



# Aggression

Aggressive behaviors are learned. Responsive care givers establish an atmosphere of cooperation and caring. **You can reduce aggression.**

## Leave your anger at the door

Many things can cause us to be upset: oversleeping, an argument with a spouse, even losing your keys. If you allow this anger to intrude into your relationships with children, you may confuse them and leave them feeling guilty.

## Identify your own angry feelings

Dealing calmly with children when they misbehave is important. But sometimes we still feel anger. Reassure the children that you are angry at the situation or behavior and not at them.

## Let children tell you how they feel

Sometimes our projections about children's feelings are clouded by how we feel about the situation. Help children recognize and label their own feelings. Say, "You seem angry to me. What's going on?"

## Accept children's right to have angry feelings

But do not accept aggressive behaviors. Don't ignore hitting, pinching, slapping, biting or other violent acts. Say, "Tina, I understand you are angry right now, but I can't let you hurt yourself or Ben."

## Help find alternatives to aggressive behavior

Encourage them to use words to communicate their needs. Say, "Ted, tell Stephanie you want your book back."

## Help children recognize angry feelings

And the behaviors that result from the feelings. Point out the cause-and-effect relationship that exists between somebody else's actions and their own feelings. Say, "Mark felt angry when he tore up your paper, Matthew."

## **E**xamine your Child's environment

for potential sources of frustration and accidental anger.

How crowded are the play spaces? Are there enough materials? Do children have enough time to get involved in play? Are there enough adults to provide positive attention to children?

Remember...

**Anger grows**

**out of**

**frustration.**

**Aggression**

**grows out of**

**powerless**

**ness.**

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## **S**omething else to consider...

If a parent or other adult in the home does not vent frustration or redirect anger in non-violent ways, a child does not have an opportunity to learn this skill.

Adults as well as kids need a healthy outlet to deal with frustration. Parents must take care of themselves in order to be able to take care of their children to the best of their ability.



**The Center for Parent Involvement** (FCPI) was funded by the U.S. Department of Education; Goals 2000, Educate America Act from 1994-1999. Guided by an advisory board of parents and professionals, the FCPI's goal was to tap the power of parents.

The FCPI gathered information on parent needs, coordinated the information, and created a series of resources organized by theme, including fact sheets for parents and professionals, "Beyond the Basics" resources, and resource identification lists. Many of the resources have been translated into Spanish language versions, and every effort has been made to preserve the meaning and flavor of the original English documents. This series of materials provides a wealth of current information for both parents and providers; the complete set of resources can be obtained in PDF format on the Department of Child and Family Studies Website at [www.fmhi.usf.edu/cfs/dares/fcpi](http://www.fmhi.usf.edu/cfs/dares/fcpi). The staff of the FCPI are hopeful that their work will continue to help children get ready to learn for many years to come.

The series' themes include:

- Family Empowerment
- Parent Involvement
- Parenting Support
- School Readiness
- Violence in the Lives of Children
- Transition to Kindergarten

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Parent Support Series, Parent Tip Sheets, #6: Aggression.

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