

Eyes on

Aggressive behaviours (1)

Better management through understanding

PARENTS



CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE FOR CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING

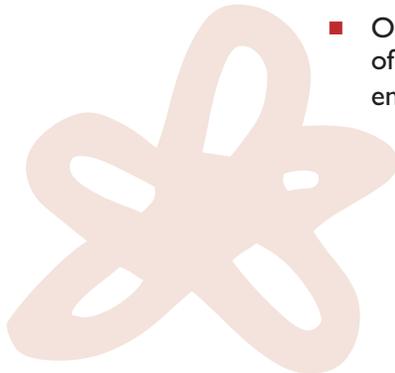
Early Childhood Development



“Early childhood is a critical period for learning to control aggressive behaviours.”

What do we know?

- The brain's ability to control aggressive behaviours depends on the quality of prenatal care and on care the child receives in early childhood (0 to 5 years).
- Early childhood is a critical period for learning to control aggressive behaviours.
- From the age of 2 months, infants display bad temper. Most babies will bite, hit or pull hair as soon as they are able to.
- Before the age of 3 most boys and girls will use physical aggression. These behaviours are most frequent between the ages of 2 and 3.
- Children use physical aggression when they have strong emotions (such as anger) or simply as a way to get what they want.
- Little girls stop using physical aggression sooner than do boys.
- Little girls use indirect aggression (for example, say bad things about a friend) sooner and more frequently than boys.
- Once children have developed language and social skills, most of them will no longer use physical aggression by the time they enter school.



Paying attention to...

What can be done?

- ... the quality of lifestyle during pregnancy.
 - Avoid stress and stay away from smoking, alcohol and other toxic substances during pregnancy.
- ... the quality of care that helps the baby's brain to develop normally.
 - Choose a child-care environment that provides effective care and stimulation for infants.

- ... how others react to the child's aggression (for example, laughing, tolerance, etc.).
 - Make sure that interactions between small children are closely supervised.
- ... what form the aggression takes – physical, verbal, or indirect.
 - Explain clear rules to discourage aggressive behaviours.
- ... the emotions that trigger the young child's aggressive behaviours.
 - Encourage the child to express emotions verbally and to develop sensitivity to others.

- ... the disciplinary approach adopted.
 - Apply age-appropriate punishments that promote learning (for example, consoling the victim, repairing any damage done, saying sorry to each other, etc.).
 - Help the child find other ways besides aggression to get what he or she wants.
- ... what the child receives as a result of aggressive behaviours.
 - Make sure that the child does not benefit from the aggressive behaviour in any way.





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.

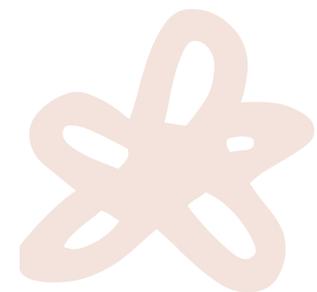
For a more in-depth understanding of aggression in early childhood, consult our experts' articles in the Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development, available free of charge at www.child-encyclopedia.com.

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