Dear Parents,

Did you know that –

• **Spanking shrinks brains.** Harvard Medical School found that kids who are spanked just once a month had **14-19% smaller brains in the decision-making area**. These were children who remembered being spanked at least 12 times a year and once with a belt, paddle or brush, but were not injured or spanked in anger.

• **1,574 studies found that spanking is harmful.**

• Even ‘everyday spanking’ is **consistently associated with:**
  - More aggression
  - More fighting
  - More mental health problems
  - More negative relationships with parents
  - Lower self-esteem
  - Lower cognitive ability
  - Weaker moral values
  - More antisocial behavior
  - Substance abuse
  - Delinquent behavior
  - Lower self-control

• **Spanking lowers IQ.**

  The University of New Hampshire found that American children who are spanked at ages 2-4 have **5 less IQ points** than non-spanked children, even years later. Children spanked at ages 5-9 have **2.8 less IQ points**.

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

• **Does this mean that everyone who was spanked as a child has problems?** No, it means that spanking doesn’t help children learn what we want them to learn. Every time we spank a child, we raise the risk that the child will develop problems.

• **Why is this so?** Spanking focuses on the behavior and misses the underlying need. It might stop a child from doing something in the moment, but the child hasn’t learned how to do things differently. And it can lead to built-up resentment and hostility, and prevent some children from telling about sexual abuse for fear of further punishment.

• **But I was spanked and turned out okay?** Today, we have a tremendous amount of knowledge about how children learn and develop. We know other ways of teaching children that don’t have these risks and harms.

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No Hit Zones to No Hit Homes

PARENTING PLEDGE

I, ________________________________, pledge to never use any form of physical discipline.

• I will not hit, spank, whip, or tap my child/children.

• I know that corporal punishment can harm my child’s physical, intellectual, and psychological well-being, and that it can damage our relationship.

• I understand that science has proven that all forms of spanking are harmful, ineffective, and can have negative effects on children’s brains.

• I pledge to use effective parenting alternatives that model that hitting is not an acceptable tool for parenting, leadership, or expressing emotions.

Parent ___________________________ Date ______________________

Parent ___________________________ Date ______________________

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