



NO HIT ZONE in CONTEXT Building Healthier Children and Communities

NO HIT ZONE initiative is a relatively new primary child abuse prevention strategy based on not hitting children. Children's hospitals, a district attorney's office and whole communities, and public health agencies have become "No Hit Zone" sites.

No Hit Zones are public spaces where *"No adult shall hit another adult; no adult shall hit a child, no child shall hit an adult, and no child shall hit another child"*. No Hit Zone signs communicate these no hitting expectations. Staff members trained in conflict de-escalation and positive intervention techniques practice and model the new norm of "not hitting". No Hit Zones change former 'bystander' cultures to places where staff armed with knowledge can intervene to prevent harm and educate all interacting with children.

For Champions for Children / Prevent Child Abuse Hampton Roads, it's NO HIT ZONE campaign is part of its overall mission to build healthier more productive communities by building healthier children.

It is important to remember while the No Hit Zone campaign aims to prevent the hitting of children in the short term, they are part of a strategy to improve children and adult health in the long-term.

CFC/PCAHR's strategy is reflected in the American Academy of Pediatrics' updated (11/2018) policy guidance for 67,000 pediatricians with regard to corporal punishment of children. Where the AAP's 20-year-old policy "encouraged" parents not to use corporal punishment, the new policy unequivocally states that corporal punishment "should not" be used. Some of the problems associated with hitting children cited by the AAP in its review of scientific research include:

- Increased risk of aggression on families, schools and community
- Increased risk of mental health disorders and learning problems
- Reduced cortical grey matter (brain development)
- Reduced performance IQ
- Increased odds for suicide attempts, alcohol and substance abuse disorders in adulthood.

The AAP entire policy document with supporting research can be found at:
<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2018/11/01/peds.2018-3112>

The AAP policy change follows the 2016 technical report where the Centers for Disease Control called for action to change norms around child discipline to stop the practice of hitting children. (See: <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/can-prevention-technical-package.pdf>).

Champions for Children / Prevent Child Abuse Hampton Roads hopes to build community-wide support for its efforts to build safer and healthier communities for our children and for us all.