

Supported by
Bureau of
Child Protective
Services
Virginia Department of Welfare



Editor
Joann Grayson, Ph.D.
Managing Editor
Charlotte McNulty, M.A.
Student Assistant
Maureen Rafferty

Summer 1983

Virginia Child Protection Newsletter

Volume 8

Virginia's Institutions: How are they coping with the ban on corporal punishment?

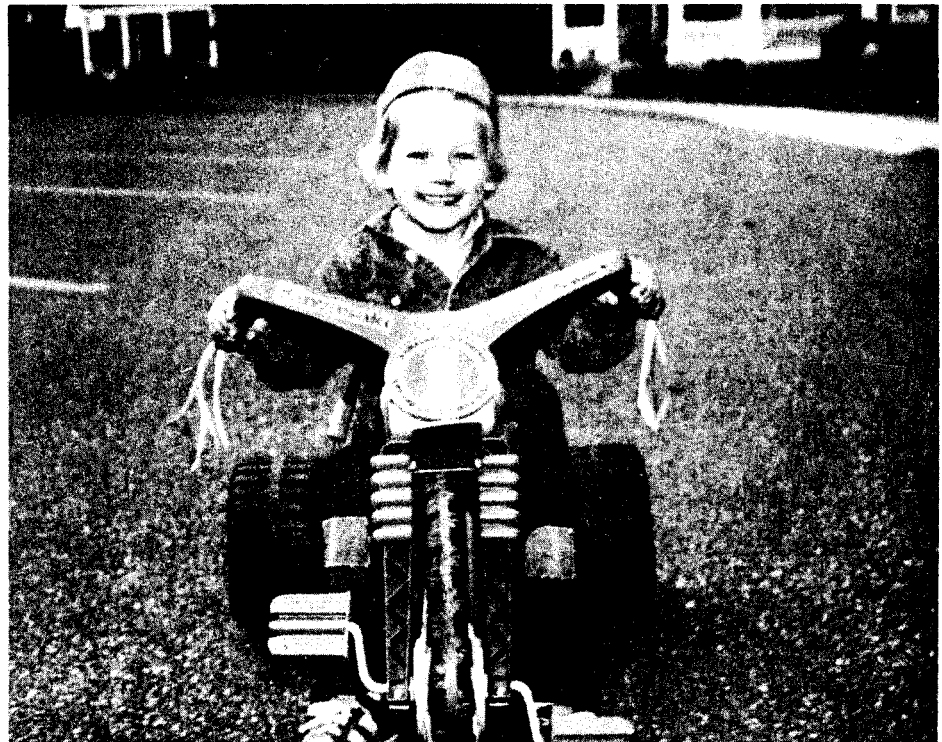
Corporal punishment. What does it mean? In the words of a 12-year-old friend it's "something to do with punishment in the Army or Navy, isn't it?" Not exactly. Actually, corporal punishment can be defined as the inflicting of pain or confinement of the human body as a penalty for some offense. It is important to note that corporal punishment is *not* implied when one "uses force to 1) protect himself or herself, the pupil or others from physical injury; 2) obtain possession of a weapon or other dangerous object; or 3) protect property from damage" (Hyman, Bongiovanni, Friedman & McDowell, 1977, p. 18).

In Virginia, the use of "reasonable" corporal punishment is legal in schools (See "Corporal Punishment in Virginia's Schools," this issue). However, corporal punishment is illegal in child caring institutions licensed in Virginia and receiving state funds. It and "deprivation of nutritionally balanced meals, prohibition of family contacts and visits; limitation of the receipt of mail; and humiliating and degrading punishment including ridicule and verbal abuse" are all forms of punishment banned by the "Core Standards for Interdepartmental Licensure and Certification of Residential Facilities for Children."

The Core Standards are guidelines by which agencies are licensed. They were implemented in September, 1981, after many years of discussion among four departments—Corrections, Education, Mental Health and Mental Retardation, and Social Services—regarding their licensing and certification responsibilities.

According to Barry Craig, coordinator of the Office of Interdepartmental Licensure and Certification, during the time of public hearings for the Core Standards and during the early implementation, the ban on corporal punishment was a big issue. "Many of the institutions felt strongly about being able to use corporal punishment. The directors felt that there are some children whose attention cannot be gotten any other way. However, when corporal punishment was abolished, all institutions desiring to remain licensed moved away from its use and toward compliance."

Just recently the issue of corporal punishment in child caring institutions was in the news. A home for mentally retarded children, believing



"We didn't use corporal punishment before, and we don't use it now."—Presbyterian Home

the use of corporal punishment is taught in the Bible, asked the Virginia legislature to waive the prohibition of corporal punishment for their agency. Concerned citizens and legislators intervened and the request was denied.

What is the concern? The concern is that corporal punishment can become abusive. The state must ensure that children under its care are protected and are provided with an atmosphere which allows the achievement of developmental goals consistent with their abilities. As a matter of fact, in his essay found in *Institutional Abuse of Children and Youth* (Hanson, 1982), George Thomas contends that, "when the state assumes responsibility for rearing children, it must be held accountable to far stricter standards in providing for the children than are the children's families" (p. 25). In the case of punishment, then, this concern translates to the abolition of corporal punishment and to the development of alternative means of discipline.

Before the Core Standards went into effect, the VCPN staff interviewed several people who were involved in institutional care for children for an article about corporal punishment (VCPN, Fall, 1979). In an effort to hear how things are going almost two years after implementation, we decided to interview many of them again.

Presbyterian Home: Lynchburg

We began our investigation by visiting the Presbyterian Home in Lynchburg. The home occupies 190 acres nestled on the perimeter of one of Lynchburg's most beautiful residential areas. It is home for approximately 60 school-age young people who must live away from their families. Since it is not designed to be a treatment center or a corrections center, the home serves a less troubled population than some facilities. However, they do receive

continued on page 3



VaNCPCA

Virginia Chapter of the
National Committee for the
Prevention of Child Abuse

Membership Drive

A reminder to all board members: Our goal this year is to have each board member recruit five new members. Do your part!

VaNCPCA AWARDED TWO GRANTS!

Sexual Abuse Prevention Play

For over a year, the chapter has been working to sponsor a sexual abuse prevention play. With the help of donors and a grant award from Virginia's Family Violence Project, the play is a reality!

The play, entitled "Hugs and Kisses" was written by Alice T. Bliss. Theatre IV of Richmond, a touring company, will coordinate the production.

A premiere showing is scheduled in each of the seven regions of Virginia for this fall. By inviting parents, school administrators, teachers and interested persons to view and experience the play, VaNCPCA hopes to pave the way for

the play to be shown in the school system for grades K through 6.

Below are the dates for each region. Plan to attend and lend us your support and ideas! We need your feedback!

Schedule:

Norfolk/Tidewater	September 29
Richmond	September 30
Northern Virginia	October 3
Harrisonburg/Shenandoah	
Valley	October 4
Roanoke	October 5
Southwest	October 6
Lynchburg	October 7

To receive further information, fill out the coupon below.

Yes! Send me information about the premiere showing of the Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Play.

Name _____

Address _____

Zip Code _____

Telephone _____

Region _____

Return to VaNCPCA
205 West Franklin Street
Richmond, Virginia

Prevention Guidebook

During the last year, VaNCPCA has been working with Charlotte McNulty of the VCPN staff in the writing of a prevention guidebook. The guidebook is designed to acquaint laypersons, community groups, and multidisciplinary teams with successful child abuse and neglect prevention models. Detailed information is included about each prevention strategy. Successful programs in Virginia are featured. Included are suggestions for developing, maintaining, and evaluating each type of program.

A grant from the Virginia Department of Social Services is providing funds for the publication and mailing of 800 copies of the guidebook. The guidebook will be printed early this fall and is available, free of charge, to any interested person.

If you would like a copy of the guidebook, please return the coupon below **NO LATER THAN OCTOBER 15**. (Funds are provided for one bulk mailing only.) Requests after October 15 must include postage reimbursement.

For a copy of the Prevention Guidebook please send your name, address and zip code to: Joann Grayson, Ph.D., Center for Child Abuse Education, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Virginia 22807.

Conference Corner

September

"The Sixth National Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect" will be held September 25-28 at the Baltimore Convention Center in Baltimore, Md. For information about conference workshops, contact Sixth National Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect, c/o the Junior League of Baltimore, 4803 Roland Avenue, Baltimore, Md. 21210.

November

The Virginia Community Education Association is sponsoring a conference on the *School Aged Child* to be held in Charlottesville, November 17 and 18. This conference grew out of an interest on the part of various groups working with children. It will address issues concerned with school aged child care, such as latchkey and survival skills programs.

For more information, contact Virginia extension agent, Fred Ashby, at (703) 982-7915.

Book Review

Institutional Abuse of Children and Youth

(Edited by Ranae Hanson, The Haworth Press, New York, 1982)

Institutional abuse is a recent concern. Thinking in this area has only begun to clarify.

This volume attacks the problem on several levels. Institutional abuse is defined broadly. Not only is abuse by an individual caretaker considered, but also the larger question of program and system abuse.

The first section discusses how institutional abuse is different from abuse by family members, identifies major issues, and reviews the rights of institutionalized children as well as the responsibilities of residential placements.

The second section is devoted to examining issues surrounding corporal punishment. An analysis of the use of physical discipline in schools is featured, as well as an examination of current attempts to use religious grounds to justify and perpetuate the use of corporal punishment. A third section deals with abuse in residential treatment.

The volume does more, however, than

describe and examine the problem—it offers alternatives. One chapter discusses alternatives for those not amenable to treatment. Another advocates prevention of abuse through the use of standards of care. A study of attitudes of direct child care workers is presented along with the implications the findings hold for prevention strategies.

Finally, the pragmatics of institutional abuse are addressed. The politics of reporting ("Sometimes you will eat the bear and sometimes the bear will eat you") are described. The emotional harm to children from investigation and removal from home are emphasized ("Do not remove a splinter from your neighbor's eye with an axe"). Finally, in a cogent presentation entitled "Helping Until it Hurts," Bruce Thomas summarizes a sobering viewpoint. Help is personal. Any system contributes to its own obstacles, frustrations and restraints. "The child welfare system can only work in spite of itself."

Institutional Abuse of Children and Youth is a superb and well-written collection of thought-provoking commentary. It whets the appetite for more.

—Joann Grayson

Virginia's Institutions continued from page 1

children who are under the care of the Department of Social Services. The Home is subject to licensure by social services and thus must comply with Core Standards.

According to Executive Director Jerry Newbold, "Core Standards had no effect on the procedures for discipline at the Presbyterian Home. We didn't use corporal punishment before, and we don't use it now."

He went on to explain that he can understand the use of physical discipline in a family context. However, he has a concern about its use in institutions. "I worry about the use of corporal punishment by people who are not related and don't have a history together. We average two and a half years with our young people. We don't have the long term relationship or identification with these children that a natural family has. In this situation, I'd rather not use it than risk the consequences that may arise because of its use."

John Alexander, program director, concurs. "I'm not so sure that a swift swat might not be an appropriate, last resort, disciplinary method, for one of our 6-year-olds. But, I don't want physical discipline to become abusive. I'd rather not have it used at all than take that risk."

According to Alexander, the home's basic approach to discipline is to accent the positive. When misbehavior occurs, however, the action results in penalties. "We have a system of consequences which befit the crime. These young people have many privileges. Acting out and breaking rules results in a loss of those privileges. Or, they may have to take on a greater share of the work as a punishment: work on Saturday at the farm, for instance."

Chris Davis is a houseparent. She lives in Noble Cottage, a residential unit for adolescent boys. A soft-spoken woman, she emanates a great deal of warmth when she talks about "her" boys. "I don't need to spank these boys," she says. "Whatever needs to be changed is identified—an attitude, a behavior, or some habits. Then we go to work." She mentioned several possible approaches to discipline, all geared toward helping the youth survive in society.

"Society has rules," she asserts. "I want these boys to be able to make it. I won't dwell on the past. Everyone knows what they've been through. I won't allow them to excuse their behavior because of their past. I talk about the future. We work on the behavior that might interfere with their making it. And we work hard. Spanking has no place in our work."

VCPN staff was fortunate to have lunch with a tablefull of preadolescent girls. When asked about the rules, rewards, and punishments, they were clear in what behavior was expected of them and the consequences if they did not comply.

"We'll lose privileges," one of them stated frankly. "Or, we have to do more cleaning," says another.

"The worst," explains a third, "is losing pool privileges." According to this young lady, that potential penalty will keep her pretty straight this summer.



Presbyterian Home's approach to discipline is to accent the positive.

The Presbyterian Home has a pleasant environment. Being there with about 60 youths and 22 staff members was similar to being with an extended family. The atmosphere was positive, and though the children have a multitude of problems, they seemed very similar to the problems of the average young person. What about institutions which serve more troubled youth?

Covington Home for Boys, Inc.

Travis Tysinger is executive director of the Boys' Home in Covington. A residential facility, the Boys' Home accepts referrals from Corrections as well as Social Services. "We have some pretty troubled youngsters," Tysinger explains. "Approximately 23% are from Corrections and 45% from Social Services. The rest are private placements."

When interviewed in 1979, Tysinger spoke candidly in favor of the use of corporal punishment. He believed then that it was an option for some boys when all else failed. Now?

"I haven't changed my mind one bit," he states emphatically. "We used corporal punishment before Core Standards, and I think there is a place for it still. It was a very small part of our system, but it was an option. It is not a teaching tool, rather it is an attention getting device. For some kids, it is the way that works."

Has anything changed since Core Standards? "Of course," he says. "We no longer use corporal punishment." Tysinger adds, however, that the new system is working well.

The transition was accomplished in an organized fashion. About the time Core Standards were being developed and it became apparent that corporal punishment would not be allowed, Tysinger and his consultants focused on a new system for discipline to be implemented at the Boys' Home.

"The system is a merit-demerit one. Good behavior carries a certain amount of merits. When rules are violated, demerits result. Simply put, the accumulation of merits will result in promotions to different levels of privileges and responsibilities. Demerits slow the process. The student manual was changed to include the rules and the consequences for breaking rules. Everything has been made very clear."

While Tysinger is enthusiastic about the new system, he retains his preference for corporal



"Whatever needs to be changed is identified...then we go to work."

punishment. He believes that the treatment program does not effect some children as quickly as when the staff had the option of spanking. "Don't get me wrong. It's a small part of any program of discipline. But, I think for some children, we need the option."

Virginia Home for Boys, Richmond

Todd Balsbaugh is the president of the Virginia Association of Children's Homes (VACH). He is also the director of the Virginia Home for Boys in Richmond. He spoke in both capacities.

In discussing the system used at the home, he said that they, too, used corporal punishment before Core Standards. "It was allowed," he says. "We used it only on children under the teen years. If it was used, it was administered by the director on duty, and a written report was filed. We also took into consideration whether there was evidence of child abuse in the child's past. We wouldn't use it then."

For a period of time his staff had been concerned about their system for disciplining. It was relatively inconsistent and left up to the discretion of the individual staff person. Core Standards was impetus for them to develop a better alternative. Now, a "four levels" program has been implemented. Similar to the system described by Tysinger, it allows promotions in privileges and responsibilities.

"We chart the young peoples' levels weekly so that we can see their progress in black and white," Balsbaugh explains. "We can see the problems when they occur. It helps us look for causes. A letter from home? A bad day at school? Or perhaps a child who cannot deal with success? Whatever the reason, we can spot the problem times and help him through the hump."

continued on page 8



"I want these boys to be able to make it...spanking has no place in our work."



Corporal Punishment in Virginia's Schools

"A good spanking never hurt anyone. It's the best thing that ever happened to me," was a comment from a "man on the street" when asked about corporal punishment in public schools. VCPN staff took to the streets to ask what a few people thought about the topic. Twenty-five people were interviewed—12 females, 13 males—varying in age from 20 to 74. Fourteen gave responses similar to the one mentioned. "I think a good paddling is okay anytime a child does something wrong," was another typical response.

Eleven respondents, however, were opposed. They saw corporal punishment as a source of great concern. "It's like being asked if child abuse is okay," says one. Another respondent voiced concern about teachers abusing their power. "I remember all too often, seeing a teacher grab someone and throw him against a locker. Sometimes the teacher would knock the boy's head against it for good measure."

While responses vary, corporal punishment is deemed, by the majority, an appropriate means of discipline in schools. Virginia statute permits its use in the schools, stating, "Reasonable corporal punishment permitted—In the maintenance of order and discipline, and in the exercise of sound discretion, a principal or a teacher in a public school or a school maintained by the state, may administer reasonable corporal punishment on a pupil under his authority, provided he acts in good faith and the punishment is not excessive" (Code of Virginia, Virginia School Laws 22-231.1).

The literature reveals several rationales for the appropriateness of corporal punishment. Proponents seem to share beliefs that "1) physical punishment helps to develop in the child a sense of personal responsibility, thrift, learning, self-discipline and character; 2) that occasional paddling contributes to a child's socialization; 3) that corporal punishment is the only resource in maintaining order, and 4) that those individuals involved favor its use" (Clarizio, 1975 as cited in Hyman, Bongiovanni, Friedman, & McDowell, 1977).

In addition, Hyman and his associates suggest three other reasons. "One is the prevailing notion that corporal punishment is necessary because teachers have to be protected and the threat of punishment offers them a means of self protection . . . ; that corporal punishment is only used as a last resort . . . and that corporal punishment is justified within the concept of *in loco parentis*" (p. 21). *In loco parentis* means that the teacher can act in the place of the parent, with the right and duty to chastize as the parent would (Maurer, 1981).

An examination of data attests to continuing widespread use of corporal punishment. The National Center for the Study of Corporal Punishment and Alternatives in Schools (Clarke, Liberman-Lascoe and Hyman, 1982) completed a study of incidents of corporal punishment since 1976. They discovered that, in the name of corporal punishment, "students have been subjected to the use of the paddle, hand, rope, belt and fist. In addition, they have had their hair cut off; been put in a storeroom, box, cloak room, closet and school vault; been thrown against a wall, desk and concrete pillar; been forced to run the 'gauntlet' or 'belt-line'; been forced to do punishment push-ups; been stuck with a pin; had their mouth, hands, or body taped; been undressed in private or before peers; been made to stand on their toes for long periods of time; been punched, been dragged by the arm or hair; had meals withheld; been forced to stand in pajamas in 20° weather; been choked; been forced to lay on wet shower floors in clothing; been made to eat cigarettes; been tied to a chair with a rope; and been forced to sit at a desk in a coat room with constant criticism." (p.48)

These incidents suggest not only that corporal punishment is currently used, but also that in many instances it is severe. The "crime," then, must have warranted such serious action. On the contrary, the punishments described were given to students, who, in most cases, had committed nonviolent acts, such as: "playing hookey; possessing cigarettes, smoking; mis-

behaving in the school hallway; coming to class late; not doing school work; getting poor grades; remaining in the bathroom too long; swearing; stealing a teacher's notebook, money or master key; hitting a school bus with a tennis ball; crying in school by a kindergarten child; and not pronouncing words correctly in a kindergarten phonics class" (Clarke, et. al., 1982, p. 49).

Many voices are beginning to be heard arguing against the use of corporal punishment in schools. (See "One Man's Opinion," this issue.) Research studies on punishment cast serious doubt on the efficacy of corporal punishment as a method of inducing permanent behavior change in school children. Punishment, used effectively, must control several closely related factors (such as timing, duration, intensity, specificity). To the extent that such control is not achieved, the ultimate effectiveness of punishment decreases while the risk of actually strengthening the behavior is increased (Hyman, et.al., 1977).

In 1975 the American Psychological Association adopted a resolution asking for a ban on corporal punishment. In it they argue:

"Research has shown to a considerable extent children learn by imitating the behavior of adults, especially those they are dependent upon; and the use of corporal punishment by adults having authority over children is likely to train children to use physical violence to control behavior rather than rational persuasion, education and intelligent forms of both positive and negative reinforcement" (Maurer, 1981, pp. 27-28).

The argument for the use of corporal punishment as a protection loses its validity when one reviews the statistics. Figures indicate that the highest incidence of corporal punishment occurs in grades 1 through 4—ages which would rarely represent a real threat to teacher. If protection were at issue, one would expect to see a higher incidence in high schools where the size and strength of the youth could pose a problem (Hyman, et. al., 1977).

There is further evidence that corporal punishment is used selectively. For example, it has been documented that minority children are disproportionately represented in samples of children who receive corporal punishment. "The *Florida Sun-Sentinel* reported that in the Broward school system, blacks were paddled at a rate of one for every six students, whereas whites were paddled at a rate of one for every 14 students. At a Florida elementary school, black pupils accounted for 15% of the school's enrollment, yet 55% of those paddled were black" (Clark, et. al., 1982, p. 51). Additionally, some researchers and clinicians have noted



"Man on the Street" Survey

Question: "Do you approve of corporal punishment in schools?"

Pro: "I think a good paddling is O.K. anytime a child does something wrong."

Con: "It's like being asked if child abuse is O.K."

that children abused at home seem to be high risk for physical discipline at school. Thus, those who are more vulnerable to the ill effects of corporal punishment—the young, the underprivileged, the child abused at home—seem the most likely to experience it.

Opponents of corporal punishment frequently cite the potential modeling effects:

"We know that the degree of physical punishment used by parents has been positively correlated with various forms of psychopathology among children, particularly with delinquency and acting out behavior. Some studies have derived a near perfect correlation between the amount and the severity of physical punishment suffered by a child during the ages of two to 12 and the amount and severity of adolescent antisocial aggressiveness displayed by the same child" (Hyman, et. al., 1977, p. 20).

The implication for schools is clear. Corporal punishment may provide an aggressive problem-solving model that a child will imitate. In addition, children hearing about or witnessing corporal punishment may become fearful and anxious. Such conditions are not conducive to socialization or learning (Hyman, 1977).

Still others stress the potential sexual component of corporal punishment. "Battering at the buttocks of a child, presumably for disciplinary purposes, partakes of the same elements of sex and sadism" (Maurer, 1981, p. 48). Indeed, the British Psychological Society authored a 1980 report entitled "The Psychopathology of Physical Punishment." It reads, in part,

"Advocates of corporal punishment in schools should examine very carefully the weight of evidence now available and, particularly in the light of the pomographic component, consider whether they can justify the continuation of a system which has the capacity for exciting unhealthy interest. This is not to cast doubt upon the motives of the punishers themselves, which in most cases may be reasonable and unobjectionable, but

rather to take into account the dangerous effects that beating has upon certain impressionable children and adults . . . There is also the question of the small minority of teachers who come to light . . . from time to time who are certainly unfit by reason of their temperament to have the opportunity of inflicting corporal punishment available to them. One may question whether sufficient safeguards exist in the teaching profession to control the activities of such persons. Teachers at present receive no screening for loss of self-control under stress or sexual deviance before entering into the profession, and any attempt to introduce an effective screening program would be met with sound practical and ethical objections. The simplest solution would be to remove any temptation from those who may be unable to resist it" (Maurer, 1981, pp. 49-50).

Toronto Board of Education in 1970, David Baker, a social scientist, remarked,

"I have no data on the mental health of teachers. It may be that . . . (it) . . . is higher than that of the general population at large. Yet the statistics on the mental health of the general population are such to give us pause in allowing a system-wide use of corporal punishment on children . . . If we add to this the observation . . . that approximately one in every 10 children is in need of special psychological . . . services, the probability that either an ill teacher or an ill child or both will be involved in an incident involving corporal punishment is simply too high to allow it to go on at all" (Hyman, et. al., 1977, pp. 21-22).

Finally, one might argue the most obvious reason for not using corporal punishment is the actual physical harm it can cause. While most acknowledge the medical risks of such practices as blows to the head or chest, and choking, it is commonly believed that the buttocks are a "safe" place to hit children. An examination of medical opinion reveals this is a fallacy. Documented damage from "the typical school paddle" includes spinal cord injury (and more subtle damage that may be linked to adult-life back problems), brain hemorrhages from jarring, numerous injuries to head, face, and limbs, when a blow threw a child off balance, damage to underlying bones of pelvis, genital injury and damage to reproductive systems (Maurer, 1981). Or consider the example of three boys caught with cigarettes. When offered the option of a paddling or eating the cigarettes, two of the three youths were quick to eat them—18 cigarettes each. As a result, one was hospitalized for a kidney infection, the other for aggravation of an existing ulcer condition (Hyman, et. al., 1977).

But that was Missouri. What about Virginia? In Norfolk, a P.E. teacher ordered a punishment drill in which the class was ordered to attack one offending student, "the victim fell, caught his thumb in the door which slammed on it, and cut it half off" (Maurer, 1981, p. 34). These are but two of many, many instances where children are seriously injured by commission of corporal punishment in schools.

VCPN surveyed seven school districts, speaking to principals from one elementary school and one high school each. In doing so we found that while state statute allows corporal punishment, some local administrative policies have banned its use. This was particularly true of high schools, where, of the seven surveyed, only one high school allowed its use. Elementary schools, on the other hand, tended to allow corporal punishment. Of the seven elementary schools surveyed, five have policies allowing its use while two prohibit it.

All principals interviewed were happy with their school policy. Those who did not use corporal punishment felt that alternatives were more effective. Those who used corporal punishment felt it was both effective and necessary.

It is interesting to note that in the five elementary schools and one high school where corporal punishment is used, there are common guidelines for its use. In all cases, only the principal can administer corporal punishment and a witness must be present. In many instances, a written record is kept which outlines the offense provoking the punishment and the number of swats administered.

Given the statutes' rather vague limits on the use of corporal punishment, we were interested in knowing how principals interpret the word "reasonable." In all cases, two or three swats with a hand or paddle were considered a reasonable use. All parties were adamant about administering physical punishment only after a series of other steps were followed and had failed. "It is the last resort—only if nothing else works," most stated.

continued on page 8



One Man's Opinion



Duncan S. Wallace, M.D.

(The following comments are edited from an address to the Governor's Advisory Committee presented by Duncan S. Wallace, M.D. on March 12, 1982. Dr. Wallace is a psychiatrist and is serving on the Virginia Beach City School Board.)

It is my opinion that corporal punishment in the schools is not only an ineffective disciplinary tool, but that it also may contribute to instances of child abuse. Corporal punishment has been abandoned as a disciplinary measure in the armed services, prisons and even in the treatment of animals. It is recognized that violence breeds violence. The fear of corporal punishment is only as good as the vigilance and presence of the punisher.

Corporal punishment when used successfully is a way of modifying overt behavior and not of changing basic personality. A hostile child remains hostile, an impulsive child remains impulsive, and a delusional child will most assuredly not lose his delusions. Rather, the undesirable behavior is driven underground. The child becomes sneaky and is more careful the next time to make sure he is not caught. All the while, building up inside him are feelings of retaliation, anger and hostility, which further mitigate against his willingness to comply in the future with the wishes of his punisher and which certainly work to the detriment of learning.

Not only is corporal punishment ineffective but it can also be dangerous, according to studies by Feshback, Feshback, Buttons and Welsh. They noted a near perfect correlation between the amount of severity of physical

punishment received by a child between the ages of 2 and 12 and the subsequent numbers of antisocial acts committed by that individual.

However, the best and most pervasive reason against corporal punishment in schools is that it does not fit the dignity and professional integrity of those charged with the educational care of the child.

Child psychiatrists as a group have repeatedly spoken out against the use of corporal punishment in schools. In a position paper, the American Academy of Child Psychiatry noted "The use of force by nonparents, administrators, teachers, etc., has none of the safeguards of a sustained parent/child relationship and it is not to be compared with spankings ad-

ministered by a loving, concerned parent. Corporal punishment is ineffective as a disciplinary agent. It involves the risk of gratifying perverse urges in both the one receiving and also the one administering the punishment. Those who use corporal punishment rely on it to the exclusion of other educational and disciplinary measures of a noncorporal sort. Further, the use of corporal punishment may at times be a symptom of staff frustrations, inexperience, administrative errors or interstaff conflicts with the child being the weakest and most accessible scapegoat."

A decade ago, the National Education Association published a report of the task force on corporal punishment chaired by a Charlottesville, Va., teacher, Julian M. Hudson. They

continued on next page

In Search of Alternatives

Effective alternatives to corporal punishment do exist. Many school districts operate without using corporal punishment. In the course of researching the use of corporal punishment, VCPN staff also inquired about the use of alternatives. From those we interviewed, and from the literature, a list of options was compiled.

1. Give the child a quiet place, or "time out" in order to "cool off." Principals especially mentioned this technique as an effective short-term alternative.
2. When a problem arises, develop a youth-teacher agreement on immediate alternatives. Chris Davis of Presbyterian Home, commented, "I often ask the boys, 'what would be a more appropriate behavior?' while also asking their assistance in deciding on an appropriate punishment for a misdeed. They have good ideas."
3. Privileges can be earned or forfeited as a result of behavior. "At Covington, in order to get certain privileges, students need to follow the rules," says Travis Tysinger.
4. Develop individualized alternatives suitable to the offense. For instance, if students are smoking in school, assign a project requiring reading literature and viewing of films about smoking, then have the student write a report summarizing the information.
5. Provide comprehensive school orientation. According to the NEA Task Force, "frequent misunderstanding or lack of understanding of regulations causes students to become disciplinary problems. Students and parents cannot be expected to support and comply with regulations that they do not understand. Thus, in addition to being given information about a school's classroom schedules, curriculum, grading system and extracurricular activities, students and parents should also be told about school codes of conduct, administrative procedures for handling discipline problems, procedures for requesting parent-teacher conferences and special services for students" (Hyman, et. al., 1977, p. 22).
6. Use alternate programs in schools: boredom or disinterest often leads to acting out. As an intermediate-range solution, the NEA

suggests revision of curriculum content by the staff and students, in order to help it better meet student interest, and expansion of work-study and other programs.

7. Develop alternative programs within school systems. Provision of support services to work with individual problem students can be helpful.

8. Regular attendance—students who attend school regularly create fewer disciplinary problems than students who are habitually absent. The NEA suggests that an accurate system of student accounting be followed and that parents should be advised of their children's absences. Students who attend regularly should receive appropriate recognition.

9. Foster communication between students and teachers. Programs have been developed to involve students and teachers in practical experiences that help them become more aware of their own and others' feelings and lead to better communication between teachers and students. Some of these include teacher effectiveness training, values clarification and approaches for motivating children.

10. Maintain a low ratio of students to teachers so that teachers can really get to know the pupils. As Jerry Newbold of the Presbyterian Home states, "Real modification comes from the relationship."

11. Have support professionals—psychologists, counselors, psychiatrists—available to both teachers and children. Venting frustrations and developing creative solutions is superior to displacing hostility.

12. Provide adequate teacher training. In-service training can be tailored to increasing teacher skill in handling difficult children and can provide needed consultation on individual cases.

This list of alternatives is not meant to be exhaustive. The NEA Task Force on Corporal Punishment has published a "proposed model law outlawing corporal punishment." It contains a comprehensive section on alternatives to corporal punishment.

recommended that corporal punishment be abolished in public schools. They found that "educators use corporal punishment exclusively where conditions for dealing with disruptions are so poor that the school staff has reached a point of total frustration. Inequities and inadequacies of the educational system make good education impossible in many schools. The best efforts of any school staff may be thwarted by such conditions as classes that are too large for individualization or personalization; materials too narrow in scope and scarce in quantity to provide motivation; and psychological and social services support too rare to provide assistance to students with severe emotional and social problems."

The N.E.A. task force noted the following general conclusions about physical punishment: Physical punishment is most often used on students who are physically weaker and smaller than the teacher. Physical punishment is often a symptom of frustration rather than disciplinary procedure. Physical punishment develops aggressive hostility. Physical punishment teaches that "might is right." The use of physical punishment inclines everyone in the school community to regard students as less than human and the schools as dehumanizing.

In many places corporal punishment in the school has been banned for years. Some cities that have banned corporal punishment in the schools include Boston, Baltimore, Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, St. Paul, San Francisco and our nation's capital. Over a century ago (1867), New Jersey banned corporal punishment in its schools. Other states banning corporal punishment in the schools include Massachusetts, Hawaii and Maine. Countries banning corporal punishment include Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Finland, Iceland, Philippines, Israel, Japan and all communist bloc nations. Poland outlawed it 200 years ago in 1783 and France abolished corporal punishment in their schools a century later in 1887.

In 1978 a study was undertaken to evaluate 59 U.S. school districts which had eliminated

corporal punishment in the last decade and the success of that action. People have expressed concern that if corporal punishment is abolished there will be a striking increase in the amount of disciplinary problems. However, this survey found that only one of the 59 districts reported an increase in disciplinary problems. In Virginia Beach, although we did not abolish the use of corporal punishment in our schools, we changed the regulations governing its use so there was a decrease of approximately 90% in its reported use in the past two years. Our number of expulsions have decreased. There has been no noticeable increase in any disciplinary problem.

Dr. John Valosek, who for ten years has studied violence in American society, concluded that the single most important source for the potential of becoming a violent-prone individual are attitudes and experiences within the triumvirate of home, school and church. Often all of these institutions have taught through the encouragement and use of corporal punishment that it is acceptable or even desirable to hit someone who doesn't do what you want. Could it be that most of us "turned out all right" in spite of the physical punishment, because we were given enough love and support to cancel the negative effect of corporal punishment?

Corporal punishment is a violation of the child's body ownership and body integrity. If responsibility for the ownership and functioning of one's own body were recognized legal concepts, then corporal punishment would be viewed as an assault or molestation, the nonsexual equivalent of rape. Legally, if parental consent is required before a physician can examine a body, corporal punishment by nonparents should not require less. If parental consent is not forthcoming then corporal punishment should be forbidden.

There is no question that discipline is necessary and teachers need to control their classrooms. Limits are important and show caring and concern. However, there are more effective and desirable disciplinary measures than corporal punishment.

Policy Statements on Corporal Punishment

On April 23, 1983, the Board of Directors of the National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse (NCPA) adopted a position statement on the abolition of corporal punishment. It reads as follows:

"It is the position of the National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse that since corporal punishment in schools and custodial settings contradicts the national policy dedicated to the eradication of child abuse, and since appropriate disciplinary alternatives can be made available, that henceforth we will work towards the elimination of corporal punishment and work toward the adoption of alternatives to corporal punishment."

The NCPA joins at least five other organizations who have also issued position statements against the use of corporal punishment in schools and institutions. These are:

- Association for Humanistic Education
- American Psychological Association
- American Public Health Association
- National Education Association
- Society of Adolescent Medicine

Book Reviews

Paddles Away: A Psychological Study of Punishment in Schools

(Adah Maurer, R & E Research Associates, Inc., Palo Alto, California, 1981)

Maurer has obviously done his homework. Beginning with statistics, this volume lays the groundwork solidly. The book contains explicit definitions, a review of the literature on punishment, and a chapter on law.

It took me three days to read the chapter entitled "Medical Considerations." I truly hadn't realized the medical implications of corporal punishment. I could handle the data and testimony only in small doses. If that chapter wasn't enough, the following one, entitled "Sex and Sadism, the Pornography of Paddling," made it difficult to ignore the potential damage to children subjected to physical discipline.

Given the current interest in upgrading education and solving problems in schools, Maurer's treatment of vandalism and violence by school children deserves careful thought. He cites corporal punishment as one of a number of variables that determine how students feel about school; and, therefore, how they act towards it.

The author's style is rambling but the information covered is impressive. Maurer is an outspoken advocate of abolishing corporal punishment and his volume is not an impartial review. Even so, it is well-researched and should be required reading for every school administrator, school board member, teacher, and parent.

—Joann Grayson

Judicial Rulings, State Statutes, and State Administrative Regulations Dealing with the Use of Corporal Punishment in Public Schools

(Ronald A. Paquet, R & E Research Associates, Palo Alto, California, 1982)

At last! A comprehensive, easy-to-read guide to state laws and administrative regulations on corporal punishment. An excellent reference, this work provides the reader with a basis for analysis and comparison of each state's rulings on corporal punishment. Ronald Paquet has also included an overview of judicial rulings concerning "cruel and unusual punishment," "due process," and "parental rights." This short volume concludes with recommendations for educators based on Paquet's analysis of both legislation and judicial decisions. This resource will prove valuable to researchers and concerned advocates alike.

—Joann Grayson

Corporal Punishment in Virginia's Schools

continued from page 5

Principals were reluctant to discuss specific instances of misbehavior which ultimately resulted in corporal punishment. Thus, we do not know which behaviors, or which children, are being punished.

Those schools which did not use corporal punishment used a variety of alternatives. The most common one was to follow a series of steps that began with talking to the child about the incident or behavior and placing the child in a position where he/she must become responsible for the behavior and accept the consequences. If problems continue, parents/guardians are brought in. All officials believe that parent involvement is an important key to managing behavior problems. With all parties involved, a system of penalties is established—withdrawal of privileges, detention, in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension. Few, however, mentioned referral to mental health services as one of the potential solutions. Some systems use an alternative school setting for those who will not adjust to a system's rules and regulations. In this setting, teacher/student ratio is smaller, and a very structured environment assists in behavior management.

One principal viewed alternatives, which include talking and building a sense of respon-

sibility in the child, as mechanisms for building rapport. "As a matter of fact," he said, "if teachers could build rapport before misbehavior becomes a serious problem, paddles may not need to be used as 'the last resort.'"

References

- Clarke, J., Liberman - Lascoe, R., and Hyman, I.A. *Corporal punishment in school as reported in nationwide newspapers*. In R. Hanson (Ed.) *Institutional abuse of children and youth*. New York: The Haworth Press, 1982.
- Hanson, R. (Editor). *Institutional abuse of children and youth*. New York: The Haworth Press, 1977.
- Hyman, I. A., Bongiovanni, A., Friedman, R. H., and McDowell, E., *Paddling, punishing and force: Where do we go from here?* *Children Today*, September-October, 1977, 17-23.
- Hyman, I. A., *Corporal punishment in the schools: America's officially sanctioned brand of child abuse*. Paper presented at the Second Annual National Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect, Houston, Texas, April 18, 1977.
- Maurer, A. *Paddles away: A psychological study of physical punishment in schools*. Palo Alto, California: R & E Research Associates, Inc., 1981.
- National Education Association. *Report of the task force on corporal punishment*. 1972. Available from NEA, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.
- Paquet, R. A. *Judicial rulings, state statutes, and state administrative regulations dealing with the use of corporal punishment*. Palo Alto, California: R & E Research Associates, Inc., 1982.

Virginia's Institutions: How are they coping with the ban on corporal punishment?

continued from page 3

As president of the VACH, Balsbaugh says he sees or speaks to his colleagues frequently. "No one is talking about corporal punishment anymore," he says. "Before Core Standards were adopted, it was a big issue. Homes were adamant that they wanted the option. When Core Standards prohibited it, then, that was final. There are some problems with Core Standards and I hear about those. Corporal punishment just is not one of them."

While it appears that attitudes among directors about the use of padding as an effective option in behavior management may differ, no one voiced great concern over its prohibition. No agency interviewed is refusing to serve specific children because of the prohibition on corporal punishment. Nor did agencies report an increase in vandalism or discipline problems due to the ban. The institutions have developed and implemented new systems where necessary and kept the old system when appropriate. All are moving ahead with the task at hand—providing the best possible environment for children under their care.



Center for Child Abuse Education
Psychology Department
Harrisonburg, Va. 22807

Address Correction Requested

Funds for This publication are provided by:

National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect
Children's Bureau
Administration for Children, Youth and Families
Department of Health and Human Services
Grant no. 3c/22/06

and

Virginia Department of Welfare
Bureau of Child Protective Services

Non Profit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Harrisonburg, Virginia
PERMIT NO. 4