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Brief

SeriesAdvances in Child and Family Policy and
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Corporal Punishment in U.S. Public Schools

Legal Precedents, Current Practices, and Future Policy

- Reviews the history of corporal punishment in U.S. public schools to establish past and current prevalence
- Explores what is known to date about the effects of school corporal punishment on children
- Examines the effect of state-level school corporal punishment bans on trends in juvenile crime
- Discusses potential legal, policy, and advocacy avenues for abolition of school corporal punishment at the state and federal levels

This Brief reviews the past, present, and future use of school corporal punishment in the United States, a practice that remains legal in 19 states as it is constitutionally permitted according to the U.S. Supreme Court. As a result of school corporal punishment, nearly 200,000 children are paddled in schools each year. Most Americans are unaware of this fact or the physical injuries sustained by countless school children who are hit with objects by school personnel in the name of discipline. Therefore, Corporal Punishment in U.S. Public Schools begins by summarizing the legal basis for school corporal punishment and trends in Americans' attitudes about it. It then presents trends in the use of school corporal punishment in the United States over time to establish its past and current prevalence. It then discusses what is known about the effects of school corporal punishment on children, though with so little research on this topic, much of the relevant literature is focused on parents' use of corporal punishment with their children. It also provides results from a policy analysis that examines the effect of state-level school corporal punishment bans on trends in juvenile crime. It concludes by discussing potential legal, policy, and advocacy avenues for abolition of school corporal punishment at the state and federal levels as well as summarizing how school corporal punishment is being used and what its potential implications are for thousands of individual students and for the society at large. As school corporal punishment becomes more and more regulated at the state level, Corporal Punishment in U.S.

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