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Media Release: The law works well

Barnardos New Zealand today welcomed the court decision concerning the Masterton father recently convicted of assaulting his son.

“I believe this is the first reported case in which the new law relating to child discipline in the home has been tested in court and the law has worked well,” said Peter Gerrie, Acting Chief Executive of Barnardos NZ.

“Opponents of the law change are predictably alarmed, but they should examine the reported facts.”

“The child was grabbed so forcibly as to have been bruised. The mother of the child was sufficiently concerned to photograph the bruising and discuss the situation with others. Someone was sufficiently concerned by the photo and what the mother said as to file a report. The police were sufficiently concerned to prosecute. The father has acknowledged he acted in anger and pleaded guilty. The parents are now attending anger management and parenting courses,” Peter Gerrie continued. “Finally the judge has placed the father under supervision and given him some wise advice.”

“Under the old law, such situations could go unchallenged and sometimes serious abuse resulted. Bob McCroskrie of Family First may consider the result a disgrace, but I am glad that the law now protects children from assaults; it results in parents accepting that non-violent modes parenting are needed, and sees the courts provide support and supervision to parents who fall short of the new standard. All in all, a good result,” Peter Gerrie concluded.

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