Our Math Stories

BEFORE YOU READ: Is punishment appropriate at school? If so, what type of punishment? Look at the definition of the word “severe” (in the box below). What is an example of severe punishment?

My math teacher was very strict with his students. I was in third or fourth grade and we used to sit on the mat on the ground. For elementary level children in Nepal, schools do not have benches.

One day, I could not remember my multiplication table for sevens. My teacher punished me. He twisted both of my ears and lifted me off the ground. My ears were torn and bleeding, but I did not notice because I was crying so much.

I did not tell my parents about this incident. I used to sleep with my father. At night, my father accidentally touched my ear, and I screamed in pain. Then my father noticed that my ears were torn and there was dried blood around them. He asked me what happened. I explained the punishment I got at school.

The next day my father went to the principal’s office with me. He had a chat with the principal and the teacher about the severe punishment I received. The math teacher apologized to my father.

Since that day, I don’t feel great about math. I don’t hate it, but I don’t like it. Math is part of everyday life, so I have to deal with it.

AFTER YOU READ: In this story, who advocated for Renuka, and what did he do on her behalf? Have you ever advocated for your child at school? Tell the story of what happened. Research corporal punishment in the U.S. (see the box below). What do you think about it? How could you advocate for what you want?

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Is Corporal Punishment Legal in Schools in the U.S.?

What do you think? To look it up online, start by putting that question into google search. Try to find out if there is a federal law about corporal punishment or if it is a matter of state law. Find the Supreme Court case that addresses corporal punishment in school. What was it called? What was the Supreme Court’s decision? And what do you think? Should corporal punishment be legal in the U.S.? Who should decide?