

Time to move on

By Dr Cindy Kiro
Children's Commissioner

**"A smack is not violence or child abuse."
"I was hit as a child and I'm fine."**



These are the most common statements made by people who want to be able to physically discipline their children. They make up a group backing petitions calling for a Referendum to overturn the law on child discipline. The reality is, the law in New Zealand was changed last year with 113 Members of Parliament voting to improve the lives of children by allowing them to grow up free from violence. A formal review is planned for June 2009 and that is the appropriate time to properly test the initial impact of the law change.

It is time to move on and for old dogs to learn new tricks. Adults have to take responsibility for their own problems and not take them out on children. What some parents consider physical discipline actually amounts to assault. As happened before the law change, the debate over parents' rights to physically discipline children is playing out in the media. Organisations with wider political agendas that encompass all their beliefs are using the convenient political football – children – to garner attention.

Much of what is reported in the media about "smacking" cases where Police talk to parents for disciplining their children is one-sided.

The lobbyists for physical discipline often use these cases to promote fear that "good parents" are being criminalised by an unfair system. The child's side of the story is seldom heard or listened to. In reality, these cases often end up in court, and it often comes out that this wasn't the first time the parent "disciplined" their child with the use of violence and in fact, they face charges of criminal assault.

When I talk to children they tell me they think physical punishment is wrong and ineffective. They think it is about adult issues and children are used to bear the brunt of frustrations that may have nothing to do with them. They believe that adults hit children because they would be in trouble if they hit other adults; or they would be hit back.

The motives for physical punishment may seem reasonable to the person administering it – they believe they are teaching the child a lesson. However, physical punishment has been proven to be a poor teaching method. At best it may result in immediate compliance. In the longer term, the evidence shows that the use of physical punishment increases the likelihood of disruptive and aggressive behaviour in children.

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March 2008

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FROM THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE OFFICER.....

Tena Koutou, Talofa Lava, Kia Orana, Fakaalofa lahi atu Malo e leiei, Bula Vinaka, Taloha ni Tuvalu, Talofa , Greetings

Like me, no doubt you were excited and pleased about the boost in Government funding for essential services provided by NGOs after many years of lobbying and representation to Government. This is welcome and exciting news and a recognition that the Government does in fact value the contribution and commitment made by many organisations around the country to provide sustainable services to children, young people and families.

I am only too aware having spoken to many organisations how difficult it has been to achieve ongoing funding to deliver the many and varied services provided by the Non Government Sector. As a representative on the Pathways to Partnership Steering Group this announcement is the result of many hours of discussion with Government by this group about the true cost and value of the work provided by the NGO sector. I will continue to work with my other NGO and Government colleagues on the steering group to develop implementation principles for this new funding. In the meantime the following information may be useful to know:-

\$446 million additional funding will be provided over the next 4 years. Government currently provides \$203 million towards the services for children, young people and families - these are the services that will receive the additional funding. This funding will rise to \$396 million by 2011 — an increase of 95%

An extra \$52 million will be spent in 2008/2009. This is made up of \$37.5 million announced on 12 February as well as \$13 million already allocated as part of the Pathways to Partnership project in the 2007 budget.. Services (not organisations) that meet the criteria of essential services will over a 2 - 4 year phase in period be funded for the full cost of delivering those services.

Essential services are seen as

- Parenting and other social work intervention programmes
- Women's refuges and family violence prevention and crisis intervention programmes
- Budgeting advice services
- Community programmes to address youth offending
- Victim Support

Funding changes will be progressively implemented from July 2008. Letters will be sent to providers within the next few weeks providing more information on what services will be eligible for the increased funding and providing an opportunity for feedback. Guaranteed funding which meets the full cost of delivering agreed services and which is automatically adjusted each year to reflect cost changes and volumes is long overdue and will mark a positive new direction in the ongoing relationship between NGOs and Government.

Jocelyn Wilson
National Executive Officer

NOTICES

SSPA's Annual Conference will be held in Dunedin this year on 18 and 19 September 2008. Don't forget to mark this in your diary as the annual conference is very popular with our members A Conference Outline and Registration form will be available in June. Enquiries to Nicola Taylor
Ph. 03 4770801 or email
director@familycare.co.nz

Parenting, the best day's
work you'll ever do

Is the slogan for a parenting campaign launched by the Families Commission. More information is available on the Families Commission website:-
www.nzfamilies.org.nz/parenting

INVOLVE 08: RELATE

Quality Relationships and Young People
2-4 July 2008 Michael Fowler Centre, Wellington

Involve 08 is organised by the NZ Association for Adolescent Health and Development with support from the Ministry of Youth Development and in partnership with the National Youth Workers Network. More information is available by visiting
www.involve.org.nz

Youthlaw

Has a free service for children and young people. Youthlaw's website contains 58 legal information sheets on all aspects of the law. See www.youthlaw.co.nz/default.aspx?_z=59

Unreasonable Force

New Zealand's journey toward banning physical punishment toward children. To order: Phone 0800-167-168 - . Cost \$25 within New Zealand (includes postage)



THE INAUGURAL

Social Services Excellence Awards Event

Thursday, 25 September 2008

An evening of celebration hosted by the Minister of Social Development and Employment, the Hon. Ruth Dyson at Parliament Buildings in association with Social Services Industry Training Organisation.

Putting the spotlight on **excellence** across social service organisations

An **OPEN** Invitation to Join In

Social services and community organisations of all types make **outstanding contributions** that have a substantial impact on community wellbeing.

This event will record and celebrate those contributions by **bringing together organisations** that already recognise excellence and innovation within their own organisations or have received outside awards for their excellence.

This event will **raise public awareness** of the contribution that social services organisations make across all communities in Aotearoa New Zealand.

This Awards celebration evening provides a special opportunity to be part of a 'peak event' to:

EITHER raise the profile of your organisations **existing social services awards** by presenting the winners at the event;

OR initiate and present a new award that highlights social services community contributions in your field of social services.

REGISTER your interest before **1 May 2008** by sending an email headed **Social Services Awards** to communications@tkaito.co.nz or phone 04 9157713.

Repeal of Section 59 re-visited again.....

The repeal of Section 59 of the Crimes Act or what has been dubbed the "Anti-Smacking Legislation" is once again featuring strongly in the hearts and minds of parents throughout the country. There's not a parent who doesn't have an opinion on the issue and the debate has polarised many people in the community. There is every possibility that the issue will be used politically in the run up to the election in November.

Beth Wood from EPOCH New Zealand has been exploring how we might better inform the public about the new law and related issues so that they are well informed when they vote on a referendum and how we can keep up the pressure on politicians to stay strong. Beth says that one of the measures that helped a lot in the last round was being able to demonstrate support from credible NGOs and she is once again seeking support - this time for the new law. Please let Beth know by contacting her at bethwood@xtra.co.nz if your agency would be willing to be reported as being in support of retaining the new law as it is.

The following Letter to the Editor is re-printed from the Kapiti News on February 27 and seems to offer words of wisdom from someone who has been there

"I have a message for the mother who wrote blaming the anti-smacking law for her inability to deal with her daughter's tantrum. Do you really believe that hitting a small child - one you admitted was very tired - would help?

I have brought up a family and have teenage grandchildren and I can assure you that hitting children does not achieve anything. You are the adult and should have self control. You cannot expect a three-year-old to have that self control.

If you smacked her, and she was still upset, would you hit her harder? When would you stop and how hard is too hard? You suggest it would make her "stop and think" about what she was doing" I suggest it is you who should stop and think.

You praised the "kindness of strangers" who helped — did kindness help more than smacking? Children do get overtired and then frequently misbehave. If you can't find another way to deal with your children, then get used to it.

*Glen Stenhouse, author of "Don't Need to Smack" is adamant children do not need to be smacked and the great majority of children are well behaved most of the time. Stenhouse says that "For the most challenging kids smacking is a waste of time. All it does is make the parents more frustrated because it's not working. It invites the kids to be more challenging and oppositional, and it just makes things worse.

By changing one's parenting style a little, and by making certain things part of your parenting, you can reduce virtually to zero the number of occasions where a situation comes to the point where you would even think about smacking. Stenhouse advocates clear guidelines on what behaviour is acceptable, and a consistent approach to dealing with behaviours that are not acceptable.

According to Stenhouse we have become so child focused that we've created a situation where our children are more likely to be assertive and challenging. Parents feel it's their responsibility to develop children's potential - that they need to go to gym classes and swimming classes from the time they're two. Parents feel that children need to be heard, that we need to discuss everything with them, and we need to negotiate — so as a result children have taken the opportunity to be more assertive and more demanding.

Stenhouse says that "Parenting is not complicated" "As long as kids have structure, and love security and predictability in their lives they will go with the flow" Stenhouse offers helpful suggestions in his book for preventing and managing behaviour and ways of responding when things go wrong.

*Excerpts from "You Don't Need to Smack" by Glen Stenhouse, published by Penguin, \$19.95

From the Minister's Desk.....

Hon. Ruth Dyson



I'm pleased to be writing this column and sharing exciting news with you. In the December newsletter I touched on the opportunities that the portfolio of Minister of Social Development and Employment provides. One of those windows of opportunity has recently been opened.

You have probably read or heard about the Prime Minister's announcement investing an additional \$446 million into the NGO sector over the next four years. Social sector agencies have voiced the improvements that can be made through increased funding and the Government has made a commitment to strengthening the delivery of essential community based family, child and youth services.

I have often stated that Government and community providers want the same things for families, children and young people. That is good outcomes, like healthy secure kids and safe communities. Pathway to Partnership is the vehicle through which the NGO sector and Government are engaging to ensure community based essential child, youth and family services reach those in need when they need them.

You are the people, who know what your community needs, where the gaps are, and what can be done to make sure families and children are taken care of in their community. More often than not you are the organisations vulnerable families go to when they need help.

The new funding announced earlier in the month will be progressively introduced from 1 July 2008, with an extra \$52 million available in 2008/09.

Pathway to Partnership and the implementation of the new funding is being guided by a steering group made up of representatives from family, child and youth focused service providers, the Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Justice. Jocelyn Wilson is a member of this steering group. I am sure Jocelyn will be making your views known to the steering group and will communicate progress to SSPA members. You will also be kept informed about how the changes affect your organisation as things progress and there is more information on the Ministry's website www.msd.govt.

It has been a privilege to play a part in this significant move – together we can create a stronger, sustainable and more effective community based family, child and youth services.

Ruth Dyson



The NZ Family and Foster Care Annual Conference 2008

This year the Annual Conference for the NZ Family and Foster Care Federation will be co hosted by the Western Bay Of Plenty Association in Tauranga on Friday 25th and Saturday 26th July 2008 at the Hotel Armitage.

In the entrance to the Tauranga Harbour stands a mountain, Mauao (Mt Maunganui) Mauao means "To catch the first light".

We are privileged as caregivers to be the ones that see the awakening and the first faint of light in the faces of our children as they begin their journey with our families. This journey is the theme for this years conference, and like all journeys it has a beginning, a middle and a destination.

Foster Care: Heal - Learn - Thrive

This is an annual event for the NZ Family and Foster Care Federation and highlights the concept of networking and learning.

For anybody who is working or interested in the field of foster care and treasuring our future generation this is an event certainly not to be missed.

We encourage people to register by 30th April 2008, to take advantage of the discount available before this date. Registration forms can be downloaded from www.nzfostercare.org.nz. General enquiries phone Gail Haakma on 07 5446576 or email to Sue Iiti paul.sue.iti@xtra.co.nz

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In the longer term, the evidence shows that the use of physical punishment increases the likelihood of disruptive and aggressive behaviour in children.

It teaches children that the use of violence is an acceptable way to solve problems or to resolve personal differences of opinion. And so the cycle continues.

New Zealand can be justly proud of what it has achieved as the first English-speaking country in the world to repeal legislation that allowed the lawful discrimination based on age for assault. New Zealand would be the only country to change the law back, if this were to happen. There are 23 countries that have banned physical punishment of children and a further 22 countries committed to changing their laws. The momentum is for change worldwide and we should embrace this.

At the heart of this debate is a recognition that children's rights are not, as is sometimes assumed, about giving children what they want or parental authority being lost. Human rights set standards about the way human beings ought to treat each other – justly, respectfully and equally. We should not exploit our positions of power over children simply because they happen to be related to us, or because we are bigger than them. They deserve the same protection in law that we afford adults and animals.

Dr. Cindy Kiro



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Thank you for inviting Te Whare Ruruhou O Meri to profile our organisation; it's a rare moment in our daily operations when we take the time to speak/write about the Fantastic things we all do as N.G.O's. I am simply the scribe, and one of the kaimahi at Te Whare Ruruhou O Meri.

We are a team of:-

- 3 Alternative Education
- 2 Pastoral Care
- 3 Social Workers
- 6 Counsellors
- 5 Admin staff

Services we provide:-

Alternative Education

Matapuna O Te Ora Youth programme for student who have been exited from mainstream schooling.

Pastoral Care

Mahi with elderly, home visiting, spiritual uplift and support services.

Social Work Intervention

Interview & Assessments and services co-ordination.

Counsellors

CYF Approval, section 403

D.V Approvals

Educational Programmes, Parenting, Relationships & Stopping Violence Programmes.

Sexual Abuse

Grief

Suicide

Adult & Tamariki Programme

Administration

Administrator

D V Clerk

Receptionist

Special Projects:- Resource gathering/ Research/ Funding Advisor.

The heart of our operation is our Rangatahi JAM (Jesus & Me) programme which is held every school holidays. This kaupapa has been running now for 12 years. The Rangatahi JAM offers safe holidays for the Tamariki we work with during the school holidays, and provides care for parents/caregivers. Our mission statement, "Te Whare Ruruhou O Meri provides a place of comfort and compassion for those in need".

Noho Ora Mai
Herarere Clarke



Strategic Pay

Understanding the Value of Love

By David Shannon, Strategic Pay Limited

When it comes to paying staff in the Not for Profit Sector, we find there is a value to love - that is, the love of work. In pay terms, what we call the "Love Factor" is that gap between the pay of employees in this sector and the pay of employees in the general employment market. In our 2007 survey, we found that gap running around 15% to 17% across the sector. We know pay is lower in social service organisations, but this love of the work and, often, family friendly working conditions and a better work-life balance, help compensate for that difference.

Nonetheless, for employers in the Not for Profit Sector it is crucial to understand that gap and keep track of it, for when it reaches a certain level, employees may find that love alone isn't quite worth it and they will leave for better-paying work in that broader market. Our 'feel' for the market is that 20% is the maximum value employees are willing to sacrifice of that love.

Pinning down the value of the Love Factor is a key objective of the Strategic Pay Survey of Remuneration in the Not for Profit Sector. This survey is the largest, most authoritative survey of pay levels in these organisations, providing an in-depth picture of that pay market and the gap that exists between it and other sectors. Understanding this gap and the pay rates that apply in this sector are crucial to effective employment practices in these organisations. This knowledge is also crucial for effective negotiation of funding contracts.

Data packs will be send out to over 500 non-governmental, Not for Profit organisations in March 2008. To ensure your organisation is included in this mail-out, contact either of the following:

Catherine Battersby
Survey Manager

David Shannon
Senior Consultant

DDI: 09 303 4057
catherine@strategicpay.co.nz

DDI: 09 303 4053
david@strategicpay.co.nz

Of interest to members:-

Social Service Providers Aotearoa took part in the Strategic Pay Survey for 2007-2008 which contributed to the survey results for last year. It is important that if you are looking to keep your salaries competitive and to retain staff within your organisation that as many providers as possible contribute to the survey to enable a comparative analysis to be undertaken.

SSPA's Talking Back Questionnaire sent to members last year on Work Force Issues highlighted that many NGO staff were paid well below the public sector rate and recruitment and retention were major issues for agencies trying to provide a continuity of service. Your participation in this survey will help to provide hard data on the discrepancies in salaries and conditions of employment in the NGO sector. A copy of the responses to the questionnaire are available on SSPA's website www.theorganisation.org.nz