

Professor Lynn Jamieson



## Parenting practices and support

Centre for Research on Families and Relationships

The relationship between parenting and  
'outcomes' for children



Evidence to help 'better parenting', or to  
support parents in doing the best for  
children?

Better from what point of view -in terms of  
controlling children, child development,  
child well-being?

Normative judgements can blend with  
'evidence' & complexity of social contexts  
can confound 'evidence'

Data on parenting practices and support  
for parenting in chapter 7 and 8



- approaches to discipline
- activities done with children
- divisions of labour between mother and father
- informal support networks of friends and family & extent of parent feeling supported
- use of and attitude to professionals

## Approaches ever used with cohort child in couple households



	Birth cohort (22.5 mths)		Child cohort (46.5 mths)	
	Respondents	Partners	Respondents	Partners
Ignoring bad behaviour	67%	57%	68%	59%
Raising voice or shouting	63%	66%	76%	80%
Time out or 'naughty step'	56%	48%	79%	78%
Removing treats/ privileges	29%	40%	74%	76%
Smacking	16%	16%	34%	37%
Reward system/sticker chart	8%	14%	56%	54%
None of these	8%	9%	1%	1%
<i>Bases (all households with resident partner at sweep 2)</i>				
<i>Weighted</i>	3614	2974	1916	1542
<i>Unweighted</i>	3765	2978	1998	1543

The influence of 'super nanny'? Use of many techniques do not vary by age



Use of discipline techniques by main carer's age at birth of child

	Under 20	20 to 29	30 to 39	40 or older
'Time out' or 'naughty step'	60%	56%	49%	31%
Removing treats or privileges	44%	34%	26%	15%

Some approaches are linked; premature to claim particular parenting styles



- 86% of respondents who have ever smacked their 22 month old also have raised their voice or shouted compared to 57% who have not smacked.
- 51% of those using a reward system with 22 month olds have also withdrawn privileges compared with 29% of those who have not used a reward system, they are also more likely to have used 'time out' or the 'naughty step'

Parents who smack are not so different  
Complex relationship between beliefs and  
practice



- Except for 'raising your voice', parents who smack have broadly similar or higher rates of using other techniques than parents who do not smack
- Parents who agreed at sweep 1 'It may not be a good thing to smack, but sometimes it is the only thing that will work' were three times more likely to have ever smacked than those who disagreed.
- Those with large families the most likely to see smacking or shouting as useful
- Otherwise no clear or systematic variation by age or income group or socio-economic status or even by level of education



- Slightly higher levels of smacking or shouting among those who feel they lack support &
- And among those who feel will be stigmatised by asking for advice





- Most carers feel well supported.
- Those who do not are less likely to have regular contact with grandparents at sweep one
- Older mothers find it most difficult to organise some kinds of support, as do those with no qualifications and low income
- Young mothers, and particularly lone mothers in low income groups remain most wary of professionals, although most contact with some types of professionals

## Early days



### Early days

- in terms of looking at relationships between informal support, professional services and parenting practices
- in terms of making evidence based statements about outcomes for children
- But already important messages emerging or being confirmed



- Parents think about parenting and parenting styles and parenting programmes could be influential, TV programmes certainly seem to be.
- Importance of grandparents and informal networks
- Relationship between carer's and partner's level of education and educational activities with the child
- Wariness of professionals among young mothers
- Social and economic resources are likely to be at least as important as parenting styles in terms of outcomes for children