

SOCIAL ISSUES

PROTECTING CHILDREN

‘Hit Means Lost It’

Leading children’s charity aims to help parents control their anger — before anger controls them



Modern life can be very stressful — especially for the parents of young children. With both parents working there is often too little time for families to be together. And those parents with very young children know only too well how easy it is to become angry and lose control

One in six parents loses his or her temper with their child almost every other day. This information comes from the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) in Britain as it begins a campaign to help the parents of young children.

Since 1884 the NSPCC has worked to protect

children from cruelty. But their latest campaign, ‘Hit means lost it’, is aimed at supporting parents to better understand — and manage — their stress and anger.

Anger can be a major reason why parents hit their children. And information gathered by the NSPCC shows that parents who often lose their temper are more likely to hit their baby or

toddler than the average parent.

‘Parenting is one of the most rewarding jobs in the world,’ says Eileen Hayes, parenting advisor for the NSPCC, ‘but it is also very hard work. Stressed parents can easily become angry parents. Though anger is a natural human emotion, it’s not always easy to recognise or control — which is dangerous when you are

looking after a child.’ It seems parents are most likely to lose their temper when their child is being physically aggressive.

‘When parents feel the pressure mounting, our advice is to take a step back before you say or do something you will later regret. Don’t give in to anger, take control before it controls you,’ says Eileen Hayes.

As part of the new campaign the NSPCC is providing advice for parents through its ‘helplines’ and its family centres. The campaign will also be advertised on radio and television.

The main message the charity wants to get across is that there are better and safer ways to discipline young children. And Eileen Hayes gives a good example when she says: ‘Praising the behaviour you want to encourage, whilst ignoring the smaller problems’ is one way to deal with losing one’s temper and anger.

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⇒ 318 words,
1,508 characters
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WORDS

aggressive – violent; destructive
campaign – project; plan
cruelty – bad treatment; unkindness
discipline – teach; educate
lose their temper – become angry
manage – handle; deal with
mounting – building up
regret – feel sorry about
rewarding – satisfying; pleasing
toddler – young child