

Most Say Spanking's OK by Parents But Not by Grade-School Teachers

Spanking has its place, most Americans say – but not in school.

The public by a 2-1 margin approves of spanking children in principle, and half of parents say they sometimes do it to their own kids. But an overwhelming majority in this ABC News poll disapproves of corporal punishment in the schools.

Sixty-five percent of Americans approve of spanking children, steady since 1990. But just 26 percent say grade-school teachers should be allowed to spank kids at school; 72 percent say it shouldn't be permitted, including eight in 10 parents of grade-schoolers.

	Yes	No
Approve of spanking children	65%	31
Think spanking should be permitted in school	26	72

Indeed, even among adults who spank their own child, 67 percent say grade-school teachers should not be permitted to spank children at school.

AT HOME – Among parents with minor children at home, 50 percent report that they sometimes spank their child, while 45 percent do not. That's about the same as it was in a Gallup poll a decade ago.

There are big regional differences in spanking. Among Southerners, 62 percent of parents spank their kids; that drops to 41 percent in the rest of the country. Similarly, 73 percent of Southerners approve of spanking children, compared to 60 percent elsewhere.

Even in the South, though, just 35 percent think spanking should be allowed in the schools. Support for spanking in the schools is about the same, 31 percent, in the Midwest, falling to 19 percent in the West and 13 percent in the East.

One other difference in spanking is among education groups. Among parents with college degrees, just 38 percent spank their kids; among less-educated parents, it's 55 percent.

The U.S. Department of Education has reported that school-sanctioned spanking is most prevalent in Southern states - Mississippi, Arkansas, Alabama, Tennessee, Oklahoma and Louisiana. There are no state laws against spanking, although 27 states have policies against the practice and this year Pennsylvania is debating becoming the 28th. Spanking in schools is currently allowed in 23 states (although in many districts parents who object can withhold permission for school personnel to spank their kids).

METHODOLOGY - This ABC News poll was conducted by telephone Oct. 25-29, 2002, among a random national sample of 1,015 adults. The results have a three-point error margin. Fieldwork by ICR-International Communications Research of Media, Pa.

Analysis by Julie Crandall.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com on the Internet at:
<http://www.abcnews.com/sections/us/PollVault/PollVault.html>

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Full results follow. *= less than 0.5 percent

1. Do you approve or disapprove of spanking children?

	Approve	Disapprove	No opin.
10/29/02	65	31	4
2/26/97*	65	32	3
4/22/90	65	25	10
9/4/46	74	24	2

*2/97 and previous: Gallup

2. (PARENTS ONLY) Do you ever spank your child/any of your children, or not?

	Yes	No	Did when they were younger, not now (vol.)	No opin.
10/29/02	50	45	5	*

3. Do you think grade-school teachers should or should not be permitted to spank children at school?

	Should	Should not	No opin.
10/29/02	26	72	1

END