

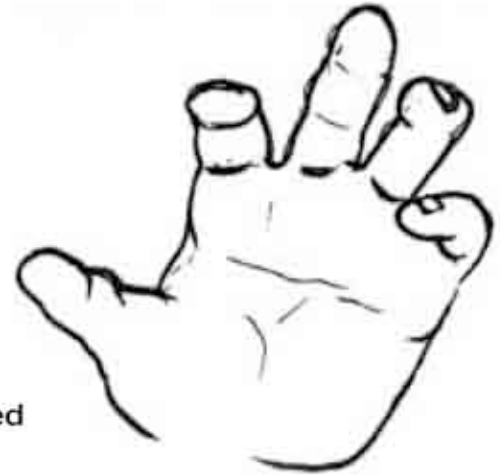
Aggression in Young Children

Aggression is defined as a hostile action **intended to cause harm to others.**

Children are easily frustrated and display aggression differently according to their ages.

There are two forms of aggression:

- Instrumental aggression that is object-oriented
- Hostile, or relational, aggression that is person-oriented



Birth – 3 years

This period is when children are concerned with ownership rights and possession.

- Aggression is most often object-oriented.
- This is called instrumental aggression.
- It is directed at obtaining something.

EXAMPLES OF INSTRUMENTAL AGGRESSION:

- Hitting a child to get the cookie.
- Pushing a child down to get to play with the wagon.
- Grabbing a doll away from another child.
- Pushing to get to sit beside the car window.

3 - 8 years old

At this age, children gain the cognitive and verbal skills to engage in new forms of aggressive behavior. They can understand the consequences of aggressive behavior. If the aggressive behavior is positively reinforced, it can strengthen the frequency or intensity of the behavior or accomplish both.

- Although instrumental (object-oriented) aggression still exists, aggression also becomes person-oriented.
- Aggression is more likely hostile or relational and is aimed at hurting another person to get dominance or revenge.

EXAMPLES OF HOSTILE AGGRESSION:

- Beating up a child who won't do what the child wants him or her to do (dominance).
- Destroying a sibling's earphones because he or she won't let the younger child listen to the radio or CD (revenge).
- Disseminating gossip about a child who is a menace to a friendship.

For more about ACT, visit
www.ActAgainstViolence.org

