

I never spank my child until now

Before I had children I used a lot of superlatives when talking about how I was going to raise children. I'd never use the television as a babysitter. I'd never feed my baby junk food. I'd never let my baby cry for an hour without responding. It seemed that the more I promised not to do things, the more disappointed I became with myself after doing them. Nonetheless, by setting up these rules I was able to break them a little less casually than if I never had them at all. In other words, I did think twice before I broke down and let him watch a cartoon, gave him Lucky Charms, or let him cry it out .

Disciplining children is a subjective act. This means that parents must take into account the child and how the child responds to certain situations. When a parent says he or she does not believe in spanking, the parent is taking a moral stance, much in the same way that someone says I don't believe in driving over the speed limit. These strong moral stances can be formative and valuable to a child who looks to that parent for how to form his or her own perspectives, opinions and beliefs. But parents should be cautious when being definitive, or at least they should realize that "never" and "always" often turns into "occasionally" and "rarely".

That's the problem with saying you'll never spank. According to a [recent survey](#), nearly 90% of U.S. adults were spanked as a child and 75% of parents are spanking their child today. The pole had a few more surprises in store:

When asked if they were ever spanked with too much violence, one in five (21%) say they were and 79% say they were not spanked with too much violence.

Then there is the punishment one should have gotten, but didn't. Half of Americans (51%) say there were times when they should have been spanked but wasn't and half (49%) say there were not.

But what the survey doesn't reveal is that parents are using spanking as just one of many tools in their arsenal to deal with child-rearing. The fact remains that some children respond well to spanking while others don't. If it's enough to put a child in "time out" or give a firm reprimand, then a parent would be remiss not to use these tools first. But when a child does not respond to reason and other tactics, spanking can be an effective way to get results. Blogger [Stacey Gannett](#) puts it all in perspective: "Yes, I most certainly believe in spanking, as a form of discipline. I also firmly believe that it is not the only form of discipline that should be used, depending on the severity of the wrong doing."