



# The Mississippi Coalition to End Corporal Punishment

## Mississippi leads the nation in the use of corporal punishment in public schools

Mississippi is responsible for almost one-quarter of all corporal punishment in the USA. Mississippi had the highest corporal punishment rate of all states examined.

Mississippi **bans** corporal punishment in: • Juvenile detention centers • Residential treatment facilities • Foster care settings • Day care programs • Early learning centers • Mental health programs • Private alternative.

**But Mississippi allows corporal punishment in: Public schools.**

(Corporal punishment is prohibited for students with special needs by HB 1182, passed in 2019.)

Corporal punishment is an anomaly in many respects. States that allow corporal punishment in school often ban it in virtually every other situation.

A review of more than 250 studies found the practice of corporal punishment linked to a range of negative consequences, from physical and emotional harm to poor academic performance, and it is widely accepted that it **does not improve students' in-school behavior or academic performance. The studies did not find evidence of any positive outcomes.**<sup>1</sup>

1. Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, "Corporal punishment of children: review of research on its impact and associations," (June 2016), p. 2, bit.ly/2pafZOW (Last accessed Dec. 10, 2018).

**Nationally, but especially in Mississippi, corporal punishment remains disproportionately administered to black students in schools.** Racial disparities in school corporal punishment are widespread, with disparities largest in Alabama and Mississippi. Black children in Mississippi are over 50% more likely to be corporally punished than White children in over half of school districts, while in one out of five of the school districts, Black children are over 5 times (500%) more likely to be corporally punished.



*Corporal punishment is considered a human rights violation in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.*

[The American Academy of Pediatrics](#) recommends healthy forms of discipline, such as positive reinforcement of appropriate behaviors, limit setting, redirecting, and setting future expectations. The AAP recommends that parents do not use spanking, hitting, slapping, threatening, insulting, humiliating, or shaming. [The American Academy of Family Physicians](#) is opposed to corporal punishment.

**Some who advocate for corporal punishment in schools say and believe** that it can be an effective, non-injurious technique of training and discipline and that children are better-controlled, that they learn appropriate appreciation for authority, develop better social skills and improved moral character, and learn to better discipline themselves.

**Studies have shown there is little evidence to support that belief.**



## How can parents and families join the coalition to end corporal punishment?

- **Parents can advocate** to have the right to hold school districts and educators who use corporal punishment accountable. **This should always include access to legal remedies.**
- **Parents can share their stories of corporal punishment.**
- **Parents can ask their legislators to vote** for an increase in funding so that school districts can hire additional behavior analysts and counseling staff to ensure that students are treated appropriately, particularly on discipline issues.
- **Parents can demand** their local school district incorporates positive behavior interventions and support (PBIS) into discipline policies and codes of conduct, which MDE requires them to do.
- **Parents can assure that their school district uses a culturally relevant curriculum.**



## What can students do to end corporal punishment?

- **Students must learn their rights and know when these rights are being threatened or violated.** This includes knowing their human rights, civil rights, & their rights as students inside school districts.
- **Students can record short audio-visual clips of their own personal experiences and examples of how corporal punishment has directly affected them to share via social media.**
- **Students can attend local school board, city planning, and/or state legislative meetings to learn how public policy affects them, or to lobby to abolish corporal punishment in their schools.**
- **Student can team up with other local, regional, state-wide, national and global youth organizations to launch anti-corporal punishment campaigns that raise awareness and ultimately change policy.**

## What steps can legislators take to end corporal punishment?

- **Legislators can enact legislation explicitly banning the use of corporal punishment in public schools.** The legislation should clarify that teachers do not have the legal right to use corporal punishment. There must be no exceptions for “reasonable” force or corporal punishment “to maintain discipline.”
- **Legislators can repeal or modify** existing legislation that grants educators immunity. **Children must receive at least the same level of protection afforded by assault laws as adults do.**
- **Legislators can require** school districts to respect parents’ wishes **forbidding corporal punishment.**



**C**orporal punishment in schools is harmful and ineffective as a form of discipline, disproportionately administered along lines of race, gender, and disability and far too often is used for minor or subjective infractions. The damage to students comes in numerous ways that are all detrimental to the individual students, to the schools, the education system and to the future of the state. If Mississippi’s goal is to move into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, if its goal is to create an enhanced early childhood development program to improve children’s healthy development, if it truly desires to lift the state from the bottom of almost every educational ranking, then it must **end the use of corporal punishment in public schools.**

### [Sign the Petition to End Corporal Punishment In Mississippi Public Schools](#)

To get more info about our coalition or to join,

**email:** [info@nolliejenkinsfamilycenter.org](mailto:info@nolliejenkinsfamilycenter.org) or **call:** 662-653-0122

Nollie Jenkins Family Center, Inc. 25 Glendale Street, Durant, MS 39063

