

# Aggression



Aggressive behaviors are learned. Responsive care givers and parents can establish an atmosphere of cooperation and caring, and **reduce aggression** by following these helpful tips.



## **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, but that wasn't a good way for Mark to express his anger."



## **Examine 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 powerlessness***



## **Something 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.