



Spare the Kids: Why Whupping Children Won't Save Black America

Stacey Patton

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A challenge to the cultural tradition of corporal punishment in Black homes and its connections to racial violence in America

Seventy percent of all Americans say they favor spanking, but African American culture seems to have a special attachment to it. The overwhelming majority of Black parents see corporal punishment as a reasonable, effective way to protect their children from street violence, incarceration, or worse. But Dr. Stacey Patton's extensive research suggests corporal punishment is a crucial factor in explaining why Black folks are subject to disproportionately high rates of child abuse, foster-care placements, school suspensions and expulsions, and criminal prosecutions—all of which funnel traumatized children into our prison systems and away from their communities.

By examining all the layers of corporal punishment—race, religion, history, popular culture, science, policing, the psychology of individual and cultural trauma, and personal testimonies with parents and children—Dr. Patton encourages parents, teachers, clergy, and child-welfare providers to consider a wider range of tools for raising and disciplining Black children.

Spare the Kids is not just a book. It is part of a growing national movement to provide positive, nonviolent discipline practices to those rearing, teaching, and caring for children of color.

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