

Aggression is fairly common in young toddlers and preschoolers.

Some children are aggressive because they have not been taught non-aggressive ways to get their own way. Others do it because they want to be independent or because they have not learned to share. Young children may bite, hit, push or fight in some way.

Try to figure out why your child is being aggressive.

For example, is it an attempt to assert independence, a response to frustration or is your child learning aggressive behavior by watching other children be aggressive with one another, or perhaps even becoming aggressive because other children are "starting it first?"

Make it a rule that there is "No hurting" others.

"Be gentle" is something most young children have to learn - with pets, toys, friends and people in general.

Try to anticipate trouble and change the situation in advance to avoid unnecessary frustration.

When your child does become aggressive, **try and stay calm** yourself, even though this is often difficult.

When you discipline your child for being aggressive, **be firm and consistent, but don't use physical or verbal aggression** as part of your response. Stopping the behavior by taking your child aside or by withdrawing a favorite toy is a better approach with a child who is already inclined to be physically aggressive.

Try to help your child put his feelings into words if you think your child is being aggressive because he can't communicate feeling of frustration. This simple approach can reduce at least some of the aggression with many children.

Try to give your child as many choices and decisions to make as you can, such as which T-shirt to wear or whether to have toast or cereal. This will help your child feel she has some control in life.

Always, always make a point of complimenting your child's behavior when he is managing well.

Children with aggressive tendencies can go a long time between compliments if the adults around him don't take the time to recognize good behavior as well as the aggression.



Although aggressive behavior is disturbing for parents, it usually starts to decrease by the age of three.

At this age, children have better control over their feelings, and have learned to put what they're wanting into words.

Here are some other reasons why children may show frequent aggressive behavior:

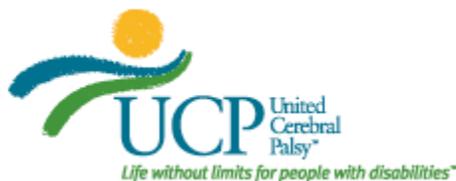
**** A child who is regularly exposed to family arguments** may come to think aggression is an appropriate way to respond.

**** Frequent or severe punishment** is likely to increase a child's aggression.

**** If aggression is rewarded** by giving the child her own way, she can learn that aggressive behavior works to her advantage.

**** A child who isn't receiving enough attention** or whose emotional needs are not looked after is less likely to care about the feelings of others, and be more prone to aggressive behavior.

If your child is three years old, and still isn't learning to control her aggression or doesn't seem to care about the feelings of others, it is important to **get some help**. A pattern of aggressive behavior is easier to change at a younger age than if it is ignored until your child is older. Also, seek help if the quality of your family life is really suffering because of your child's aggressive behavior. Consult your child's doctor for an appropriate referral if you have any concerns.



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**Understanding Disabilities
Creating Opportunities**

How to Help and Understand Children Who are



Aggressive

Some children are very aggressive, even as toddlers and preschoolers. Many need extra attention from parents and caregivers to learn less aggressive ways of behaving. Here are several tips to help you manage a child's aggressive behavior.

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