

MEDIA RELEASE

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Kiwis remain opposed to “anti-smacking” legislation

Nine months after the controversial “anti-smacking” legislation was passed three quarters of New Zealanders remain opposed to it, Research New Zealand polling shows.

Research New Zealand director Emanuel Kalafatelis said that the poll showed 74% of New Zealanders believed parents should be able to smack their children, contrary to the repeal of Section 59 of the Crimes Act (the so-called anti-smacking Bill) passed on May 16 last year.

The poll showed little variation between males and females, or whether or not a household included children, Mr Kalafatelis said.

“The variations we found were among the age groups. Those in the 40 to 49 and 60 plus age groups were more likely to believe parents should be able to smack their children (82 % and 84% respectively). Younger people between 15 and 29 were least likely to believe parents should be able to smack their children (64%),” Mr Kalafatelis said.

“In March last year we asked New Zealanders whether or not they supported the Bill before it was passed and found 73% percent of those polled opposed it. It seems opinions have remained the same even though it’s now law.”

Polling was conducted between 12 February and 18 February.

The Research New Zealand poll of 501 people aged 15 and over was conducted by telephone between the 12 and 18 February. The maximum margin of error is +/- 4.7 % (at the 95% confidence level). The data has been weighted to ensure it is an accurate representation of New Zealand's general population. The poll was not taken on behalf of any organisation but as part of Research New Zealand's monthly survey of attitudes and opinions.

Participants were asked: *Do you believe parents should be able to smack their children or are you against any physical force being used on a child?*

The results by gender are detailed in the table below:

Table 1: Smacking children (by gender)

Do you believe parents should be able to smack their children, or are you against any physical force being used on a child?

	Base =	Total	Male	Female
		501	250	251
		%	%	%
Parents should be able to smack their children		74	77	72
Parents should not be allowed to smack		22	21	23
Don't know		4	2	5
Refused		1	1	0
Total		100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

The results by age are detailed in the table below:

Table 2: Smacking children (by age)

Do you believe parents should be able to smack their children, or are you against any physical force being used on a child?

	Base =	Total	15 to 29	30 to 39	40 to 49	50 to 59	60+
		501	76	76	111	108	130
		%	%	%	%	%	%
Parents should be able to smack their children		74	➤64	➤70	82	72	➤84
Parents should not be allowed to smack		22	30	26	15	22	15
Don't know		4	6	3	4	4	2
Refused		1	0	1	0	2	0
Total		100	100	100	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

➤Denotes a statistically significant difference between other sub-group, shading denotes significant difference between total.

The results by household composition are detailed in the table below:

Table 3: Smacking children (by household composition)

Do you believe parents should be able to smack their children, or are you against any physical force being used on a child?

	Base =	Total	Household with children	Household without children/ Other
		501	228	273
		%	%	%
Parents should be able to smack their children		74	72	76
Parents should not be allowed to smack		22	23	20
Don't know		4	4	3
Refused		1	0	1
Total		100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

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