

## **Spanking by Parents or Others - What Is Excessive? What Is Abuse? What Should Be Abuse?**

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Spanking a child for disobedience has been used for generations. However, the lines separating child punishment and child abuse are becoming increasingly blurred when spanking is used for child disobedience. For example a [Portsmouth woman was recently charged with child abuse](#) when she was observed spanking her 7-year-old daughter with a belt in a parking lot. The spanking resulted in welts on the girl's body. The lines become even more blurred and enter the realm of criminal charges when the child is injured during a spanking. It is imperative for parents who resort to spanking their children as a form of discipline to use sound judgment when doing so. Parents need to be aware of the amount of force they are using and the amount of pain they are inflicting upon their children. Although spanking receives a higher level of scrutiny today, the lines have become so blurred between what constitutes punishment and what crosses the threshold into abuse. Corporal punishment and spanking can be the basis of a lawsuit or civil cause of action especially when the corporal punishment / spanking is against the law, against school or day care policies, and / or against the instructions or without the consent of the parents. Take for instance a [2006 child abuse case](#) where a father disciplined his child with a belt for acting "unmanly." After the child complained to a teacher about his back hurting, belt marks were discovered all over his back and lower body. There is a profound difference between spanking your children as a form of punishment and a violent beating. Alternative forms of punishment are becoming increasingly popular. Instead of spanking their children, parents are resorting to more consistent and humane types of punishment such as taking away their children's privileges (watching TV, cell phone and vehicle use) or putting them in time-out. The main question with spanking is: When is spanking or corporal punishment excessive and / or abusive to the child? When is spanking no longer punishment but crosses the threshold into child abuse? These are serious legal issues that are unclear and cause a great amount of debate. A [child injury lawyer](#) is an extremely helpful resource if you believe a child to be a victim of violent beatings. For more on this issue please see [Spanking: Acceptable Form of Punishment or Abuse?](#)