



Canadian Friends Service Committee (Quakers)

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Ron Ensom
Coalition on Physical Punishment of Children and Youth
1858 Sharel Drive
Ottawa, ON, K1H 6W4
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Re: Endorsement of *Joint Statement on Physical Punishment of Children and Youth*

December 6, 2013

Dear Ron Ensom,

In response to your request to Phillip Smith, Clerk of the Quakers Fostering Justice program committee of Canadian Friends Service Committee, that Friends consider adding our voice to those of other Canadian Groups endorsing the *Joint Statement on Physical Punishment of Children and Youth* sponsored by the Coalition on Physical Punishment of Children and Youth (16 May 2013 e-mail), the Canadian Friends Service Committee has agreed to endorse this statement.

We understand the purposes of this statement to be:

1. to create a common understanding of the ways in which physical punishment can affect children's development
2. to summarize the evidence of its risks
3. to identify the factors that perpetuate its use
4. to encourage parents and other caregivers to choose approaches to discipline that don't rely on physical punishment

We understand that by endorsing this statement we indicate our confidence in its review of research on physical punishment, the conclusions drawn from the review and our support for the recommendations contained therein.

From the findings of the joint statement, we understand that there is no clear distinction between physical punishment and physical abuse. From recent findings in neuroscience, we understand further that if a child or youth feels mad, sad, bad or scared, resultant brain states interfere with learning. We understand that physical punishment increases the risk of physical injury, is linked to impaired parent-child relationships, which are then a risk factor for poorer child mental and physical health. Physical punishment lowers self-regulation and leads to increasing levels of aggression and increased anti-social behaviour. All of these factors are harmful to child development and relate to negative outcomes and increased tolerance for violence in adulthood.

Reflecting on our own testimonies of faith, we find physical punishment of children and youth to be incompatible with our belief that there is that of God in every person and with our rejection violence as acceptable behaviour. Historically, at a time when harsh punishments for children were the norm, Quaker parents rejected corporal punishment in favour of love and reason to appeal to their children. In the 17th century in the United States, Quakers led a movement against the use of corporal punishment, and achieved local reforms in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Today, the Quaker Peace Centre in South Africa conducts training for teachers on alternatives to corporal punishment in schools.

Please proceed to add the Canadian Friends Service Committee to the list of groups endorsing this statement. If there is something more we can do to further the purposes for which this statement is intended, please let us know.

In Friendship,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lesley Robertson". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Lesley Robertson
Clerk