

[Spanking Children](#)

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OK?

Are smacking, spanking (striking on the buttocks) or hitting children acceptable forms of punishment? In American and European society it is. No guilt, no qualms. A recent survey of 700 families in England showed that "most children get smacked once a week. Sixty percent of mothers hit babies as young as 12 months." Do Hindu parents strike their children?

We called around. Mrs. Anasuya Shivakumar from Illinois, with three children, told Hinduism Today, "A little spank, or something, might be OK if they have really been mischievous. But five minutes later, you hug and kiss them. It's all over. Mostly, Indian mothers don't ever hit their children. We love them too much. The Indian community is different from the American community. They sometimes take their frustration, anger and mental problems out on their children - hitting them, etc. It's really sad." More calls repeatedly revealed that US Hindu parents, by and large, do not hit, or even regularly spank, their children. Of ten people interviewed, five said they never spank or slap, and the other five said it was rare. Most families use the very popular "raised voice" or "grounding method" - making the child go to his room for five minutes - alone and separated from the family - and then return and explain why his actions were wrong. An Indian mother of three, in California, added, "Spanking, I feel, should never be done with anger. It's OK once in a while, maybe, lightly, but never connected with anger." An unmarried, 23-year-old Indian girl from Tennessee, doing her MA in psychology, had a well-developed response. "I have thought about child-raising a lot. Spanking is OK but it should be done right after a specific incident. Punishment should always be specific and consistent. Then there's no ambiguity. Also, avoid applying guilt trips on the child."

An Indian surgeon from Houston, and father of four daughters, said, "I would say spanking in a limited way, without being abusive, is acceptable - but actually I have never spanked any of my girls." Another Indian father, from Wisconsin, with two

children, said: "Yes, spanking is necessary sometimes. I have to spank my children probably only once in five months but always use other methods first. But yes, Indian families do spank." Revealing the increasing influence of the hectic, fast-paced Western lifestyle, he candidly said, "Sometimes a slap is done because everything is moving too fast. There's no time to do anything else." His wife added, "But Indian families spank far less than American families." Mrs. Damini Bhatt, of Chesterfield, Missouri, and mother of three, told Hinduism Today, "We Indian mothers do not believe in spanking. Better to take away their toy or, if a teenager, restrict their entertainment." And her 17-year-old daughter, Shurti, added in a quick, minded voice, "I would never spank my children when I become a mother."