

# EPOCH

New Zealand

Action for Children and Youth  
Aotearoa  
Ahu Whakatika Challenge  
Violence Trust  
Alternatives to Violence Project  
(Waikato) Inc  
Barnardos New Zealand  
Brainwave Trust  
Catholic Social Services  
(Wellington)  
CCS  
Child Abuse Prevention Services  
Northland  
Child Development Foundation  
Cholmondely Children's Home  
Christchurch Methodist Mission  
Christchurch Resettlement  
Services  
Council of Social Services n  
Christchurch  
EPOCH NZ  
Every Child Counts  
Hauraki Safety Network  
Home and Family Society  
Christchurch  
Housing Advice Centre  
(Palmerston North)  
Horowhenua FV Intervention  
Programme  
Humanists for Non-Violence  
IHC  
Inner City Group for Men  
Institute for Public Policy at AUT  
Jigsaw  
Living Without Violence Waiheke  
Linton Camp Community Services  
Manawatu Alternatives to Violence  
National Council for Young  
Catholics  
National Council of Women New  
Zealand  
National Network of Stopping  
Violence Services  
Natural Parenting NZ  
North Harbour Living Without  
Violence  
Pacific Foundation  
Paediatric Society  
ParentingWorks  
Parents Centres NZ  
Parentline Charitable Trust  
Parentline Manawatu  
Peace Foundation

OPEN LETTER  
TO  
RT HON HELEN CLARK  
AND  
LEADERS OF ALL POLITICAL  
PARTIES  
IN PARLIAMENT.

***Physical punishment harms children –  
it's time to remove this archaic law.  
Repeal section 59 Crimes Act 1961.***

18 October 2006

Dear Prime Minister and Parliamentary  
Leaders

New Zealand parents want their children to  
grow up with positive memories of  
childhood. Each year many children in New  
Zealand are subjected to experiences of  
violence perpetrated in the name of  
discipline and excused in law.

This is not a positive memory for them.  
Physical discipline does not show children  
how to behave well.

Physical punishment is not a part of positive  
parenting and carries many risks for most  
children – including child abuse. Yet our law

Peace Movement Aotearoa  
Plunket Society  
PORSE In-Home Childcare  
Network  
Presbyterian Support Services  
National  
Relationship Services  
Religious Society of Friends  
(Quakers)  
Save the Children New Zealand  
Start Inc Christchurch  
Stopping Violence Services  
Nelson  
Supportline Women's Refuge  
Te Korowai Aroha O Ngati Whatua  
NZAARD  
NZ Child Care Association  
NZ Family Planning Association  
NZ Psychological Society  
Playcentre Federation  
Rodney Stopping Violence  
Services  
Taranaki Support Services  
The Body Shop  
Violence Free Waitakere  
Wairarapa Community Counseling  
Centre  
Waitakere Abuse and Trauma  
Counseling Service  
Wellington Community Law Centre  
Women's International League for  
Peace and Freedom  
Women's Refuge  
UNICEF New Zealand  
Youth Law Tino Rangatiratanga  
Tai Tamariki

justifies the use of force as a means of  
correcting children.

Please support the outright repeal of section  
59 (without amendment to define any  
degree of force as reasonable or  
unreasonable).

This would send out a consistent message  
of non-violence that is in line with modern  
child rearing practices and family violence  
prevention initiatives. It would treat children  
as equals with adults in court and show  
respect for children's human status.

**The purpose of law change is education  
not prosecution.**

The agencies listed in this letter call on you  
to:

- Fully repeal section 59 Crimes Act 1961
- Encourage practice that ensures that  
prosecutions of parents only proceed  
when other interventions to support  
families have failed to adequately protect  
the child from harm.
- Expand and maintain education  
campaigns on positive discipline.

Yours sincerely

Beth Wood  
On behalf of the listed organisations.

cc All Members of Parliament