

ATTITUDES ON PARENTAL DISCIPLINE POLL Mar 2009

CLIENT:	Family First New Zealand
POLL DATES:	Evenings of Wednesday 11 and Thursday 12 March 2009
SAMPLE SIZE:	1,000 respondents agreed to participate.
SAMPLE SELECTION:	A random selection of 8,000 nationwide phone numbers.
SAMPLE ERROR:	Based on this sample of 1,000 respondents, the maximum sampling error (for a result of 50%) is +/- 3.2%, at the 95% confidence level.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The demographic breakdown of the 1,000 respondents is:

Demographic	No	Response %	MOE
All	1,000	100.0%	3.2%
Female	530	53.0%	4.3%
Male	470	47.0%	4.6%
18 – 40	278	27.8%	6.0%
41 – 60	442	44.2%	4.8%
60+	280	28.0%	6.0%
Have children under 12	240	24.0%	6.5%
No children under 12	760	76.0%	3.6%
Provincial	271	27.1%	6.1%
Rural	289	28.9%	5.9%
Metro	440	44.0%	4.8%

Metro is defined as Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch.

Provincial is all other cities in New Zealand.

Rural areas are all areas not Metro or Provincial.

IEWS ON CRIMES ACT AMENDMENT

In 2007 Parliament passed a law that removes a defence of reasonable force for parents who smack a child to correct their behaviour, but states the Police have discretion not to prosecute if they consider the offence was inconsequential. What is your view of this law? Do you:

- Strongly agree with it
- Somewhat agree with it
- Neither agree nor disagree with it
- Somewhat disagree with it
- Strongly disagree with it

View of Law	All	Female	Male	18 - 40	41 - 60	61+
Strongly agree	11.1%	12.3%	9.8%	12.9%	11.1%	9.3%
Somewhat agree	14.1%	14.5%	13.6%	12.9%	16.3%	11.8%
Neither	8.5%	9.2%	7.7%	10.4%	7.9%	7.5%
Somewhat disagree	26.7%	27.2%	26.2%	32.7%	25.6%	22.5%
Strongly disagree	38.2%	35.3%	41.5%	28.8%	37.8%	48.2%
Don't know	1.3%	1.5%	1.1%	2.2%	1.1%	0.7%
Refused	0.1%	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Overall 65% (73% in 2008, 62% in June 2007) of respondents disagree with the law, and 25% (29%, 20%) agree with it. Males disagree with the law more strongly than females with 68% opposition for men and 63% for women. All age groups disagree with the law, with older respondents more strongly opposed.

View of Law	All	Children <12	No Child <12	Provincial	Rural	Metro
Strongly agree	11.1%	12.1%	10.8%	13.7%	7.6%	11.8%
Somewhat agree	14.1%	15.0%	13.8%	13.3%	14.2%	14.5%
Neither	8.5%	7.9%	8.7%	9.2%	7.3%	8.9%
Somewhat disagree	26.7%	25.8%	27.0%	26.2%	30.8%	24.3%
Strongly disagree	38.2%	37.5%	38.4%	35.4%	38.8%	39.5%
Don't know	1.3%	1.7%	1.2%	2.2%	1.4%	0.7%
Refused	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

63% (69% in 2008) of parents with children aged under 12 disagree with the law. Amongst other adults 65% disagree.

Respondents living in rural areas register 70% disapproval, and provincial areas 62% and metro areas 64%.

REDUCING CHILD ABUSE

Do you think the new law is likely to help reduce the rate of child abuse in New Zealand? Specifically, is it very likely, somewhat likely or not at all likely to reduce the rate of child abuse?

Reduce Abuse	All	Female	Male	18 – 40	41 - 60	61+
Very likely	5.7%	4.3%	7.2%	5.8%	5.4%	6.1%
Somewhat Likely	13.7%	14.9%	12.3%	16.9%	14.3%	9.6%
Not at all likely	77.4%	77.4%	77.4%	74.1%	78.3%	79.3%
Don't know	2.9%	3.4%	2.3%	2.9%	1.8%	4.6%
Refused	0.3%	0.0%	0.6%	0.4%	0.2%	0.4%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Overall 77% (78% in 2008, 77% in 2007) of respondents do not believe the new law is likely to reduce the rate of child abuse. This does not vary greatly by age or gender.

Reduce Abuse	All	Children <12	No Child <12	Provincial	Rural	Metro
Very likely	5.7%	5.8%	5.7%	5.9%	4.8%	6.1%
Somewhat Likely	13.7%	14.6%	13.4%	14.4%	12.5%	14.1%
Not at all likely	77.4%	76.7%	77.6%	75.6%	80.3%	76.6%
Don't know	2.9%	2.5%	3.0%	3.7%	2.4%	2.7%
Refused	0.3%	0.4%	0.3%	0.4%	0.0%	0.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Again there is little difference by area or parental status.

SHOULD THE LAW BE CHANGED?

Do you think the new law should be changed to state explicitly that parents who give their children a smack that is reasonable and for the purpose of correction are not breaking the law?

Change Law	All	Female	Male	18 - 40	41 - 60	61+
Yes	82.9%	82.8%	83.0%	79.1%	83.5%	85.7%
No	12.8%	12.3%	13.4%	13.7%	12.9%	11.8%
Don't know	3.6%	4.5%	2.6%	6.5%	2.5%	2.5%
Refused	0.5%	0.2%	0.9%	0.4%	0.9%	0.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

83% (85% in 2008, 82% in 2007) of respondents would like the law amended to explicitly allow reasonable smacking for the purpose of correction.

There is little variation by gender or age, but slightly greater support for a law change as respondents get older.

Change Law	All	Children<12	No Children<12	Provincial	Rural	Metro
Yes	82.9%	82.9%	82.9%	81.2%	86.2%	81.8%
No	12.8%	12.5%	12.9%	14.4%	10.4%	13.4%
Don't know	3.6%	3.8%	3.6%	3.7%	3.1%	3.9%
Refused	0.5%	0.8%	0.4%	0.7%	0.3%	0.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Again massive support for a law change across all demographics.

UNDERSTANDING OF LAW

Under the new law is it always illegal for parents to give their child a light smack?

Note that the correct answer is no, as smacking for certain non correctional purposes is not illegal.

Always Illegal	All	Female	Male	18 - 40	41 - 60	60+
Yes	54.7%	52.6%	57.0%	54.7%	54.1%	55.7%
No	31.3%	32.3%	30.2%	31.7%	33.5%	27.5%
Don't know	13.6%	14.9%	12.1%	13.3%	11.8%	16.8%
Refused	0.2%	0.0%	0.4%	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Less than one third of respondents actually understood the law. Slightly over 50% incorrectly stated that it is always illegal for a parent to give their child a light smack, and 14% said they did not know what the law covers.

Always illegal	All	Children <12	No Child <12	Provincial	Rural	Metro
Yes	5.1%	56.7%	54.1%	55.7%	55.0%	53.9%
No	36.8%	31.7%	31.2%	30.6%	30.8%	32.0%
Don't know	4.2%	11.7%	14.2%	13.7%	14.2%	13.2%
Refused	0.5%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Respondents with children aged under 12 are slightly more likely to incorrectly understand the law.

SMACKING IN LAST YEAR

Despite the new law, have you in the last year smacked your child to correct their behaviour, when you believed it was reasonable and appropriate to do so? (question asked to respondents with a child aged under 12 only)

Have smacked	All	Female	Male	18 - 40	41 - 60
Yes	39.4%	40.0%	38.7%	43.1%	28.2%
No	58.1%	56.8%	59.5%	53.8%	70.4%
Don't know	0.8%	0.8%	0.9%	0.6%	1.4%
Refused	1.7%	2.4%	0.9%	2.5%	0.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

39% (48% in 2008) of respondents who had a child aged under 12 said they had smacked their child, to correct their behaviour, in the last year.

Note: the last survey was only nine months ago, so there is some potential overlap of 2009 and 2008 results.

Females were slightly more likely than males to have smacked their child for correctional purposes. A more significant variation is by age – 43% of younger parents (under 40) have smacked their child while only 28% of parents aged 41 to 60 have done so.

Have smacked	All	Provincial	Rural	Metro
Yes	39.4%	42.0%	46.9%	33.0%
No	58.1%	52.2%	53.1%	65.0%
Don't know	0.8%	1.4%	0.0%	1.0%
Refused	1.7%	4.3%	0.0%	1.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

There is a significant difference by geography. In rural and provincial areas around 53% of parents with children under 12 have not smacked for correctional purposes in the last year, while in metro areas this increases to 65%.

David Farrar
 Director, Curia Market Research

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