



Peaceful Ways to Prevent Aggression

MYTH

Children are aggressive on purpose to hurt another child or adult.

FACT

- Children use aggression as a means of communication, especially where they are lacking the skills to express their wants and needs.
- These can be teachable moments as children are learning social and play skills, such as how to share and navigate their emotions.

MYTH

The environment does not affect whether a child is aggressive.

FACT

- Children are learning how to navigate their environment (ex., noise level, lighting, play spaces, overcrowding).
- Having a calm, quiet space can decrease aggression in children.

MYTH

There should be consequences for children who are aggressive.

FACT

- Children use aggression as a reactive behaviour to express their emotions towards a situation (e.g., change of routine, needing support, reassurance, or wanting something they cannot have, etc.)
- Emphasis should be on co-regulation: helping the child work through their big emotions.

MYTH

School age children should have the skills to manage their anger without aggression.

FACT

- School age children use aggression as a means to express anger or a loss of control over a situation because they do not yet have the skills to act otherwise.
- Teaching replacement behaviours can help them build these skills.

A KIND AND CURIOUS EDUCATOR RESPONSE— RATHER THAN A PUNITIVE CONSEQUENCE— IS ESSENTIAL TO REDUCE AGGRESSION AND SUPPORT EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

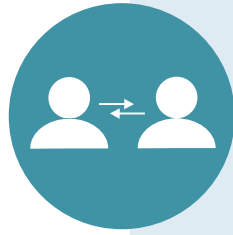
Move quickly, calmly and confidently when intervening between two children.
If you need to pick up the child, do it calmly and not out of anger.

Be mindful of your tone, facial expression, and body language.
They should display kindness and support.

Try the following based on developmental skill level and the child:



- Teach children to recognize and express emotions, wants, and needs
- Redirect to a calm down area/ bin/ backpack, etc.



- Engage in educator-led play
- Have activities of high interest
- Have multiples of the same toy



- Comment on what the child is trying to do
- Label and validate emotions
- Stay close (approximately at arm's length)



- Give positive attention when they are not being aggressive
- Narrate what you would like them to do



Be mindful of:

- Crowded play spaces
- Noise level and lighting
- Plan and reduce wait times

Use:

- Visuals
- Fidgets



Model language:

- "I'm mad"
- "I feel sad today..."
- "I didn't like that"
- "My turn"
- "I had that first"
- "I need space"