



MEDIA RELEASE

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Ethnic Groups Confused by Anti-Smacking Law - Study

Family First NZ says that research just released from the Families Commission shows that immigrant families are confused by the anti-smacking law and still see non-abusive smacking as a viable option for correcting their children.

The research report funded by the Families Commission and carried out by Victoria University entitled '*SETTLING IN: parent-adolescent family dynamics in the acculturation process*' documents the experiences of migrant and refugee families in New Zealand adapting to NZ culture and laws.

The report said 'A major issue of both frustration and change in the families studied was discipline and the rights of children. Most of the families came from a culture where physical discipline was the norm. Many of the parents mentioned that they found the New Zealand law concerning the rights of children difficult to understand and to follow. The corporal punishment of children was still seen as a viable method of reprimand by some parents, although they knew that this was against the law.'

One African parent said 'I do carry disciplinary action out immediately if they misbehave – I tell them to go and report it to anyone. I don't have a problem ... as long as they live here and we [are] still doing something for them, like sending them to school, paying their fees and we are doing everything for them. We should show them the way.'

An African mother said 'it's unfortunate that we are not allowed to smack but it's [the] most effective way of doing it.' And another parent said that the law 'makes my life as a parent hard'.

"This is further evidence that the anti-smacking law is completely out of touch with the views of parents, including migrant and refugee families," says Bob McCoskrie, National Director of Family First NZ. "It also reiterates the level of confusion that parents are under regarding the effect of the law."

"The Families Commission needs to pay attention to their own research and the views of the majority of parents if they want to maintain any credibility as a voice for families."

Note: Family First has laid a formal complaint with the Human Rights Commission regarding the confusion that the law is causing and the rights of parents to know whether they are parenting within the law or not. A decision is due shortly.

ENDS

For More Information and Media Interviews, contact Family First:

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