

AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIORS

Definition:

Actions or words that threaten or cause physical or emotional harm to others or to self.

Behavior:

Why could this be happening?

- Aggressive behavior generally stems from an inability to control behavior or from a misunderstanding of what behaviors are appropriate.
- If a child is HALT (hungry, angry, lonely, or tired).
- Illness (a child may become aggressive when experiencing pain or physical discomfort).
- Exposure to violent/aggressive behavior by others in the home or by watching TV or movies with violent content.
- A child is not able to express wants, needs or feelings by using words.

Typical Development:

- Occasional outbursts of aggression are common and even normal.
- A child under age 3 who is unable to use words to communicate will typically use aggression to get what he/she wants.
- Once a child gains the verbal skills to communicate with other children and adults effectively (usually between the ages of 2 - 3), the amount of aggression should decrease significantly.

When to be Concerned:

- If there is a pattern or an increase in the number (frequency) of aggressive incidents.
- If the aggressive behavior impacts the child's ability to make friends.
- If the child is unable to verbally communicate basic needs/wants by age 2 ½.
- If the child significantly injures himself or others intentionally.

Possible Resources:

Help Me Grow, Early Childhood Family Education, pediatrician, occupational therapist, mental health professional

