

Resolution approved unanimously at the AGM of the Westwood Unitarian Society in Edmonton, Alberta on May 28, 2023

Background:

At the March 12, 2023 Sunday Service we heard a presentation by Ron Ensom on Physical Punishment of Children: the enduring personal and societal harm. Ron is the co-author of the Joint Statement on Physical Punishment of Children and Youth. The Joint Statement has been endorsed to date by 673 organizations in Canada including 56 in Alberta.

In the discussion after the presentation, it was suggested that the Congregation consider a motion to endorse the Joint Statement at our May 28, 2023 Annual General Meeting.

The purpose of the Joint Statement is to:

- create a common understanding of the ways in which physical punishment can adversely affect children's development
- summarise the evidence of its risks
- identify the factors that perpetuate its use
- encourage parents and other caregivers to choose approaches to discipline that do not rely on physical punishment.

In Canada, Section 43 of the Criminal Code allows the use of force against children between the ages of 2 and 12.

“Every schoolteacher, parent or person standing in the place of a parent is justified in using force by way of correction toward a pupil or child, as the case may be, who is under his care, if the force does not exceed what is reasonable under the circumstances.” Section 43

In the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's 94 Calls to Action, # 6 calls for the repeal of section 43 from the Criminal Code.

Provincial Education Acts across Canada unevenly prohibit physical punishment in all provinces, except in Alberta and Manitoba in publicly funded schools.

The MOTION

Whereas the Physical Punishment of Children violates the following Unitarian Universalist Principles:

- # 1 on the inherent worth and dignity of every person**
- # 2 on Justice, equity and compassion in human relations**
- # 3 on acceptance of one and other**
- # 6 on the goal of justice for all**

Therefore Be it Resolved that the Westwood Unitarian Society endorse the Joint Statement on Physical Punishment of Children and Youth.

Resources:

[JS highlights poster update #23.jpg](#)

<https://www.westwoodunitarian.ca/recording-physical-punishment-of-children-r>