

## ATTITUDES ON PARENTAL DISCIPLINE POLL Mar 2010

**CLIENT:** Family First New Zealand

**POLL DATES:** Evenings of Wednesday 24, Thursday 25 March and Sunday 28 March 2010

**SAMPLE SIZE:** 1,000 respondents agreed to participate.

**SAMPLE SELECTION:** A random selection of 10,000 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

	Gender	
	Count	%
Female	528	53%
Male	472	47%
Total	1000	100%

	Age	
	Count	%
18 - 40	300	30%
41 - 60	518	52%
61+	182	18%
Total	1000	100%

	Area	
	Count	%
Metro	435	44%
Provincial	252	25%
Rural	313	31%
Total	1000	100%

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.

	Have children under 12	
	Count	%
Yes	296	30%
No	704	70%
Total	1000	100%

## 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

		Gender		Age			Total
		Female	Male	18 - 40	41 - 60	61+	
		Col %	Col %	Col %	Col %	Col %	Col %
Anti-Smacking Law	Strongly Disagree	<b>33%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>34%</b>
	Somewhat Disagree	19%	23%	19%	22%	20%	21%
	Neutral	13%	8%	11%	11%	9%	11%
	Somewhat Agree	16%	17%	16%	17%	17%	17%
	Strongly Agree	16%	15%	12%	17%	17%	16%
	Don't know	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Total		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Overall 55% (65% in 2009, 73% in 2008, 62% in 2007) of respondents disagree with the law, and 33% (25%, 29%, 20%) agree with it.

Males disagree with the law more strongly than females with 58% opposition for men and 52% for women. **All age groups disagree with the law, with younger respondents more strongly opposed.**

		Area			Have children under 12		Total
		Metro	Provincial	Rural	Yes	No	
		Col %	Col %	Col %	Col %	Col %	Col %
Anti-Smacking Law	Strongly Disagree	<b>34%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>34%</b>
	Somewhat Disagree	21%	19%	23%	24%	20%	21%
	Neutral	14%	9%	8%	10%	11%	11%
	Somewhat Agree	14%	19%	18%	18%	16%	17%
	Strongly Agree	16%	14%	16%	15%	16%	16%
	Don't know	1%	3%	3%	1%	3%	2%
Total		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

56% (63% in 2009, 69% in 2008) of parents with children aged under 12 disagree with the law. Amongst other adults 55% disagree.

Respondents living in rural areas register 56% disapproval, and provincial areas 55% and metro areas also 55%.

## 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?**

		Gender		Age			Total
		Female	Male	18 - 40	41 - 60	61+	
		Col %	Col %	Col %	Col %	Col %	Col %
Will law reduce child abuse	Very likely	9%	7%	7%	10%	4%	8%
	Somewhat likely	15%	17%	13%	18%	13%	16%
	Not at all likely	<b>75%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>74%</b>
	Don't Know	2%	3%	2%	1%	6%	2%
Total		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Overall 74% (77% in 2009, 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 and **has stayed steady over time.**

		Area			Have children under 12		Total
		Metro	Provincial	Rural	Yes	No	
		Col %	Col %	Col %	Col %	Col %	Col %
Will law reduce child abuse	Very likely	11%	6%	4%	7%	8%	8%
	Somewhat likely	18%	15%	13%	15%	16%	16%
	Not at all likely	<b>69%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>74%</b>
	Don't Know	2%	3%	2%	0%	3%	2%
Total		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Parents of children under 12 are more likely to say the law will not reduce child abuse, as are those in rural NZ.

### 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?**

		Gender		Age			Total
		Female	Male	18 - 40	41 - 60	61+	
		Col %	Col %	Col %	Col %	Col %	Col %
Should law allow light correctional smacking	Yes	<b>73%</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>77%</b>
	No	22%	16%	18%	23%	12%	19%
	Don't Know	5%	3%	2%	5%	2%	4%
Total		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

77% (83% in 2009, 85% in 2008, 82% in 2007) of respondents would like the law amended to explicitly allow reasonable smacking for the purpose of correction.

Men and older NZers are most supportive of a law change.

		Area			Have children under 12		Total
		Metro	Provincial	Rural	Yes	No	
		Col %	Col %	Col %	Col %	Col %	Col %
Should law allow light correctional smacking	Yes	<b>74%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>77%</b>
	No	21%	19%	17%	20%	19%	19%
	Don't Know	5%	2%	4%	4%	4%	4%
Total		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

**Again extensive 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.

		Gender		Age			Total
		Female	Male	18 - 40	41 - 60	61+	
		Col %	Col %	Col %	Col %	Col %	Col %
Is smacking always illegal now	Yes	<b>46%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>50%</b>
	No	41%	36%	43%	38%	31%	38%
	Don't Know	14%	9%	9%	11%	17%	12%
Total		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

**Ignorance of the actual law remains high**, with only 38% of respondents correctly knowing that smacking is still allowed for non correctional purposes.

		Area			Have children under 12		Total
		Metro	Provincial	Rural	Yes	No	
		Col %	Col %	Col %	Col %	Col %	Col %
Is smacking always illegal now	Yes	50%	48%	51%	48%	51%	50%
	No	42%	38%	33%	45%	36%	38%
	Don't Know	8%	13%	16%	7%	13%	12%
Total		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

45% of parents with kids under 12 correctly knew the law, compared to 36% of non parents,

### 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)**

		Gender		Age			Total
		Female	Male	18 - 40	41 - 60	61+	
		Col %	Col %	Col %	Col %	Col %	Col %
Have you smacked to correct in last year	Yes	45%	43%	46%	40%	67%	44%
	No	53%	56%	52%	60%	33%	54%
	Refused	1%	1%	2%	1%		1%
Total		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

**44% of parents with children under 12 have smacked for correction purposes in the last year, despite it being illegal to do so.** In 2009 the proportion was 39% and in 2008 it was 48%. Overall the proportion does not seem to be declining.

**Females were slightly more likely than males to have smacked their child for correctional purposes.** A more significant variation is by age – 46% of younger parents (under 40) have smacked their child while only 40% of parents aged 41 to 60 have done so.

		Area			Have children under 12		Total
		Metro	Provincial	Rural	Yes	No	
		Col %	Col %	Col %	Col %	Col %	Col %
Have you smacked to correct in last year	Yes	41%	50%	43%	44%		44%
	No	55%	50%	57%	54%		54%
	Refused	3%			1%		1%
Total		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

## POLITICAL IMPACT OF LAW CHANGE PROMISE

If a political party promised that amending the law to allow light correctional smacking was a non negotiable policy at the next election, would that make you more likely to vote for them, or less likely, or make no difference to your likely vote?

		Gender		Age			Total
		Female	Male	18 - 40	41 - 60	61+	
		Col %	Col %	Col %	Col %	Col %	Col %
Vote Impact if party promises light smacking law change	More likely	22%	22%	23%	21%	24%	22%
	Less likely	12%	12%	11%	13%	8%	12%
	No difference	63%	62%	63%	61%	63%	62%
	Don't Know	4%	4%	3%	4%	6%	4%
Total		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

**22% of respondents are more likely to vote for a party that promises to change the law to allow light correctional smacking, and 12% are less likely.**

		Area			Have children under 12		Total
		Metro	Provincial	Rural	Yes	No	
		Col %	Col %	Col %	Col %	Col %	Col %
Vote Impact if party promises light smacking law change	More likely	26%	17%	22%	23%	22%	22%
	Less likely	11%	11%	13%	13%	11%	12%
	No difference	60%	66%	63%	62%	62%	62%
	Don't Know	4%	6%	3%	2%	5%	4%
Total		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Those in provincial NZ are less likely to say they are more likely to support a party which promises to change the law.

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