

**Antelope Springs  
Blended Family Parenting Class  
Session 6**

Agenda

1. Review and finish Sound Relationship House paradigm
2. Discussion
  - a. Birth order issues
  - b. Sexuality in blended families
  - c. Stepchildren's dilemma's
  - d. Loyalty conflicts
  - e. Discipline basics in blended families (biological parent takes "point")
3. Family meeting structures (20 minutes each)
  - a. "Moan and Groan"
  - b. "Scheduling & Goals"
  - c. "Validation & Encouragement" (Make this concrete, specific and detailed)
4. Job chart basics
  - a. Initial set-up, materials
  - b. Preparing the chart
  - c. Distribution
  - d. Monitoring keys
  - e. Accountability
5. Family Contract Structure Basics
  - a. Streamline, just essentials
  - b. Basic expectations/rules
  - c. Level 1, 2, 3 consequences
  - d. Ideally everyone has input

## **Think Before You Strike or Some thoughts on Spanking**

University of New Hampshire researcher Murray Straus recently released the results of his latest study which involved over 3,000 children. Murray states that, **“Spanking chips away at the child’s liking for, and trust of, the parent. One has to look at long term effects of these things.”** Researchers analyzed data from over 800 mothers of children ages 6 - 9, taken in 1988 and 1990. They compared levels of antisocial behavior among spanked and unspanked children over that interval. **The more spanking a child received at the beginning of the study, the higher the level of antisocial behavior at the end. Antisocial behavior was defined as lying, cheating, disobedience at school, breaking things deliberately, not feeling sorry after misbehaving or not getting along with teachers.** The study found that the higher levels of antisocial behavior were independent of other traits that could affect that behavior, such as a family’s socioeconomic status and the amount of support parents give their children.

Psychologist Irwin Hyman, author of the book “The Case Against Spanking” agrees with Straus’s study. **“There is never a reason to spank a child, period, there’s no other place in society where someone can smack another person. So why should we be able to do this to children?”**

Smith & Brooks-Gunn, (1997) **studied 715 children and found that those who had received “harsh discipline” had the lowest IQ, even after controlling for other factors.**

Fower & Chapiesski (1986) compared 14 month old children whose mothers relied on corporal punishment with mothers who rarely or never used corporal punishment. **The children who were corporally punished had average scores on the Bayley Infant Development Scale, whereas those children who were not struck averaged 20 points higher than the average.**

Conclusions from a recent study by Straus & Paschall (1998) where 960 children were tracked found that;

1. **The more corporal punishment used, the lower the average cognitive ability** relative to other children of the same age whose mothers use corporal punishment less often or not at all.

2. When analyzed developmentally, **use of corporal punishment is associated with an average decrease in cognitive ability.**

Findings from 3 recent longitudinal studies (Brezina, In Submission; Gunnoe & Mariner, 1997; Straus et al., 1997) and the results of a meta analysis of 88 studies (Thompson, In press) suggest that the **benefits of reduced corporal punishment are likely to include;**

**“Reductions in juvenile delinquency, adult violence, masochistic sex, and great probability of completing higher education, higher income, and lower rates of depression and alcohol abuse (Straus 1994; Staus & Kaufman Kantor 1994)**

These are just a few of the research findings, please consider them before you hit your child.

## **Guidelines for Addressing Sexuality in the Blended Family**

### **From Einstein and Albert**

1. Talk honestly and openly about sex and comfort levels. Discuss fears and feelings that might arise. Talk about and decide as a family what is appropriate behavior and dress.
2. Anticipate and prevent situations where inappropriate sexual contact can occur. Teenage stepbrothers and stepsisters should not be left alone together for long periods of time.
3. Establish home dress codes. Scanty lingerie and revealing jockey shorts are improper attire.
4. Establish specific bathroom and bedroom etiquette. It's proper to knock before entering someone's room. Doors should be closed when someone is dressing or undressing, open when opposite sex visitors are present. Bathroom doors can be locked, or an "In Use" sign hung from a nail on the door.
5. Become aware of intense relationships or crushes. Talk openly about the fact that such feelings are normal, so family members do not feel guilty, but also establish and clarify what is acceptable in your home. Discuss the difference between feelings and behavior.
6. Tune in when a family member expresses discomfort. Don't brush the statement aside, it might be a plea for help. Encourage conversation.
7. If you feel sexually attracted to your stepchild recognize that your feelings are normal. There is no reason to feel guilty about feelings. Realize, though, that ACTING ON feelings by beginning a physical relationship will cause grief and guilt, delay the child's social development and destroy your marriage.