

DAY ONE PROJECT

Ending Violence in Schools

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Summary

Tens of thousands of students experience violence in schools in the form of corporal punishment. Nineteen states continue to allow for corporal punishment as a means of disciplining students in public schools. And public schools in nine states use corporal punishment as a disciplinary strategy for preschool-aged children. There is no federal law or regulation governing the practice, however the federal government should be clear that it does not condone it.

Challenge and Opportunity

According to the [Civil Rights Data Collection](#), nearly 92,500 students experienced corporal punishment in the 2015-2016 school year. A recent estimate from the [Children's Equity Project](#) shows that more than 1,500 of those students who experienced corporal punishment were preschool children.

The practice of harming students in schools to motivate a change in behavior must stop. As highlighted in a [letter](#) from the Department of Education to governors and state school officers, it is not only an ineffective strategy to address inappropriate behavior, it is often disproportionately applied to students of color and students with disabilities.

A majority of states have banned the use corporal punishment outright. For those that continue to allow the practice, the federal government must communicate clearly to states and districts that the maintenance of corporal punishment in schools must end.

Plan of Action

Guidance: The Departments of Education and Health and Human Services should jointly release guidance on the use of corporal punishment in schools and early learning facilities. The guidance should mirror the recommendations from the 2016 letter from the Department of Education and discourage corporal punishment from continuing in early childhood, elementary, and secondary settings.

Data: The Departments of Education and Health and Human Services should share data sources—including the Department of Education's Civil Rights Data Collection and any relevant data from the Administration on Children and Families—between each other in order to develop a public tool that demonstrates the prevalence of corporal punishment by state, district, and school/facility. The data should allow for interoperability, so that the public can see if there are certain populations of students who experience corporal punishment disproportionately (e.g., being able to see if African American boys with disabilities are disproportionately impacted). The data should be shared in a user-friendly manner so that it may serve as an easily accessible resource for policymakers, researchers, educators, parents, and others, who wish to understand where corporal punishment is taking place and which students experience it most.

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Funding: Funding streams that are used for early childhood services—the bulk of which come from the Departments of Education and Health and Human Services—should condition the receipt of funds on the assurance that any district, school or facility that receives such funds does not employ corporal punishment as a disciplinary strategy for preschool-aged children. Federal agencies should solicit comments from the field on how best to implement this policy among its programs, including how this can be accomplished through rulemaking.



About the Author

Mario Cardona previously served as the senior policy advisor for K-12 education on the White House Domestic Policy Council during the Obama administration. In that role, he helped develop the administration's legislative strategy, budget proposals, and policy initiatives focused on early, elementary, and secondary education. Prior to his service in the White House, Mario served as an advisor to senior members of the U.S. Senate, including as a principal advisor to the Chairman of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee. Prior to his work in Congress, Mario served as a research intern for the Massachusetts Secretary of Education and as an AmeriCorps volunteer in Boston's public schools. He is a graduate of the University of Texas at Austin, the Harvard Graduate School of Education, and the George Washington University Law School. Mario is currently an attorney in private practice in California.



About the Day One Project

The Day One Project is dedicated to democratizing the policymaking process by working with new and expert voices across the science and technology community, helping to develop actionable policies that can improve the lives of all Americans, and readying them for Day One of a future presidential term. For more about the Day One Project, visit dayoneproject.org.