
Social Workers Should Stand against Physical Punishment of Children

Shawna J. Lee

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) is the leading professional organization for social work that established the *Code of Ethics* and sets the policy agenda for the profession. Guided by the *Code of Ethics* and the Grand Challenges for Social Work goal to “build healthy relationships to end violence,” the NASW *Social Work Speaks* policy compendium should reassert its statement against the physical punishment of children. This recommendation aligns with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and children’s right to protection from violence; the rigorous empirical research base, which demonstrates that physical punishment has detrimental consequences to child well-being; and similar policy statements issued by allied professional organizations. The NASW policies can advocate for ending violence against children by providing guidance on disciplinary practices that are based on principles of nonviolence and that respect children’s human rights. Practitioners can support caregivers through interventions that provide alternatives to physical punishment.

KEY WORDS: *Code of Ethics*; *Convention on the Rights of the Child*; *discipline*; *physical punishment*; *spanking*

Central to the profession of social work is empowerment and protection of vulnerable and oppressed populations. The National Association of Social Workers’ (NASW, 2021a) *Code of Ethics* states:

Social workers pursue social change, particularly with and on behalf of vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups of people. Social workers’ social change efforts are focused primarily on issues of poverty, unemployment, discrimination, and other forms of social injustice. . . . Social workers strive to ensure access to needed information, services, and resources; equality of opportunity; and meaningful participation in decision making for all people. (p. 11)

In addition to the *Code of Ethics*, the NASW publishes the *Social Work Speaks* policy statement compendium. This volume serves to “set the parameters for official positions of the National Association of Social Workers on a broad range of critical public policy and professional issues” (NASW, 2021b, p. ix). *Social Work Speaks* is more than just a set of policy statements on timely social issues. It establishes the policy agenda and articulates advocacy and intervention actions that social workers can undertake. It

is used to train and educate future social workers. *Social Work Speaks* policy statements guide legislative advocacy goals of the NASW and constituent chapters. These policy statements are revised regularly, with input from NASW staff as well as subject matter experts who serve as policy review delegates.

The United Nations (UN) Committee on the Rights of the Child (2007) defined *physical punishment* as “any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light” (p. 4). The current volume of *Social Work Speaks* (12th ed.; NASW, 2021b) is silent on the physical punishment of children, outside of school settings. This article recommends that

- NASW issue a policy statement that hitting is harmful to children and incompatible with evidence-based practice.
- NASW advocate for the United States to ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).
- the authors of the grand challenge to “build healthy relationships to end violence” issue a policy brief against the physical punishment of children.
- social work journals use precise language in describing hitting children (e.g., avoiding colloquial

terms such as “spanking,” which obfuscate the often degrading and humiliating behaviors that are used to punish children).

These recommendations are supported by children’s human rights, the evidence demonstrating that hitting children for punishment has detrimental consequences to their well-being, and the fact that many allied professions have strong statements against its use. This article concludes with recommendations for practice interventions that may help social workers guide caregivers to reduce physical punishment.

CHILDREN: A SPECIAL CASE OF AN OPPRESSED GROUP

Oppression can be defined as the misuse of power by one group against another group, often with “a system of asymmetrical power that benefits some but not all” (Barth & Olsen, 2020, p. 1). Oppression does not necessitate animosity toward the group, and actions need not be done with the *intent* to harm or oppress the group in question (Barth & Olsen, 2020). Children are a group of people that may be considered oppressed. Philosopher Elisabeth Young-Bruehl (2012) used the term “childism” to describe prejudice against children in U.S. institutions and policies. Central to her argument was that children are relegated to a disadvantaged status in society because they are particularly vulnerable to abuse and maltreatment. Barth and Olsen (2020) argue that children constitute a category of oppressed individuals based on six domains: minority status, the right to vote, the right to legal protections, freedom from undue exposure to violence, access to resources, and freedom in family life. Children can be seen as an oppressed group because they are precluded from full participation in society. Children have few legal rights and little status or power through formal and informal power structures (Barth & Olsen, 2020). Echoing Young-Bruehl (2012), Barth and Olsen (2020) suggest that children need protection because they experience higher rates of violence victimization than adults.

Not all children experience the oppression of violence victimization equally. Black children are disproportionately impacted by exposure to physical punishment within schools (Gershoff & Font, 2016), the school-to-prison pipeline, and physical punishment by caregivers (Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor, 2016b). Black and American Indian children

continue to be separated from their communities through the child welfare system at much higher rates than White children (Wildeman & Emanuel, 2014). Oppression of Black and American Indian children can be understood through a historical lens that examines how white supremacy, slavery, and the forced removal of Indigenous and Black children from their communities have normalized interconnected forms of punishment. Patton and colleagues’ (2021) historical analysis links slavery to the high rates of physical punishment of Black children. Patton argues that this history contributes to the perception that physical punishment of Black children is somehow necessary to keep them safe from police, school systems, and the streets (Patton, 2017). Black parents’ use of physical punishment is paradoxically intended to prepare their children for society’s violence against them. Indigenous children throughout the Americas experienced forced removal from their families to boarding schools, in which abusive forms of physical punishment were widespread (Ward et al., 2021). Children of color experience multiple forms of oppression. A social justice perspective would support efforts to remedy their oppressed statuses.

NORMALIZED VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN: HITTING CHILDREN FOR DISCIPLINE OR PUNISHMENT

Beginning with the CRC in 1989, there has been increasing attention to the issue of corporal punishment. Central to the current analysis is that hitting children for punishment—indeed, all forms of physical punishment, which, by definition, involve physical force against a child—are one manifestation of oppression, and eliminating this form of oppression should be a policy priority for professional organizations such as NASW.

Physical punishment is legal in most countries, including the United States (Durrant, 2020a; Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, n.d.). Over 70 percent of U.S. adults agreed with the statement, “It is sometimes necessary to discipline a child with a good, hard spanking” (Cuddy & Reeves, 2014). Physical punishment is a common practice (Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor, 2016a) that is used more often in households with low income (Lee et al., 2020), toward Black children by their caregivers (Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor, 2016b), and toward Black and disabled children in schools (Gershoff & Font, 2016). Physical punishment is

associated with increased risk for physical abuse (Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor, 2016a). In a study of over 156,000 children living in 56 countries, Ma and colleagues (2022) estimated that, in reference to the population of abused children, eliminating spanking could reduce incidence of physical abuse by up to 33 percent. Physical abuse is also alarmingly common in the United States. There were 656,000 substantiated child victims of abuse in 2019, 17.5 percent for physical abuse (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2021). Official rates are most likely an underestimate of the real number of children impacted by physical abuse. Abuse may go undetected by officials, and statistics do not adequately capture the fact that many victims experience multiple forms of abuse.

The correlation between physical punishment and physical abuse is not surprising. U.S. law distinguishes physical *punishment* from physical *abuse* mainly based on whether there is physical injury to the child. Public school teachers and administrators in 19 U.S. states, as well as parents and caregivers of children in all states, may hit or slap a child with a bare hand or an object, so long as no bruise, mark, or injury results that lasts for 24 hours or more (Dupper & Montgomery Dingus, 2008; Fuselier, 2007; Gershoff & Font, 2016). Even the limited protection against physical injury is not absolute. Legal precedent speaks to cases of serious injury or death to a child that may *not* be considered abuse if the perpetrator declares a lack of intent to cause injury, harm, or even death to the child (Durrant, 2020a; Durrant et al., 2017; Fuselier, 2007).

In contrast, a common legal standard for physical assault of an adult is the act of directly inflicting physical harm or unwanted physical contact on another person, or the “intentional attempt, using violence or force, to injure or harm another person” (FindLaw Staff, 2021, para. 8). Even the *threat* or *attempt to commit* such an action against an adult may constitute assault (FindLaw Staff, 2021). Physical assault of an adult does not require documentation of physical injury such as bruises, as is the case with children. Physical assault of an adult is punishable by law. Yet, the law justifies physical assault of children as a lesser form of violence (e.g., punishment or discipline), even though the behaviors are often identical (e.g., hitting or slapping with a hand or an object, punching or beating, shoving or pushing), and children are much more vulnerable than adults to experience physical injury resulting from assault

due to their size, developmental status, and reliance on adults for basic care. Notably, psychological injury that may result from physical punishment is rarely considered, even though the punishment is often committed by the child’s primary attachment figures. Thus, physical punishment can be seen as a form of oppression in which acts of violence against children are culturally sanctioned and normative, whereas the same behaviors toward adults—even without physical injury—are punishable through criminal penal codes.

NASW’S POSITION: SOCIAL WORK SPEAKS

Social Work Speaks (12th ed.; NASW, 2021b) addresses a wide range of topics related to the safety and welfare of children, including parental abduction (NASW, 2021b, p. 240), foster care and adoption (NASW, 2021b, p. 135), and family violence (NASW, 2021b, p. 127). The statement on education of children and adolescents states: “The use of corporal punishment *in schools* should be abolished in the remaining states that approve of such practices” (NASW, 2021, p. 93 [emphasis added]). Yet, this volume is silent on physical punishment outside of schools. Notably, earlier versions of *Social Work Speaks* (8th and 9th eds.; NASW, 2009; NASW, 2012) included a strong statement against the use of physical punishment of children:

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) believes in the right of every child to have a safe and nurturing environment, including home and educational experiences that promote every child’s optimal growth and development. The use of physical force against people, especially children, is antithetical to the best values of a democratic society and of the social work profession. **Thus, NASW opposes the use of physical punishment in homes, schools, and all other institutions, both public and private, where children are cared for and educated** [emphasis added]. NASW affirms that all children need parental guidance and discipline and that most parents want to be able to discipline in a way that works and is helpful to children. (NASW, 2009, p. 254)

The statement went on to include a list of activities that NASW will support, including “legislation

that prohibits the use of physical punishment” (NASW, 2009, p. 255).

Beginning with the 10th edition of *Social Work Speaks*, ratified by the NASW Delegate Assembly in 2014, the statement on physical punishment of children was “eliminated as . . . intent and recommendations were also included in other broader statements” (NASW, 2015, p. x). I reached out to the NASW Policy Statement Steering Committee regarding this omission (personal communication, Lee, 2017). The committee replied that the “committee has decided not to add a statement specifically on physical punishment of children to *Social Work Speaks*. The committee feels that this is addressed in the Child Abuse and Neglect policy statement, which was updated in August 2014” (NASW Policy Statement Steering Committee, personal communication, March 27, 2017). However, the policy statement on child abuse and neglect (NASW, 2015) does not mention physical punishment of children at all. As of the 12th edition of *Social Work Speaks*, NASW has not provided a statement dedicated to the physical punishment of children.

There are numerous reasons why NASW should include a statement against the use of physical punishment. First is the recognition of children as rights bearers. Second is the overwhelming empirical evidence demonstrating negative consequences to children of physical punishment and the relevance of this research as applicable to racially and ethnically diverse populations. Third is the role of allied professional organizations and policy statements against the physical punishment of children.

CHILDREN’S HUMAN RIGHTS AND PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT

The CRC lays out a framework for understanding the basic human rights of children, including their entitlement rights and protections from abuse and neglect, sexual exploitation, and human trafficking (Liefwaard & Sloth-Nielsen, 2016; Scherrer, 2012). The CRC is the most widely accepted set of international standards for the rights of children. The CRC describes the legal protections that are necessary to reduce child oppression. By setting forth the radical notion that children have basic human rights, UN member states are obligated to protect those rights and offer remedy when rights are violated. The CRC is widely viewed as the most important catalyst that moved forward a children’s

rights perspective on a global scale (Durrant et al., 2020).

As reviewed elsewhere (Durrant et al., 2020), statements by the CRC have explicitly addressed the issue of hitting children for punishment. These statements have concluded that the CRC obligates states to protect children from “all forms of physical or mental violence,” thus removing exclusions for socially acceptable forms of violence, including forms of violence in childrearing (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2007, para. 18, as cited in Durrant et al., 2020). The committee wrote: “The interpretation of a child’s best interests . . . cannot be used to justify practices, including corporal punishment and other forms of cruel or degrading punishment, which conflict with the child’s human dignity and right to physical integrity” (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2011, para. 61, as cited in Durrant et al., 2020).

In the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the UN called for the elimination of all violence against children. The CRC has been cited as the impetus for the global movement to ban corporal punishment. To date, 65 countries have implemented bans on corporal punishment (Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, n.d.). Corporal punishment is banned in high-, middle-, and low-income countries across the globe, including Colombia, Congo, South Africa, Japan, Nepal, Lithuania, Brazil, Honduras, Israel, and Turkmenistan.

Since its passage in 1989, all UN member states except the United States have ratified the CRC. Thus, the United States occupies a unique position, having signed the CRC but remaining the only UN member state that has not ratified it and thus is not bound to uphold it (Liefwaard & Sloth-Nielsen, 2016). This form of American exceptionalism underscores the importance of professional organizations such as NASW in promoting children’s basic human rights in a context where such beliefs may not be widely held.

Rigorous Research Base

The research is clear: Hitting children for punishment is harmful to their well-being. This literature has been reviewed elsewhere, including in one meta-analysis examining 111 unique effect sizes across 50 years of research (Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor, 2016a), a review of 69 prospective longitudinal studies (Heilmann et al., 2021), a meta-

analysis of five studies examining race and ethnic differences in the United States (Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor, 2016b), and in global research examining spanking and child outcomes in low- and middle-income countries (Grogan-Kaylor et al., 2021; Ma et al., 2022).

Studies in this field have used advanced statistical approaches. Gershoff and colleagues (2018) used propensity score matching and found that children who experienced spanking subsequently had more externalizing behavior problems. Cuartas and colleagues (2020) used three econometric strategies to demonstrate that, across these methodological approaches, parental physical punishment was associated with reductions in children's cognitive development. In a particularly innovative study, Cuartas and colleagues (2021) used fMRI scans to demonstrate that children who experienced physical punishment showed heightened neural activation in response to fearful relative to neutral faces compared with children who did not experience physical punishment. Research also suggests that experiencing physical punishment is associated with lower reading and math scores (Kang, 2022). There is voluminous research examining physical punishment and child behavior, academic performance, and mental health, which is not possible to comprehensively review herein. Importantly, there is no research showing *positive* associations for any of these outcomes.

Indeed, researchers have proposed that physical punishment such as spanking should be considered a form of toxic stress (Afifi et al., 2017; Ma et al., 2021). Similar to other adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), such as child maltreatment, spanking is associated with poorer mental health outcomes and alcohol and drug use (Afifi et al., 2017). A prospective longitudinal study found that the effects of ACEs and spanking on child behavior problems were statistically indistinguishable (Ma et al., 2021).

Cultural Competence

Cultural competency is central to the *Code of Ethics*, which states that “social workers should demonstrate understanding of culture and its function in human behavior and society” (NASW, 2021a, p. 9). Arguments in support of physical punishment have often pointed to conditions (e.g., high level of parent-child warmth mitigates negative effects of spanking) and contexts (e.g., contexts in which spanking is normative and more

accepted) that may mitigate the negative outcomes associated with physical punishment. In particular, a belief that has been widely held is that physical punishment is not harmful to Black children because it is normative within Black children's cultural contexts (Lansford, 2010). To unpack this belief, it is helpful to frame it in more plain language. Researchers claimed that because the behavior of physical punishment was more common in Black communities, it was less likely to harm Black children: “If children believe that their parents' use of corporal punishment is indicative of ‘good’ and caring parenting, there may be no association between that type of discipline and children's adjustment problems” (Lansford, 2010, p. 98).

The belief that Black children and other children of color are not impacted by physical punishment has been entirely refuted through research. The associations linking physical punishment to poorer child outcomes are consistent across diverse race and ethnic groups in the United States (Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor, 2016b; Grogan-Kaylor et al., 2018; Lorber et al., 2011; Ward et al., 2021), and in studies of 63 low- and middle-income countries (Grogan-Kaylor et al., 2021). Studies have also examined the moderating effects of factors such as maternal warmth (Lee et al., 2013), maternal-child attachment (Ward et al., 2020), impulsivity of the hitting behavior (Lorber et al., 2011), family income level (Lee et al., 2020), neighborhood disorganization (Ma et al., 2018), and levels of neighborhood crime and violence (Ma et al., 2020).

Thus, while parenting itself is clearly contextual and culturally dependent and highly variable across settings, research strongly suggests that the negative association of one element of parenting behavior—hitting children for discipline or punishment—is consistent across race and ethnic groups. It is important to underscore that this research does not suggest that parenting behaviors are the same across cultures; the research is clear that parenting itself is culturally and contextually dependent. Rather, studies show that even after accounting for the variability in the parenting behavior of physical punishment across race and ethnic groups in the United States and globally, spanking is harmful to children who are White, Black, American Indian, and Latinx, and to those who live in highly diverse cultural contexts.

Professional Organizations' Statements against Physical Punishment

NASW was arguably ahead of the times with its statements against physical punishment in early editions of *Social Work Speaks*. In the decade since removing this statement from *Social Work Speaks*, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP; Sege & Siegel, 2018) has called on pediatricians to advise parents against physical punishment. The AAP statement echoes the CRC, noting that “parents, other caregivers, and adults interacting with children and adolescents should not use corporal punishment (including hitting and spanking) . . . nor should they use any disciplinary strategy, including verbal abuse, that causes shame or humiliation” (Sege & Siegel, 2018, p. 6). AAP also recommends that “pediatricians are encouraged to assume roles at local and state levels to advance this policy as being in the best interest of children” (Sege & Siegel, 2018, p. 6).

In February 2019 the American Psychological Association (APA) passed a similar statement, citing the voluminous scientific evidence showing that physical punishment of children can harm their mental health and increase aggressive behavior. The APA statement makes reference to children’s right to be treated with dignity and respect and notes the responsibility of APA members to recommend alternative methods of discipline. The Canadian Paediatric Society, Canadian Psychological Association, National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners, American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, and American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children have also issued statements, often similar in tone to that utilized in the previous statement on physical punishment of children in *Social Work Speaks* (8th ed.; NASW, 2009). NASW now appears to be out of step with allied professions in the United States and internationally.

SUMMARY

Early editions of *Social Work Speaks* recognized the importance of supporting children’s right to be free from all forms of violence. However, beginning with the 10th edition, the statement on physical punishment of children was removed and reportedly subsumed under the statement on child abuse and neglect, despite there being no mention of physical punishment. Furthermore, in the

United States, physical punishment and child abuse are distinct under the law. While physical punishment is legal and normative, physical abuse is not endorsed as a normative parenting practice, and there are laws to punish parents who commit acts of physical abuse that result in injury to the child.

Despite the robust and rigorous empirical base regarding its harms, the issue of physical punishment of children remains controversial. The recommendations herein focus on prevention of physical punishment through social work interventions that may reduce or eliminate physical punishment. Eliminating physical punishment can occur by shifting professional norms, e.g., policy statements advocating against physical punishment. Eliminating physical punishment can occur through practitioners’ behaviors, e.g., interventions that provide caregivers with alternatives to physical punishment. Although the 12th edition of *Social Work Speaks* policy statement on the education of children and adolescents advocates that “the use of corporal punishment in schools should be abolished in the remaining states that approve of such practices” (NASW, 2021, p. 93), from a practical standpoint, a wholesale legislative ban on physical punishment would seemingly have little chance of success in the United States (e.g., Fuselier, 2007). Furthermore, punishing parents is not the goal of this set of arguments; the intended focus is on children’s human rights. Focusing on legislative bans herein would distract from other potential mechanisms such as shifting professional norms, practices, and behaviors, as well as raising awareness and advocating for children’s human rights.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK POLICY

NASW should clearly communicate to social workers that all forms of violence against children—including physical punishment—are antithetical to social work ethics. NASW should formulate a clear, evidence-supported policy statement that hitting children under any circumstances, including for punishment or discipline, by parents, teachers, or other caregivers, is harmful to children, incompatible with evidence-based best practices, and violates the NASW *Code of Ethics* principle to advocate for vulnerable and oppressed populations. This should be

stated via a separate policy statement against physical punishment of children in all settings.

The United States could be viewed as exceptional in its resistance to children's rights, as demonstrated by failure to ratify the CRC (Scherrer, 2012). NASW should support policy advocacy to uplift the human rights of children. As the only member state of the UN that has not yet done so, NASW should advocate for the United States to ratify the CRC.

The grand challenges are "a call to action for all of us to work together to tackle our nation's toughest social problems" (Grand Challenges for Social Work, n.d.). The Grand Challenges for Social Work Initiative policy brief *Policy Recommendations for Meeting the Grand Challenge to Stop Family Violence* (Kulkarni et al., 2016) focused on child maltreatment, but did not mention specific forms of violence against children. In a chapter describing intimate partner violence and child maltreatment, Barth and Macy (2018) mention that spanking "may be one of the most common precursors of physical abuse and also strongly associated with IPV" (p. 61), but did not make recommendations related to physical punishment of children. The grand challenges have not gone far enough in recommendations related to violence against children. Because hitting children for punishment is a form of violence that does not promote progress toward building healthy relationships, the authors of the "build healthy relationships to end violence" grand challenge should issue a policy brief to affirm a stance against the physical punishment of children in all contexts.

Colloquial terms such as "spanking," "slapping," "whipping," and "smacking" minimize and obfuscate the severity of everyday violence against children. Scholars who publish in social work journals and publications should be encouraged to use precise language in describing the behaviors of hitting children (Durrant et al., 2020). It is time to move the field toward acknowledging the true nature of the behaviors that are used to correct and "discipline" children, which are often degrading, humiliating, and denigrating to the child's basic human rights.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

It is important that a policy statement against physical punishment identify intervention practices that

reinforce positive parenting practices that are aligned with children's dignity and human rights. There are a number of promising interventions that social workers can use in their work with parents (reviewed in Gershoff et al., 2017; Gershoff & Lee, 2020). Positive Discipline in Everyday Parenting is an accessible tool. It provides a children's rights perspective on how parents can discipline without physical punishment (Durrant, 2020b). The ACT Raising Safe Kids program is a community-based group intervention that also has been shown to reduce parents' use of physical punishment (Knox & Dynes, 2020), with studies show positive effects on parenting in the United States and internationally.

In healthcare settings, Play Nicely is a brief technology-delivered intervention that is associated with parents' reduced intentions to use physical punishment (Scholer, 2020). No Hit Zones is a universal strategy that uses educational tools to reinforce that the hospital is a space where no hitting is to occur, including spanking. For families with more intensive needs, the Safe Environment for Every Kid (SEEK) is another program based in healthcare settings. SEEK helps parents with basic needs such as food insecurity and housing issues. SEEK has been shown to reduce harsh parenting (Dubowitz, 2020).

Another strategy to reduce physical punishment is Head Start. Multiple studies show that child participation in Head Start is associated with reduced parental physical punishment of children (Ansari & Gershoff, 2016). Positive parent education and involvement may play a role in helping parents to eliminate or reduce their use of physical punishment.

Even brief interventions can be effective at shifting norms about physical punishment. Educational interventions with medical professionals (Horner et al., 2020) and parents and students (Holden & Brown, 2020) can result in short-term changes in attitudes about the use of physical punishment. Another brief clinical intervention using motivational interviewing (Holden & Holland, 2020) reduced parents' stated intentions to use physical punishment.

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Hitting children is wrong. Preventing physical punishment of children could help to alleviate the enormous health and economic burdens associated

with child abuse (Ma et al., 2022). The UN has articulated in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that their goal is to end all forms of violence against children. The Grand Challenges for Social Work seek to end violence. The CRC is clear that physical punishment violates children's basic human rights and contributes to the continued oppression and silencing of children. Social workers should uphold the social justice principles put forth in the NASW *Code of Ethics* to advocate for vulnerable and oppressed populations and set a higher standard for the profession. Social workers should advocate for the elimination of all forms of violence against children, including hitting children for punishment, in all settings, including homes, schools, and childcare centers. Thus, NASW should reinstate a policy on physical punishment of children in *Social Work Speaks*. NASW should advocate for intervention practices that are based on principles of nonviolence and that respect children's development, dignity, and human rights. The "build healthy relationships to end violence" grand challenge should similarly take a stand against the physical punishment of children. **SW**

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Shawna J. Lee, PhD, MSW, MPP, is professor, School of Social Work, University of Michigan, 1080 South University Avenue, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1106, USA; email: shawnal@umich.edu.

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