

## EDUCATE, DO NOT PUNISH

Save the Children has received financial support from the European Commission Daphne III Programme to carry out a project to protect children from physical and humiliating punishment by supporting the inclusion of the explicit ban of physical and humiliating punishment in all settings, including the family, in the political agenda and debate and to prevent corporal punishment through public awareness raising actions on positive parenting.

This two years project is coordinated by Save the Children Italy and the partners are the three respective Save the Children Organizations in Romania, Lithuania and Sweden. The project will be focused in these four European countries, which have different legislative, administrative, social and educational measures related to Corporal Punishment. Specifically in Italy and Lithuania corporal punishment is still not ban in the family context. In Romania, even if corporal punishment was banned by the law, it is still socially accepted and it is still a considerable problem.

The Committee on the Rights of the Child defines “corporal” or “physical” punishment as any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light. Most involves hitting (“smacking”, “slapping”, “spanking”) children, with the hand or with an implement - a whip, stick, belt, shoe, wooden spoon, etc. But it can also involve, for example, kicking, shaking or throwing children, scratching, pinching, biting, pulling hair or boxing ears, forcing children to stay in uncomfortable positions, burning, scalding or forced ingestion (for example, washing children’s mouths out with soap or forcing them to swallow hot spices)<sup>1</sup>.

The objective of the project is to prevent physical and humiliating punishment in all settings by implementing awareness raising actions on positive parenting through the development of awareness raising materials, such as leaflets, posters, TV and radio spots, targeting public opinion, parents, pediatricians, and teachers, politicians and relevant institutions at national and local level. Moreover, a re-adaptation of existing guidelines on positive parenting will be produced with the aim to make parents thinking about positive educational approaches in relationship with their children.

Four surveys (1 in each country involved in the project) will be conducted to gather the views on corporal punishment of children, parents and other carers. In Sweden the survey will be focused on the duty of professionals working with children to report if they suspect that a child is being abused. Furthermore, seminars, training modules for parents, specialist and experts and participation activities with children and adolescence will be carried out in Sweden, Lithuania and Romania.

Finally, eight roundtables (2 in each country involved in the project) will be organized to encourage a public debate on the ban of physical and humiliating punishment and the value of positive parenting. The findings of the project will be disseminated at European level through a conference that will be held in Brussels.

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<sup>1</sup> General Comment n.8 (2006), The right of the child to protection from corporal punishment and other cruel or degrading forms of punishment (arts. 19; 28, para. 2; and 37, inter alia).