

## SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM SAMA PRESIDENT

Over the past few weeks it has come to our attention that some Montessori schools are guilty of implementing 'corporal punishment' within their environments. Corporal punishment can be defined as follows:

- *"to cause deliberate pain or discomfort in response to undesired behaviour by children"*
- *"any act of punishing or disciplining children that causes the child any physical pain or injury and, in some instances, psychological harm"*

One of the Fundamental principles that guide our member schools in best practise is **Principle 3: Rewards and Punishments** are not used in a Montessori environment. <http://samontessori.org.za/sama-fundamental-principles/>

SAMA has over the years published extensively to the topic of 'Rewards and Punishments' and 'Discipline' in our various National Newsletters and Parent Newsletters (Newsletter July 2011; March 2012 and Aug/Sept 2013 – Parent Newsletters September 2008; September 2009; April/May 2010; January 2017 and August 2017). We encourage our members finding this 3<sup>rd</sup> principle challenging to research the many articles available.

We would like to remind our member schools that "corporal punishment" is against the law. Any person who contravenes Section 10 of the Schools Act, subsection (1) is guilty of an offence, and liable on conviction to a sentence which could be imposed for assault.

### Examples (this list is not limited)

- Being **poked** or **pinched**;
- Having **ears pulled**;
- Being **denied meals, drinks, heat or shelter**;
- Being **denied the use of the toilet**
- Being **forced** to do **exercise**;
- Being **threatened**;
- Being **verbally abused** with insults, swearing or name calling.
- Being **hit with a cane** over your hands, or on any part of your body;
- Being **struck** on the knuckles or hands with a **black board duster**;
- Being hit on any part of your body with objects such as **hosepipes, sticks, brooms, belts**, etc.;
- Being **punched** by an educator;
- Being **slapped** across the face, or hit anywhere else on the body by an educator;
- Being **physically harassed** by an educator such as being thrown on the floor, or against walls, or being pushed or pulled;
- Being **kicked** anywhere on your body by an educator;
- Being given "**lashes**" on the buttocks;
- Being **violently shaken**;
- Being **humiliated** by being sent to sit in a principal's office etc.

We urge our fellow Montessori leaders, mentors, teachers, assistants and parents to assist the child and report abuse of children to the relevant departments. Please use the links below to give you more information on how to report corporal punishment.

<http://section27.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Chapter-19.pdf>

[https://eelawcentre.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Corporal-Punishment\\_digital.pdf](https://eelawcentre.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Corporal-Punishment_digital.pdf)

Parents are not allowed to give an educator permission to assault a child. Should you encounter a parent who has asked you to hurt their child, please advise them of the law passed on the 19<sup>th</sup> October 2017. <https://www.enca.com/south-africa/it-is-now-illegal-to-spank-your-child-in-sa>

*We often hear it said that a child's will should be "broken" that the best education for the will of the child is to learn to give it up to the will of adults. Leaving out of the question the injustice which is at the root of every act of tyranny, this idea is irrational because the child cannot give up what he does not possess. We prevent him in his way from forming his own will-power, and we commit the greatest and most blameworthy mistake. He never has time or opportunity to test himself, to estimate his own force and his own limitations because he is always interrupted and subjected to our tyranny, and languishes in injustice because he is always being bitterly reproached for not having what adults are perpetually destroying. (– Maria Montessori, The Montessori Method pg 366)*