



Comfort Play & Teach



Dealing with Aggressive Behaviour

Your Preschooler (36 months to 48 months):

Every day your preschooler is learning new rules when playing with other children, and because other children have their own ways of playing and interacting with others, your child is also learning about compromises and negotiating in play. It is important that your child be aware of boundaries and have experience with finding alternatives and solutions when problems in play arise. Act as a buffer when you can to help your child navigate these new social situations. At this age, aggressive behaviours should be replaced with your child using his words, or finding a trusted adult to help him manage his feelings.

- Make sure your child is aware of your expectations about manners and rules and what the possible age-appropriate consequences will be for not following them. When your rules are clear and relevant and you remain consistent in applying the rules and the consequences, then your child is more likely to follow them and carry them out in his daily routines and interactions with his peers. It is important to remember that when your child has behaved inappropriately to not isolate him, but rather, redirect him to another activity where you can talk about the inappropriate behaviour.
- If your child does happen to hurt another child while you are monitoring their play, take your child aside and describe to her why her behaviour was inappropriate. Ask her how she thinks she should have handled it and allow her to be a part of making the other child feel better. Then allow her to return to her play. Making your child a part of the solution allows her to understand that you are more upset about the behaviour, and not upset with her. Give your child clear instructions on what your expectations are, and let her know that you are watching. If your child continues with the inappropriate behaviour, redirect to another activity instead of stopping her play altogether. If she has behaved appropriately and used the solutions you both spoke about, let her know that you are proud of her efforts.
- Involve your child by having him apologize for his actions. When your child takes responsibility for his actions, then he begins to develop empathy, a skill that is crucial to understanding the cues of others and being able to move forward in play after the incident has happened. This will also encourage your child to engage in more appropriate play behaviours in the future.

Comfort

When your child has acted out in a specific situation or towards another child help him collect his thoughts and then let him be part of the process of making things right. This will empower him to make choices that are safe for everyone.

Play

Engage in role-playing games with your child and act out challenging situations. This will act as a safe practice time for your child to learn how to behave if a similar situation arises in their life.

Teach

Help your child identify what she has done wrong if she misbehaves. This will help her understand what to do in the future and how to handle her current situation.