



Attitude toward physical punishment of children

Children support centre
June, 2009

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Summary

- ✓ Lithuanians attitude toward physical punishment of children have not significantly changed comparing to the survey results of 2005.
- ✓ Majority (72%) of Lithuania's inhabitants believe that no more than 60% of Lithuania's children are punished physically (beating/spanking is considered as the punishment): almost one third of them (27%) think that 20% of children are experiencing this kind of "education".
- ✓ It is revealing that very few Lithuanians are extreme in their attitude: only 4% of them believe that all Lithuania's children are physically punished, and in the contrary, only 2% of surveyed people are certain than none of children are punished like that.
- ✓ More than a half (56%) of inhabitants accept that physical punishment should not be employed on children, still they consider that there are situations when the use of this method is justifiable. There are more people in favour of this opinion among middle aged respondents, inhabitant of smaller towns and those Lithuanians who are raising at least one minor in their families.
- ✓ 38% of respondents are completely against the use of physical punishment in children's education. It is more stressed among young people and inhabitant of the villages.
- ✓ Correlation between approvement of physical punishment and evaluation of percentage of children, which experience this kind of "educational" method, is noticed: more one person approves the use of physical punishment as a method of education, more frequently he indicates a bigger share of children, who are physically punished at home.

1. Survey methodology

Survey was ordered by Children support centre.

The aim of the survey is to explore the attitude of Lithuanians toward the number of children physical punished in their families, and the attitude toward physical punishment as a method of education. Data, gathered during this survey, is compared to the results of similar survey carried in 2005.

1.1 The poll method

Survey was carried out as face-to-face interview in respondent's home (method of Omnibus).

Visual QSL software was used for questionnaire's creation.

Bellview CAPI software was used for the survey. This software permits to control the quotas, faults of logics and data gathering. It also controls the coherence of the questions and defined sequence of the questions. It is impossible for the interviewer to change the sequence of the questions or to make a mistake in data gathering – all this is monitored during the interview, so there can be no mistakes in the data file.

1.2 Sampling

Survey represents inhabitants of Lithuania aged 15-74.

Sample size: 500 respondents.

The respondents were selected using multi-stage random sampling:

- First, geographical distribution of the sample was accomplished. Geographically the ratios of the sample correspond to the ratios of population in distinct regions. LR Statistical Department most recent data were used;
- At the second stage, LR Statistical Department Population Register database was used to randomly select initial sampling points, i.e. addresses to start the route of the poll from. 77 initial sampling points were used in total;
- Hereinafter households to participate in the survey were selected. This sampling was accomplished using route-sampling method. Starting from the initial sampling point, every 2nd household in towns or rural districts was visited;
- Then, using “the youngest male” principle, the particular respondent was selected, who was asked to participate in the survey.

1.3 Accomplishment of the poll

The poll was fulfilled at 5 – 11 of June, 2009.

65 interviewers were engaged in the poll.

Results of the survey:

| | | |
|---|---|------------|
| ✓ | Households visited in total: | 1566 |
| ✓ | Nobody found at home: | 122 |
| ✓ | Households refused to participate in the poll: | 410 |
| ✓ | Selected person refused to participate in the poll: | 37 |
| ✓ | Sampling criteria not met: | 467 |
| ✓ | Respondents interviewed: | 521 |

1.4 Quality control

The interviewer department used the work-phone to check 10% of the interviewers. During the check interviewers introduction, explanation of survey's purposes, keeping up with questions phrasing, recording of answers to open question are verified.

1.5 Data analysis

In the report and its appendixes both common distribution of answers and answers distributions according various social-demographic characteristics are presented.

In the tables, representing answers distribution according respondents' socio-demographic, statistically significant differences are shaded in pink.

Statistically significant differences are calculated using statistical analysis program – SPSS/PC. The variables are cross-tabulated. Then, using χ^2 test, the existence of statistically significant difference among variables is tested (coefficient of significance p is not bigger than 0.05). If statistically significant difference exists, then data in cells (distributions of question) is analyzed (using function Adjusted Residuals). Statistically significant difference in the cells is measured in testing columns' answers distribution in the connection with the cell's sampling size.

How to read the tables (row percent is present in the tables):

Distribution of answers to the question “Equating all children, living in Lithuania, to 100%, please give the percentage of how many of them experience physical punishment (or beating/spanking as punishment) in their families” according age groups are presented in the table. 15-29 years old respondents more often believe that 65% - 80% of Lithuania’s children are physically punished, and 30 – 49 years old respondents more often believe that 85% - 100% of children experience physical punishment at home.

| | Till 20% of children | 25% – 40% of children | 45% – 60% of children | 65% – 80% of children | 85% – 100% of children |
|---------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Age groups | | | | | |
| 15 – 29 years old, N=147 | 24% | 16% | 26% | 26% | 8% |
| 30 – 49 years old, N=171 | 27% | 20% | 24% | 15% | 14% |
| 50 – 74 years old., N=203 | 28% | 20% | 27% | 17% | 8% |

1.6 Statistical error of the data

When judging on the results, one should take statistical error into account. Sampling respondents, instead of interviewing continuously, gives rise to it. This error is counted mathematically.

The next table presents errors, corresponding various number of respondents and distribution of the answers. The biggest statistical error in evaluating all respondents’ (521 people) answers, occurring because of sampling, is equal to $\pm 4.4\%$, with 95% possibility. If a smaller sample is analyzed, when using the results the maximum statistical error should be taken in the account.

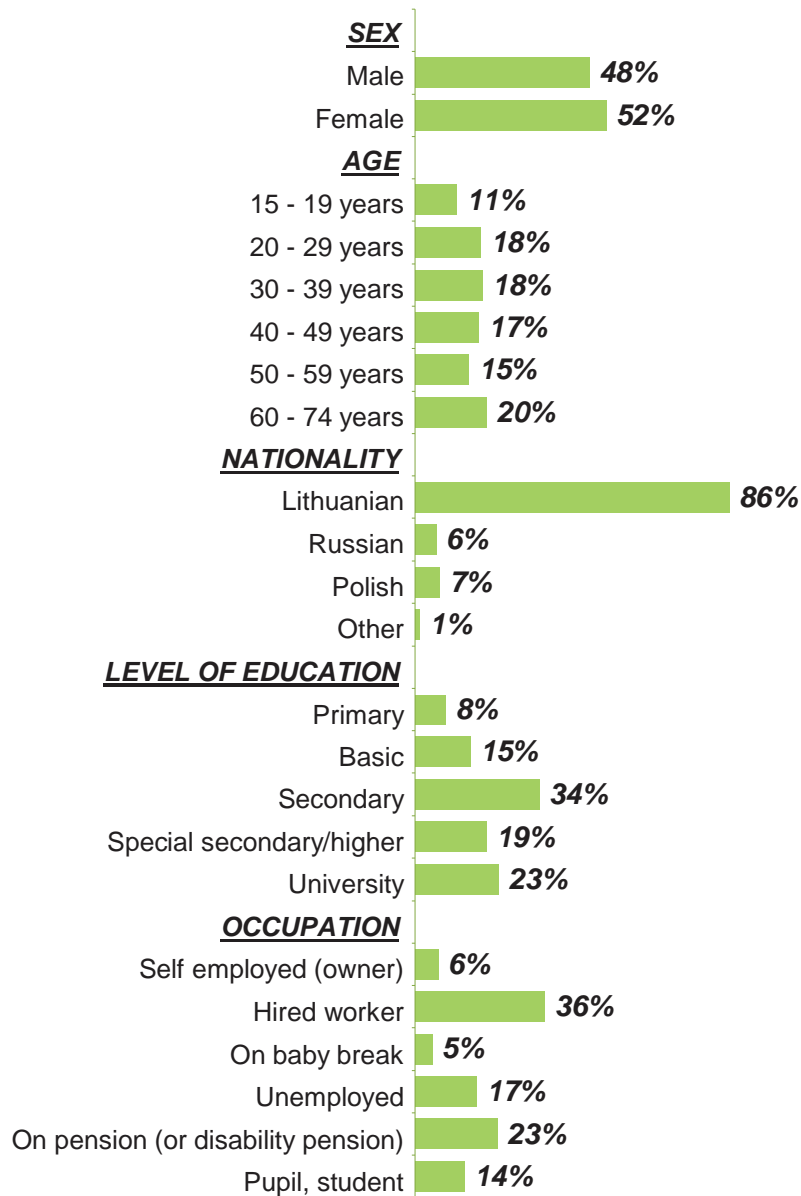
| Sample size | Distribution of answers | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|-------------------------|-------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| | 50 | 45/55 | 40/60 | 35/65 | 30/ 70 | 25/75 | 20/80 | 15/85 | 10/90 | 5/95 |
| 10 | 31 | 30.8 | 30.4 | 29.6 | 28.4 | 26.8 | 24.8 | 22.1 | 18.6 | 13.5 |
| 30 | 17.9 | 17.8 | 17.5 | 17.1 | 16.4 | 15.5 | 14.3 | 12.8 | 10.7 | 7.8 |
| 50 | 13.9 | 13.8 | 13.6 | 13.2 | 12.7 | 12 | 11.1 | 9.9 | 8.3 | 6 |
| 75 | 11.3 | 11.3 | 11.1 | 10.8 | 10.4 | 9.8 | 9.1 | 8.1 | 6.8 | 4.9 |
| 100 | 9.8 | 9.8 | 9.6 | 9.3 | 9 | 8.5 | 7.8 | 7 | 5.9 | 4.3 |
| 150 | 8 | 8 | 7.8 | 7.6 | 7.3 | 6.9 | 6.4 | 5.7 | 4.8 | 3.5 |
| 200 | 6.9 | 6.9 | 6.8 | 6.6 | 6.4 | 6 | 5.5 | 4.9 | 4.2 | 3 |
| 300 | 5.7 | 5.6 | 5.5 | 5.4 | 5.2 | 4.9 | 4.5 | 4 | 3.4 | 2.5 |
| 400 | 4.9 | 4.9 | 4.8 | 4.7 | 4.5 | 4.2 | 3.9 | 3.5 | 2.9 | 2.1 |
| 500 | 4.4 | 4.4 | 4.3 | 4.2 | 4.0 | 3.8 | 3.5 | 3.1 | 2.6 | 1.9 |

Example: Suppose 500 respondents answered the question about physical punishment as a method of educating. Say, 79% of them think that physical punishment should be used under no circumstances. It means that, with 95 % possibility, we can tell that the real value is in the interval $79\% \pm 3.5\%$.

2. Social-demographic characteristics of the respondents

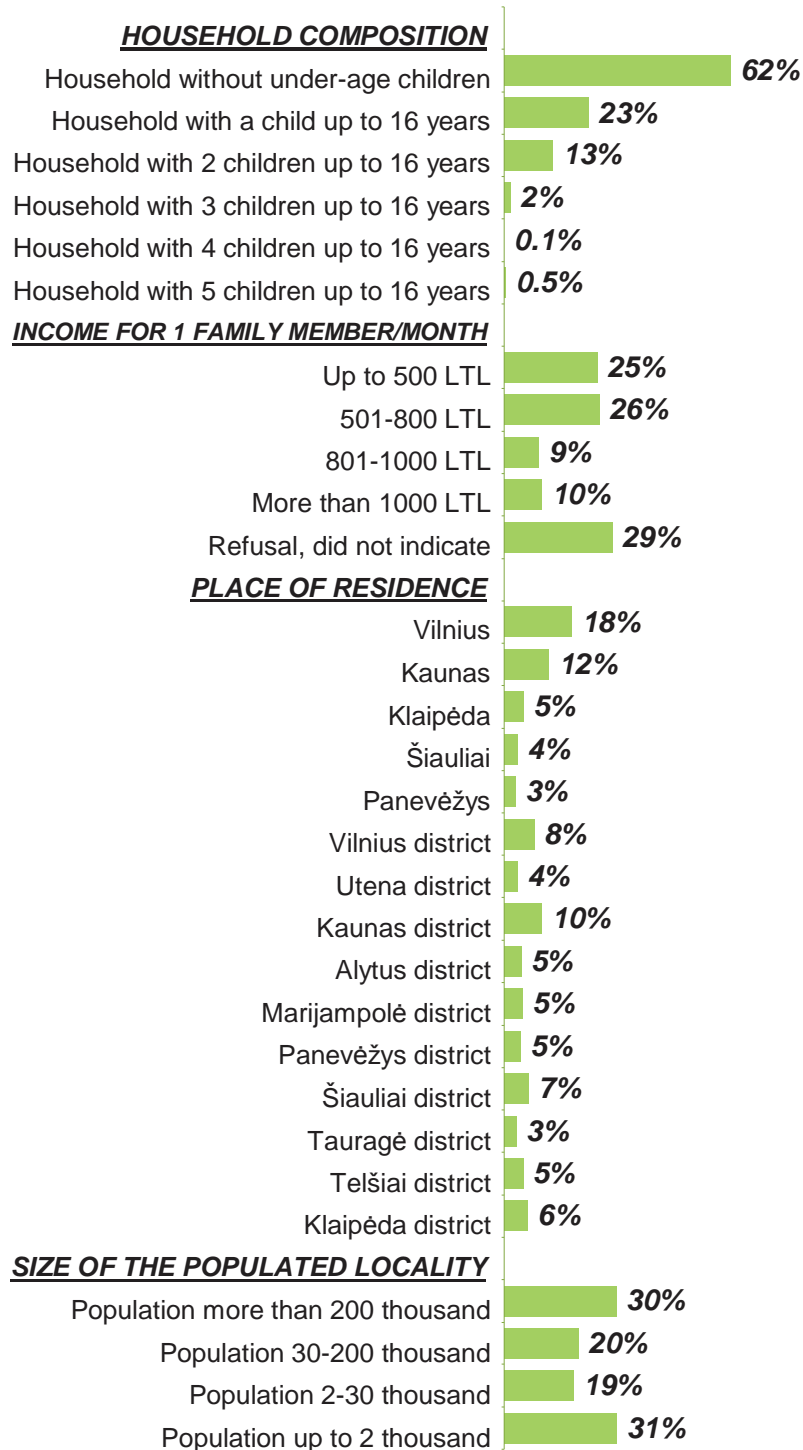
Social-demographic characteristics of respondents

% all respondents, N=521



Social-demographic characteristics of respondents

% all respondents, N=521



3. Results of the survey

3.1 Number of children, experiencing physical punishment in families

- Majority of Lithuanians believe that up to one half of children experience physical punishment at home-

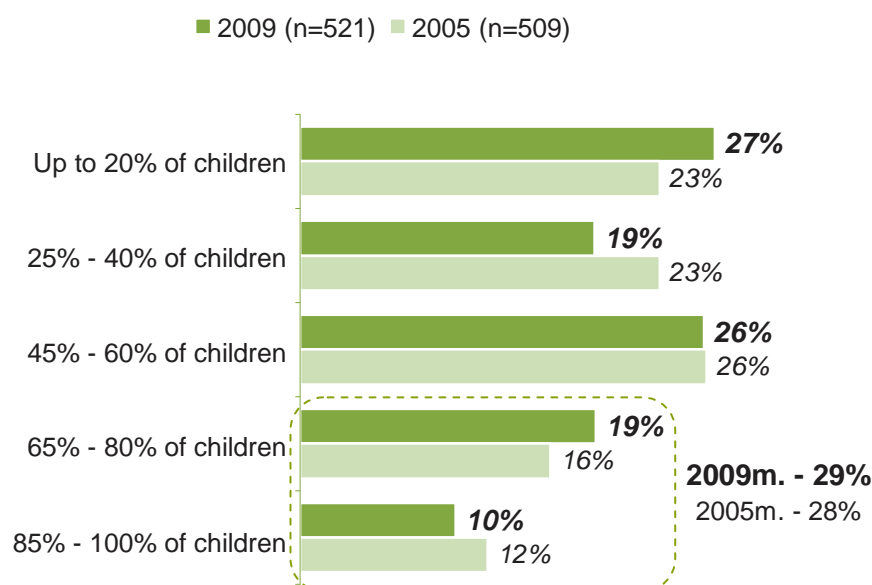
Thinking about physical punishment, mostly prevailing opinion in Lithuania is that up to 60% of children experience physical punishment at home. 27% of respondents believe that this kind of “educational” method is experienced by a less than 20% of children. Slightly more than a quarter (26%) of Lithuania’s inhabitants think that such kind of punishment is experienced by 45%-60% of children. One fifth (19%) of respondents believe that 25%-40% of Lithuania’s children are physically punished at home.

Whereas, one third (29%) of respondents believe that such punishment is practiced upon more than 65% Lithuania’s children.

Interesting to note, that 4% of surveyed inhabitants believe that all (100%) children in Lithuania experience physical punishment at home (beating/spanking is perceived as punishment). While, 2% of respondents are certain about the fact that children at home are not punished physically in any circumstances.

When comparing result of present survey with the results of the survey carried in 2005, it is noticeable that attitude of Lithuanians toward the percentage of children, experiencing physical punishment, have not changed.

Please estimate the percentage of children in Lithuania, experiencing physical punishment in their families?



Analysis of socio-demographic respondents' characteristics revealed some tendencies:

- ✓ Currently not working people, inhabitants of small towns (especially in Vilnius district) more often believe that there are up to 20% of children experiencing physical punishment in their homes;
- ✓ Young (15-29 years old) people and those of Lithuanian nationality more often indicated that physical punishment is addressed to 65% - 80% of children in Lithuania;
- ✓ 30-49 years old respondents and the residents of big cities more often than other participants of the survey expressed their opinion that 85% - 100% of Lithuania's children are physically punished at home.

3.2 Physical punishment as a method of educating children

- Respondents do not agree to the definition of physical punishment as a method of education -

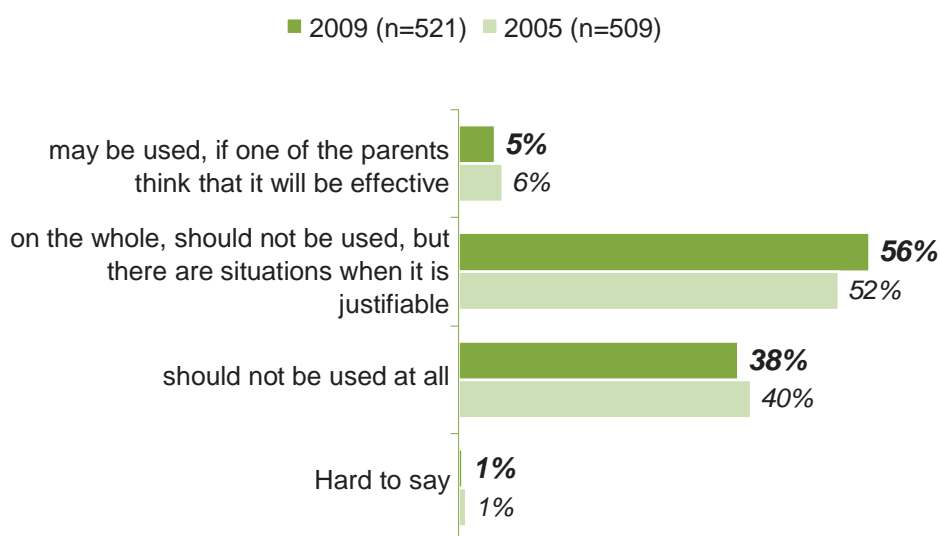
Almost 4 out of 10 (38%) respondents are certain that under no circumstances children can be physically punished at home.

More than a half (56%) of respondents do not agree that children should be educated using physical punishment as a method, but acknowledge that sometimes particular situations occur where this kind of method is justifiable.

Only 6% of Lithuanians are in favour of physical punishment as a method of educating children (with a condition, that one of the child's parents believe in effectiveness of such a method).

Comparing current results to the survey data of 2005, attitude toward physical punishment, as a method of education, have not shifted.

Physical punishment is a method of educating children, which...



Analysis of socio-demographic respondents' characteristics revealed some tendencies:

- ✓ Those respondents who are not raising minors (up to 16 years old) in their families more often agree that physical punishment can be used as method of education (with a condition that one of parents believe in effectiveness of such a method);
- ✓ Middle aged (30-49 years old) people, respondents with a secondary education, inhabitants of small towns (especially in Šiauliai and Klaipėda district) and those respondents who are raising at least one minor (up to 16 years old) in their

households more often agree with the statement that in general physical punishment should not be used as an educational method, but there are situation when its use is justifiable:

- ✓ More often against the physical punishment as a way of education (believe that such a method cannot be used at all) are respondents aged 15-29 years, respondents with primary or basic education, also inhabitants of villages (especially in Vilnius district).

- Respondents who are against of physical punishment as a method of educating children more often believe that there are quite small share of children in Lithuania, experiencing physical punishment as such -

The same tendency of 2005 is noticeable when analyzing survey results of 2009: more one person agrees to a physical punishment as an educating method, more he believes that there a big extent of children experiencing physical punishment.

36% of respondents, who believe that *physical punishment is one method of children's education*, believe that there are at least 65% of children experiencing the use of such a "method". Same share of physically punished children indicated 35% of respondents who believe that *physical punishment is justified only in exceptional cases*. Only one fifth (19%) of respondents, who *disagree* with a statement that *this kind of punishment can be used for educational purposes*, think that there are 65% - 100% of children physically punished in their families.

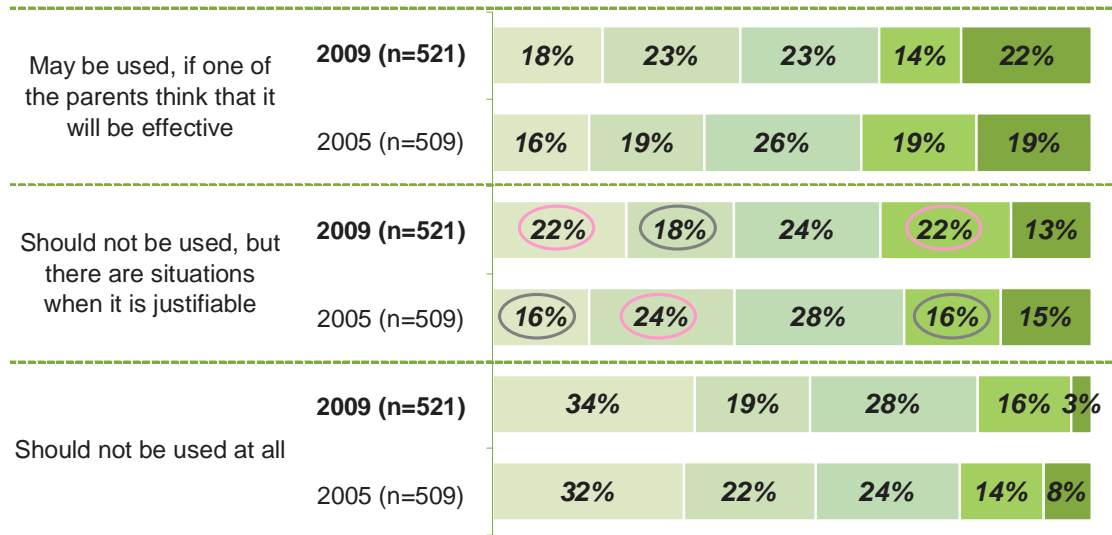
Every third respondent (34%) who *disagree that physical punishment can be used on educational purposes*, believes that only a small share (up to 20%) of children living in Lithuania are physically punished. A smaller percentage (18%) of those respondents, who *justify physical punishment as a method of education*, believe that only 20% of Lithuania's children experience physical punishment at home.

Comparing results of two surveys (fulfilled in 2009 and in 2005), some changes of attitude among those respondents who *justify physical punishment in certain cases*, are noticeable:

- in 2009 increased the percentage of those respondents who believe that only up to 20% of children are educated using physical punishment (in 2005 it was 16%, in 2009 - 22%);
- there is also an increase on the number of respondents, who consider that physical punishment is experienced by 65% - 80% of Lithuania's children (in 2005 it was 16%, in 2009 - 22%);
- percentage of those, who believe that 25% - 40% of children are punished physically, decreased (in 2005 it was 24%, in 2009 - 18%).

National percentage of children, experiencing physical punishment vs. the attitude towards physical punishment

- Up to 20% of children
- 25% - 40% of children
- 45% - 60% of children
- 65% - 80% of children
- 85% - 100% of children



Note: Statistically significant differences are marked in colours: statistically significantly more – pink colour, statistically significantly less – gray colour..

A Appendix. Response distribution in the social-demographic groups

A.1 Number of children, experiencing physical punishment in families

The next tables present distribution of response to the question “**equating all children, living in Lithuania, to 100%, please give the percentage of how many of them experience physical punishment (or beating/spanking as punishment) in their families**” according to the social-demographic characteristics of the respondents. Statistically significant differences are shaded in pink colour. Row percentage is present.

| | Up to 20% of children | 25% – 40% of children | 45% – 60% of children | 65% – 80% of children | 85% – 100% of children |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Sex | | | | | |
| Male, N=263 | 29% | 20% | 24% | 16% | 11% |
| Female, N=258 | 25% | 18% | 27% | 21% | 9% |
| Age group | | | | | |
| 15 – 29 years old, N=147 | 24% | 16% | 26% | 26% | 8% |
| 30 – 49 years old, N=171 | 27% | 20% | 24% | 15% | 14% |
| 50 – 74 years old, N=203 | 28% | 20% | 27% | 17% | 8% |
| Nationality | | | | | |
| Lithuanian, N=445 | 25% | 19% | 25% | 21% | 10% |
| Non-Lithuanian, N=76 | 33% | 16% | 33% | 8% | 10% |
| Education | | | | | |
| Basic, primary, N=112 | 27% | 19% | 31% | 16% | 6% |
| Secondary, N=175 | 28% | 17% | 24% | 20% | 10% |
| Special secondary, higher, N=127 | 28% | 17% | 25% | 20% | 10% |
| University, N=107 | 22% | 22% | 23% | 19% | 13% |
| Household composition | | | | | |
| Household without under-age children, N=340 | 29% | 18% | 26% | 19% | 8% |
| Household with at least one child up to 16, N=181 | 22% | 21% | 25% | 19% | 13% |
| Occupation | | | | | |
| Currently working, N=231 | 22% | 19% | 29% | 19% | 11% |
| Currently not-working, N=290 | 30% | 19% | 23% | 19% | 9% |
| Income for 1 family member per month | | | | | |
| Up to 500 LTL, N=125 | 27% | 19% | 29% | 18% | 7% |
| 501 – 800 LTL, N=132 | 32% | 17% | 22% | 19% | 10% |
| More than 801 LTL, N=117 | 19% | 21% | 30% | 23% | 7% |
| Did not indicate, N=147 | 26% | 19% | 23% | 16% | 15% |

| | Up to 20% of children | 25% – 40% of children | 45% – 60% of children | 65% – 80% of children | 85% – 100% of children |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Place of residence | | | | | |
| Vilnius city, N=96 | 20% | 26% | 26% | 17% | 12% |
| Kaunas city, N= 55 | 23% | 12% | 17% | 25% | 23% |
| Klaipėda city, N=29 | 22% | 39% | 24% | 4% | 11% |
| Šiauliai city, N=20 | 9% | 14% | 34% | 32% | 12% |
| Panevėžys city, N=18 | 29% | 6% | 22% | 43% | |
| Vilnius district, N=44 | 48% | 16% | 23% | 11% | 2% |
| Utena district, N=26 | 33% | 25% | 8% | 28% | 5% |
| Kaunas district, N=47 | 23% | 22% | 34% | 12% | 9% |
| Alytus district, N=27 | 13% | 3% | 21% | 54% | 9% |
| Marijampolė district, N=26 | 20% | 10% | 39% | 19% | 12% |
| Panevėžys district, N=25 | 37% | 11% | 43% | 3% | 7% |
| Šiauliai district, N=33 | 35% | 22% | 19% | 19% | 5% |
| Tauragė district, N=19 | 27% | 18% | 7% | 26% | 23% |
| Telšiai district, N=27 | 36% | 9% | 47% | 7% | 2% |
| Klaipėda district, N=29 | 28% | 29% | 25% | 16% | 2% |
| Size of populated locality | | | | | |
| Population more than 200 thousand, N=278 | 21% | 20% | 22% | 20% | 16% |
| Population of 30-200 thousand, N=212 | 24% | 18% | 30% | 21% | 6% |
| Population of 2-30 thousand, N=222 | 35% | 13% | 27% | 19% | 6% |
| Up to 2 thousand, N=297 | 28% | 22% | 26% | 16% | 8% |

A.2 Physical punishment as a method of educating children

The next tables present distribution of response to the question **“in your opinion, physical punishment is a method of educating children, which should be used if one of the parents approves it, should not be used in any cases, or should be used in situations when its use is justifiable”** according to the social-demographic characteristics of the respondents. Statistically significant differences are shaded in pink colour. Row percentage is present..

| | May be used, if one of the parents think that it will be effective | Should not be used, but there are situations when it is justifiable | Should not be used at all | Hard to say |
|--|--|---|---------------------------|-------------|
| Sex | | | | |
| Male, N=263 | 6% | 56% | 37% | 1% |
| Female, N=258 | 4% | 56% | 39% | 0,4% |
| Age group | | | | |
| 15 – 29 years old, N=147 | 2% | 53% | 45% | 0,4% |
| 30 – 49 years old, N=171 | 6% | 63% | 31% | 0,3% |
| 50 – 74 years old, N=203 | 7% | 52% | 40% | 1% |
| Nationality | | | | |
| Lithuanian, N=445 | 5% | 57% | 38% | 0,1% |
| Non-Lithuanian, N=76 | 4% | 52% | 41% | 3% |
| Education | | | | |
| Basic, primary, N=112 | 3% | 45% | 50% | 1% |
| Secondary, N=175 | 5% | 63% | 32% | 1% |
| Special secondary, higher, N=127 | 7% | 59% | 34% | |
| University, N=107 | 5% | 56% | 39% | |
| Household composition | | | | |
| Household without under-age children, N=340 | 7% | 51% | 41% | 1% |
| Household wit at least one child up to 16, N=181 | 1% | 65% | 34% | 0,3% |
| Occupation | | | | |
| Currently working, N=231 | 6% | 58% | 36% | 0,2% |
| Currently not-working, N=290 | 4% | 55% | 40% | 1% |
| Income for 1 family member per month | | | | |
| Up to 500 LTL, N=125 | 5% | 61% | 34% | |
| 501 – 800 LTL, N=132 | 5% | 53% | 42% | 0,5% |
| More than 801 LTL, N=117 | 6% | 50% | 43% | 1% |
| Did not indicate, N=147 | 5% | 59% | 36% | 1% |

| | May be used, if one of the parents think that it will be effective | Should not be used, but there are situations when it is justifiable | Should not be used at all | Hard to say |
|--|--|---|---------------------------|-------------|
| Place of residence | | | | |
| Vilnius city, N=96 | 7% | 58% | 33% | 2% |
| Kaunas city, N= 55 | 7% | 55% | 38% | |
| Klaipėda city, N=29 | 3% | 55% | 41% | 2% |
| Šiauliai city, N=20 | 8% | 47% | 45% | |
| Panevėžys city, N=18 | 6% | 62% | 32% | |
| Vilnius district, N=44 | | 42% | 57% | 1% |
| Utena district, N=26 | 5% | 67% | 28% | |
| Kaunas district, N=47 | 4% | 51% | 46% | |
| Alytus district, N=27 | | 50% | 50% | |
| Marijampolė district, N=26 | 3% | 68% | 29% | |
| Panevėžys district, N=25 | 14% | 40% | 46% | |
| Šiauliai district, N=33 | | 78% | 22% | |
| Tauragė district, N=19 | 9% | 51% | 40% | |
| Telšiai district, N=27 | 9% | 42% | 48% | |
| Klaipėda district, N=29 | | 75% | 25% | |
| Size of populated locality | | | | |
| Population more than 200 thousand, N=278 | 7% | 57% | 35% | 1% |
| Population of 30-200 thousand, N=212 | 5% | 53% | 41% | 1% |
| Population of 2-30 thousand, N=222 | 3% | 66% | 31% | |
| Up to 2 thousand, N=297 | 4% | 51% | 45% | 0,3% |

B Appendix. Questionnaire

1. Equating all children, living in Lithuania, to 100%, please give the percentage of how many of them experience physical punishment (or beating/spanking as punishment) in their families.

..... % of children experience physical punishment in Lithuania.

2. In your opinion, physical punishment is a method of educating children, which:
One answer.

2.1 may be used, if one of the parents think that it will be effective;

2.2 on the whole, should not be used, but there are situations when it is justifiable;

2.3 should not be used at all;

2.4 it is hard to say.