsibilities and reporting mechanisms at the institutional level, facilitating earlier identification and intervention so that children suspected of being abused can receive protection at an earlier stage. However, ACA believes that truly protecting children requires more than legal and institutional safeguards. It must also begin with family education and community support. Many child abuse cases begin with corporal punishment and escalate over time amid mounting stress, emotional loss of control and a lack of support. Following the implementation of the Ordinance, society must therefore strengthen efforts to promote the “No Spank” message, help parents understand the risks of corporal punishment, equip them with

non-violent parenting approaches, and encourage them to seek help early when needed so that harm can be prevented before it occurs.

Corporal Punishment Is Not Discipline, Violence Only Causes Harm

“Spank Out” is more than a slogan; it is a commitment to respecting and protecting children. What children need is not fear, but a sense of security; not humiliation, but understanding; not harm, but support. Numerous studies and World Health Organization Report (2025) have long pointed out that corporal punishment not only fails to help children develop internal discipline or achieve any positive outcomes, but often leads to multifaceted negative impacts. Instead, it may harm their physical and mental health, brain development, cognitive and socio-emotional development, while also damaging parent-child relationships. Children raised in environments of frequent scolding and beating are more prone to emotional distress, behavioral problems, increased risks of aggression and antisocial behavior, learning difficulties, and even replicating patterns of violence in conflict resolution—effects that may extend into adulthood. Any form of corporal punishment can also escalate under emotional loss of control and accumulated stress, ultimately evolving into abuse. For this reason, ACA has consistently advocated replacing corporal punishment with positive parenting. Through understanding, communication, listening, encouragement, guidance and clear boundaries, parents and caregivers can help children learn appropriate behaviour while building confidence, self-discipline and a sense of security in an atmosphere of respect. Positive discipline not only protects children from harm, but also helps strengthen parent-child relationships and promote family harmony.

Parents Support the Direction of Child Protection, but Remain Concerned About Family Pressure

ACA earlier conducted a parent survey on the Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse Ordinance, collecting 788 valid responses. The findings show that while parents generally support the direction of child protection, many also have significant concerns about their understanding of the Ordinance, the boundaries of discipline, and the possible impact on family life. The survey found that 52.8% of parents believed the Ordinance would help strengthen parents’ awareness of appropriate discipline, while 49.1% believed it would improve community awareness of child protection. At the same time, 46.7% said they were concerned that it would increase pressure and anxiety, while 43.3% worried about the possibility of false reports and the impact on family reputation. The survey included three questions testing knowledge of the ordinance, 25% of respondents scored only 0 to 1 point on the knowledge questions, reflecting that some

parents have an insufficient understanding of the ordinance's content. These findings suggest that parents are not opposing child protection. Rather, in the face of real-life parenting pressures, many are seeking clearer, more concrete guidance. For many parents, what matters most is not only understanding what they must not do, but also learning what they can do instead — and how to replace corporal punishment with positive, non-violent ways of guiding children.

Protecting Children Also Means Supporting Parents

In today's fast-paced and high-pressure social environment, parents face multiple challenges at the same time, including work, finances, caregiving responsibilities, emotional stress and family relationships. When pressure builds and emotions become unbalanced, conflict is more likely to arise. The ACA's parent survey also points to a two-track demand for information and support. 55.3% of respondents said they only needed passive information support, such as fact sheets, short videos and frequently asked questions. At the same time, 43.8% said they needed active support, such as anonymous enquiry channels, online Q&A sessions, talks, or channels that allow real-time questioning. Respondents indicated that when feeling immense pressure during parenting, the most needed support includes emotional counseling services, positive discipline skills courses, and temporary childcare services. This indicates that beyond public education, communities must also provide more interactive and accessible support services to help parents find appropriate methods when encountering stressful situations, rather than resorting to corporal punishment.

Promoting Positive Discipline in Place of Corporal Punishment

Building a Violence-Free Environment for Children's Growth

Against Child Abuse calls on all sectors of society to foster a "No Spank" culture, so that ending corporal punishment becomes a shared value in family education. ACA recommends:

- 1. Strengthen case-based parent education**

Through scenario-based materials, talks and community education activities, clarify the boundary between appropriate discipline and the risk of harm, helping parents master non-violent discipline methods.

- 2. Provide parents with diverse forms of positive parenting information and support services**

Provide clear and accessible passive information, such as fact sheets, short videos and Q&A materials; simultaneously set up anonymous enquiry channels, online Q&A

sessions and community talks to respond to parents' practical concerns. Additionally, enhance emotional counseling services and temporary childcare services, while connecting at-risk families to support early.

3. Legislation to total ban corporal punishment of children

Children should enjoy basic human rights and grow up in an environment free of fear and violence. ACA urges the government to legislate a total ban on corporal punishment, including the family level. At present, there are 70 countries or states around the world that have enacted legislation to completely prohibit corporal punishment of children (see the attachment for details). Legislation not only sets a bottom line of zero tolerance for violence, but also has an educational effect, making the public aware the importance that society places on children and families. Corporal punishment is a socially unacceptable method of raising children. How to deal with parents who violate the law can be determined according to the circumstances and severity of the incident, such as mandatory parent education and follow-up by social workers.

Let Every Day Be Spank Out Day

Children are the hope of families and the future of society. To truly protect children, we must not only shield them from harm, but also help parents build the confidence and capacity to raise their children with love and understanding. Against Child Abuse hopes that all sectors of society will work together — starting with families and communities — to end corporal punishment and practise positive discipline, so that “No Hitting” will not remain only a message for 30 April, but become a daily family value.

ACA strives to provide families with various preventive and remedial services, parent and community education activities, and also provides a parent-child support hotline: 2755 1122 for inquiries about services, seeking assistance or reporting suspected child base cases.

Let us walk together to protect children and support every family.

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Reference :

Corporal punishment of children: the public health impact. Geneva: World Health Organization;
2025. <https://doi.org/10.2471/B09424>.

In the following 70 countries or states, children are protected by law from all corporal punishment:

No.	Country/State	No.	Country/State
1	Sweden	36	Honduras
2	Finland	37	North Macedonia
3	Norway	38	Andorra
4	Austria	39	Estonia
5	Cyprus	40	Nicaragua
6	Denmark	41	San Marino
7	Latvia	42	Argentina
8	Croatia	43	Bolivia
9	Germany	44	Brazil
10	Israel	45	Malta
11	Bulgaria	46	Benin
12	Turkmenistan	47	Ireland
13	Iceland	48	Peru
14	Romania	49	Mongolia
15	Ukraine	50	Montenegro
16	Hungary	51	Paraguay
17	Greece	52	Slovenia
18	Togo	53	Lithuania
19	Spain	54	Nepal
20	Venezuela	55	Georgia
21	Uruguay	56	South Africa
22	Portugal	57	France
23	New Zealand	58	Republic of Kosovo
24	Netherlands	59	Japan
25	Liechtenstein	60	Seychelles
26	Luxembourg	61	Guinea
27	Republic of Moldova	62	Republic of Korea
28	Costa Rica	63	Colombia
29	Albania	64	Zambia
30	Congo (Republic of)	65	Mauritius
31	Kenya	66	Lao PDR



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32	Tunisia	67	Tajikistan
33	Poland	68	Thailand
34	South Sudan	69	Czech Republic
35	Cabo Verde	70	Switzerland

Source: <https://endcorporalpunishment.org/countdown/>