

Eyes on

Aggressive behaviours

More support,
for better prevention

PRACTITIONERS



CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE FOR CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING

Early Childhood Development

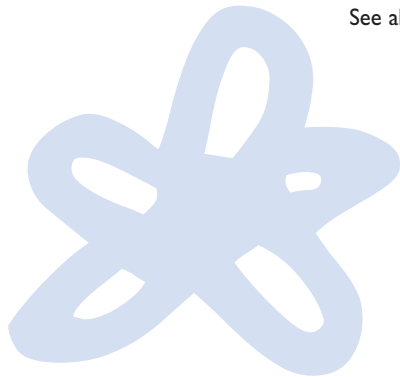


“In at-risk families, interventions to support both children and parents at the same time give better results.”

What do we know?

- Prenatal development affects the ability to control aggression.
- The use of tobacco, alcohol or drugs during pregnancy can have a permanent impact on the brain's ability to control violent behaviours.
- Abuse, lack of care or stimulation, and problems with bonding all contribute to aggression problems.
- In at-risk families, interventions to support both children and parents at the same time give better results.
- The earlier interventions are taken, the better the outcomes are likely to be.
- A small number of children who continue to be physically aggressive after the age of 4 will need specific professional help.
- Aggression that continues after the age of 4 or 5 predicts relationship problems in the teen years with peers and adults, poor social skills, academic difficulties, problems of depression and violent or non-violent delinquency.
- It has been shown that certain prenatal, peri-natal or early childhood programs can help prevent socialization problems.

See also: The information sheet for parents - *Aggressive Behaviours (2) When should we be worried?*



Paying attention to...

What can be done?

DURING PREGNANCY

... signs that identify young at-risk mothers (such as young age, low education level, underprivileged environment, poor social network, mental health problems).

... the mother's stress level and the quality of her environment during pregnancy.

- Ensure young at-risk mothers get the medical follow-up, and material and social support they need.
- Inform parents about behaviours that are risky during pregnancy.
- Encourage the mother to develop healthy lifestyle habits and to eat well during pregnancy.

DURING THE FIRST YEAR OF LIFE

... the baby's health and to the care and stimulation provided in the family and in child care.

... babies whose care is especially demanding (difficult temperament, frequent colic, etc.).

... the training of staff and their availability to respond to the baby's distress.

- Provide babies with regular medical follow-up and a caring and stimulating environment.
- Help prevent child maltreatment by informing parents about child development and children's needs.
- Offer steady support to young parents who are poor or living in difficult conditions; give them priority access to quality child care.

IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

... children who have problems with aggression at school and at home.

... children whose parents have anti-social values.

... children who do not pay much attention to other children, or who have problems with language, or are hyperactive or impulsive.

... children who are isolated from others or who are rejected by adults or peers.

- Set up disciplinary measures and appropriate prevention programs (such as Incredible Years and Triple P).
- Stimulate language development and social skills, as well as problem solving, negotiation and anger-management skills.
- Don't exclude or group together children who have problems of aggression.



Information

The Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development identifies and summarizes the best scientific work on the social and emotional development of young children. It disseminates this knowledge to a variety of audiences in formats and languages adapted to their needs.

For a more in-depth understanding of aggression in early childhood, consult our experts' articles in the Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development, available free of charge at www.child-encyclopedia.com.

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