



Government  
of Canada

Office of the Federal  
Ombudsperson for Victims  
of Crime

240 Sparks Street  
P.O. Box 55037  
Ottawa, ON K1P 1A1

Gouvernement  
du Canada

Bureau de l'ombudsman  
fédéral des victimes  
d'actes criminels

240 Rue Sparks  
C.P. 55037  
Ottawa (Ontario) K1P 1A1

January 30, 2024

Mr. Ron Ensom  
Partnerships and Advocacy  
Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario  
401 Smyth Road  
Ottawa, ON  
K1H 8L1

**Re: *Joint Statement on Physical Punishment of Children and Youth***

Dear Mr. Ensom,

As Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime, I am writing to endorse the *Joint Statement on Physical Punishment of Children and Youth*. I remain deeply concerned about family violence in Canada, and violence experienced by children and youth. We must ensure that our children are protected.

The *Joint Statement* endorsed by more than 600 experts and community organizations provides research-based evidence that using physical punishment on children and youth has negative impacts on their developmental outcomes and can have long lasting harmful after-effects. Research findings include no evidence of physical punishment improving outcomes for children and youth.

Raising children is demanding. As parents and caregivers, we do the best we can with the tools we have, often drawing on our own experiences as children to guide our decision-making. And yet, as the world changes rapidly around us, we are in a constant process of unlearning and remaking our social world. Today, caregivers in Canada are working to dismantle gender inequality, racism and ethnocentrism, homophobia and transphobia, colonialism, and other attitudes or behaviours they witnessed as children.

Children are learning about consent. In schools, anti-bullying and physical and sexual violence prevention programs share the message that no child should be hit or kicked, or touched in a way that makes them uncomfortable. Children are learning about the genocide of Indigenous Peoples, and how physical punishment was used to control, hurt, and shame Indigenous children in residential schools.

As children learn more about their rights and bodily autonomy, experiences of physical discipline violate these evolving values children are internalizing.

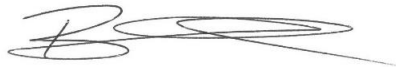
Around the world, **65 other countries** have formally committed to banning the physical punishment of children. It is time for Canada to turn talk into action.

As the *Joint Statement* recommends, public awareness around the harms of physical punishment and education for parents is key. Prevention must be a priority by providing support and resources for caregivers to promote healthy corrective measures. Programs designed to target prevention, like the World Health Organization (WHO) evidence-based model *INSPIRE*, will not only prevent child victimization, but also help adults who have children in their care, regardless of their background or experiences when they themselves were young.

Once again, I fully support the *Joint Statement on Physical Punishment of Children and Youth* and its recommendations and would like to express my gratitude to the National Coalition on Physical Punishment of Children and Youth for developing it.

Thank you for your dedication to protecting children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Roebuck', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dr. Benjamin Roebuck  
Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime