

Parents assaulted

with bogus smacking prosecutions

Is anyone surprised? Wasn't the prosecution and persecution of good parents predicted even before the anti-smacking bill became law? Despite the fact that over 80% of New Zealanders rejected these anti-smacking laws, our fears have been realised with good parents being prosecuted and persecuted over trivial matters or unproven claims. And the list continues to grow...

CASE 15: Father charged for "reasonable discipline" yet case dismissed when no evidence is offered

(April 2008) A 30-year-old Glen Innes father was charged by police for allegedly hitting his five-year-old daughter with an open hand on the back of the head and swinging a pair of jeans at his six-year-old daughter.

He denied the allegations and said that he had pushed one of the girls to get her to hurry for school and threw the jeans at the other to get her attention.

The father had to spend a day in the police cells and police opposed bail! CYF also investigated the family yet found nothing to be concerned about.

When the matter eventually came to court, the police offered no evidence and the case was dismissed. *Source - NZ Herald*

CASE 16: Father charged and convicted for demanding respect towards mother

(2008) On the way to school, mum and dad were angry at their daughter (12) for not doing her chores that morning. Dad, who was driving, reached across to his daughter in the front passenger seat and shoved her on the upper arm 2-3 times to demand that she listen to her mother, who was in the back seat.

A driver in the vehicle behind claimed the father was punching the daughter and rang 111.

Six police in three cars turned up at the daughter's school. The police records show that the daughter didn't feel any pain from the alleged 'punching'. There was no bruising or marks of any kind yet the Police charged the father with assault.

He was banned from living at home or seeing his daughter for two weeks. He pleaded guilty to assault simply to avoid the shame, stress, and costs of a defended hearing.

His daughter (an A grade student at school) is pleased to have dad home. An MP who reviewed the case described it as "disturbing."

CASE 17: Grandfather charged and convicted for tipping child out of beanbag

In 2008, a grandfather was charged and convicted of assaulting his grandson for tipping him out of a bean bag-type chair in order to 'get him moving'. The boy had refused to turn the TV volume down and then refused to turn the TV off when asked. Police arrested the grandfather after the boy rang 111.

When Police arrived, the grandmother and grandchild pleaded with the police not to take granddad away, yet he was held in prison cells for 2 nights. His lawyer advised him to plead guilty to avoid cost and hassle.

CASE 18: Police interview step-father for 2 hours for restraining abusive daughter

In mid-2007, stepdaughter (12) was verbally and physically abusive to both her mother and step-father. The stepfather restrained her arms so she couldn't hit out any more. Her mum was grateful for the protection.

The couple were visited in January 2008 by the police because of a complaint made by the natural father - two months after the original incident. Both were taken to the police station where the step-father was video interviewed for almost 2 hours.

When these parents asked the police "What else can we do if we're not permitted to restrain her?" they were told, "We don't know". Despite numerous phone calls and visits to the police station, Police have not informed the couple of the results of the inquiry.

The parents are now afraid to restrain any of their kids - no matter what their behaviour. It is creating tension in

the family and step-father is never sure if the next car up the driveway is the police coming to arrest him.

CASE 19: Dad banned for 6 months based on smacking claim by ex-wife

In 2008, Raymond was denied access to his two young children for 6 months by CYF when his ex-wife made a complaint that he had used "physical force on one or both children".

No complaint was referred to the police, and there were no witnesses or evidence of bruising. The father actually believes it was the warning of a smack that led to the complaint (Dad had warned his youngest child about running out onto the street).

It is believed that the smacking law was used by the ex-wife so that she could take the children overseas, in breach of the family court order.

After six months and no evidence, Dad finally has access to his children again.

What a CYFS Community Panel Board Member says (Name withheld on request)

"I was concerned about the passing of Sue Bradford's parenting bill, fearing that there would be an increase in the number of investigations of 'good' parents unnecessarily through our CYFS social services.

Sadly this concern is becoming a reality. Although I have only been involved with our community panel a year prior to the passing of Ms Bradford's anti-parent legislation, I can say without a doubt, that in my time I have seen a small but a definite increase in 'good' parents being investigated by our CYFS case workers.

Any child who mentions to a school teacher that they have been smacked or touched in any physical way is brought under investigation and their names are indelibly logged onto our data base as a potential 'abuser'.

I really feel sorry for these good parents because of the fear that we, as an organisation, are now engendering upon their parenting practice. Sadly, good parents are being lumped together with the really bad ones and the source of this injustice is the bad legislation that an idealist like Sue Bradford has put together."

Previous Cases

The true accounts in this advertisement are in addition to previous cases Family First has highlighted:

- CASE 1:** Mum investigated by Police when child falls over
- CASE 2:** Police investigate grandmother for smacking swearing grandchild in shop
- CASE 3:** Toddler's bedtime tantrum brings three cops knocking
- CASE 4:** School dubs mum to CYF for hand smack
- CASE 5:** Boy calls 111 to report parents who, according to Police, were disciplining him 'reasonably'
- CASE 6:** Mother investigated after smacking 4 year old for running out on road
- CASE 7:** Supermarket tantrum earns stressed mum Police warning
- CASE 8:** Class of eight year olds taught to report their parents
- CASE 9:** Passerby reports squealing child - Police investigate
- CASE 10:** Grandmother warned by Police after grabbing grandchild running onto road
- CASE 11:** CYF interview kids over minor smack without parent's knowledge and told they can't see Dad
- CASE 12:** Teen tells mum - "You can't hit me but I can hit you"
- CASE 13:** Kids fighting in backseat of car earns mum a Police investigation
- CASE 14:** One smack for one hour tantrum - 10 year old calls 111

For more details on all reported cases, go to www.familyfirst.org.nz

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