



Report

Use of Corporal Punishment on Children

Survey of Canadians

May 11, 2026



Methodology

This week, we surveyed Canadians on their opinions on the use of corporal punishment on children.

Method

Online survey among respondents 18 years of age or older.
(Canadian sample: **n= 1,525**)

Respondents had the option of completing the survey in French and English and were randomly recruited using LEO's online panel.

Weighting

Results were weighted according to **age, gender, mother tongue, region, education and presence of children in the household** in order to ensure a representative sample of the Canadian population.

When

Data collection from **May 8 to May 11, 2026**.

Margin of error

For comparison purposes, a probability sample of this size yields a margin of error no greater than **±2.51%**, (19 times out of 20) for the sample.

Significant Differences

Data in bold **red** characters indicate a significantly lower proportion than that of other respondents. Conversely, data in bold **green** characters indicate a significantly higher proportion than that of other respondents.

Rounded data

The numbers presented have been rounded up. However, the numbers before rounding were used to calculate the sums presented and might therefore not correspond to the manual addition of these numbers.

Questions

Have questions about the data presented in this report? Please contact one of the following people:

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Notes

A more detailed methodology is presented in the Appendix.

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CANADA 2025

LEGER POLL
Published on
April 26, 2025

OFFICIALS RESULTS
2025 Canada
Federal Election

	43%	43.7%
	39%	41.3%
	8%	6.3%
	6%	6.3%
	2%	1.2%

BRITISH COLUMBIA 2024

LEGER POLL
Published on
October 18, 2024

OFFICIALS RESULTS
2024 British Columbia
Provincial Election

	46%	45%
	42%	43%
	9%	8%
Others	3%	4%

UNITED STATES 2024

LEGER POLL
Published on
November 4, 2024

OFFICIALS RESULTS
2024 United States
Presidential Election

	49%	50%
	49%	48%
Others	2%	2%

Key Highlights

Some of **the key highlights** of our survey...

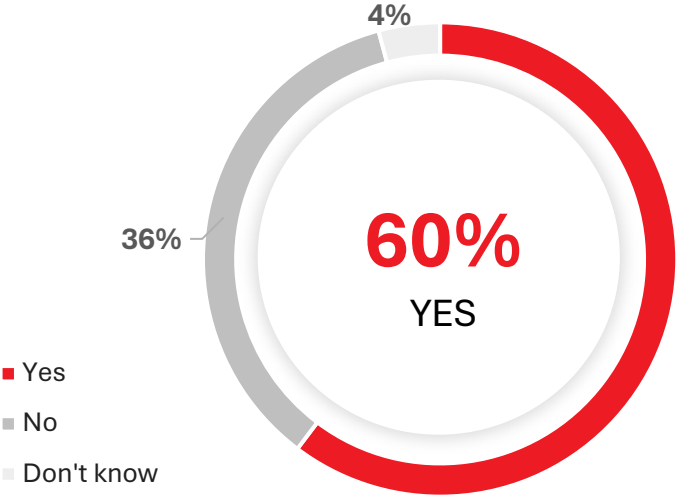
- **Six in ten Canadians (60%) say they experienced corporal or physical punishment as children**, with older Canadians (68% among those aged 55+) significantly more likely to report having experienced it.
- **A slight majority of Canadians (53%) believe corporal punishment toward children is unacceptable today, while 40% say it is acceptable at least in some situations.** Acceptance is significantly higher among Albertans (55%), Canadians who have received physical punishment as a child (52%), and men (46%), while Quebecers (64%) and women (59%) are more likely to consider it unacceptable.
- **Non-physical disciplinary measures are broadly accepted by Canadians, including taking away privileges (88%), using timeouts (81%), and isolating a child in their room to calm down (78%).** In contrast, physical forms of punishment are widely viewed as unacceptable, particularly hitting a child with an object (91% unacceptable) or slapping a child in the face (92% unacceptable). However, about one-third of Canadians still consider spanking (32%) or slapping a child on the hand, arm, or leg (35%) acceptable. Canadians who received physical punishment as children are more likely to find all tested disciplinary actions acceptable.
- When witnessing corporal punishment in public, 18% of Canadians say they would intervene directly, while 20% would report the situation without intervening. Meanwhile, **36% say they would not intervene because it is none of their business**, and 26% are unsure or prefer not to answer. Parents (21%) are significantly more likely to say they would intervene directly. Men (42%) are more likely to say they would not intervene because it is none of their business.

Detailed Results

Childhood Experience of Physical Punishment

Q1. When you were a child, did you receive corporal or physical punishment (spanking, slapping, etc.)?

Base: All respondents (n=1,525)

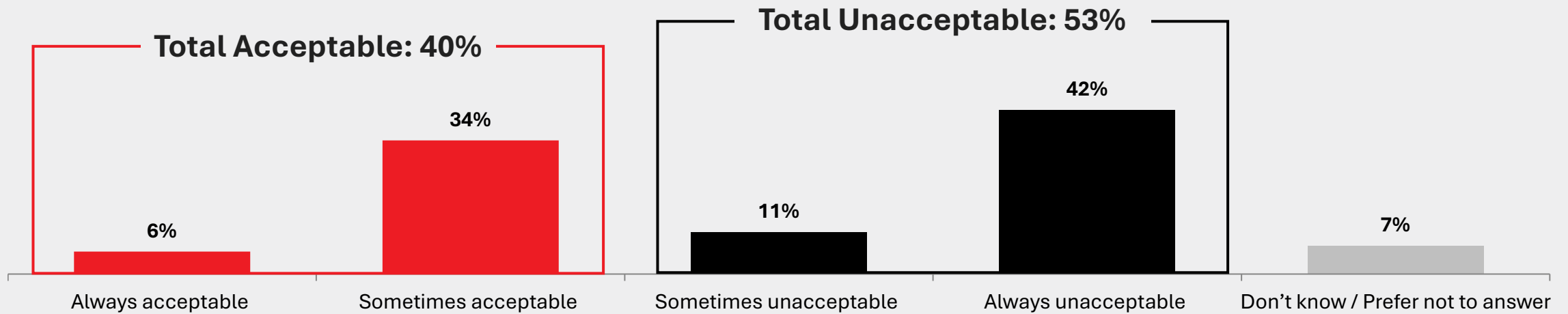


	Total CANADA	ATL	QC	ON	MB/SK	AB	BC	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+
Weighted n=	1,525	103	352	591	98	169	212	743	782	407	489	628
Unweighted n=	1,525	101	414	607	125	126	152	783	742	395	428	702
Yes	60%	53%	51%	61%	71%	74%	61%	63%	58%	45%	63%	68%
No	36%	44%	47%	34%	21%	22%	33%	32%	39%	48%	32%	30%
Don't know	4%	3%	2%	5%	8%	4%	5%	5%	3%	7%	5%	2%

Acceptability of Corporal Punishment Toward Children (1/2)

Q2. Do you think corporal or physical punishment toward children is acceptable or unacceptable today?

Base: All respondents (n=1,525)



Acceptability of Corporal Punishment Toward Children (2/2)

Q2. Do you think corporal or physical punishment toward children is acceptable or unacceptable today?

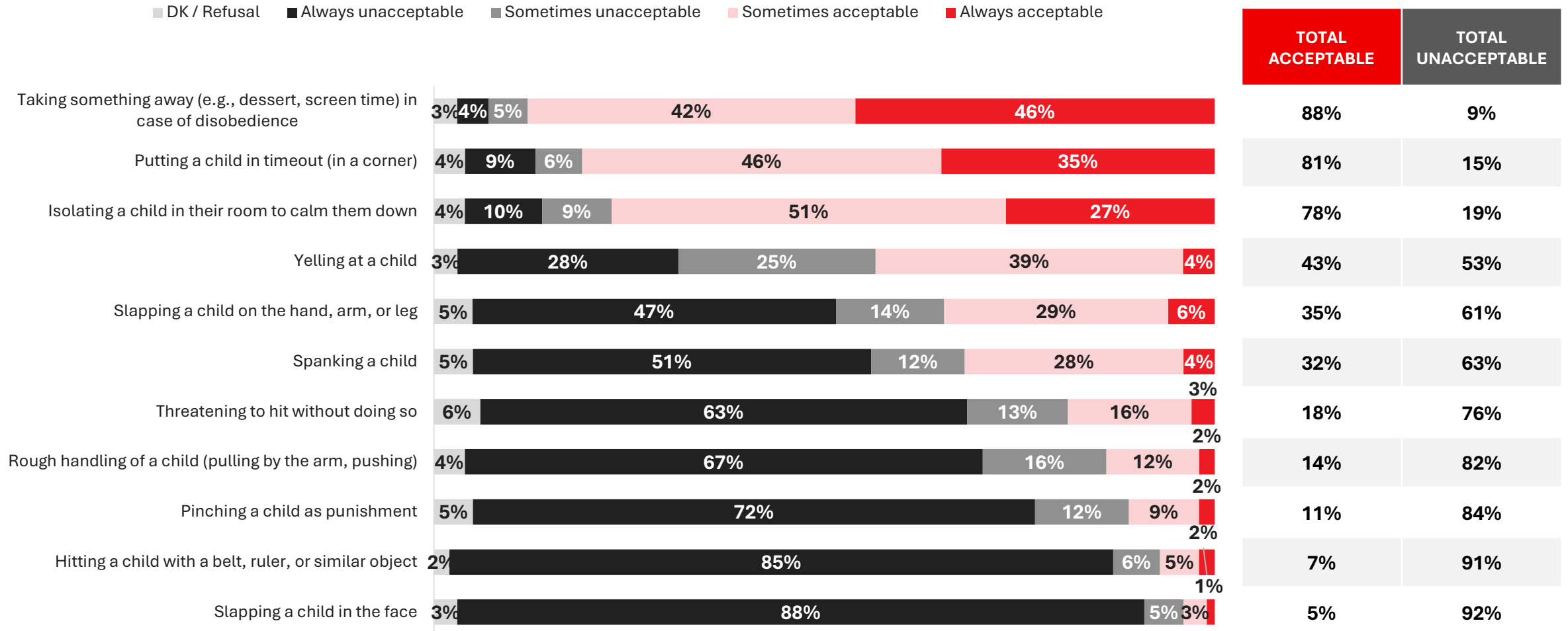
Base: All respondents (n=1,525)

	Total CANAD A	ATL	QC	ON	MB/SK	AB	BC	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Kids <18 at home now		Ever had kids, currently living with them or not		Received physical punishment as a child	
													Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Weighted n=	1,525	103	352	591	98	169	212	743	782	407	489	628	408	1,111	909	616	919	542
Unweighted n=	1,525	101	414	607	125	126	152	783	742	395	428	702	428	1,091	968	557	904	564
TOTAL ACCEPTABLE	40%	37%	32%	40%	48%	55%	41%	46%	34%	36%	41%	42%	37%	41%	41%	38%	52%	21%
Always acceptable	6%	6%	5%	5%	4%	12%	6%	9%	2%	5%	5%	7%	5%	6%	6%	5%	8%	2%
Sometimes acceptable	34%	31%	27%	35%	44%	42%	35%	37%	31%	32%	36%	35%	32%	35%	35%	33%	44%	20%
TOTAL UNACCEPTABLE	53%	60%	64%	53%	39%	38%	48%	47%	59%	54%	52%	53%	57%	51%	53%	52%	43%	70%
Sometimes unacceptable	11%	10%	8%	13%	10%	8%	13%	12%	10%	10%	12%	10%	13%	10%	11%	11%	11%	10%
Always unacceptable	42%	51%	56%	40%	29%	30%	36%	35%	49%	43%	41%	42%	45%	41%	43%	41%	32%	60%
Don't know	7%	3%	4%	7%	13%	8%	11%	7%	7%	10%	7%	6%	5%	8%	5%	10%	5%	8%

Acceptability of Disciplinary Actions Toward Children (1/2)

Q3. In your opinion, are the following disciplinary actions or behaviours toward children acceptable or unacceptable?

Base: All respondents (n=1,525)



Acceptability of Disciplinary Actions Toward Children (2/2)

Q3. In your opinion, are the following disciplinary actions or behaviours toward children acceptable or unacceptable?

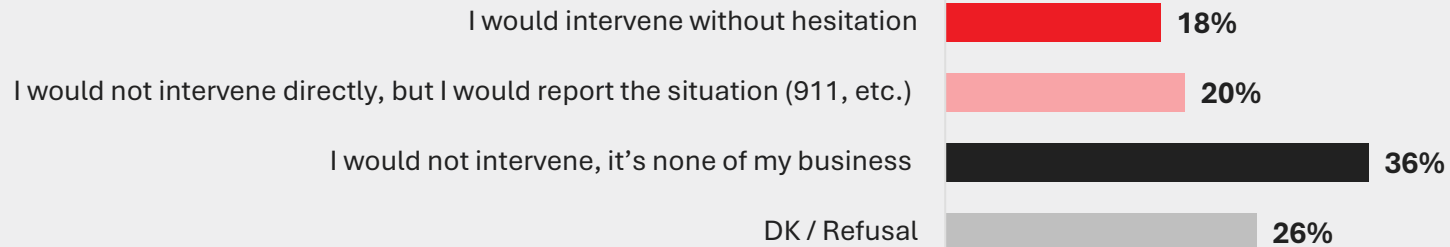
Base: All respondents (n=1,525)

% ACCEPTABLE	Total CANADA												Kids <18 at home now		Ever had kids, currently living with them or not		Received physical punishment as a child	
		ATL	QC	ON	MB/SK	AB	BC	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
<i>Weighted n=</i>	1,525	103	352	591	98	169	212	743	782	407	489	628	408	1,111	909	616	919	542
<i>Unweighted n=</i>	1,525	101	414	607	125	126	152	783	742	395	428	702	428	1,091	968	557	904	564
Taking something away (e.g., dessert, screen time) in case of disobedience	88%	91%	92%	87%	88%	87%	82%	87%	89%	82%	88%	91%	86%	89%	89%	86%	91%	85%
Putting a child in timeout (in a corner)	81%	77%	82%	81%	81%	84%	76%	80%	81%	77%	79%	85%	77%	82%	81%	80%	86%	73%
Isolating a child in their room to calm them down	78%	83%	88%	75%	76%	77%	67%	78%	78%	70%	76%	84%	69%	81%	77%	79%	83%	71%
Yelling at a child	43%	43%	36%	45%	52%	48%	42%	47%	39%	39%	47%	43%	45%	43%	44%	42%	51%	32%
Slapping a child on the hand, arm, or leg	35%	27%	36%	34%	33%	43%	32%	42%	28%	26%	33%	41%	30%	36%	36%	33%	45%	20%
Spanking a child	32%	32%	21%	33%	47%	43%	32%	37%	27%	28%	31%	36%	28%	34%	32%	33%	43%	15%
Threatening to hit without doing so	18%	15%	17%	19%	22%	20%	18%	23%	13%	17%	18%	20%	19%	18%	19%	18%	23%	11%
Rough handling of a child (pulling by the arm, pushing)	14%	12%	16%	13%	12%	16%	12%	19%	9%	15%	13%	14%	14%	14%	13%	15%	17%	9%
Pinching a child as punishment	11%	7%	14%	10%	17%	11%	9%	15%	8%	16%	10%	9%	12%	11%	10%	13%	13%	8%
Hitting a child with a belt, ruler, or similar object	7%	2%	6%	7%	12%	12%	6%	12%	3%	10%	7%	6%	8%	7%	6%	9%	9%	5%
Slapping a child in the face	5%	3%	7%	5%	3%	3%	2%	7%	3%	8%	5%	2%	8%	4%	5%	4%	6%	3%

Immediate Reaction to Witnessing Corporal Punishment in Public

Q4. If you saw a parent using corporal punishment (spanking, slapping, etc.) toward their child in a public place, what would your immediate reaction be?

Base: All respondents (n=1,525)



	Total CANADA	ATL	QC	ON	MB/SK	AB	BC	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Kids <18 at home now	Yes	No	Ever had kids, currently living with them or not	Yes	No	Received physical punishment as a child	Yes	No	
<i>Weighted n=</i>	1,525	103	352	591	98	169	212	743	782	407	489	628	408	1,111	909	616	919	542				
<i>Unweighted n=</i>	1,525	101	414	607	125	126	152	783	742	395	428	702	428	1,091	968	557	904	564				
I would intervene without hesitation	18%	20%	26%	15%	12%	14%	19%	16%	20%	21%	16%	18%	26%	15%	21%	14%	17%	21%				
I would not intervene directly, but I would report the situation (911, etc.)	20%	24%	20%	23%	14%	16%	18%	21%	20%	23%	21%	17%	26%	18%	20%	20%	16%	28%				
I would not intervene, it's none of my business	36%	32%	29%	37%	45%	38%	38%	42%	30%	34%	40%	34%	32%	37%	34%	38%	42%	27%				
DK / Refusal	26%	25%	25%	25%	29%	32%	25%	22%	30%	22%	23%	31%	16%	30%	25%	28%	26%	24%				

Respondent Profile

Respondent profiles

(Base n=1,525)

The table below presents the Canadian distribution of respondents before weighting.

Gender

	Unweighted	Weighted
Male	783	743
Female	742	782

Language (Mother Tongue)

	Unweighted	Weighted
French	364	301
English	1,053	1,125
Other	107	99

Age

	Unweighted	Weighted
18 to 34	395	407
35 to 54	428	489
55+	702	628

Province

	Unweighted	Weighted
British Columbia	152	212
Alberta	126	169
Manitoba/Saskatchewan	125	98
Ontario	607	591
Quebec	414	352
Atlantic	101	103

Our Credentials



Canada

Leger is a member of the [Canadian Research Insights Council \(CRIC\)](#), the industry association for the market/survey/insights research industry.



Europe

Leger is a member of [ESOMAR](#) (European Society for Opinion and Market Research), the global association of opinion polls and marketing research professionals.



America

Leger is also a member of the [Insights Association](#), the American Association of Marketing Research Analytics.



International

Leger is a member of the [Worldwide Independent Network of Market Research \(WIN\)](#), a global alliance of leading independent market research and polling firms that collaborate to share expertise, methodologies, and insights across diverse markets.

Our services

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Marketing research and polling

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Leger Analytics (LEA)

Data modelling and analysis

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Panel management

Leger Communities

Online community management

Leger Digital

Digital strategy and user experience

International Research

Worldwide Independent Network (WIN)

300
employees

185
consultants

8
offices

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