



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

10 August 2008

### **Eight Smacking Prosecutions in Six Month Period**

Family First NZ says that claims that there have been no smacking prosecutions are false and misleading.

Official police papers obtained by Family First NZ under the Official Information Act show that prosecutions against parents who use minor physical discipline or light smacking are being masked under a category that has no statutory definition.

According to the *Police Executive Meeting 6 Month Review* papers, there have been no prosecutions for 'smacking', but the paper says that "eight 'minor acts of physical discipline' events against children were prosecuted with six yet to be resolved."

"The problem is that there is no statutory definition for either 'smacking' or 'minor acts of physical discipline'," says Bob McCoskrie, National Director of Family First NZ. "So rather than call them smacking and draw attention, they are simply being classified under this undefined category."

"These so-called minor acts also show a 200% increase in families being investigated over a six month period yet less than 10% were serious enough to consider warranting a prosecution. This would suggest that there is a huge drain on police resources in trying to meet the requirements of this flawed law."

"It is concerning that the anti-smacking law is being promoted as working by playing around with definitions, and that so many families are being investigated for minor acts. It is important to remember that there is still a definition of 'child assault' and this is the category that we should be throwing the resources and weight of the law at."

"You know a law is a bad law when it fails to deal with the problem it was supposed to deal with, while good families become the victims of it because nobody can accurately define what the law says or means," says Mr McCoskrie.

Family First NZ continues to call on the politicians to change the law so that non-abusive smacking is not a crime (as wanted by 85% of NZ'ers, according to recent research).

**ENDS**

***For More Information and Media Interviews, contact Family First:***

**Bob McCoskrie - NATIONAL DIRECTOR**

**Mob. 027 55 555 42**