



# Please don't take my daughter!

As the Anti-Smacking law takes root in mainstream New Zealand, new cases arise that reveal its fundamental flaws. The following are more disturbing examples of good mothers and grandmothers who have been investigated by Police over trivial matters reported by members of the public.

## Mother investigated after smacking 4 year for running out on road

Jackie's 4 year old daughter ran across the road outside a busy supermarket when she saw a friend on the other side. Jackie smacked her once on the bottom to teach her how dangerous her actions were. A member of the public challenged the way she had disciplined her child, took her vehicle registration, and called the Police. Jackie was visited by the Police two days later.

She felt like a criminal and pleaded, "Please don't take my daughter!" The officers then carried out a Police Check to see if smacking had been reported before.

Jackie's daughter was understandably upset and asked "What's wrong mummy?"

## Supermarket tantrum earns stressed mum police warning

Wanita's 5-year old son (who is autistic) was having what his mum calls a "magic moment" in the supermarket. This included screaming, lying on the floor and waving his arms around. Despite not completing her shopping, Mum had to leave the supermarket.

Once outside, Wanita attempted to deal with the behaviour quickly, as taught to her by the specialists who work with her son. She told him to get himself under control and started counting to five. She also had to hold his arm as he was attempting to run out into the parking lot.

As all this was happening, a policeman approached her, asked if she was aware of the anti-smacking law, and informed her that he was giving her a warning. The mother said she had not even smacked the child and enquired

whether he knew what it was like to have an autistic child. He said that he was simply doing his job. She replied that, as a mother, she was simply doing her job.

## Class of eight year olds taught to report their parents

The police went to a local primary school and did a class on "Keeping Ourselves Safe." During the session, the policeman told this particular class of 7 and 8 year olds that parents couldn't smack them, and to immediately report any smacking to their teacher.

Within days, an 8 year old girl who had been in this session was stood down for kicking the teacher in the leg. She also repeatedly told her mother "you can't make me do anything - you can't smack me."

The solo mum went to the police to clarify what they had said and to tell them the difficulties she'd had since their visit to the school.

Two days later 2 officers arrived to supposedly reinstate the mother's authority but instead they questioned her parenting skills and told her they had investigated her background with a variety of community organisations. They had her in tears and she found them intimidating and degrading. They also proceeded to tell the children their rights. Yet amazingly the police said to the mother the daughter deserved a smack for kicking the teacher.

## Passerby reports squealing child - Police investigate

Tanya had two police officers arrive on her doorstep as she was hosting visitors on a Saturday night. The police informed her that a 'passer by' had heard a child being

smacked and subsequently screaming. She explained to them that her 9 year old daughter squeals when she plays, particularly when outside on the trampoline with her brother.

"We rarely smack our kids and this incident did not occur. I informed the officers accordingly. They insisted that they needed to see my daughter."

"I have found the whole episode to be extremely distressing. I felt completely humiliated to literally be accused of child abuse and have now found it hard to sleep at night as it has upset me so much - how I look after and care for my children is being questioned. On hearsay I am now a guilty person. This new law is ending up with a lot of good innocent parents being wrongfully accused. This law needs to be changed."

## Grandmother warned by police after grabbing grandchild running onto road

This grandmother had to prevent her 2 year old grandson from running onto the road by grabbing his arm and pulling him back to the footpath. A police officer witnessed her and said she was breaking the law by grabbing him. She was let off with a warning but was told that if it ever happened again, they would prosecute her.

She now puts him in the pram to avoid getting arrested. Her family is horrified by what's happened and she's now concerned about taking her grandchildren out in public. She feels she's been publicly humiliated.

Note: After witnessing the aforementioned incident, another grandmother came up to her and said she'd been interviewed at the police station for giving her 4 year old grandson a smack on the bottom in Countdown for swearing at her.

## Previous cases

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

- Mum investigated by Police when child falls over
- Police investigate grandmother for smacking swearing grandchild in shop
- Toddler's bedtime tantrum brings three cops knocking
- School dubs mum to CYF for hand smack
- Boy calls 111 to report parents who, according to Police, were disciplining him 'reasonably'

For more details on all reported cases, go to [www.familyfirst.org.nz](http://www.familyfirst.org.nz)

## Will you be next?

Hopefully not. But are you confident that you'll never be targeted? Meanwhile, Police and CYF resources are diverted from at-risk families that do need investigating and children that do need protecting. And the government continues to fail to deal with the real causes of child abuse: (To see Family First's 5-point Action Plan, go to [www.stoptheabuse.org.nz](http://www.stoptheabuse.org.nz))

*"The epidemic of child abuse and child violence in this country continues, sadly. My bill was never intended to solve that problem."* Sue Bradford MP  
National Radio, 21 Dec 07

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