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# Parenting in Northern Ireland: Policy and Practice

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- Wave 3 of the NIHPS (2003)
- Variable component (repeated every 3 to 5 years):
  - Children and parenting
- Respondents to this component:
  - All parents of children <16
  - Each parent asked about each child living in the household (up to total of 6)
- Total responses: 1,629

# Parent/child interaction

- Talking
- Praising
- Hugging
- Quarrelling
- Yelling
- Smacking
- Key Variables:
  - **Gender of parent, gender and age of child**

**Table 1: Relationship of child to respondent**

	%
Natural child	97.2
Adopted child	0.2
Foster child	0.5
Step/partner's child	2.1

**Table 2: How often does the child talk to you about things that matter to the child?**

	<i>%</i>		
	Sons	Daughters	All
Most days	64	67	65
More than once a week	18	18	18
Less than once a week	12	7	9
Hardly ever	7	8	8

**Table 3: % of children who talk to parent ‘most days’**

	Fathers	Mothers	All
Sons			
Age 4-7	69	76	73
Age 8-11	61	74	69
Age 12-15	35	52	45
Daughters			
Age 4-7	75	89	83
Age 8-11	58	70	66
Age 12-15	43	58	52



**Table 4: How often do you praise the child?**

	<i>%</i>		
	Sons	Daughters	All
Very often	71	70	71
Sometimes	26	28	27
Seldom	3	2	2
Never	0	0	0



**Table 5: % of children praised 'very often'**

	Fathers	Mothers	All
<b>Sons</b>			
Age 0-3	75	86	82
Age 4-7	79	89	85
Age 8-11	44	77	65
Age 12-15	35	60	51
<b>Daughters</b>			
Age 0-3	86	93	90
Age 4-7	73	90	83
Age 8-11	55	71	65
Age 12-15	35	55	47

**Table 6: How often do you hug the child?**

	<i>%</i>		
	Sons	Daughters	All
Very often	68	71	70
Sometimes	20	20	20
Seldom	7	6	6
Never	5	3	4

**Table 7: % of children hugged 'very often'**

	Fathers	Mothers	All
<b>Sons</b>			
Age 0-3	82	96	91
Age 4-7	73	90	83
Age 8-11	43	75	63
Age 12-15	15	47	35
<b>Daughters</b>			
Age 0-3	92	97	96
Age 4-7	82	93	88
Age 8-11	61	70	67
Age 12-15	30	49	42

**Table 8: How often does the child quarrel with you?**

	<i>%</i>		
	Sons	Daughters	All
Most days	29	27	28
More than once a week	21	19	20
Less than once a week	19	19	19
Hardly ever	31	35	33

**Table 9: % of children quarrelling 'most days'**

	Fathers	Mothers	All
<b>Sons</b>			
Age 4-7	30	44	39
Age 8-11	28	25	26
Age 12-15	12	26	21
<b>Daughters</b>			
Age 4-7	27	41	35
Age 8-11	16	32	26
Age 12-15	11	24	19

**Table 10: How often do you yell at the child?**

	<i>%</i>		
	Sons	Daughters	All
Very often	25	22	24
Sometimes	43	39	40
Seldom	20	24	22
Never	12	15	14

**Table 11: % of children yelled at 'very often'**

	Fathers	Mothers	All
<b>Sons</b>			
Age 0-3	15	17	16
Age 4-7	30	34	33
Age 8-11	24	27	26
Age 12-15	19	30	26
<b>Daughters</b>			
Age 0-3	17	21	19
Age 4-7	17	26	22
Age 8-11	15	33	26
Age 12-15	13	27	21



## Attitudes to physical punishment in Northern Ireland

- Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey (2001)
  - 34% of respondents said that physical punishment was acceptable
- Office of Law Reform consultation paper (2001)
  - 89% of respondents said physical punishment effective
  - 88% said physical punishment appropriate

**Table 12: How often do you smack/slap the child?**

	<i>%</i>		
	Sons	Daughters	All
Very often	2	2	2
Sometimes	14	7	11
Seldom	29	25	27
Never	55	66	61

**Table 13: % of children 'never' smacked/slapped**

	Fathers	Mothers	All
<b>Sons</b>			
Age 0-3	56	54	55
Age 4-7	35	43	40
Age 8-11	57	55	56
Age 12-15	67	76	72
<b>Daughters</b>			
Age 0-3	64	65	66
Age 4-7	47	48	48
Age 8-11	70	62	65
Age 12-15	84	87	86

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