

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Friday April 22 2022, 12.01am, The Times

**BAN SMACKING PLEA**
Sir, The children’s commissioner’s call to outlaw smacking is welcome ([news](https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/children-tsar-dame-rachel-de-souza-ban-smacking-england-latest-v05tgwspj), Apr 21). There is no justification or value in beating any other human being, especially children, irrespective of the motivation. Numerous studies have shown that not only does smacking not work but it is more likely to increase the offending behaviour (which is usually children just being children), perpetuate violence within a family and outside and have both short and long-term negative consequences in all settings. There are other powerful arguments, so that although some people like to pretend that “it never did me any harm”, in multiple conversations with patients it is remarkable how episodes of physical punishment are invariably seared into their memory. It does not work for parents either. When I ask the few parents who still admit to smacking their children how they feel afterwards, they all say: “Terrible.” **Anthony Cohn**
Consultant paediatrician, London NW4