

1.3 POSITIVE PARENTING AND CARE PRACTICES

Key issues in East Asia and the Pacific

Positive parenting and care practices encompass: health; nutrition; early learning; security and safety; and responsive caregiving. While a growing number of parenting programmes are emerging, few of them address all of these five domains, with most focusing on one or two areas; and most have been implemented at small scale. Many focus on the early childhood years, with very few addressing parenting of adolescents or of children with disabilities.

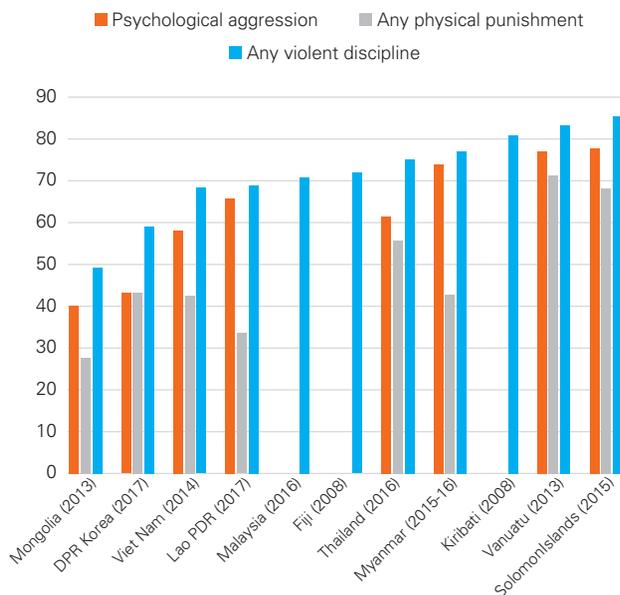
Data from Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) in eight countries in East Asia and the Pacific indicate a high use violent discipline of children aged under 15. While such forms of discipline are socially accepted, the long-term negative impact on individuals and the collective 'cognitive capital' of the region is increasingly recognised. Research by East Asian neuroscientists found that both verbal/emotional abuse and harsh forms of physical punishment cause visible damage to children's brains and can impact development. The annual cost

of violence against children due to its public health consequences is estimated at 2 per cent of the gross domestic product of the region, with emotional abuse cost an estimated US\$65.9 billion each year.



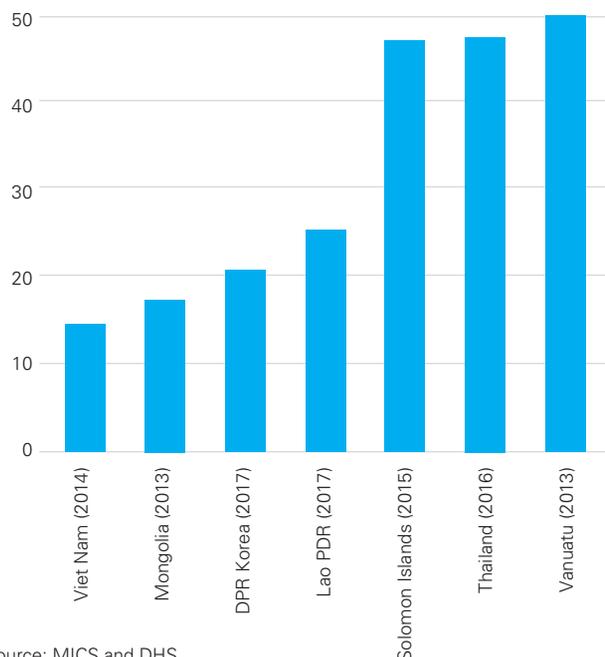
Robust evidence associates positive parenting and non-violent family environments with holistic cognitive and physical development in children, which is particularly critical during the early years.¹ Family and caregiver support is also associated with better nutritional and health habits from the early years until adolescence. Furthermore, growing evidence shows that positive parenting practices potentially reduce school dropout and result in better learning outcomes for adolescents, boys and girls.²

Children (1-14 years) experiencing violent discipline by type (%)



Source: MICS, DHS and UNICEF

Caregivers who believe that physical punishment is needed to raise a child (%)



Source: MICS and DHS

1 Black, M., S. Walker et al. 2017. 'Early childhood development coming of age: science through the life course'. *Lancet* 389: 10064.
 2 OECD. 2012. *Equity and Quality in Education: Supporting Disadvantaged Students and Schools*. OECD Publishing.

Driving results for children

Following recent global development research,³ the adoption of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4.2,⁴ and the release of the World Health Organization document *Survive, Thrive and Transform Goals*,⁵ the global community has a strategic opportunity to increase the impact and reach of actions and results for young children and their families by guiding policy, programme and budget support at country level.

For the first time, there is global consensus that States have a role in ending the widespread practice of using violent discipline against children. The development and scaling up of publicly funded positive parenting programmes will have a key role in contributing to the SDG, specifically target 16.2: “End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children.” This target includes an indicator that measures the percentage of children who experience any physical punishment and/or psychological aggression by caregivers. Progress will be accelerated through a comprehensive prohibition of all forms of violence against children, including corporal punishment in a home and family setting. There is global momentum for prohibition. Mongolia has now joined the 48 other States around the world that have prohibited corporal punishment in all settings – including the home.



Key programme strategies



Systems and capacity

- Strengthen capacity of social services, health, nutrition and education sectors to deliver positive parenting support services and programmes.



Behaviour change

- Strengthen norms and values that promote positive parenting practices and challenge the social acceptance of violence against children in home and family settings, especially gender-related stereotypes and bias.
- Create core messages that encourage parents and caregivers to reflect on child rearing beliefs and practices.
- Build the capacity of parents – including fathers – and caregivers to understand and support child development.
- Strengthen knowledge and awareness that help parents and caregivers to adopt non-violent disciplinary practices.
- Roll out *ASEAN Guidelines for a Non-Violent Approach to Nurture, Care, and Development of Children*.



Data, evidence and knowledge

- Evaluate positive parenting programmes to show their impact on: improvements in child development outcomes in the five domains; reducing risk of child maltreatment; abandonment of harsh parenting practices, including gender bias, and adoption of positive alternatives; and reduction of child behavioural problems, parental stress and intimate partner violence.



Partnerships and alliances

- Collaborate with early childhood development practitioners, religious leaders and opinion makers to ensure all families, especially in marginalized communities, have access to the latest evidence and knowledge on nurturing children.
- Work with adolescents and young people in developing parenting programmes appropriate for their age group.
- Partner with disability experts to develop parenting programmes for children and adolescents with disabilities.

3 *Lancet* 2016, Early Childhood Development Series.

4 SDG 4.2: “By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education.”

5 *WHO Global Strategy for Women’s, Children’s and Adolescents’ Health*.