

Violence against children in the Republic of Moldova

Study report

Implementing agency:



Ministry of Education and Youth of the Republic of Moldova
Ministry of Social Protection, Family and Child of the Republic of Moldova



The Study was carried out in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Youth of the Republic of Moldova and the Ministry of Social Protection, Family and Child of the Republic of Moldova.

The implementation of the study was financially supported and technically assisted by the UNICEF Office in the Republic of Moldova.

Data was collected and processed by the Institute for Marketing and Polls IMAS-Inc.

IMAS-Inc. implementation team:

Doru PETRUȚI
general manager

Paul ACATRINI
executive director

Veronica TUDOSOV
director of the Quantitative Studies Department

Ecaterina SOFRONI
senior researcher

The publication was coordinated by:

Viorica CREȚU
UNICEF Moldova
project officer - Violence and Child Trafficking

With the contribution of:

Daniela POPESCU
UNICEF Moldova
Consultant

Gerhard OHRBAND
UNICEF Moldova
Consultant

Brigid Caitlin KENNEDY PFISTER
UNICEF Moldova
Consultant

Photos:

Tatiana EȚCO
Sanda LEU
Cristina PUȚUNTICĂ
Oleg ROIBU
Nicolae RACOVIȚĂ
Victoria ȚĂRANU

DESCRIEREA CIP A CAMEREI NAȚIONALE A CĂRȚII

Violence against Children in the Republic of Moldova : Study Report / Min. of Education and Youth of the Rep. of Moldova, Min. of Soc. Protection, Family and Child of the Rep. of Moldova; coord. : Doru Petruți, ... - Ch. : S. n., 2007 (Combinatul Polig.). - 72 p. ISBN 978-9975-901-72-7

343.62(478)(047)

CONTENTS:

OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY .☒	6
1. Objectives	7
2. Child Study Methodology	8
3. Parent Study Methodology .☒	10
SUMMARY	12
1. INCIDENCE OF DIFFERENT FORMS OF ABUSE	20
A. Domestic Neglect	21
B. Domestic Emotional/Psychological Abuse	24
C. Domestic Physical Abuse/Beating	26
D. Forced Housework	29
E. Sexual Abuse	30
F. Violence against Children by Teachers	31
2. PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE PHENOMENON OF VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA	34
A. How children perceive the phenomenon in the Republic of Moldova	35
B. How parents perceive the phenomenon in the Republic of Moldova	38
3. TRANS-GENERATIONAL TRANSMITTANCE OF ABUSE	42
4. CHILD DISCIPLINE: BEHAVIOUR CORRECTION VERSUS ABUSE	46
A. Frequency of Disciplinary Methods Applied to Children	47
B. Acceptability and Necessity of Physical Discipline	52
C. Responsibility and Reasons for Child Discipline	56
D. Attitudes about Gender and Family Roles	57
5. ASSESSMENT OF RESPONSES TO CASES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN	58
A. The Role of Professionals in Assisting Cases of Violence against Children	59
B. Individual and State Responses to Violence against Children	61
C. Education about Violence against Children	62
D. Attitudes about Gender and Family Roles	63
CONCLUSIONS	66
Recommendations	70



FOREWARD

Violence against children and women is still a serious problem for most countries including Moldova. There are few official data on the true dimension of the phenomenon in our country due to low reporting rates. Domestic violence is traditionally accepted and mostly takes place within the "privacy" of homes. It is not even perceived as a violation of human rights, but rather as a private matter. For instance, corporal punishment as means of disciplining children is often considered to be a parental right, a natural demonstration of the authority, and a measure that does not require time or special knowledge but gives an immediate effect – a child who was beaten would immediately do what he or she is told. Adults must change their perceptions. Children are brought up to perceive beating as a normal and well-deserved punishment. Many women and children victims do not report acts of domestic violence because they are afraid to do so, they do not know where to go for help and what the reporting procedures are. Some feel ashamed or guilty.

Stopping the violence against children is now a priority for the Government of Moldova and for UNICEF. In 2005, Moldova provided data for the UN General Secretary's Global Study on Violence against Children and participated in Regional Consultations on Violence against Children (Ljubljana, Slovenia). The Study calls for all violence against children, including all corporal punishment, to be legally prohibited by 2009. Amending Moldovan legislation in order to ensure real protection for women and children from all forms of violence is crucial. The adoption of the Law on Domestic Violence will be one significant step in the right direction.

It is also very important to develop a strong system, able to respond to cases of violence and to provide children and women victims or at risk of violence with necessary support and protection. Professionals working with and for children and families should be thoroughly trained, community-based services should be developed. The framework for all these actions is being set by the first National Plan of Action to prevent and combat violence against children that is to be approved by the Government in the nearest future.

To more effectively plan the efforts in dealing with violence against children, two studies have been implemented in 2006-2007 in agreement with the Ministry of Education and Youth and later with the Ministry of Social Protection, Family and Child and with UNICEF support:

- the *Study on the State Responsiveness to Violence against Children*, implemented by the Gender-Center NGO, and
- the *Study on Violence against Children*, implemented by the Institute of Marketing and Polls IMAS-Inc.

We invite you to read the reports on these studies carefully. They can become very valuable tools in policy planning to successfully prevent violence by triggering and sustaining the societal changes needed based on the respect for the rule of law, human rights and equal opportunities for all children.

Galina BALMOȘ

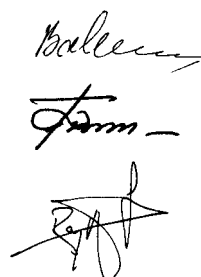
Minister of Social Protection, Family and Child of the Republic of Moldova

Victor ȚVIRCUN

Minister of Education and Youth of the Republic of Moldova

Ray Virgilio TORRES

UNICEF Representative in the Republic of Moldova





OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

1. OBJECTIVES

➤ **The goal** of this study is to give a detailed account of the extent, causes and incidence of the phenomenon of violence against children in families and at school.

Because this study is the first of its scale in the Republic of Moldova, a broader definition of violence has been adopted in order to cover as many facets of the phenomenon as possible. In this study the term “violence” therefore includes:

- Domestic neglect;
- Domestic emotional/psychological abuse;
- Domestic physical abuse/beating;
- Forced housework;
- Sexual abuse;
- Violence at school by teachers.

➤ **Study Objectives:**

- To identify and estimate the incidence of different forms of violence;
- To identify and explore some of the causes of violence;
- To identify risk groups among children;
- To study the attitudes of parents and children towards violence;
- To study the knowledge and attitudes of parents towards the role of professionals who might assist in cases of violence against children;
- To make recommendations aimed at decreasing the phenomenon of violence against children.





2. CHILD STUDY METHODOLOGY

- **Sample size:** 1,629 students, representative of school age children, between 10 and 18 years old from the 5th-12th forms.
 - **Sample type:** stratified, probabilistic
 - **Target group:** students from the 5th-12th forms
 - **Method of Collecting Data:** self-administered written questionnaire
 - **Data Collection Period:** The survey was completed in November-December 2006.
 - **Sampling:**
 - The sample included schools located in all regions of the Republic of Moldova to ensure geographic distribution of the population/ students throughout the country;
 - To the extent possible, localities and schools were chosen randomly and so were the *forms* selected from each school. This scheme was adjusted when, for example, a school did not have students in the 9th form. In such a case, another locality would be selected randomly.
- If that locality also failed to meet the selection criteria, another locality would again be selected at random until the specified form was filled;
- Preliminary information regarding the number of students enrolled in various schools was not precise; discrepancies between official statistics and the actual situation necessitated a change in the initial plan of the study, requiring IMAS-INC to supplement the number of schools visited in order to administer questionnaires to a sufficient number of students. The UNICEF survey on CHILDREN therefore covered 79 forms from 57 localities.
- **Interviewing Conditions:**
 - Children filled in written questionnaires; they received direction on how to fill out the questionnaires from study operators who were trained by IMAS-INC.
 - Results exceeded the expectations of the study team; children handled the task easily, regardless of age. Only the respondents' indecision in choosing one specific answer

from the available options in a particular situation described in the questionnaire became eventually problematic. The share of non-answers was very negligible therefore;

- IMAS-INC operators enjoyed the methodology adopted for this study. Work on the project was enriching, and it was interesting for them to interact with children;

➤ **School Administration/Teaching Staff Attitude:**

- School administrators were generally very responsive towards the study and said that it was both welcome and necessary. In the majority of localities, school administrators drew the attention of the operators to the unfavourable conditions in which teachers work and children learn, especially the lack of gyms, music rooms, canteens, etc.
- In some schools in the Chisinau municipality administrators reacted somewhat differently, rather cynically towards the initiative. They asked operators for explanations on why a particular school or form was chosen, and in what way the study would be used, attesting that- “the results would not change anything”, “some schools encounter big problems – they

do not have the most necessary resources” (furniture, a proper heating system, etc.), and that “this survey is a waste of time, and first of all the mentality of parents should be changed so that they do not treat their children as they often do, especially in a lot of rural localities.” Similar problems were encountered in schools in Taraclia and Cahul;

- In some cases in Chisinau the Ministry of Education and Youth had to intervene in order for the study to take place;
- At some lyceums, administrators expressed their willingness to collaborate with UNICEF on additional projects for which UNICEF could contact them directly.
- School administrators expressed their desire to find out the results of the study as soon as possible;

➤ **Refusal Rates**

There were no refusals by students to fill out the questionnaire, but there were cases in which children did not answer some of the questions. The number of omitted answers was minor and did not affect the results or the credibility of the study.

➤ **Sample Structure**

Variable	Group	No. Students	Percentage
Sex	Male	776	48
	Female	840	51
	No answer	13	1
Form (year of study)	Forms 5-9	1.286	79
	Forms 10-12	343	21
Family Financial Situation	We do not have enough food	144	9
	We try to save a little	431	27
	We can afford various things	559	34
	We have all we need	478	29
	No answer	17	1
I live	With both parents	1.176	72
	With only one parent	268	17
	With other relatives	97	6
	No answer	88	5
Siblings	Yes	1.393	85
	No	225	14
	No answer	11	1
Type of Locality	Municipality	240	15
	Town >15,000	228	14
	Town <15,000	193	12
	Rural area	968	59
TOTAL		1.629	100

3. PARENT STUDY METHODOLOGY

- **Sample size:** representative sample of 630 questionnaires
- **Sample type:** stratified, probabilistic
- **Target group:** Persons taking care of children
- **Method of Data Collection:** Face-to-face interviews
- **Data Collection Period:** The survey was carried out in November-December 2006
- **Sampling:**
 - Cluster (Area) Random Sampling was used to ensure that the sample was representative at the national level.
 - Localities were selected randomly according to their geographic locations.
- The analysis was performed based on a representative sample of 630 questionnaires completed out of 638 proposed.
- The questionnaires were administered in a slightly different way than in other surveys as the respondents selected were adults bearing responsibility for a child/children (taking care of their upbringing, education, spending most time with the children in their family/household).
- **Interviewing Conditions:**
 - Overall, impressions of this survey were positive; the operators were pleasantly surprised by how easy it was to administer the questionnaires and expressed their desire for additional surveys on the subject-matter to be carried out using the same type of sampling.



➤ **Refusal Rates**

- This study is also singular in terms of the total number of refusals (11), both at the urban (6) and rural (5) levels. The majority of respondents who refused to participate did so politely, mostly justifying their refusal by a lack of time rather than an unwillingness to participate; other refusals occurred on account of those who were home alone and did not want to open the door. Non-contacts took place when respondents were absent from home at the time of all three visits, either because they were at work, lived in another locality but owned a home in the area, or because the entrance to the block of flats (in urban localities, especially Chisinau) was locked.



➤ **Sample Structure**

Variable	Group	No. Parents	Percentage
Sex	Male	101	16.0%
	Female	529	84.0%
Person Responsible for Child Care	Mother	473	75.1%
	Father	85	13.5%
	Another person	72	11.4%
Mother's Education	Secondary incomplete education	91	15.9%
	General or vocational school	229	40.1%
	Lyceum, college	105	18.4%
	Higher education (University), Master's degree	127	22.2%
	No answer	19	3.3%
Father's Education	Secondary incomplete education	60	11.7%
	General or vocational school	226	43.9%
	Lyceum, college	79	15.3%
	Higher education (University), Master's degree	95	18.4%
	No answer	55	10.7%
Household Monthly Income	< 1,000 lei	202	32.1%
	1,001-2,500 lei	210	33.3%
	Over 2,500 lei	88	14.0%
	I don't know/No answer	130	20.6%
Type of Locality	Municipality	141	22.4%
	>15,000 inhabitants	51	8.1%
	<15,000 inhabitants	54	8.6%
	Rural	384	61.0%
Total		630	100.0%



SUMMARY

1. INCIDENCE OF DIFFERENT FORMS OF ABUSE

Domestic Neglect

- ◆ One out of ten children from the general sample, and four out of ten children who perceive themselves as very poor say that they suffer from hunger because there is not enough food in their house.
- ◆ One out of ten children from the general sample and three out of ten children who perceive themselves as very poor consider themselves neglected, with nobody taking care of them.
- ◆ Children who report that their parents neglect them are more likely to have difficulty adapting in school.
- ◆ Children who say that they suffer from emotional neglect at home run a higher risk of being abused by teachers and becoming victims of sexual abuse.

Domestic Emotional/Psychological Abuse

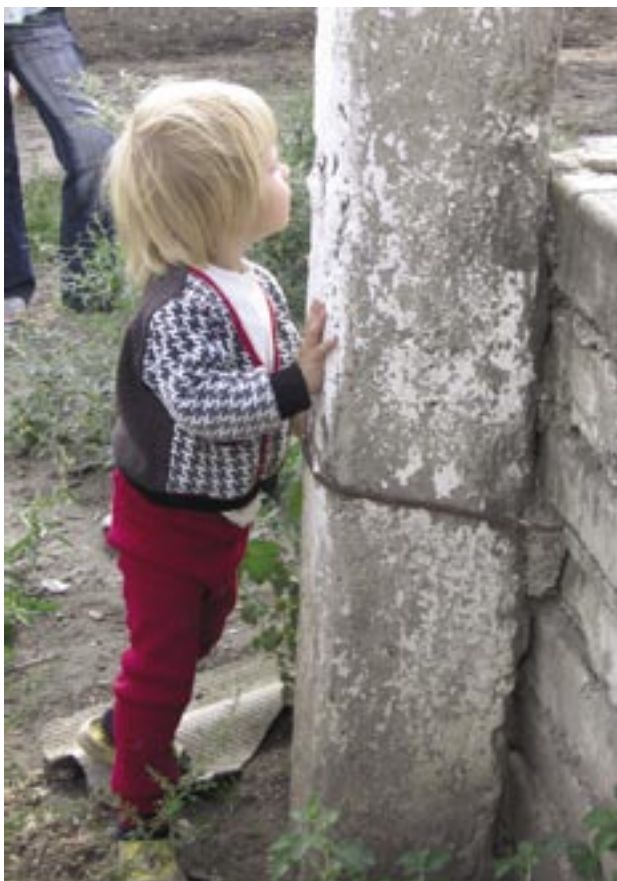
- ◆ Three out of ten children declare that parents control every single move they make; it is especially characteristic of children from families with a low living standard or with a single parent.
- ◆ Two out of ten children consider themselves exposed or subject to verbal violence in their families (they are called different humiliating names).



- ◆ One out of ten parents says that they act towards their children in ways that are emotionally or psychologically abusive (they threaten them, prohibit activities, etc.)
- ◆ Seven out of ten children say that their parents support them in what they do. These statements are more characteristic of girls (77%) as compared to boys (72%), children in primary school as compared to children in high school, and children from rural areas as compared to urban localities.
- ◆ Two out of ten children say that they are often (4%) or sometimes (16%) neglected by their parents – their parents ignore or fail to communicate with them – even if their material needs are satisfied. 30% of the children surveyed consider at least half of the children in the Republic of Moldova to be in the same situation.
- ◆ The study showed a close connection between psychological and physical abuse; children who report that their parents often shout at them also more frequently report being beaten and vice versa.

At the same time:

- ◆ Four out of ten children (42%) say that sometimes they do not meet their parents' expectations and disappoint them in some way, and one child out of ten (10%) says that he or she never meets parental expectations. One third of students say that they believe that a *majority* of children are in such a situation. Two thirds of students declared that they knew *at least several cases* of children in the same situation.



- ◆ The study also showed a correlation between neglect and emotional abuse; parents who neglect their children also shout at them more often.

Domestic Physical Abuse/Beating

- ◆ 25% of children state that their own parents beat them if they do not listen to them. This scenario is especially true for children from families whose material well-being is assessed as very poor. Respondents believe that parents most often beat their children for smoking, alcohol consumption, and truancy.
- ◆ 7% of parents declare that they slap their children when the latter do something wrong and 4% beat them with different objects.
- ◆ Only 5% of parents would make a report to the police if they saw another parent beating a child.
- ◆ On average, children are scolded more frequently in today's generation as compared to their parents' and this behaviour is transmitted from generation to generation.
- ◆ Although on average the incidence of violence against children seems to be slightly less for today's children as compared to their parents, it still takes place at almost the same rate as compared to the preceding generation.

- ◆ Boys suffer more from physical domestic violence than girls.
- ◆ Children who are beaten at home are more vulnerable to becoming victims of sexual abuse, less able to adapt at school and run a higher risk of being beaten by teachers.

Forced Housework

- ◆ Four out of ten children say that when they return home from school they are more often (7%) or sometimes (36%) given a certain amount of housework and do not have time for playing, friends, or sometimes even school-homework.
- ◆ 60% of children who report that their families do not have money even for food say that they do not have time for playing, friends, or at times school-homework because of the work they must do for their family.
- ◆ Two out of ten parents state that they make their children work (in the field, taking care of other children, etc). In villages, three out of ten parents claim this.
- ◆ Children who say that they are too involved in housework have fewer friends and are less able to adapt at school.

Sexual Abuse

- ◆ One in ten children states that adults involve them in watching pornographic films.
- ◆ One out of ten children reports that they have been sexually abused/molested.
- ◆ 5% of parents know about cases of child sexual abuse.
- ◆ Seven out of ten parents say that cases of sexual abuse must be reported to the police.
- ◆ Sexually abused children (in comparison with the opinion of non-abused children) think that few children suffer in the same way and know of few particular cases.

Violence against Children by Teachers

- ◆ One third of children declare that teachers verbally attack them. An increased incidence of this phenomenon is associated with low income situations and lack of parental figures.
- ◆ Four out of ten parents know teachers who verbally attack children.
- ◆ 13% of children say that teachers either always or sometimes physically abuse them.
- ◆ Two out of ten parents know teachers who threaten children with beatings or slap them.
- ◆ 24% of children report that they feel that their teachers discriminate against them. The rate is higher for children who identify themselves as being from a poor family.
- ◆ One out of ten parents knows teachers that have harassed or sexually abused children.
- ◆ Girls tend to suffer more from violence, especially physical violence, in school.





2. PERCEPTION OF PHENOMENON OF VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN IN MOLDOVA

How do children perceive the phenomenon in the Republic of Moldova?

- ◆ One third of students say that the majority of children cannot meet their parents' expectations and thus disappoint them. Two thirds of the survey participants declared that they know of at least several cases of children in such a situation.
- ◆ More than 40% of students say that at least half of children in Moldova are given house or field work as soon as they come back from school and have no time for playing, friends, or sometimes even school-homework.
- ◆ 30% of the questioned children declare that parents neglect at least half of children in Moldova by ignoring them or by failing to communicate with them.
- ◆ 37% of the interviewed children believe that half or more of children suffer from hunger because there is not enough food in the house. 56% of students say that they know at least several children in such a situation.
- ◆ More than one third of students think that at least half of children are beaten by parents if they disobey.
- ◆ Four out of ten children think that adults involve at least some children in watching pornographic films. One third declares that they know at least one specific example.
- ◆ One third of students think that sexual molestation happens to at least some children. A similar number say that they know such cases in their proximate environment.
- ◆ Almost half of children think that some students are victims of physical violence by teachers during classes. Approximately the same proportion of children says that they know of particular cases of such abuse.

How do parents perceive the phenomenon in the Republic of Moldova?

- ◆ Six out of ten parents say that in Moldova parents show insufficient care for their children's hygiene and nutrition, and that they leave their children without supervision at home.
- ◆ Approximately four out of ten respondents think that parental threats of violence addressed to children/adolescents happen often or very often.
- ◆ Three out of ten parents believe that beating is often used to discipline children in Moldova, but just two out of ten know parents who apply beating as punishment.
- ◆ One out of ten parents acknowledges that there are cases of sexual abuse in the Republic of Moldova.
- ◆ Six out of ten parents accept the idea of children frequently doing house or field work.
- ◆ Parents, on average, believe that around half of children are scolded frequently by their parents, that more than one third are frequently slapped by their parents, and that two out of ten children are frequently exposed to serious violence by their parents.
- ◆ Half of parents say that all or many teachers yell at students.
- ◆ Two out of ten parents think that all or many teachers threaten children with beatings and nurture a fear of teachers in their students.

3. TRANS-GENERATIONAL TRANSMITTANCE OF ABUSE

- ◆ Disciplinary practices used by parents have a tendency to perpetuate themselves from one generation to the next. Children are thus scolded as much in their families currently as their parents were in the past. Similarly, the issue of beating children to the point of generating bruises persists into the current generation of families.





4. CHILD DISCIPLINE: BEHAVIOUR CORRECTION VERSUS CHILD ABUSE

- ◆ More than three quarters of parents declare that they use explanations in correcting their children's behaviour.
- ◆ Mothers slap their children more often than fathers do. Three mothers and one father out of ten use slapping to discipline their children.

At the same time:

Children of 0-6 years old

- ◆ Scolding (criticism) is the disciplinary method most frequently used by parents with children of 0-6 years old. 14% of parents of this age group report that they use scolding when disciplining their children.
- ◆ Prohibition of play and threatening to not buy certain things are methods used by one out of ten parents.

Children of 7-10 years old

- ◆ One out of five parents who has children 7-10 years old says that he or she scolds or criticizes her children as a form of behavioural correction.
- ◆ Forbidding entertainment/hobbies or watching TV for a specific period of time, and threatening to not buy specific things, are punishments used by about one out of ten parents.

Children of 11-14 years old

- ◆ Scolding/criticism is the most frequently used method of disciplining children between the age of 11 and 14. 16% of parents report using this method of discipline.
- ◆ The threat to not buy certain things or objects for the child is another method

used frequently by some parents who have children between 11 and 14 years old.

Children of 15-18 years old

- ◆ For children aged between 15 and 18, criticism/scolding is the method generally used by parents for behaviour correction.
- ◆ One out of ten parents still resorts to prohibiting entertainment/hobbies for a certain period of time for children in this age group, as well as disallowing them from going out with friends or threatening to not buy certain things.

Opinions:

- ◆ Two out of ten parents, more frequently parents of children of up to 10 years of age, consider it acceptable to slap a child when he is misbehaving. Moreover, four out of ten parents think that beating is an effective measure for correction and that it is justifiable.
- ◆ However, more than 70% of parents agree that the law should forbid corporal punishment by parents against their children.

5. ASSESSING RESPONSES TO CASES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

When assessing the role of different professionals in assisting in cases of violence against children, parents expressed the following opinions:

- ◆ Six out of ten parents say that teachers and police officers try to help in cases of violence against children, but only three out of ten say that this help has a positive effect.
- ◆ Two out of ten parents declare that family doctors, social workers, and police officers do not help even when they can.
- ◆ A notable percentage of respondents did not answer the question about effectiveness of various professionals, illustrating that they may not understand the issue and/or the role of professionals in assistance; some of the respondents even recognized this fact. Thus, with regard to assisting in cases of violence against children:
 - Four out of ten parents do not know the role of the family doctor and school counsellor in assisting with cases of abuse.
 - Almost half of all parents (45%) do not know the social worker's role.
 - One in four (25%) parents does not know the teacher's role.

- Three out of ten parents do not know the police officer's role.





1. INCIDENCE OF DIFFERENT FORMS OF ABUSE

A. DOMESTIC NEGLECT

Neglect is generally a passive form of abuse occurring when a child does not receive the physical or psychological attention necessary for his or her corresponding age. Sometimes, however, parents or caregivers also deliberately withhold necessary attention or sustenance from a child as a form of punishment. In all its forms, physical and emotional neglect is one of the most prevalent manifestations of violence against children in the world.

Neglect can be related to poverty in the family if, for example, parents cannot materially afford to meet the basic human needs of their children, such as the need for food, clothing, shelter, education, or health care. A child whose parents both have to work the whole day is exposed to a higher risk of neglect than a child in whose family at least one of the parents can afford to stay at home from time to time and whose parents have enough money to cover his / her material needs.

What do children say?

Two types of neglect were analyzed: physical and emotional.

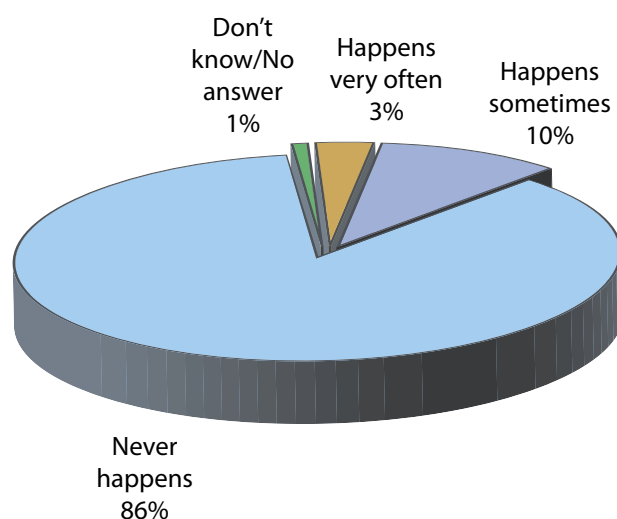
- Physical neglect was demonstrated by using the example of a child described as often hungry because there is not sufficient food at home, whose parents very rarely buy him / her clothes, and who is sometimes without sufficient school supplies.
- Emotional neglect was illustrated using two examples, the first in which children are not supervised and return home when they want, sometimes even very late, and the second in which children's parents do offer them "all they need," but practically do not talk to them, do not ask them about school, their friends, or what they actually do.



Physical Neglect

- 73% of the interviewed children think that there are at least some children in Moldova who suffer from physical neglect;
- 70% know at least one child in a similar situation;
- 13% of children identify themselves with this situation at least partially.

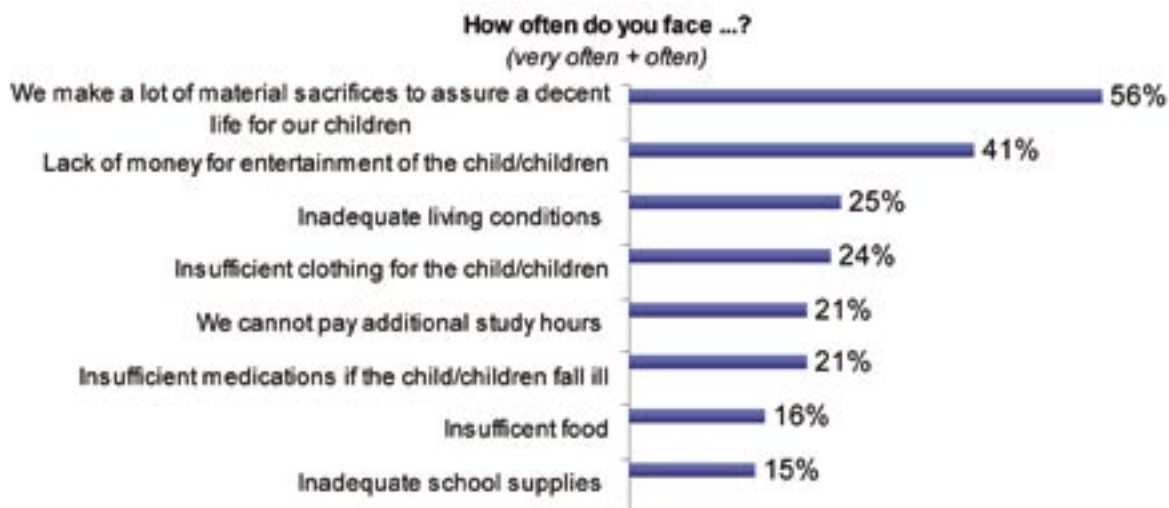
Physical Neglect of Children



Emotional Neglect

- 69% of children think that there are at least some children in Moldova who suffer from emotional neglect.
- 69% know at least one child in a similar situation.
- 13% of children identify themselves with this situation at least partially.

What do parents say?





- Of parents interviewed, 16% say that often or very often they do not have sufficient food for their children.
- Approximately 25% of parents declare that they cannot afford to provide their children with adequate dwelling conditions or sufficient clothing.
- Approximately 37% of parents say that they cannot regularly meet three of the basic needs of their children (food, clothes, or sufficient dwelling).
- Two thirds of adults perceive physical neglect of children as measured by insufficient care of parents for a child's hygiene and nutrition, as well as leaving children home without supervision as a problem present in Moldovan society.
- Adults who live in cities and municipalities more frequently believe that such cases exist in society, but direct knowledge of such cases is much higher in the rural area.
- Approximately 10% of parents declare that they leave children home without supervision either often or very often. This

statement correlates with parents who have low levels of education and families that have children mostly aged between 15 and 18.

Who are the child victims?

It was possible, using correlation analysis, to identify the following tendencies:

- Physical and emotional neglect are closely related; children who report suffering from one are more likely to suffer from the other.
- The incidence of neglect correlates with poverty in the family; moreover, physical neglect relates more closely to poverty than emotional neglect does.
- Neglect affects boys more frequently than it affects girls, especially as far as emotional neglect is concerned.
- Parental neglect correlates to children's difficulty in adapting at school.
- Children who suffer from emotional neglect at home have a higher risk of being abused by their teachers and becoming victims of sexual abuse.

B. DOMESTIC EMOTIONAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE

The presence of emotional or psychological abuse of children is identified by:

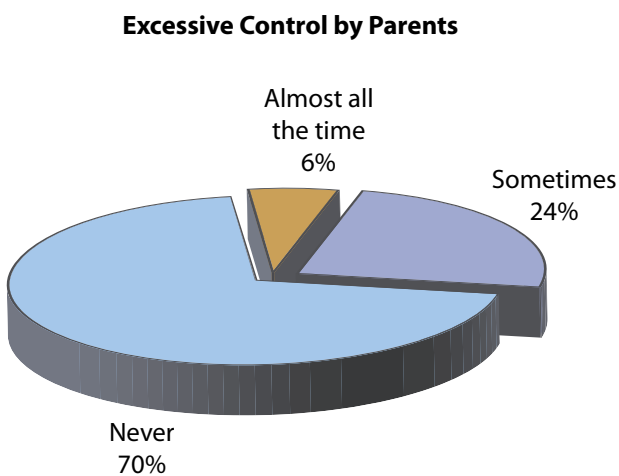
- Excessive parental control
- Verbal violence
- Threats
- Interdictions
- Lack of support and trust by parents
- Emotional pressure from excessive parental expectations, etc.

What do children say?

Excessive control by parents

Excessive parental control was illustrated by using an example of a girl whose every move is controlled by her parents, who is allowed to see only friends that are accepted by her parents, and whose parents often come to school to check up on her.

- 63% think that there are at least some children who suffer from excessive control by their parents.
- 55% know at least one child in a similar situation.
- 30% of children identify themselves with this situation at least partially



Verbal Violence

Domestic verbal violence was studied by presenting the hypothetical situation of a boy whose parents very often shout at him and call him different humiliating names (they say that he is stupid, good-for-nothing, etc.)

- 66% think that there are some children who suffer from domestic verbal violence.
- 61% know at least one child in a similar situation.
- 22% children identify themselves with this situation at least partially.
- Children say that their father is the source of verbal violence more often than their mother.

Threats

- 10% of children say that, at least once per month, their parents threaten them with a beating.

- 7% say that they have been threatened by their parents that they will tweak their ears.
- 2% report to have been threatened with death.

Interdictions

Prohibitions, if used very often, are considered a form of emotional/psychological abuse. Around 6% of children say that parents daily (!) forbid them to do various things such as:

- watching television,
- going out to play, and
- meeting up with their friends.

Lack of support and trust by parents

- 12% of children state that their parents do no support them in what they do.

Emotional pressure by imposing excessive expectations

Extent of emotional pressure was measured by using the example of a boy who “knows” that his parents are disappointed because he does not meet their expectations.

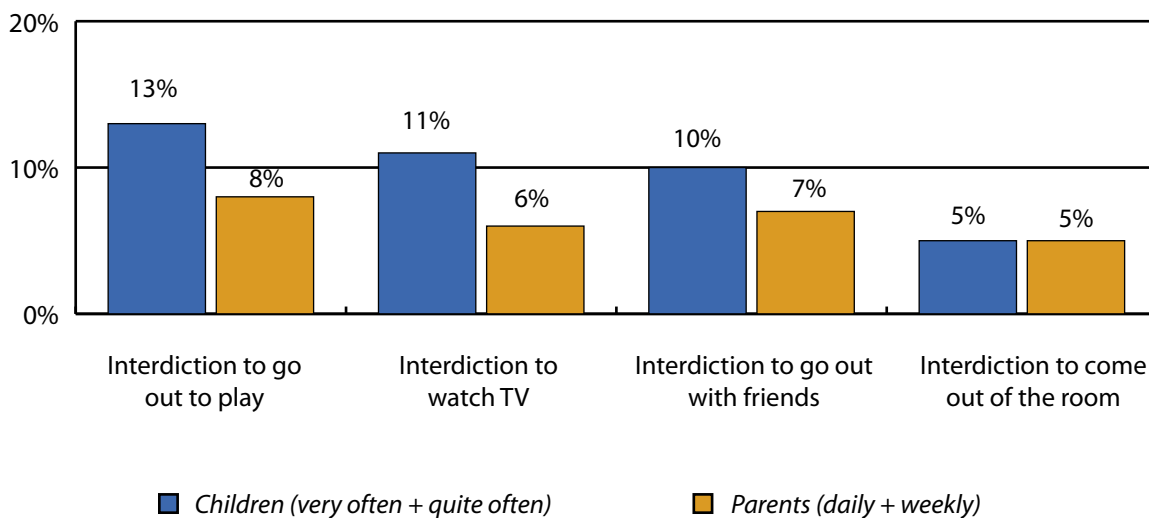
- 72% think that there at least some children who suffer from excessive expectations.
- 77% know at least one child in a similar situation.
- 52% of children identify themselves with this situation at least partially.

What do parents say?

- Only 4% of parents say that they threaten their children with beatings or with tweaking their ears.
- Parents acknowledge frequent use of interdictions (*very often* and *quite often*) at a rate of between 5% (interdiction to come out of the room) and 8% (interdiction to go out to play or interdiction of certain hobbies).
- The incidence of domestic verbal violence decreases together with the increase of the parents’ level of education. The same correlation occurs between the incidence of domestic verbal violence and the level of financial welfare in the family.

A comparison of incidence rates of emotional abuse reported by the sample of children and the sample of parents is illustrated below.

Frequency of Interdiction Use Children vs. Parents





Because the scales used for the two categories of respondents were different for these questions, comparisons between the children's and parents'

answers are rather approximate. They reveal, however, a gap between the perceptions of parents and children about the frequency of interdictions.

Who are the child victims?

According to correlation analysis, the following trends are apparent:

- Children who report excessive expectations by their parents also suffer from excessive control and vice versa.
- There is a (slight) tendency among boys to report more excessive control.
- Parents with greater financial means shout at and control their children less frequently.
- There is a close connection between psychological and physical abuse; parents who often shout at their children also beat them more often and vice versa.
- Parents who neglect their children also shout at them more often.
- A child whose parents physically abused him or her is more vulnerable to sexual abuse.

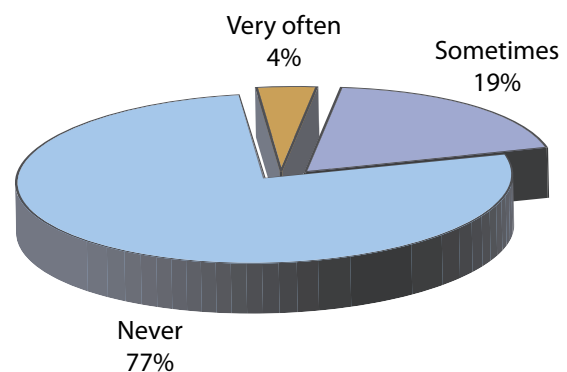
C. DOMESTIC PHYSICAL ABUSE/BEATING

What do children say?

Domestic physical abuse or beating was illustrated by using the example of a child who is beaten by parents for his or her disobedience.

- 74% of children say that there are some students in such a situation.
- 69% know at least one student in a similar situation.
- 23% of students identify themselves with this situation at least partially.

Children Beaten by Their Parents for Disobedience





Children were also asked how and how often they were beaten.

- Approximately 10% of children say that their parents slap them at least once a month.
- 8% say that they are beaten at least once a month.

Further, the study explored children's perceptions about the causes of beatings by using a list of potential reasons. The reasons are listed below and ranked according to which cause was considered by children to be the most likely to result in beating.

Do you think that parents/people who take care of children beat their children when they.....?

	%
Start smoking	66
Start consuming alcohol	65
Start playing truant	61
Steal something small	56
Disobey their parents /those who take care of them	54
Do not respect their parents/those who take care of them	49
Get low marks at school	46
Lie	45
Do not come home at the established time	43
Destroy something of value	41
Do not help their parents/those who take care of them	31
Do not take care of their clothes	25
Are lazy	21



What do parents say?

Parents were asked about the ways in which they disciplined their children and how often.

- 7% of parents say that they slap their children often or very often when their children do something wrong.
- 4% acknowledged that they beat children often or very often with different objects (belt, stick, etc.)

The treatment of children by their parents was also compared to parents' experiences in their own childhoods. (See Chapter 3: Trans-generational Transmittance of Abuse)

Who are the child victims?

- Children who come from families whose financial situations are assessed as very poor were most likely to identify themselves with the experience of violence at home.
- Boys suffer most from domestic physical violence.
- Children whose parents beat them are also more vulnerable to becoming victims of sexual abuse.
- Children whose parents beat them have more difficulty in adapting at school and run a higher risk of being beaten by teachers.

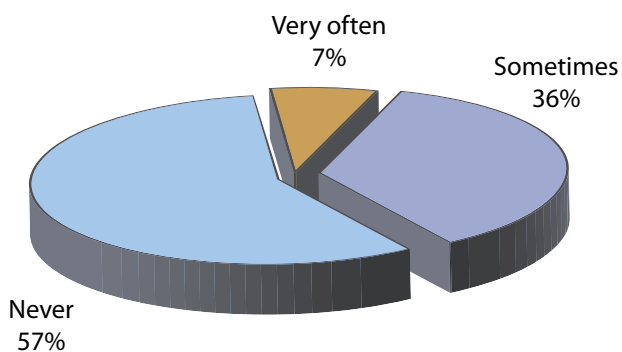
D. FORCED HOUSEWORK

The study explored whether and to what extent children are required to do housework that leaves them no time for playing, meeting up with friends, or even doing their school- homework.

What do children say?

- 74% think that there are at least some students who find themselves in this situation.
- 73% know at least one student in a similar situation.
- 43% of students identify themselves with this situation at least partially.

Frequency Children are Given Housework



What do parents say?

Parents were asked how often children in their family are forced to work (for instance, in the field or caring for other children).

- Almost 20% of parents admit that children are given housework in their family very often or quite often.
- The practice of giving work to children is more common for families with a low educational level and in rural areas (where the frequency of this phenomenon is 28%).



Who are the child victims?

Correlation analysis shows that:

- Children from poorer families report more frequently that they must do housework to the exclusion of other activities.
- Girls and boys experience these situations at the same rates.
- Children who are more frequently involved in housework have fewer friends and are less able to adapt at school. These correlations illustrate the negative effects that large amounts of housework responsibilities can have on children, and namely that such practices can lead to deficiencies in social development and academic progress.



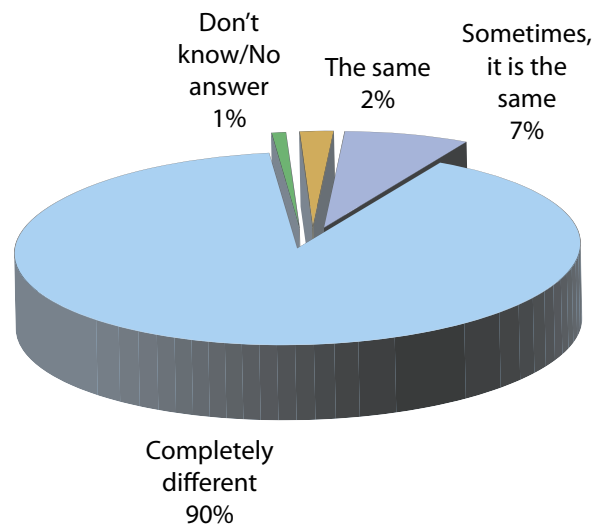
- Almost 11% of children say that they have experienced such a situation in one form or another.

Physical Sexual Abuse/Molestation

The incidence of sexual molestation was measured by presenting a situation in which an adult touches a child's intimate body areas or in which a child is convinced to touch the adult.

- 32% of the interviewed students think that sexual abuse of this type happens to at least some children in Moldova.
- A similar number of students (30%) say they know at least one child who has experienced sexual abuse.
- 9% of interviewed children report that their situation is at least partially similar.

Similarity of the Presented Situation (sexual molestation) to the Responding Child's Circumstances



E. SEXUAL ABUSE

What do children say?

The child sexual abuse measurement included two facets: involvement of children in watching pornographic movies and physical sexual molestation.

Involvement of children in watching pornographic movies

This facet of sexual abuse was measured using a hypothetical situation in which a child was convinced by an adult to watch pornographic movies.

- Over 40% of the questioned students think that adults involve at least some children in watching pornographic movies.
- 34% of children declare that they know at least one specific example of a child who was convinced by an adult to watch pornographic movies.

What do parents say?

- 7% of parents say they know about specific cases of sexual abuse.
- Approximately 70% of parents say that they would report such cases to police.

- 20% of parents say that they would not know how to react if they found out about or encountered a case in which a child was being sexually abused.

Who are the child victims?

Using correlation analysis, the following trends were found:

- Children who watch pornographic films together with adults are more likely to suffer from physical sexual molestation (and vice versa).
- Children who report suffering sexual violence are more often from families with worse financial situations and with greater risks of other family problems, including

lack of emotional support, excessive expectations, neglect, as well as verbal and physical violence.

- Children who report suffering sexual violence also have problems at school more often, where they are rejected by their peers more often, and suffer more from verbal and physical violence by their teachers.
- Boys report more cases of sexual abuse, especially of watching pornographic films.

It is interesting that abused children (in comparison to non-abused children) think that there are less children who suffer in the same way and they are aware of less concrete cases. This could make them feel guilty and ashamed and thus prevent them from looking for a trusted person with whom they could talk.

F. VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN BY TEACHERS

What do children say?

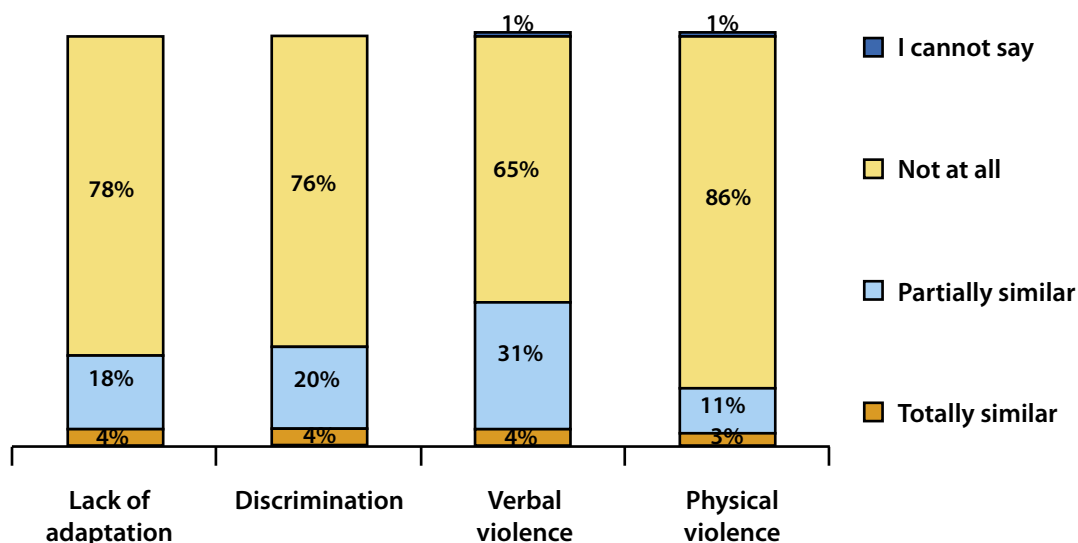
Violence at school by teaching staff was assessed by focusing on three aspects:

- Discrimination – disproportionate and unfair criticism of a particular student;
- Verbal violence – the teacher regularly shouts at a particular student;

- Physical violence – the teacher slaps or otherwise physically interferes with a student.

There was also a question about the extent to which the interviewed children felt poorly adapted at school (they do not like school, they do not have friends, or they feel rejected).

Presence of Violent Elements at School. What Is Your Situation?





Discrimination

- 56% think that teachers discriminated against at least some students in school.
- 54% know at least one child in a similar situation.
- 24% of children say that, at least sometimes, they find themselves in a situation where their teacher discriminates against them for no reason, or accuses them of something that is not true.

Verbal Violence

- 66 % think that there are at least a few students who suffer verbal violence.
- 64 % know at least one student in a similar situation.
- 34 % of students say that they at least sometimes find themselves in a situation where teachers are yelling at them.

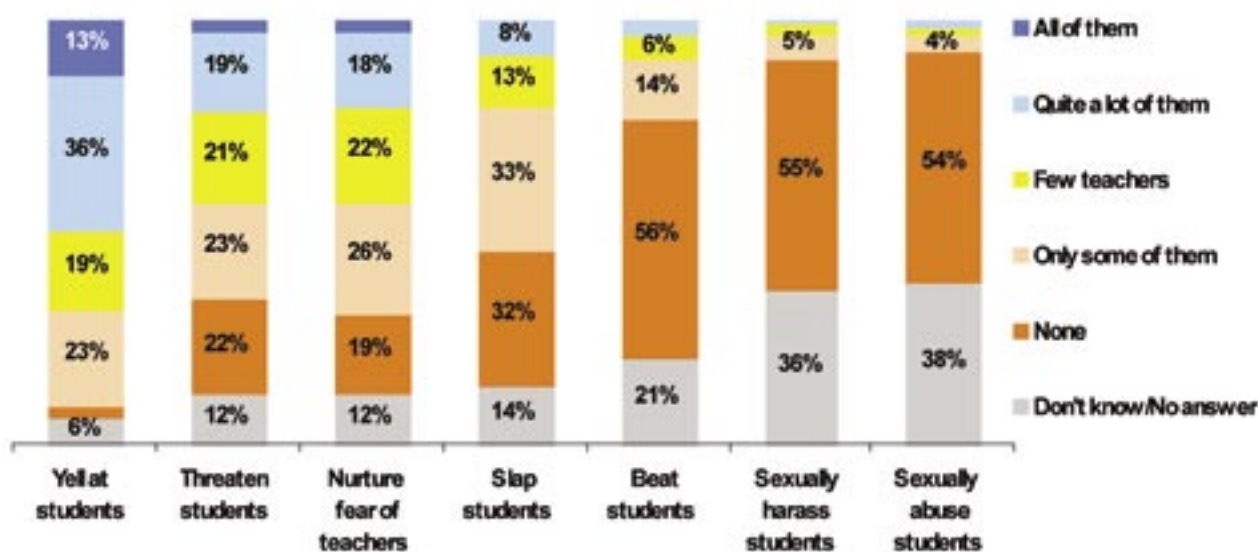
Physical Violence

- 42 % think that there are at least some students who suffer from physical violence by a teacher.
- 44 % know at least one student in a similar situation.
- 14 % of students identify themselves, at least partially, with the situation in which a teacher slaps a student.

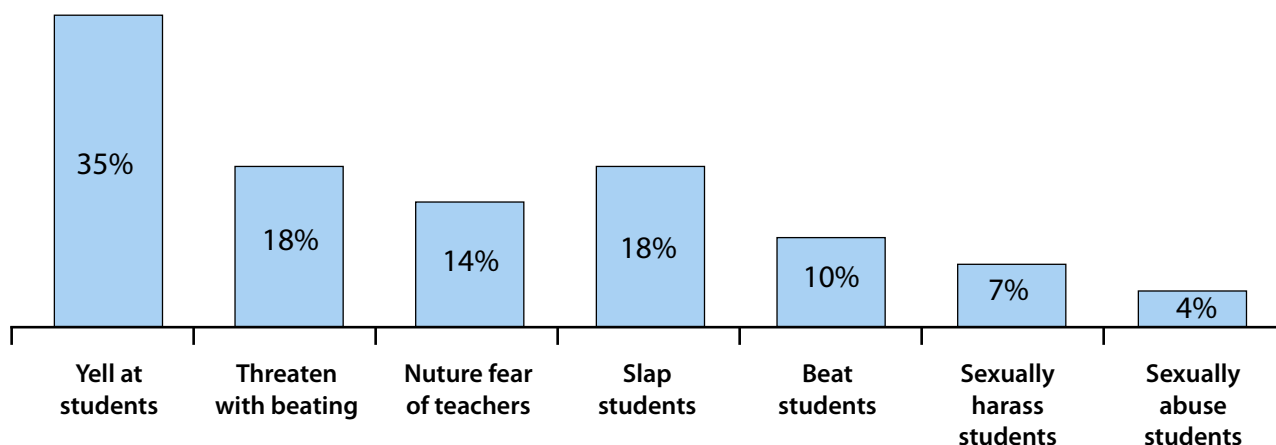
What do parents say?

Interviewed parents support the perception that teachers use violent educational practices. Parents' opinions are presented in the diagrams below:

Thinking of schools in Moldova, how many teachers do you think do the following?



Thinking of schools in Moldova, how many teachers do you know do the following?



Who are the child victims?

- Children who suffer from all three types of violence at school, unsurprisingly, report a low level of adaptation at school. Since all the data in this study was collected at the same time, no conclusion can be drawn about causality, i.e., whether poor adaptation determines the experience of violence or vice versa.
- Correlation analysis shows that children often suffer from more than one type of violence at school.
- The closest relationships between types of violence are the relationships between verbal and physical violence and between discrimination and verbal violence. If a child experiences one type of violence, it is likely that the child will also experience the other.
- Girls tend to suffer more from violence at school, especially physical violence.



2. PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE PHENOMENON OF VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

A. HOW CHILDREN PERCEIVE THE PHENOMENON IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

Physical Neglect

More than one third of the students questioned (37%) think that at least half of children in the Republic of Moldova suffer from hunger due to a lack of sufficient food at home, or have very little clothing and not very many school accessories. Another 37% of the surveyed students believe that this situation is true for only a few children.

When it comes to recognizing similar situations in their own communities, the majority (56%) say that they know at least several children who do not have sufficient material support. Two thirds of children who report that their family does not have enough money, even for food, say that they know at least several similar cases. Half of children who live in a municipality, however, say that they do not know of even a single case of a child who is hungry because of a lack of food at home.

Forced Work

More than 40% of children surveyed say that at least half of children in Moldova must do housework when they come home from school and as a result have no time left for playing or friends or sometimes even to complete their school-homework. An extremely small percentage of the students interviewed (6%) say that almost no child finds his or herself in the described situation.





A quarter of the participants in the survey do not know of any children who are expected to do such a high level of work at home. Girls identify cases in their circle more frequently than boys. In addition, more than one third of children without siblings and almost the same percentage of children from urban areas say that they do not know of a single similar case.

Emotional Neglect

One third of the interviewed students say that the majority of children in Moldova live with the feeling that they cannot meet their parents' very high expectations and that they often disappoint them. Moreover, 40% of high school students and 43% of children whose families do not even have money for food say the same thing. Two thirds of the participants in the survey declared that they knew at least several cases of children who are in this situation.

Sometimes parents provide their children with all necessary material support, but do not spare much time for talk or communication with them,

or helping them with their problems. Almost 40% of the surveyed students say that this situation happens to only a few children; however, another 30% say that the situation is valid for at least half of children. In addition, when asked if they know of such cases, 47% declare that they know at least several children who are in similar situations.

There are also parents who show almost no interest in their children. For example, they do not know when their children leave for school and when they return, or whether their children have done their homework. 27% of students say that this situation is valid for half or more of the children in Moldova. An additional 55% of students say that the situation is specific only to a very limited number of children. More than 50% of students say that they know at least several cases of children who are neglected by their parents in this way.

Emotional/Verbal Abuse

A majority of children (56%) say that parents verbally attack and humiliate their children only

in some families. Children from single-parent families, or families whose income is assessed as insufficient for food, perceive this phenomenon as more widespread. More than half of children in these two categories know more than a few children whose parents act in this way.

Physical Abuse

More than one third of the interviewed children think that at least half of children in Moldova are sometimes beaten for disobeying their parents. This perception is more widespread among children who come from single-parent families or whose families' incomes are insufficient enough even to buy food. Children who declare that their families do not have money even for food also know more children in the same situation.

Violence against Children in School

Almost one third of the children questioned say that teachers yell at half or more of the children they teach. Another third of children thinks that

only some children are the target of teachers' verbal abuse. The same percentage of children is aware of specific cases in their schools.

Almost half of the children who participated in the survey think that at least some students are victims of physical violence by teachers at school. Approximately the same proportion of children says that they know of specific cases of violence by a teacher against a student.

Sexual Abuse

More than 40% of the children surveyed think that adults or older children are able to convince at least some children to watch pornographic movies with them. One third of them declare that they are aware of specific cases.

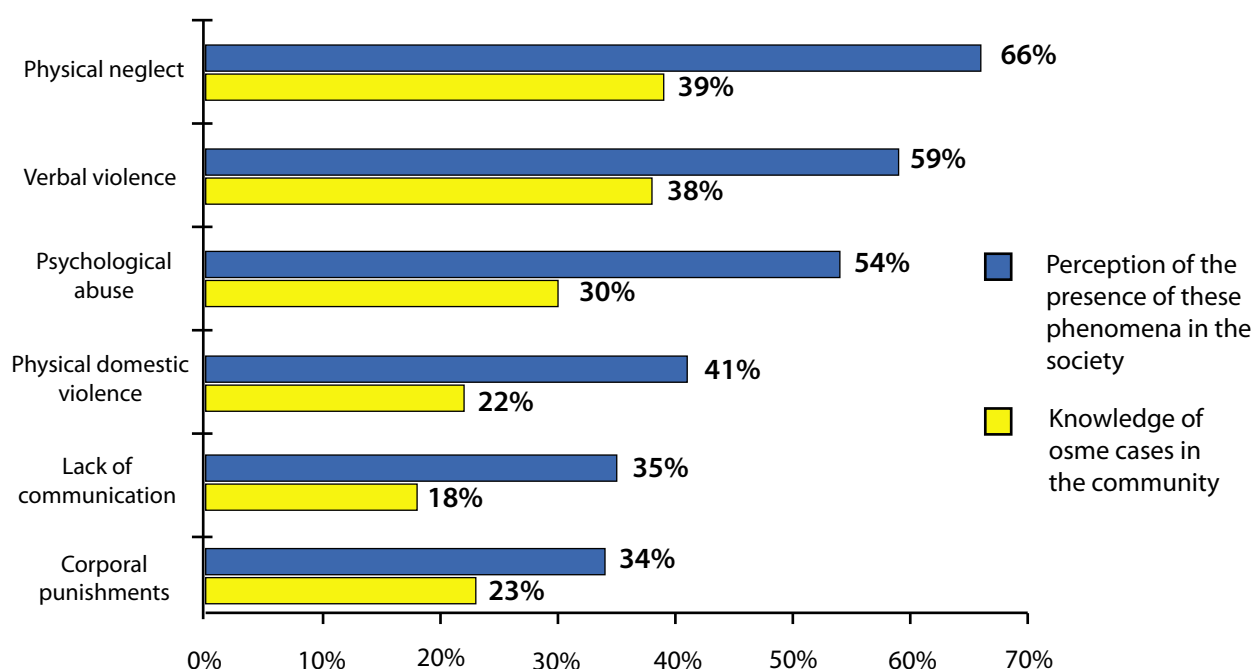
One third of the questioned students think that at least some children experience sexual aggression from adults or older children. A similar percentage says that they know of such cases in their communities.



B. HOW PARENTS PERCEIVE THE PHENOMENON IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

Enjoyment of family life seems to counterbalance the material difficulties encountered by many families in the Republic of Moldova; six out of ten parents declare that they are satisfied by their family life. The feeling of satisfaction, however, is more characteristic of families from cities or municipalities, those with incomes of over 2,500 lei per month per household, and for parents who have either secondary education or higher.

Parent's Perceptions of Child Neglect and Domestic Violence



Physical Neglect

Two thirds of parents questioned say that parents in the Republic of Moldova physically neglect their children. 62% of parents say that parents often or very often leave their children home without supervision, and 31% say the same thing about parents neglecting their children's hygiene and/or nutrition. Parents from cities and municipalities perceive that physical neglect is more widespread in society, but a much higher number of parents from rural areas report direct knowledge of cases.

Verbal and Psychological Violence

Verbal violence – measured by the frequency of arguments between parents/adult members of the family and between adults and children from a particular family – is perceived by parents as being quite widespread among families in the Republic of Moldova. Thus, 55% of parents interviewed assert that arguments between parents/adult members of the family take place often or quite often, although only 35% say that they are aware of similar cases in their communities. In addition,



42% think that arguments between parents and children are frequent and 20% have come across specific examples of such cases.

Almost as negative is the perception of parents about forms of psychological abuse, including threats and interdictions. More than half of the respondents think that parents in the Republic of Moldova very often or quite often threaten with beatings or other punishments (44%), and prohibit various things (36%) as a way of disciplining their children.

Emotional Neglect

Other important forms of child neglect include parents' indifference towards their children, lack of communication with them, or instances in which they are ignored by parents. In response to questions, 35% of parents think that, at the level of the entire society, often or quite often parents are not interested in their children's problems. On the other hand, only half of these say that they have also come across particular cases of parents ignoring their children.

Sexual Abuse

Parents discuss sexual abuse in all its forms very infrequently. Only 10% of parents surveyed admit that it exists in the country at all and just 5% recognize it as existing in their community.

Child Labour

Child labour is a special type of violence against children, regardless of the form of labour (in the field, taking care of a brother or a sister). Parents perceive that the incidence of this phenomenon is very high. 59% of parents say that children often or very often must engage in household work. In rural areas, parents say that the phenomenon actually occurs in their community at higher (40%) rates than in urban areas.

Physical Violence

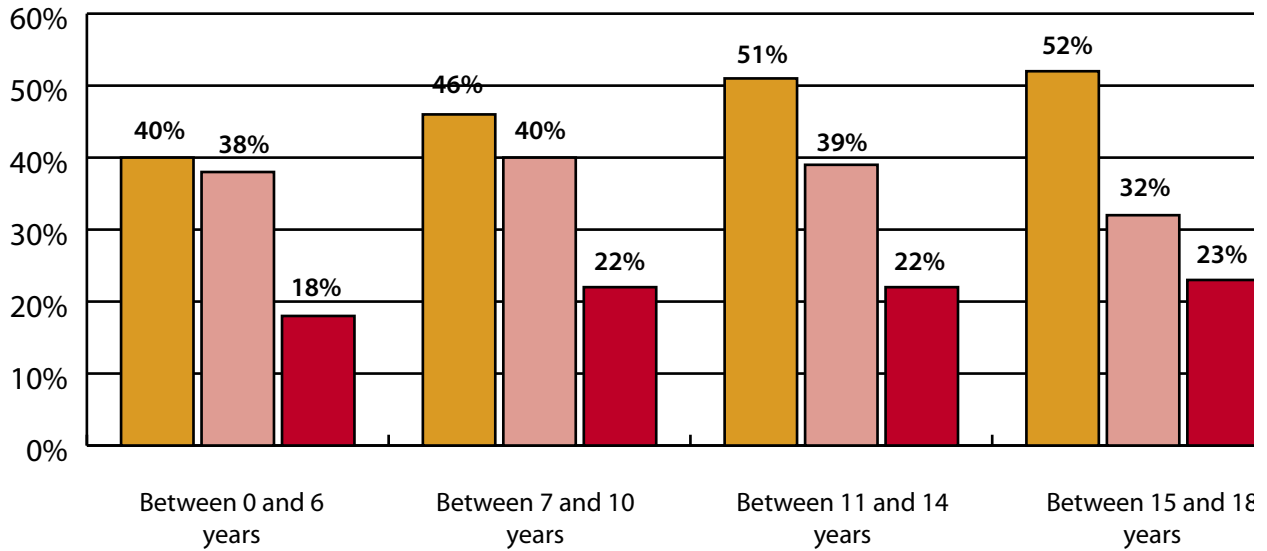
Four out of ten parents say that domestic physical violence occurs frequently in families in the Republic of Moldova. Thus, 36% of parents think that there is violence between adult family members and 17% know of specific examples of such violence. In addition, 29% of parents think that violence between parents and children is frequent and 13% are aware of such cases in their community.

The study assessed the violent disciplinary environment within families in the Republic of Moldova by measuring parental perception of the climate within families. Thus, parents were asked about the proportion of some of the violent practices they thought were applied to children. The answers were analyzed by grouping the responses of parents according to their children's age.

In your opinion, how many children in the Republic of Moldova are

- scolded
- slapped
- exposed to serious violence

frequently by their parents?

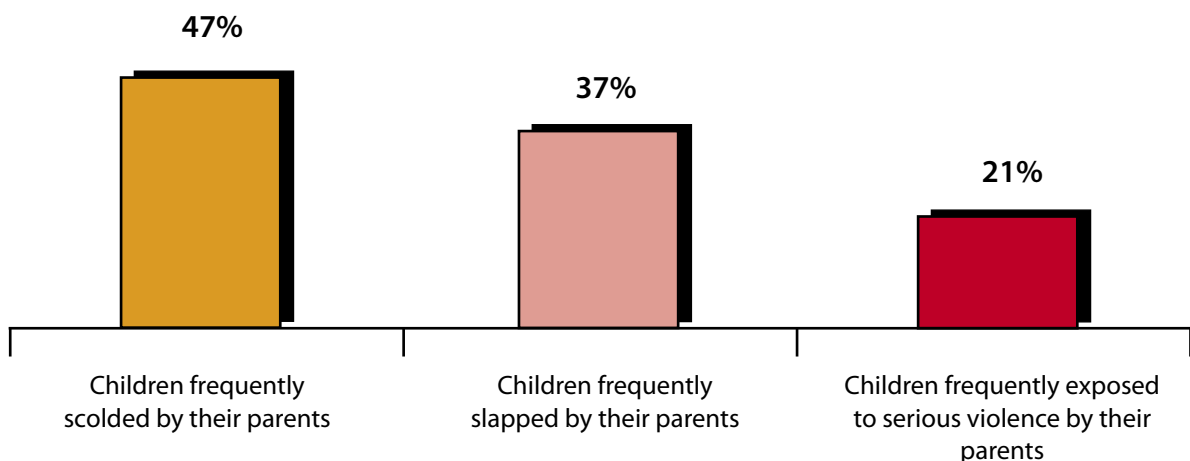


The figures in the above diagram represent the average of the percentage indicated by parents for the three questions. Thus, on average, respondents who have children aged between 0 and 6 years old say that 40% of children in the Republic of Moldova are frequently scolded by their parents, 38% slapped, and 18% violently beaten.

Parents of children between 7 and 10 years old gave the highest average percentage of children

they believed were slapped by their parents (40%), the last two groups of parents (with 11- 14 and 15-18 year old children) believed that very similar percentages of children (51 and 52%) were scolded by their parents. Responses regarding the percentage of children who are believed to be exposed to serious violence are almost identical for parents with children in the oldest three age groups (22 to 23%).

Parent's perception of the incidence of physical violence against children in families in the Republic Moldova





Overall, the general perception is that almost half of children are frequently scolded by their parents, more than one third are frequently slapped by

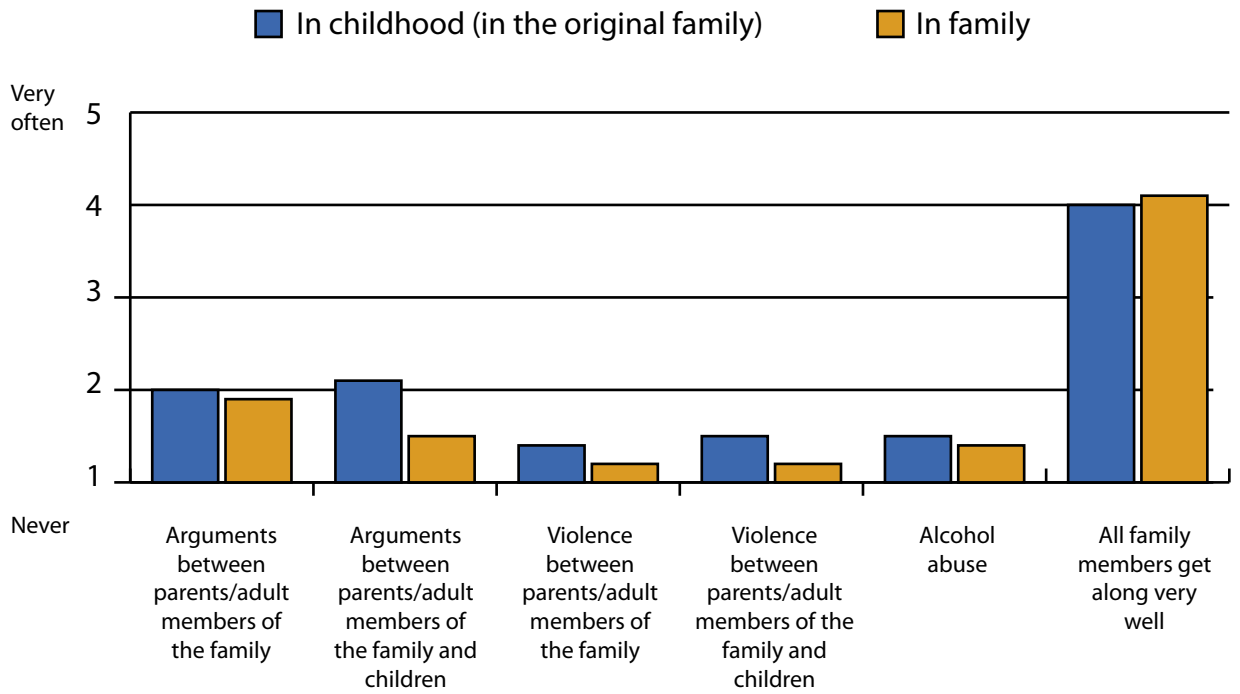
their parents, and two out of ten children are frequently exposed to serious violence by parents.



3. TRANS-GENERATIONAL TRANSMITTANCE OF ABUSE



How often such cases used to/still happen in your family?

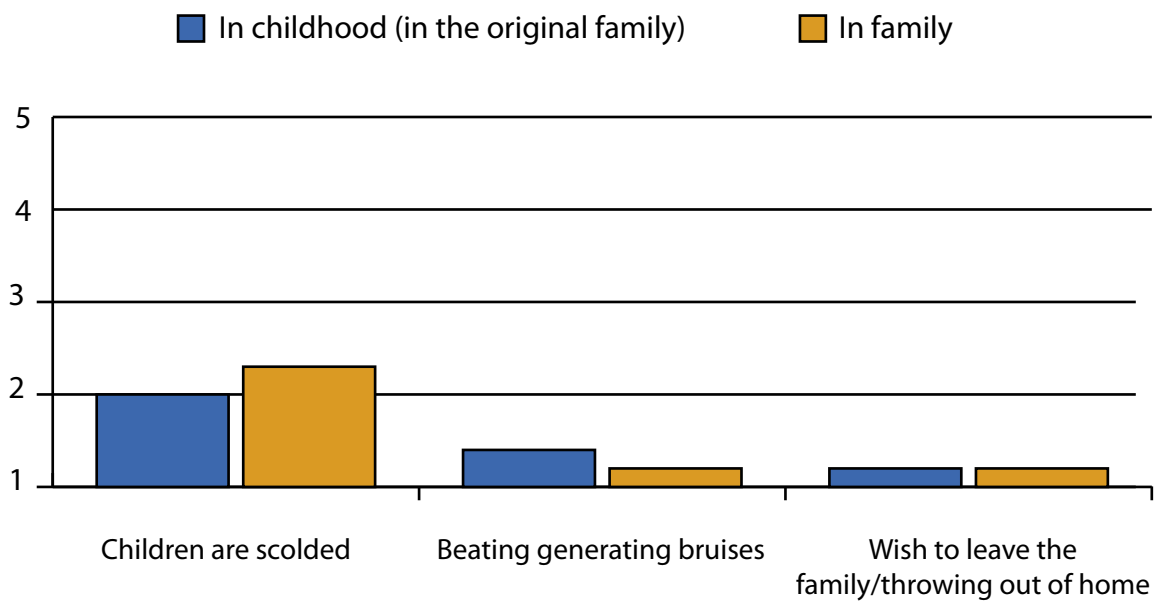




As the diagram above shows, the average frequency of arguments and violence between parents, alcohol abuse, and different forms of violence against children is very similar across generations. On average, the frequency of arguments between parents and children is less than 0.5 points closer to the value (1) (meaning *never*) in the current family compared to the frequency in the parents' childhood family. The situation is almost the same for violence between parents and children.

In analyzing the answers to other questions related to violent domestic practices on the same scale, from 1 to 5, it is apparent that the types of disciplinary practices used have a tendency to perpetuate from one generation to the next. Thus, children experience scolding in their families as much as their parents did in the past. Similarly, the occurrence of beating children to the point of generating bruises persists into the current generation of families.

How often cases of violence used to/still happen in your family?



Using correlation analysis, there is a tendency for parents to use the same disciplinary methods against their children that they experienced in

their own childhood. For instance, parents who have been victims of verbal abuse in childhood use this behaviour on their own children.





4. CHILD DISCIPLINE: BEHAVIOUR CORRECTION VERSUS ABUSE



A. FREQUENCY OF DISCIPLINARY METHODS APPLIED TO CHILDREN

The study also asked parents about methods they use to discipline their children when they do not behave properly. The following list of corrective practices was presented to parents, and parents were asked to indicate how frequently they applied each measure to their children.

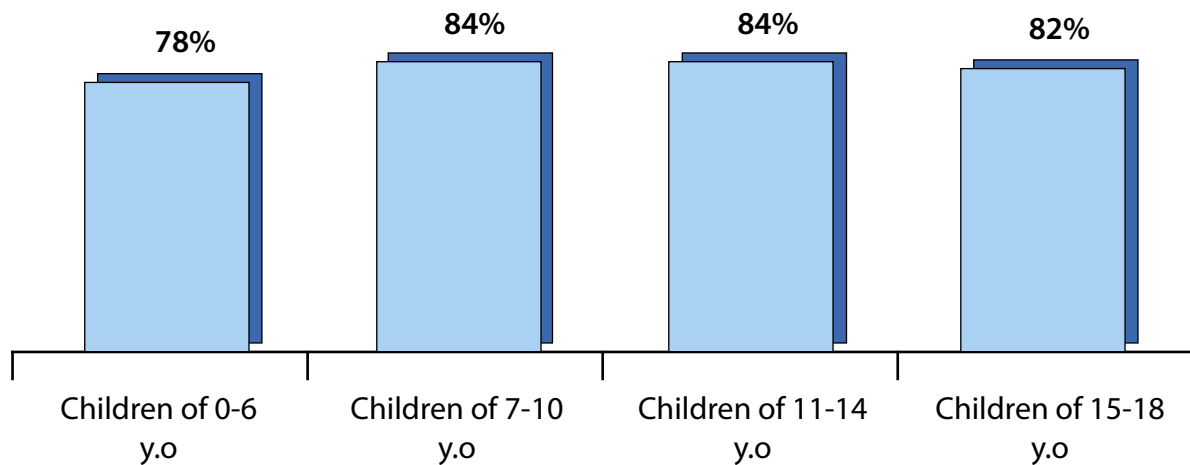
- a. You prohibit entertainment/hobbies for a certain period of time
- b. You prohibit watching TV
- c. You prohibit going out to play
- d. You prohibit seeing friends
- e. You prohibit coming out of their room
- f. You throw them out of the house
- g. It happens that you get tired of them and don't care what they do anymore
- h. You punish them by not speaking to them
- i. You confiscate some of their things for a certain period of time (toys, money, etc.)
- j. You discredit the child, telling them that they are good-for-nothing
- k. You scold/criticise them
- l. You badmouth them (curse)
- m. In anger, you tell them that they are stupid and call them other similar names
- n. You threaten that you will not buy them certain things
- o. You send them to look for food on their own (to beg, to steal)
- p. You threaten them with beatings or other punishments



- q. You threaten that you will tweak their ears, that you will cut their nails to the flesh, etc. (threats of mutilation)
- r. You threaten them with death (“I will kill you if don’t listen to me”, “I will beat you to death”, etc.)
- s. You won’t give them food for a certain period of time
- t. You make them stand on their knees
- u. You put them in the corner (with their hands up)
- v. You tie them up so that they will not run away
- w. You pinch them, pull their hair
- x. You slap them
- y. You beat them so that there are marks/bruises
- z. You beat them with different objects (belt, stick, etc.)
- aa. You explain to them what they have done wrong

A comparative analysis of the most frequently applied punishments was made according to the age group of the parents’ children.¹ Since the difference between the results for option ‘aa’ (you explain them what they have done wrong) and the other punishments was so big, this option was analyzed separately.

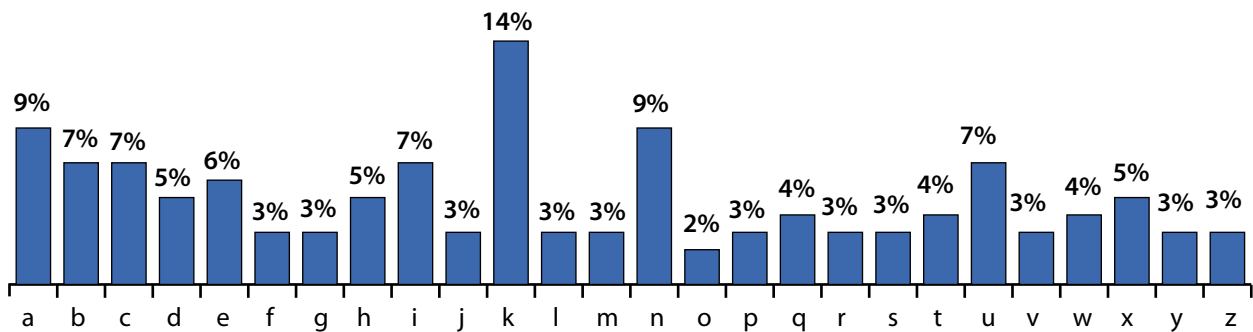
How Often Parents Use Explanation in Disciplining their Children (Very often + Quite often)



Approximately eight out of ten parents say that when their children misbehave, they frequently explain to their children what they have done wrong. Parents claim that explanation is by far the method they use most frequently with their children for behaviour correction.

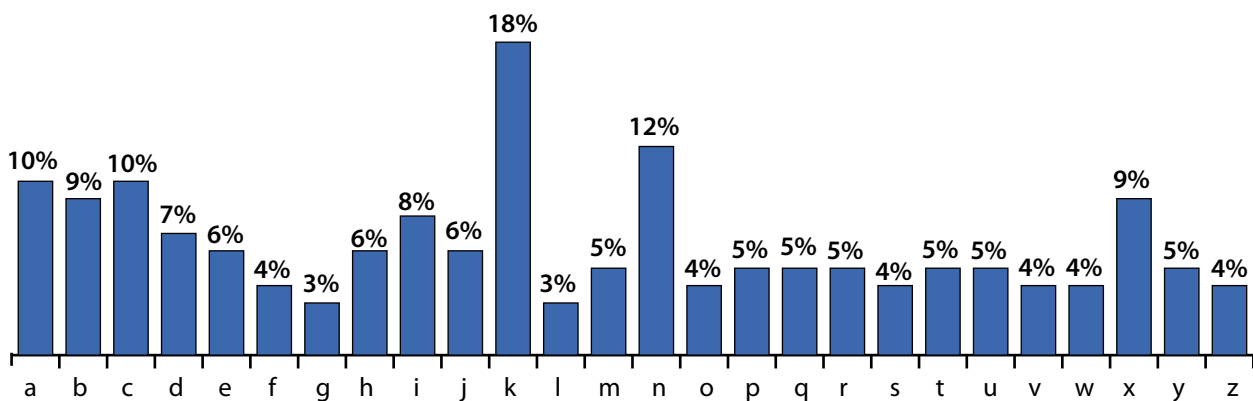
¹ The percentage given in these diagrams represents the cumulative amount of answers for ‘Very often’ and ‘Quite often.’

When your child/children misbehave, how often does the following happen?
Children of 0-6 y.o



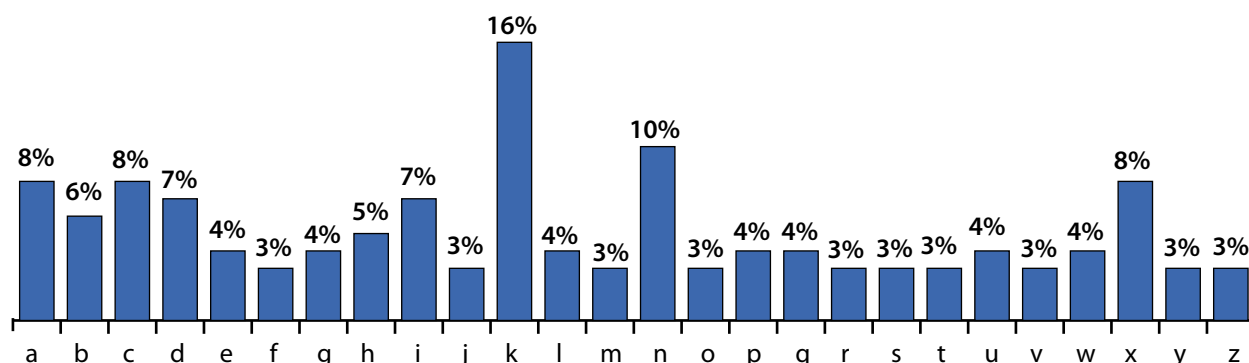
With regard to other types of punishment, parents with children 0-6 years of age, declare that they criticize or scold their children (k: 14%) most frequently. The next most frequently used methods are threats to not buy certain things for their children and prohibition of participation in hobbies or other entertainment (n and a: 9% each).

When your child/children misbehave, how often does the following happen?
Children of 7-10 y.o



Among parents with children 7-10 years of age, the most frequently used disciplinary methods are: scolding or criticism (k: 18%), threatening to not buy certain things (n: 12%), or prohibition of hobbies or entertainment, or going out and playing (a and c: 10%). Slapping children as a parental response to misbehaviour (x: 9%) is reported most frequently for this age group as compared to the other age groups.

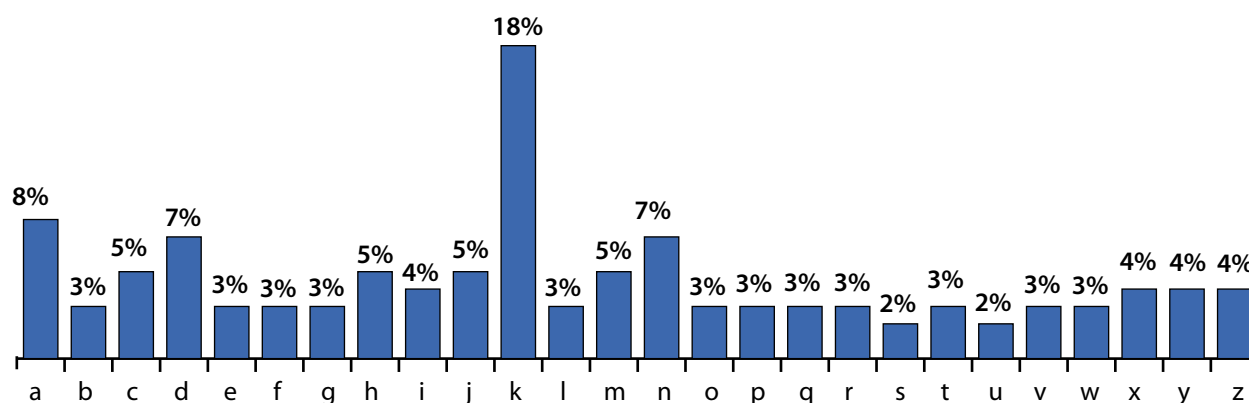
When your child/children misbehave, how often does the following happen?
Children of 11-14 y.o



Similarly, in addition to explanation, the most frequently used methods of behaviour correction for children of 11-14 years of age are: scolding, criticism (k: 16%), and threatening to not buy certain things (n: 10%).

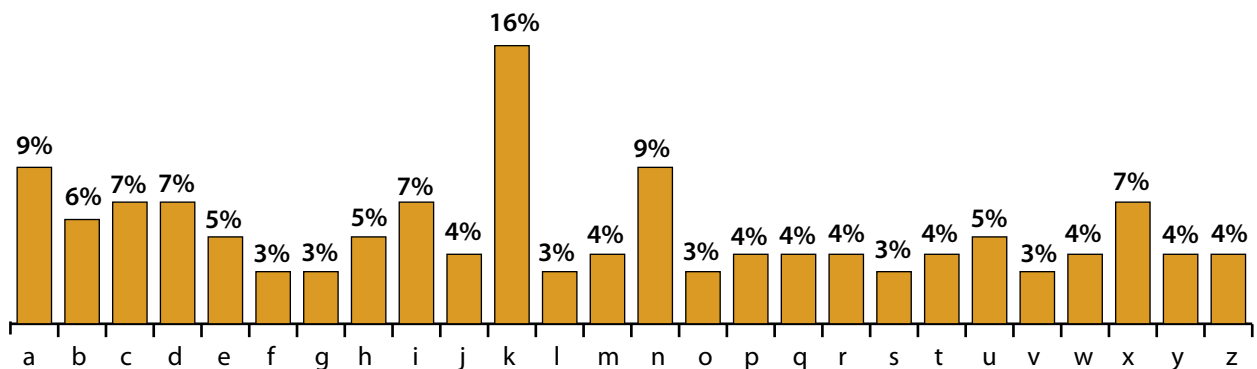
For children of 15-18 years of age, criticism/scolding is the method that parents generally used to correct behaviour. Relatively fewer parents still use prohibition of entertainment or hobbies for a certain period of time, going out with friends, or threatening to not buy certain things, although these remain among the punishments used 7-8 % of the time.

When your child/children misbehave, how often does the following happen?
Children of 15-18 y.o



In order to obtain a synthesized view on the forms of punishment used by parents in disciplining their children for misbehaviour, we have estimated an average for the four age categories.

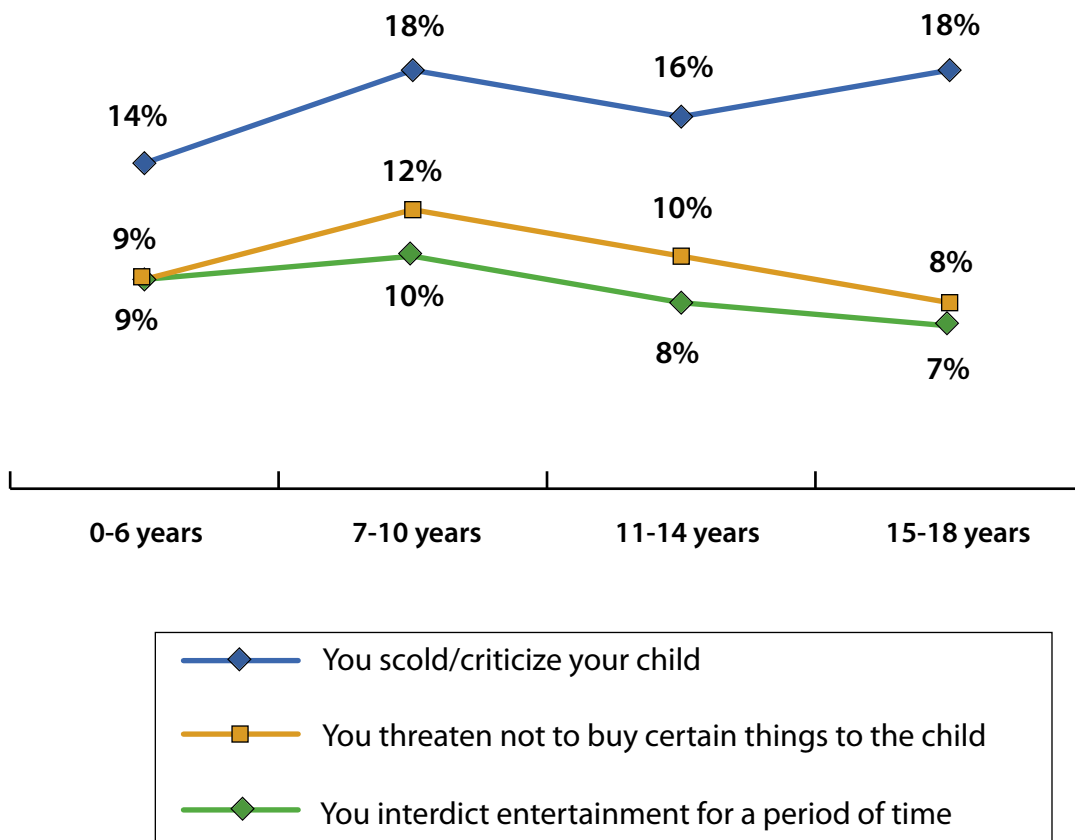
When your child/children misbehave, how often does the following happen? Total per Parents Sample



Overall, according to parents' declarations, parents most frequently try to correct their children's mistakes verbally (explaining these mistakes or scolding/criticizing). Physical punishment in the form of slapping does not appear as a particularly

frequent phenomenon, but it still occurs almost 7% of the time (option x). In addition, the frequency of such punishment decreases as children's ages increase.

Application of the Most Frequently Used Forms of Punishment at Different Ages

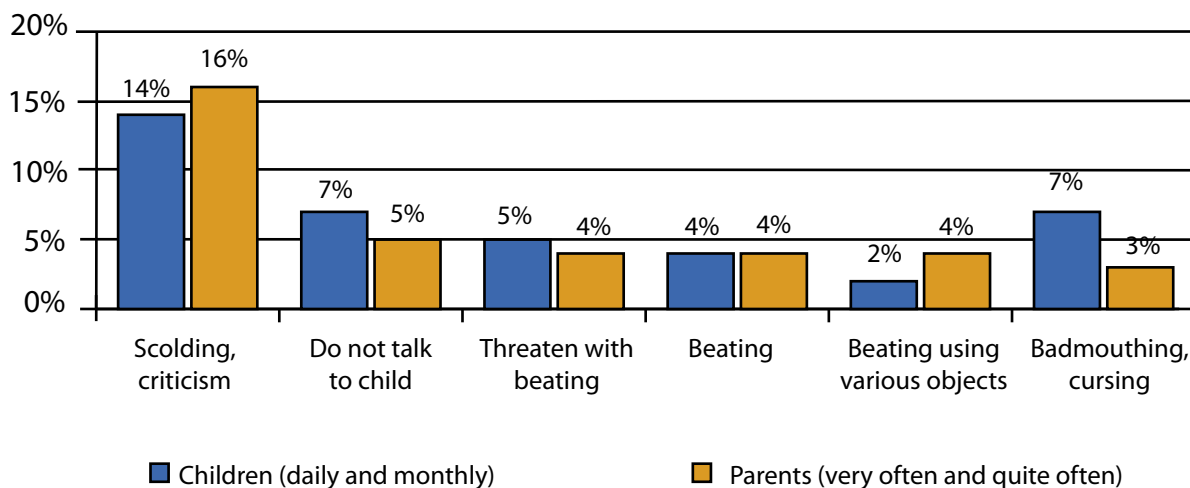


Comparison of Parent and Child Responses

A comparison was made between child and parent responses to questions about the frequency of violence. The results are shown in the

chart below. Since the items and scales used for the two groups were different, the comparison is approximate.

Comparison between the answers of children and parents concerning the frequency of different forms of punishment

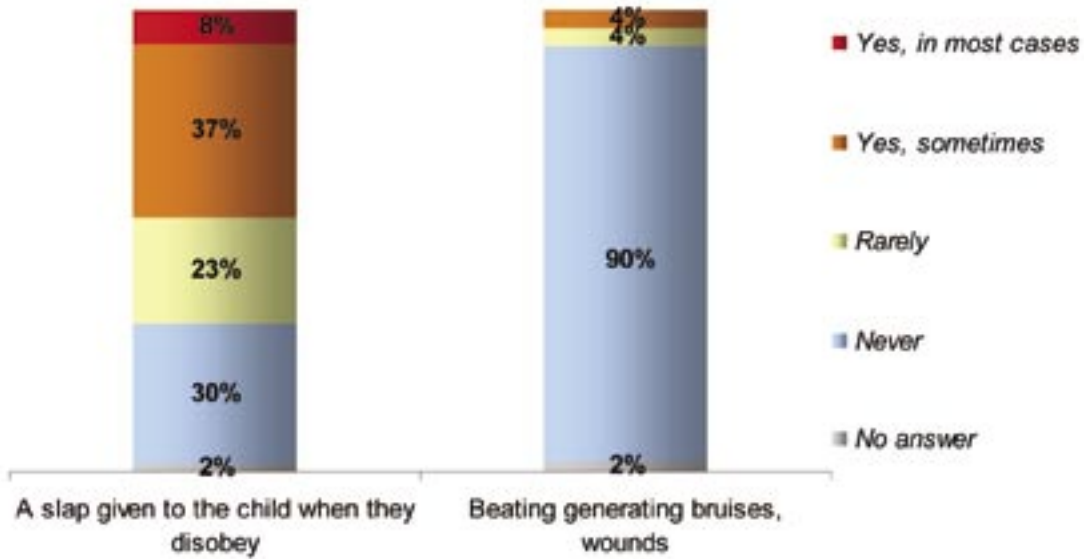


B. ACCEPTABILITY AND NECESSITY OF PHYSICAL DISCIPLINE



The study assessed the parental acceptability/unacceptability of two methods of disciplining children by way of physical violence: slapping and beating. Less than one third of parents say that either kind of physical violence is always unacceptable (whether it is just a slapping or a series of blows generating wounds). Almost half of parents, however, consider a slap given to a child for disobedience to be acceptable in either some or most cases.

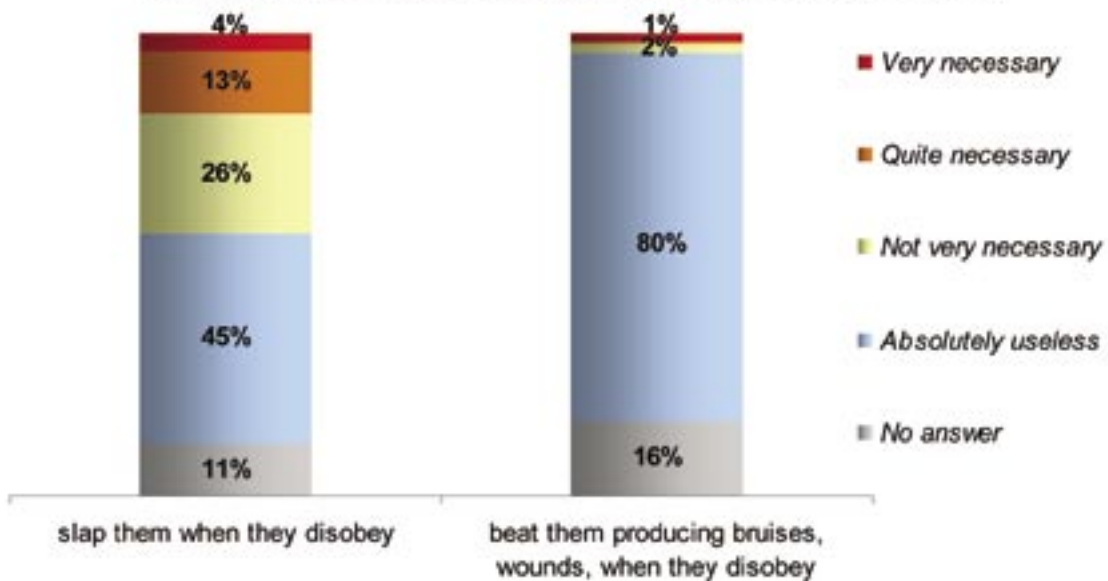
Do you find the following measures of child correction acceptable?

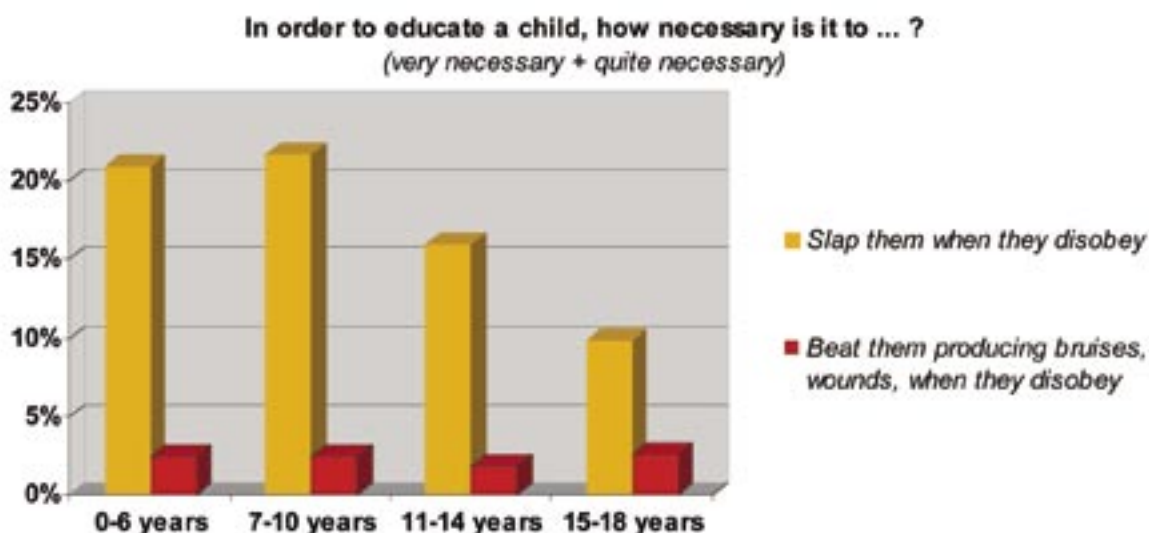


Despite the acceptance of slapping, the vast majority of parents do not believe that severely beating a child to the point of wounding or bruising is an acceptable form of punishment. Still, 8% of parents think that there are some cases in which such violent beatings are acceptable.

Although many parents (45%) consider it acceptable to slap their child at least occasionally, few parents are certain that slapping is actually necessary for child discipline. Moreover, a very significant majority of interviewed parents (80%) reject the idea that severe beatings are necessary to teach children proper behaviour.

In order to teach a child proper behavior, how necessary is it to ... ?

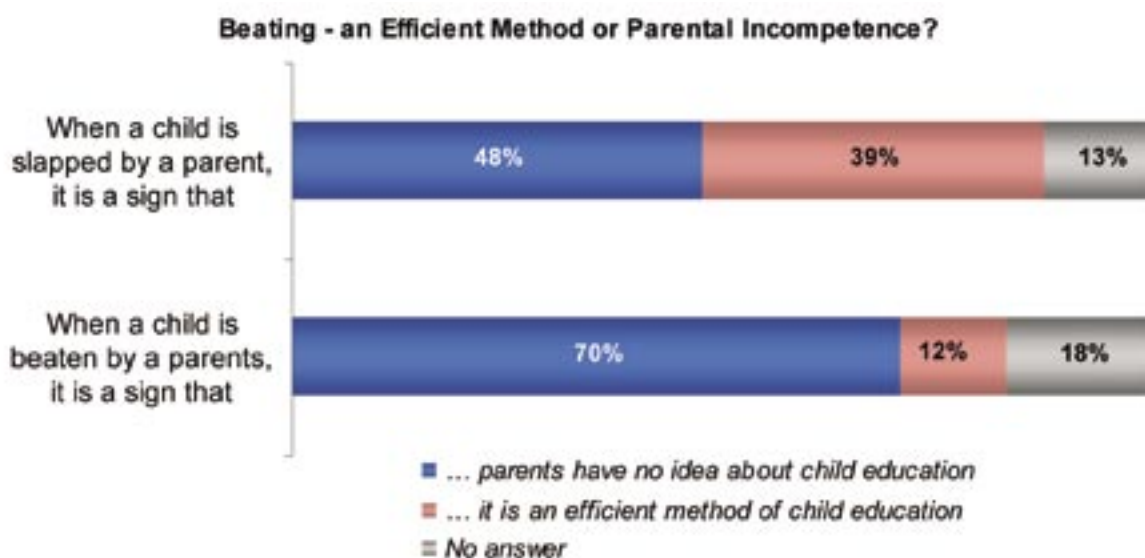




Parents' responses regarding the utility of these two types of physical punishment were also analyzed according to the children's age group. This analysis shows that parents with children in early childhood (0-6, 7-10 years) view physical punishment as more necessary to correct the behaviour of children. Indeed, according to two out of ten parents with children in these two age groups, it is necessary to slap children for disciplinary purposes. As children grow older, fewer and fewer parents perceive such discipline

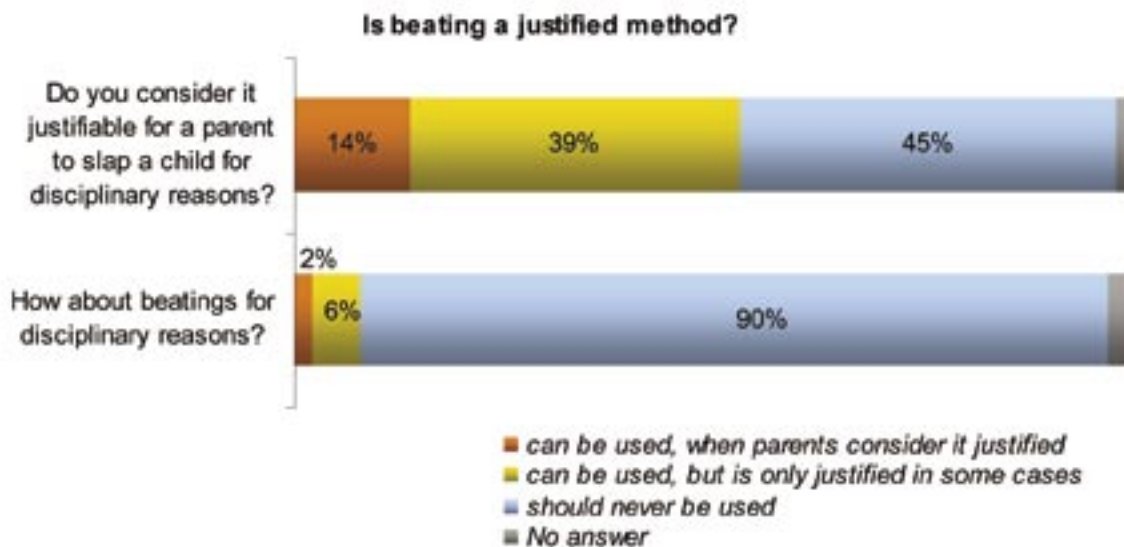
to be necessary. Among parents of children in all age groups, the percentage who find severe discipline useful is relatively similar.

Overall, parents consider "light" beating (slapping) to be somewhat acceptable but not necessary. Although 39% of parents consider this method effective, 48% still consider it to be a sign of one's inability to raise a child using alternative educational methods and do not consider it to be a necessary method of child discipline.



A large majority of parents (70%) believe that those who apply "severe" beatings to their children as a method of education are ignorant

in regards to proper child education. Still, 12% of parents think that, at least sometimes, it is an effective educational method.



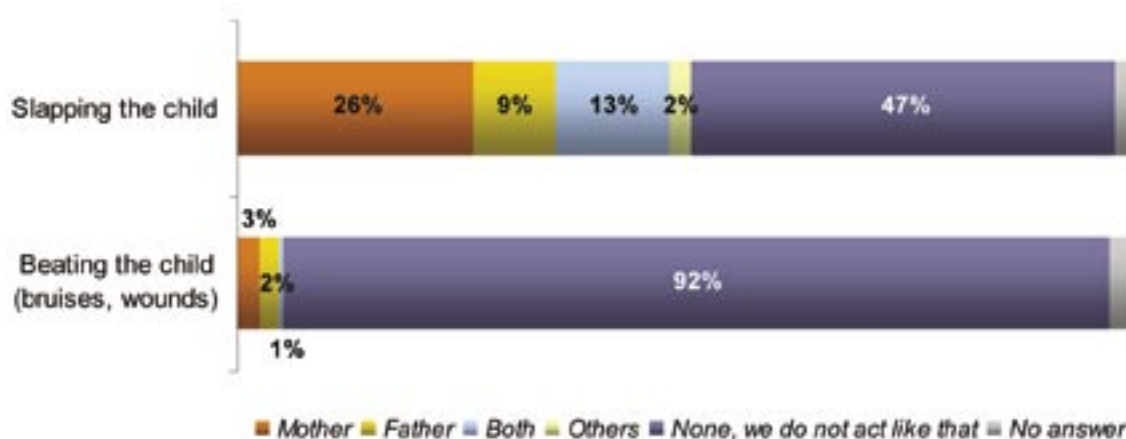
More than half of parents say that slapping a child is justifiable in certain situations. Nine out of ten parents, however, say that “severe” beatings are not justifiable under any circumstances.

C. RESPONSIBILITY AND REASONS FOR CHILD DISCIPLINE

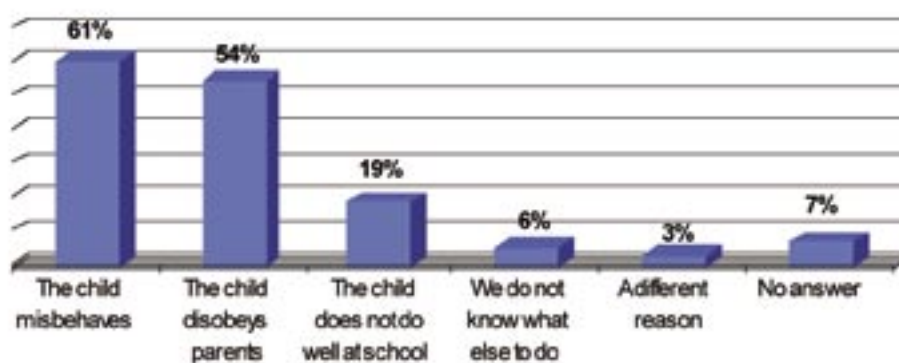
According to traditional family roles, mothers are responsible for child rearing, and thus apply various forms of punishment (including slapping) most frequently. In approximately one out of ten

families, it is the father who physically disciplines the child. Over 90% of respondents declare that, in their families, they never use severe beating (generating bruises or wounds to the child) to correct their children's behaviour.

Who is the person in your family to apply such forms of punishment:



Why are you forced to use these forms of punishment?



The reasons given for physically violent forms of punishment applied by parents to children are generally related either to a lack of real parental authority (the child is naughty, disobeys parents, or we do not know what else to do), or to the child's academic progress (the child does not do well at school). In the category of other reasons,

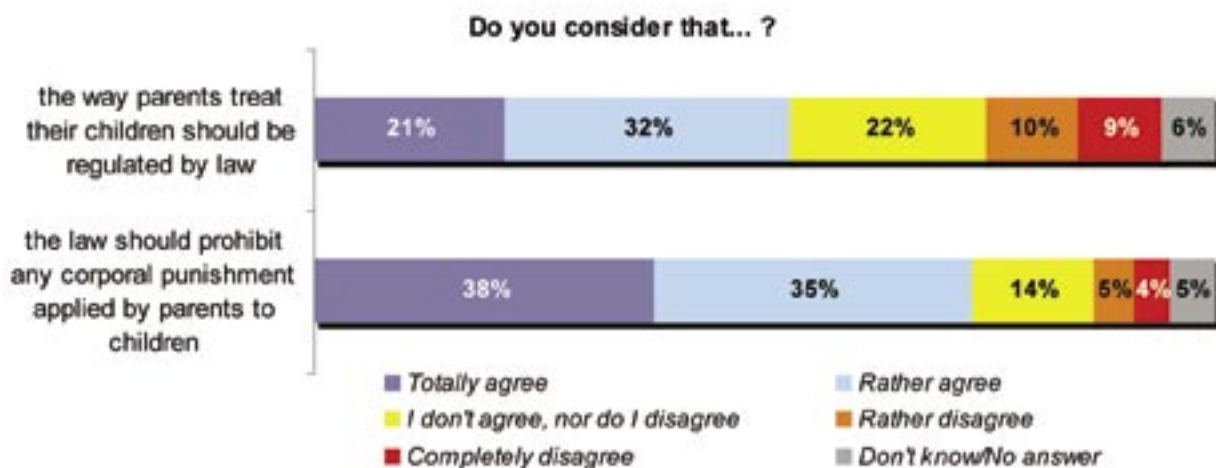
parents also mentioned that physical violence is used as a punishment when the child takes things he should not take, fools around, stays out late playing, brawls with other children, messes up things, comes home late, and/or lies. Sometimes parents also use discipline to instil a fear of parents in their children.



D. REGULATION OF CHILD DISCIPLINE

Two out of ten parents totally agree that the law should regulate the way parents treat their children. One third of parents are rather more

in favour of this idea than against it. However, a number of parents (19%) are more or less resolutely against the legal regulation of children-parents relations.



In consideration of physical punishment, over 70% of parents agree with the principle that corporal punishment applied by parents to children should

be legally prohibited. However, 9% of parents significantly resist any legal prohibition of this form of punishment.

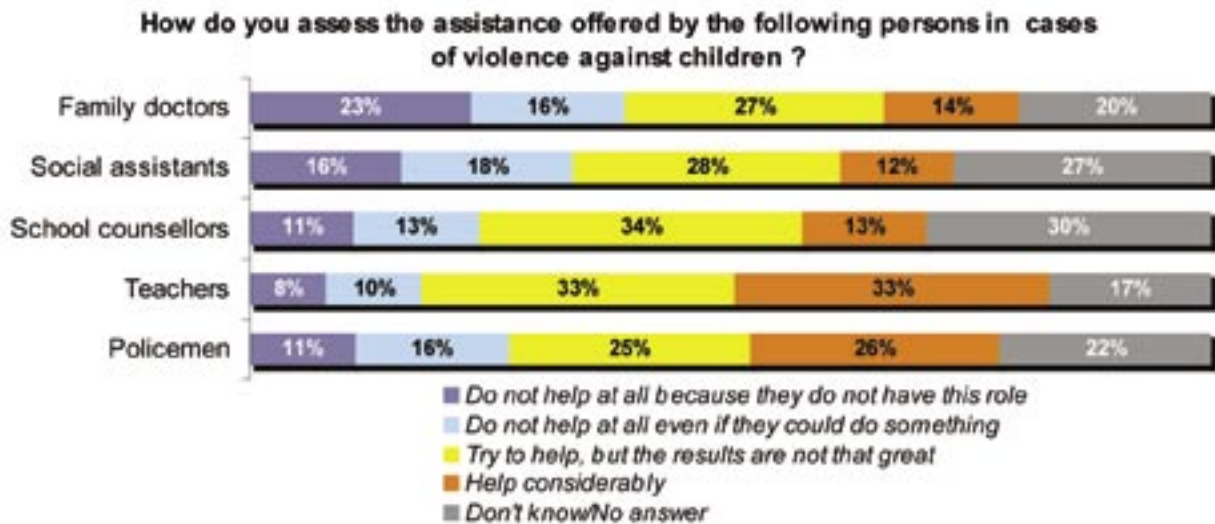


**5. ASSESSMENT OF
RESPONSES TO CASES
OF VIOLENCE AGAINST
CHILDREN BY
PROFESSIONALS**

A. THE ROLE OF PROFESSIONALS IN ASSISTING CASES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

The parents included in this study do not seem to know about or understand the roles of various professionals in social and psychological assistance positions (social assistants and school counsellors) who should be responsible for assisting with and resolving cases of violence against children.



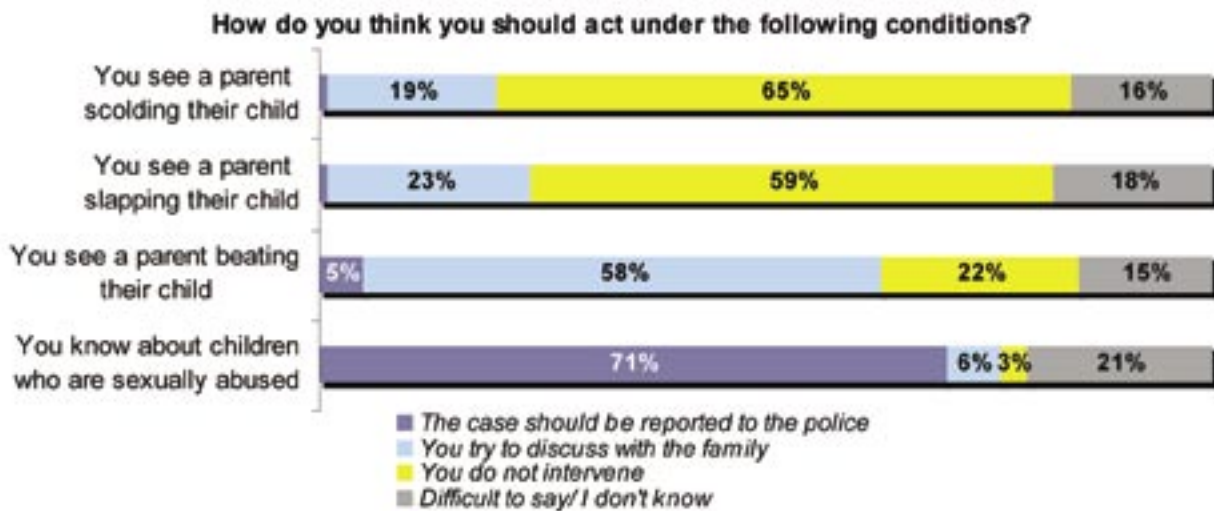


Parents consider teachers to be most efficient in assisting in such cases, (33% of parents say that they help a lot). One quarter of parents say that police officers also play an efficient role in cases of violence against children.

B. INDIVIDUAL AND STATE RESPONSES TO VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

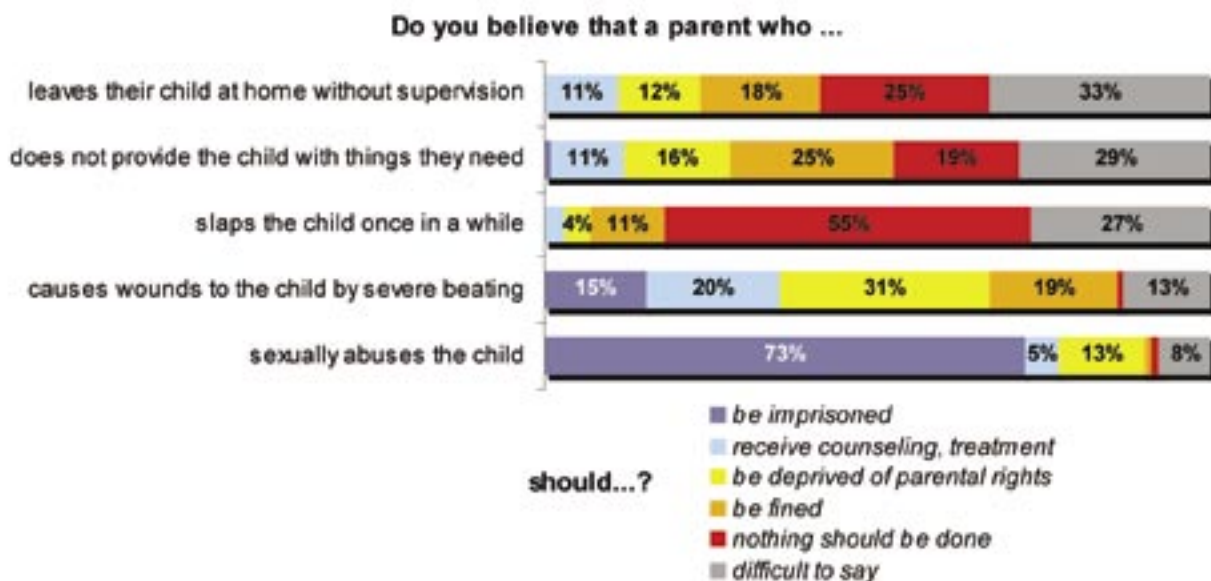
The civil responsibility undertaken by parents when they are confronted with specific situations of violence against children was measured through the assessment of intended behavioural

responses in relation to four cases of violence against children. Each case presented a different level or type of violence. Parents were asked to report which action they would take if they were confronted with such a case.



A significant minority of parents (between 15 and 21 percent) said that they did not know how they would react if they were confronted with specific acts of violence against children. For approximately two thirds of parents, the image of another parent scolding or slapping his child neither provokes a reaction in attitude nor action.

In cases where a parent observes a parent beating a child, 58% of responding parents claim that they would intervene by having a discussion with the respective parent. Only 5% would report such a case to the police. In contrast, 71% of parents say they would make a police report for any case of sexual abuse against a child.





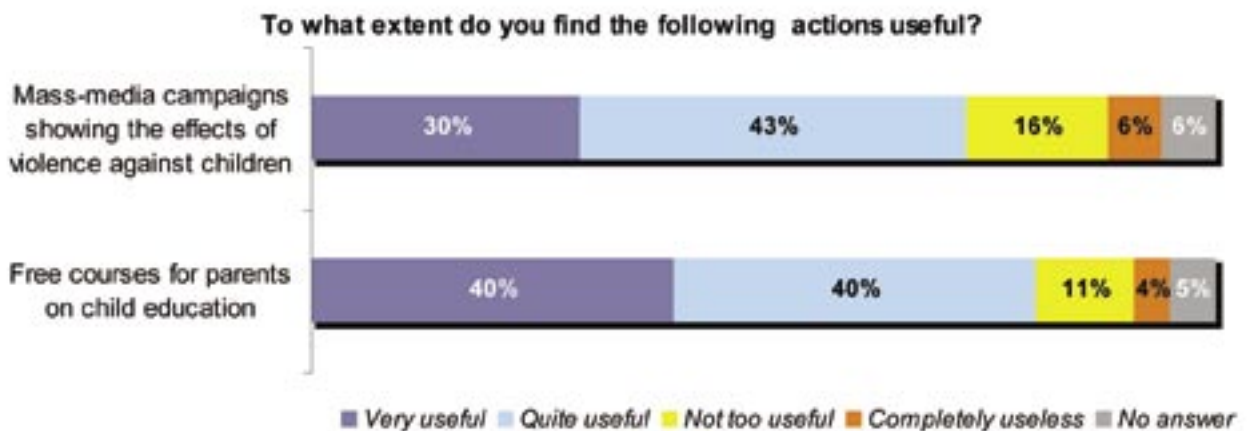
Slapping is the most tolerated form of violence against children by parents. More than half of respondents say that a parent who slaps his or her child should not receive any form of punishment. In contrast, almost the same number of respondents suggested that, in cases of neglect (leaving the child at home without supervision or not providing children with things they need,) sanctions such as a fine or deprivation of parental rights should be imposed.

Approximately one in three respondents say that parents who wound their children when beating them should be deprived of parental rights. A similar proportion (15% and 19% respectively) of respondents say that parents who beat their children to such an extent should either be imprisoned or fined and two in ten suggest that such parents should receive counselling or treatment. A significant majority of respondents (almost three quarters) say that imprisonment is the most appropriate response for parents who sexually abuse children.

C. EDUCATION ABOUT VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

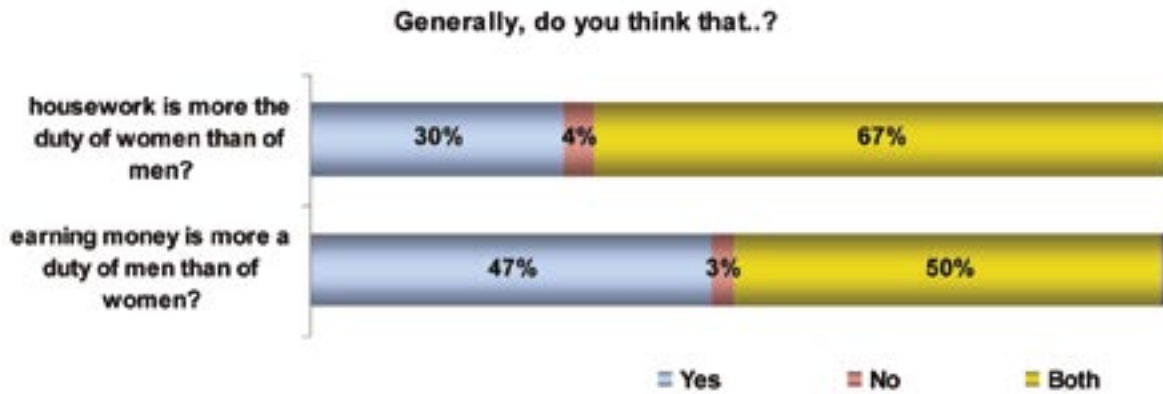
The survey also assessed parents' perceptions on the effectiveness in which information about parenting issues and child abuse and neglect is distributed in Moldova. Approximately three

quarters of parents consider both mass media campaigns and free courses for parents on child upbringing and education to be useful or very useful.



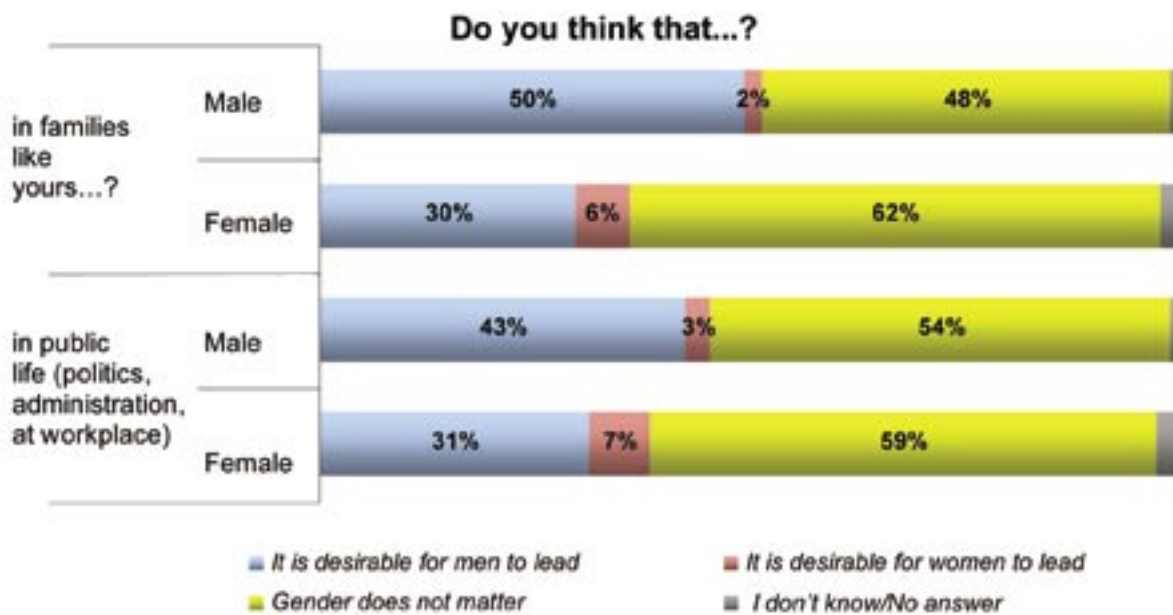
D. ATTITUDES ABOUT GENDER AND FAMILY ROLES

The survey also sought information from parents on their perception towards family and gender roles. The results showed that both men and women in Moldova adhere to traditional social roles.



Almost one third of the parents interviewed (men and women at the same rates) believe that women should be more involved in housework than men. The remaining third says that both spouses should

be responsible. Concerning financial responsibility, almost half of the parents included in the study (men more frequently than women) believe that men are more responsible for earning the family's income.



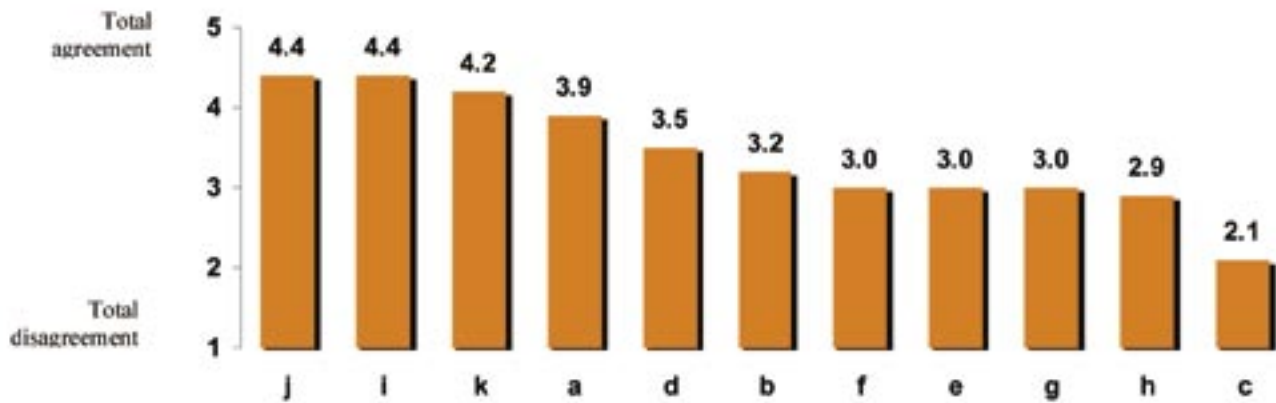


In consideration of public life, 43% of men say that they should be the leaders, while 3% say women should lead. Almost one third of women say that men should be leaders in public life, while only 7% say that women should take this role. The responses were similar when parents were asked about leadership roles in family life. Half of men, and approximately one third of women, said that

men should lead families such as theirs, while 2% of men and 6% of women said that women should take the leadership role in the family.

Finally, the survey presented a series of statements about child rearing to the parents. For each statement they evaluated the extent to which they agreed or disagreed.

Q42. To what extent do you agree with the following ...?



(the columns represent arithmetical averages between 1 "total disagreement" and 5 "total agreement")

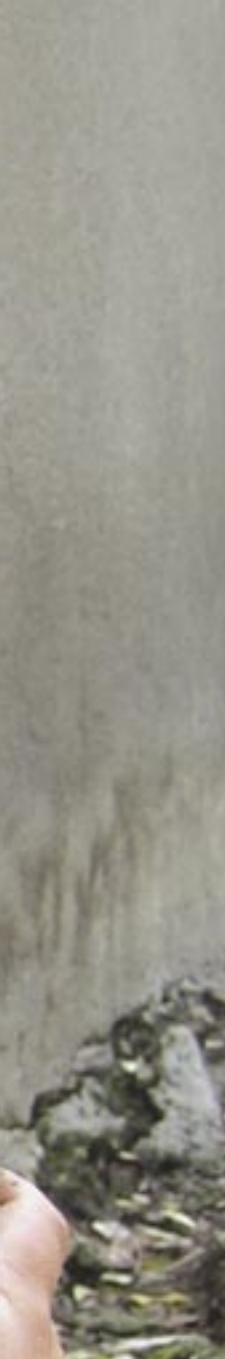
- a. *The man's responsibility is to earn money for living, while the woman's is to take care of the children and home*
- b. *Children should get used to hardship from a young age*
- c. *Beating is a gift from heaven*
- d. *"A slap on the bottom" given to children once in a while cannot be bad*
- e. *Children should fear their parents because they will listen better that way*
- f. *A child who is not punished will never learn what is good and what is bad*
- g. *A child is the property of his parents, thus parents should decide upon their child's future*
- h. *More severe treatment will make child stronger and will be beneficial for him when he grows up*
- i. *Children should always listen to their parents*
- j. *Children must always be controlled*
- k. *Parents should also consult their children before making decisions such as moving out of a locality*

Interviewed parents agreed most closely with statements that related to children's obedience to parents, parental control over children, and communication with them. The clearest rejection was of the traditional phrase that "justifies" the use of violence in disciplining children: "Beating is a gift from heaven".





CONCLUSIONS



Child abuse is not a simple problem. Perfect solutions for the prevention and elimination of child abuse and neglect have not yet been found. At the same time, acknowledgement of the phenomenon enables the development of efficient strategies for decreasing the risk of child maltreatment and consolidating child protection factors.

This study on violence against children is the first of its kind to be implemented in the Republic of Moldova using a representative sample. The information gathered, therefore, should lead to valid conclusions and recommendations that ought to be considered in efforts to improve and promote child protection policies in Moldova.

CONCLUSIONS:

1. Violence against children occurs in many forms. Both children and parents report cases of physical and psychological abuse within families and at school, as well as cases of neglect, child labour, and sexual abuse. The number of cases of child abuse and neglect that parents and children self-report is lower than the incidence rate of cases known by children/parents in their community/proximity, leading to the conclusion that abuse and neglect is probably under-reported by its victims and perpetrators.



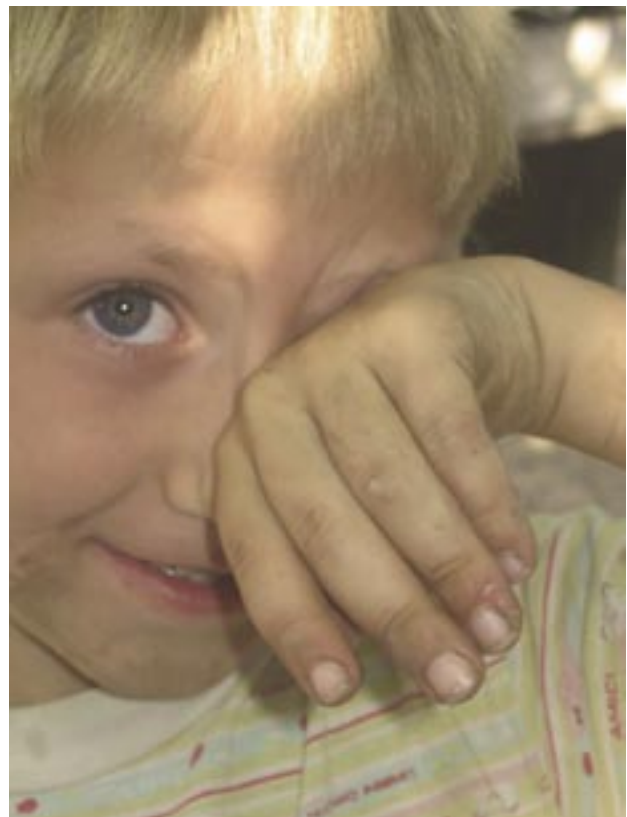


2. The most significant discrepancy between the rate of self-reporting and perception of the phenomenon relates to **child neglect**. While only one out of ten children from the general sample and three out of ten children who perceive themselves as very poor consider themselves neglected, that nobody takes care of them, 56% of the children questioned mention that they know of specific cases of children who are neglected in poor families. Parents also assess the phenomenon of child neglect at the social level quite seriously (6 out of ten parents consider that neglect occurs often and very often).
3. The problem of **abusive involvement of children in housework** occurs at substantially high rates, according to both children and parents. This phenomenon was self-reported in approximately the same proportion as it was perceived on the social level. 40% of children say that five out of ten children are abusively involved in housework, and six out of ten parents say that children are engaged in work often or very often.
4. The phenomenon of **violence at school** proved to be very relevant. Violence at school is the second most commonly reported and perceived form of violence against children. Thus, 3 out of 10 children recognized verbal and physical abuse by teachers and half of children know of at least one case of aggression by a teacher against a student.
5. Conflicting information was obtained on the incidence of **emotional/psychological/verbal abuse**. Though the overall situation appears to be positive (for example, seven out of ten interviewed children say that they are supported by their parents in what they do), in a different context, one third of interviewed students mention that a majority of children do not manage to meet their parents' expectations and disappoint them. The responses to this second statement are a probable indicator of parents' rejection and ignoring of children. In the same context, the problem of verbal aggression in the child-parent relationship was raised. More than one quarter of parents recognize that there are quarrels between themselves and their children, while only two out of ten children assess that they are sometimes exposed to verbal violence in their families (called different sorts of humiliating names). In this context, one may deduce that children have an inadequate understanding of non-violent communication.
6. The incidences of various forms of abuse correlative. Thus, children who suffer from one form of abuse are more likely to suffer from another. This is relevant when making a psychological assessment or diagnosis of a child, as it suggests that other forms of abuse may exist if one was already identified or disclosed. Moreover, knowledge of multiple forms of violence that a child might have experienced during psychological counselling and/or therapy would allow all forms to be addressed simultaneously.
7. The incidence of **child beating** in Moldova is reported at different rates by parents and children. One quarter of children report that their parents beat or slap them, while just 7% of parents say that they slap their children and 4% admit to beating them with different

objects. At the same time, three out of ten parents believe that beating is often used as an educational method in the Republic of Moldova. Thus, the self-reporting rate by children coincides more closely with the rate of parents' perception of the given phenomenon.

8. Parents underestimate the existence of **sexual abuse**, as compared to the assessment of this phenomenon by children. Sexual abuse (exposure to pornographic materials or sexual violence) has been experienced at least once by approximately 10% of the children interviewed for the study, and 30% of children are aware of cases in their proximity. At the same time, only 10% of parents admit that the phenomenon is even present in the society, and only 5% recognize it in their proximity.
9. There is a tendency to perpetuate abusive behaviour towards children across generations. Parents who have witnessed or have been victims of abusive behaviour by their own parents during childhood have a tendency to exhibit the same behaviour towards their own children.
10. There are contradictions in the attitudes expressed by parents regarding **beating and slapping** children. 45% of parents say that it is acceptable to slap the child at least sometimes, at the same time, 48% consider that beating (even in the form of a slap) indicates the parents' incompetence in properly rearing their children. In addition, 39% of parents consider this method an effective way of correcting children's behaviour. In contrast, more than 70% of parents say that the law should prohibit corporal punishment of children by parents. The acquired data thus shows parental lack of knowledge and confusion as to the most effective method of disciplining children.
11. Many parents do not know about the role of professionals in assisting abuse cases, a part of the respondents even recognized this fact. Thus:
 - Four out of ten parents do not understand the role of the family doctor and the school counsellor in child abuse and neglect cases.

- Almost half of parents (45%) do not understand the role of the social assistant.
- 25% of parents do not know understand the role of the teacher.
- Three out of ten parents do not understand the role of the police officer.
- Many parents, both men and women uphold and believe in traditional social roles based on gender stereotypes. Both men and women tend to believe that women are traditionally responsible for child rearing and home-making, and that men are better suited to lead both families and society. Men also suggest more frequently that they themselves should shoulder greater responsibility for earning family incomes. Traditional social roles tend to emphasize arbitrary power dynamics rather than individual strengths within relationships. Such an emphasis naturally heightens existing power disparities between adults and children so that children are less able to assert themselves or seek protection if they are abused or neglected.





RECOMMENDATIONS

I. Prevention of and assisting in cases of violence against children

Prevention of the phenomenon of violence against children should be approached in a series of policies, measures and techniques that seek diminishment of the problem in the Republic of Moldova. The prevention process should be continuous and have a multidisciplinary nature, both at the national and local levels.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are suggested as strategies for preventing **domestic violence against children**:

- **Diversification and development of family support options to address the root causes of violence against children**, for example home visits by doctors within the pre-delivery and post-delivery period, community social assistance; prevention of unemployment

among families with children; parent training; subsidies for poor families, etc.

- **Development of community services aimed at children and parents**, that might include day-care centres for children from vulnerable families, counselling services for parents, and re-socialization services for children, etc.
- **Development of and education about appropriate mechanisms for identifying and reporting cases of abuse and neglect** so that cases can be identified and appropriate assistance can be provided.

In this context, it is important to mention that prevention actions should be intensified for

specific groups identified within this study (groups at risk).

Given the fact that the study identified **violence at school** as quite an alarming problem, it is necessary to carry out prevention actions that specifically focus on this sector. The following actions would be appropriate:

- **Revision of teaching staff training curriculum** (including continuous / in-service training curricula) to include strategies from Educational Science and Psychology of Non-Violence in the training/educational process, as well as trainings on the phenomenon of violence against children in all forms, and its consequences.
- **Application of special programs** (like mutual support groups) for teachers and other staff, and for students of pre-university institutions, in order to preserve a non-violent climate.
- **Revision of the legal and regulation framework** concerning punishment of pre-university institutions' employees for discrimination and abusive behaviour towards children.
- **Implementation of life-skill-based programs for children** including issues such as family life, health education, communication skills, gender roles, violence against children and women, migration, drug and alcohol abuse, etc.

II. Informing and changing attitudes towards the phenomenon of violence against children in the society

The lack and insufficiency of information on the indicators, consequences of various forms of abuse, ways of reporting revealed cases of violence, role of services and specialists in assisting such cases, reliance on traditional social roles, as well as insufficient competence on the part of parents and teachers in non-violent child discipline are obvious factors that generate and maintain the phenomenon of violence against children.

Thus, it is recommended that special actions to raise awareness as well as actions to change or develop informed attitudes concerning the phenomenon, such as communication and awareness raising campaigns, and information programs of continuous nature organized at the national level, should be carried out in the following fields:

- Individual and societal effects of violence against children
- Child involvement in housework
- Effective methods of disciplining children
- Non-violent communication at school
- Recognition of the sexual abuse of children
- Identifying and reporting cases of violence against children





III. Building human resources and capacity in prevention and intervention in cases of violence against children

Starting with the alarmingly high rate of cases of child abuse found in this study, and taking into account that parents were sceptical about the effectiveness of interventions by specialists in these cases, the following is recommended:

- To develop and implement modules of professional and continuous (in-service) training of human resources in the field of children's rights, violence against children, and early identification and prevention of

cases of violence for: psychologists, social assistants, police, medical personnel, legal experts, and educators.

- To provide professionals with tools and procedures for prevention and identification of child abuse, and assistance to children and families at risk and/or maltreated.
- To develop and apply clear reporting and registration procedures for child abuse cases.