

# Aggression In Children

**A**

**ANGER** children who are feeling upset and mad may at times act aggressively. Impulse control is hard and not acting on feeling is a skill that takes years to learn. Recognize the feeling a child may be having and tell the child what you think they may be feeling. "You sound mad", "you look upset", "you seem to be frustrated". This labeling can show a child you understand them and help them to use words instead of actions.

**G**

**GOOD ACTIVITIES** Children need ways to tell you what they are feeling. Words, drawing pictures, being loud, hitting something soft like a pillow gives them something to do rather than hit or kick or behave aggressively.

**G**

Children **GROW** in stages of development. There are certain times when children are learning new skills and are easily frustrated. This can lead to aggressive behavior. Take a parenting class or read a child development book so you can recognize the stages of development your children are in.

**R**

**ROUTINES** help children know what is expected of them and what they can expect of the environment around them. Knowing what comes next and where things are can help children feel more calm and secure.

**E**

Children who are **EXCITED** about an activity, a game, a video, or a toy can become very physical in their play and that can lead to aggressiveness. It is not intended to hurt anyone

**S**

**SAFETY** is a factor to consider if children are behaving aggressively. Do children feel they have to be aggressive to protect themselves? Do they feel the adults won't protect them and they have to watch and perhaps attack to keep themselves safe? Children need to know the adults in their lives are there to keep them safe from other children or adults

**S**

**SPACE** are children crowded together? Too many children in a small space and too many children with too few things to play with can cause children to become aggressive. Loud and constant activity can wind up some children and make it hard for them to be calm. Fighting may result.

**I**

Children who are **IGNORED** may become angry and aggressive. If they feel their needs are not being heard and responded to, they may resort to acting out to get an adult's attention. Listening to children and responding to their needs tells children they are important and they do not need to hurt someone to make an adult pay attention.

**O**

Give children a way **OUT** - a place and time to act on their frustration, anger and sadness. Feelings have energy and children need to have a way to release that energy without hurting anyone or themselves. Jumping, yelling, running, climbing can help some children to release their aggression without hurting anyone.

**N**

**NEED** such as hunger, thirst, tiredness, being too hot or too cold, having to wait, and being bored can cause children to act aggressively. Help children by meeting their physical and emotional needs so they do not lose control and act in ways unacceptable to adults.

## BOOKS FOR ADULTS

- The Explosive Child by Dr. Ross Greene
- The Wonder of Boys by Michael Gurian Ph.D
- Parenting the strong Willed Child by Forehand and Lory