



9 September 2014 – [Violence against](#) children is often overlooked. Though it happens [in conflict](#), it is most prevalent at home, in the child's everyday life where they are meant to be the most protected.

A [new report](#) released by UNICEF finds that violence against children is commonplace and happens most often in the child's daily setting. "[...] the slaps of an upset parent to control an 'unruly' child, the sexual victimization of a teenager by a peer or a neighbour, the bullying of one child by another in the schoolyard, the emotional degradation of a child bride by her spouse."

One of the most common forms of violence against children remains disciplinary measures in the household. Children can be subjected to physical or psychological violence by their parent or guardian as a way of teaching self-control or acceptable behaviour. The report finds that six in 10 children worldwide ages 2 to 14 are regularly beaten by parents or guardians.

These practices are highly detrimental to a child's development and future, such practices are a violation of children's right to protection from all forms of violence. The report finds domestic

violence against children a global concern, “because of its pervasive nature, children in all regions of the world are at risk of being exposed to violent discipline at home.”

Furthermore, the report found that in a domestic setting the percentage of adults, both male and female, who believe in the use of physical violence to raise children is equal. “Interviews with parents in China, Colombia, Italy, Kenya, the Philippines, Sweden, Thailand and the United States indicate that mothers use corporal punishment more frequently than fathers but find similar opinions on the need for physical discipline.”



The report also finds that children are most often at risk of being subjected to sexual violence when in a domestic setting. Though girls are most often subjected to sexual violence, often at the hands of boyfriends or husbands, young boys are also at risk of sexual exploitation. As with physical violence, sexual violence is not an issue isolated to developing countries, sexual violence against children also occurs in [high-income countries](#) .

The report found that in the U.S. “Around 17 per cent of adolescent girls and 4 per cent of adolescent boys reported experiences of sexual assault at some point in their lives”, while in Switzerland “Around 40 per cent of girls and 20 per cent of boys reported incidents of sexual victimization that did not involve physical contact at some point in their lives. This included indecent exposure, verbal or written harassment ( [including online](#) ) and exposure to pornography.”

In it’s conclusion [the report](#) finds that, “Ensuring that all forms of violence are recognized as a fundamental violation of children’s [human rights](#) is a first step in moving towards their elimination.” The first step to protecting children is to recognize the danger and damage caused by abuse and to bring this lurking issue into the light.

## Who will guard from the guardians?

Tuesday, 09 September 2014 00:00

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