

**609.377 MALICIOUS PUNISHMENT OF CHILD.**

Subdivision 1. **Malicious punishment.** A parent, legal guardian, or caretaker who, by an intentional act or a series of intentional acts with respect to a child, evidences unreasonable force or cruel discipline that is excessive under the circumstances is guilty of malicious punishment of a child and may be sentenced as provided in subdivisions 2 to 6.

Subd. 2. **Gross misdemeanor.** If the punishment results in less than substantial bodily harm, the person may be sentenced to imprisonment for not more than 364 days or to payment of a fine of not more than \$3,000, or both.

Subd. 3. **Enhancement to a felony.** Whoever violates the provisions of subdivision 2 during the time period between a previous conviction or adjudication for delinquency under this section or sections 609.221 to 609.2231, 609.224, 609.2242, 609.342 to 609.345, or 609.713, and the end of five years following discharge from sentence or disposition for that conviction or adjudication may be sentenced to imprisonment for not more than five years or a fine of \$10,000, or both.

Subd. 4. **Felony; child under age four.** If the punishment is to a child under the age of four and causes bodily harm to the head, eyes, neck, or otherwise causes multiple bruises to the body, the person may be sentenced to imprisonment for not more than five years or a fine of \$10,000, or both.

Subd. 5. **Felony; substantial bodily harm.** If the punishment results in substantial bodily harm, the person may be sentenced to imprisonment for not more than five years or to payment of a fine of not more than \$10,000, or both.

Subd. 6. **Felony; great bodily harm.** If the punishment results in great bodily harm, the person may be sentenced to imprisonment for not more than ten years or to payment of a fine of not more than \$20,000, or both.

**History:** 1983 c 217 s 4; 1984 c 628 art 3 s 11; 1988 c 655 s 2; 1989 c 290 art 6 s 16; 1990 c 542 s 18; 1994 c 636 art 2 s 37; 2000 c 437 s 14; 2023 c 52 art 6 s 16