



MEDIA RELEASE
STUDY INDICATES LINK BETWEEN VIEW OF CHILDREN AS
'DEVELOPING ADULTS' AND SUPPORT FOR PHYSICAL
PUNISHMENT

A Victoria University study has concluded that people who view children primarily as developing humans are more likely to support the use of physical punishment to discipline them.

Researcher Marie Russell told the Public Health Association conference at Auckland University today that an analysis of some of the submissions to the select committee on repealing section 59 of the Crimes Act indicated submitters who viewed children as what have elsewhere been called "human becomings" tended to support the retention of section 59.

"Those who saw children as human beings in their own right tended to support the section's repeal", Ms Russell told the public health workers.

Section 59 of the Crimes Act formerly allowed people charged with assault of their children a defence of using reasonable force for correction. Its repeal passed in May and came into force on June 22.

"We analysed about 10 percent of the 1700 submissions to the select committee. We found a link between views of children as 'developing adults', and support for physical discipline. There was also a link between a view of children primarily as human beings and support for the repeal of section 59".

"The research indicates there may be a need to look at people's most deep-seated beliefs about children and childhood, before their beliefs about physical punishment and discipline can be addressed".

"One place where this could be explored is in parenting classes. Discussions about how parents view children and childhood would be a good place to start us thinking about how we go about parenting them." Ms Russell said.

For more information please contact
Liz Price 0276 957 744
Anton Blank 021 406 031