



PRESS RELEASE | Canada

Methodology:

Results are based on an online study conducted from February 9 to February 11, 2023, among 1,000 adults in Canada. The data has been statistically weighted according to Canadian census figures for age, gender and region. The margin of error – which measures sample variability – is +/- 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

Do you think it is time to abolish the legislation that allows schoolteachers and parents to use “reasonable force” to discipline children?

Definitely / Probably – 51% (+17)

Probably not / Definitely not – 38% (-15)

Not sure – 11% (-2)

Views on Physically Disciplining Children Shifting in Canada

Compared to 2018, fewer Canadians agree with allowing parents or schoolteachers to use “reasonable force” to correct a child.

Vancouver, BC [February 17, 2023] – More than half of Canadians think it is time to abolish the legislation that allows parents and schoolteachers to use “reasonable force” to discipline children, a new Research Co. poll has found.

In the online survey of a representative national sample, 51% of Canadians think it is time to abolish Section 43 of the Criminal Code, up 17 points since a similar Research Co. survey [conducted in May 2018](#).

Section 43 of the Criminal Code of Canada reads: “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.”

A sizeable majority of Quebecers (61%) voice support for the repeal of Section 43. The proportions are lower in British Columbia (50%), Ontario (49%), Alberta (also 49%), Saskatchewan and Manitoba (45%) and Atlantic Canada (also 45%).

“More than three-in-five Canadians aged 18-to-34 (61%) and a majority of those aged 35-to-54 (53%) would like to end the use of force to discipline children,” says Mario Canseco, President of Research Co. “Support is lower among Canadians aged 55 and over (42%).”

Several countries around the world, including Denmark, Finland, Norway, Germany, New Zealand and Sweden, have adopted laws that forbid physical punishment towards children, either by parents or schoolteachers.

In Canada, New Democratic Party (NDP) Member of Parliament Peter Julian tabled Bill C-273 in May 2022. The proposed legislation seeks to amend the Criminal Code to repeal Section 43.

More than half of Canadians (58%, -16) agree with allowing parents to physically discipline children in Canada—a proportion that rises to 65% among men and to 61% among those aged 55 and over.

Only 26% of Canadians (-17) agree with allowing schoolteachers to physically discipline children in Canada.



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Just over three-in-four of Canadians (61%) acknowledge having been physically disciplined as children by a parent or guardian, while 22% report the same experience at school.

Three-in-ten Canadians (30%) say they were never physically disciplined as children—a proportion that rises to 40% among those aged 18-to-34 and to 46% in Quebec.

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About Research Co.

Simply put, we are curious about what people think and the decisions they will make. Some call it public opinion, others call it polling or public affairs. We never compromise facts for profit. Our agenda is the truth.

We have a global network of partners in the qualitative, data collection and data visualization specialities.

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