

Chapter 1 : Aggressive Behavior in Toddlers – ZERO TO THREE

2. Remove your child from the situation: Sometimes you need to take your child out of a situation to help him regain control of his emotions. If you're at the grocery store and your toddler is having a tantrum and kicking at the shopping cart because you're not buying the cereal he likes, you can say, "You're making too much noise."

Kiwi Street Studios Ask any parent whether she wants her child to be an aggressive person and you are likely to get more than one answer. After all, aggression is associated with both approved and disapproved behavior in our minds and in our society—both with the energy and purpose that help us to actively master the challenges of life and with hurtful actions and destructive forces. Most of us want our children to be able to take a stand for themselves when others treat them roughly. We hope that they will not start fights but if attacked will be able to cope with the attacker and not be overwhelmed. According to developmental theory, aggressive impulses or drives are born in the human child and are a crucial aspect of the psychological life-force and of survival. In the course of healthy development, these drives are normally expressed in various behaviors at different ages and, with assistance from parents and others, are gradually brought under the control of the individual—moderated, channeled, and regulated, but by no means stamped out. Aggression Is Part of Healthy Development During the first year, infants are not often thought of as behaving aggressively, and yet encounters in which an infant pushes, pulls, or exerts force against another are signs of the outwardly directed energy and assertiveness that reflect the healthy maturation of aggression. But the 9-month old who pulls your hair does not know that it might hurt—it is done in the same exuberant, playful spirit that is seen in other activities. Even then, he does not know enough about cause and effect to understand the consequences of his action or how to regulate this behavior toward others. When your month-old smashes a fragile object, he is caught up in the pleasure of assertiveness, not anticipating its result. They believe this is so because when he is scolded, he looks ashamed. What the toddler understands is not that he has hurt someone or destroyed something but that he has earned the disapproval of his parents. Conversely, when praised for being gentle with another, he knows and is pleased that he is approved of for that behavior at that moment. It will take time and many reminders before he can understand that not hitting or biting applies to many situations. The differences between a kiss and a bite, between patting and hitting, between nudging and pushing someone down are not automatically understood and children need many reminders: If you understand what an infant or toddler or a 4-year-old is capable of, you can adjust your own actions and teaching to realistic expectations and save yourself worry and frustration. On the other hand, if your 4-year-old has frequent aggressive outbursts and seems not to be concerned about the effect of his aggression, or even seems to enjoy hurting others, you are correct in being worried and in seeking ways to help him toward healthier behavior. While there is no exact recipe, here are 12 suggestions that may help you to provide your child with the guidance he needs. Limits are part of loving. Children who feel loved want to please their parents most of the time and will respond to their guidance. Ask yourself what might have happened that set him off—your behavior or that of another person, or something else in the situation; perhaps he is overtired or not feeling well physically. Being rushed, abruptly handled, being denied something he wants, even being unable to do something he has tried to do with a toy or physical activity often produces feelings of frustration and anger that result in aggressive behavior. Use what you know. Tell your child what you want him to do or not do in a specific situation but try not to give a long lecture. Your child will be aware of your displeasure from your tone of voice as well as from what you say. It is important that you try to be clear about your disapproval. However, long lectures and dire predictions are usually counterproductive. Be a careful observer. When your young child is playing with other children, keep an eye on the situation but try not to hover. What begins as playful scuffling or run and chase or sharing toys can quickly move into a battle between children, and they may need a referee. However, there are times when you can let young children work things out among themselves. Age makes a difference, of course. You may either suggest and help start a new activity or perhaps guide him to a place where he can discharge aggressive feelings without doing harm to himself, to anyone else, to toys, or to the family pet. For example, a corner in which there is something to punch or bang or throw at can be utilized. When time permits,

demonstrate how to handle a situation in which there is conflict between children. For instance, if your child is old enough, you can teach him a few words to use in order to avoid or settle a conflict. Children need specific suggestions and demonstrations from adults in order to learn that there are effective ways to handle disagreements that are more acceptable than physical attack and retaliation. If your child has language skills, help him explain what he is angry about. Be a role model. Keep in mind that parents are the most important models for behavior and how to use aggression in a healthy way. If social exchanges in your family include much arguing or physical fighting in the presence or hearing of your children, you can count on their picking it up. Home environments like these can be unsafe and unhealthy for everyone in the family. If you are coping with a violent partner, call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at or TTY for support, shelter, or services, or visit Stop Family Violence for more information on getting the support and help you need. Think about the very real disadvantages of physical punishment for your child. Children often arouse anger in adults when they provoke, tease, behave stubbornly, or attack others. If your practice is to hit or physically punish your child in some other way for such behavior, you need to think very carefully about what he learns from that. Be patient; learning takes time. While living from day to day with the pleasures and frustrations of being a parent, it is also important to keep the long view in mind:

Chapter 2 : The Best Ways to Help Autistic Aggression: Tips and Tricks

If your child has a tendency toward this kind of aggressive behavior, it's up to you to help him develop judgment, self-discipline, and the ability to express his feelings in appropriate ways.

The good news is that adults can take charge and get support to manage aggressive behavior in ways that are effective without being shaming. This article is from *The Earliest Teachable Moment: Personal Safety for Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers*. Parents, teachers, and caregivers of young children often come to Kidpower for help when their kids have trouble being safe with their bodies and their words: Yesterday she deliberately destroyed a sand castle and then threw sand into the eyes of one of her friends in our playgroup. One of the most difficult issues when living and working with children of any age is knowing how to calmly, lovingly, and safely stop them if they are acting out in ways that are potentially harmful to themselves or others. Children who have lost control are likely to feel emotionally unsafe and may be physically unsafe if they are not stopped. Other children who see a child who is acting in a way that seems dangerous are also likely to feel unsafe unless an adult is taking charge of the situation in an effective and caring way. They might also start experimenting with imitating the behavior of the aggressive child. Although aggressive behavior must be stopped, great harm can be done if an adult restrains an upset child in a way that is physically unsafe for the child or for the adult; acts worried or angry about the child being upset; or shames the child for losing control. Although the following seven strategies were written to help adults with younger children, most of them can also be adapted for intervening when older children struggle with aggressive behavior. Be prepared that children will sometimes have difficulty staying in charge of their behavior. As soon as they can understand, it is important to begin teaching children skills for staying in charge of their behavior while understanding that they need our supervision to stay safe and ongoing guidance to learn how to act safely. Often, children with strong leadership qualities seem to need to define their boundaries by pushing against the boundaries of others and by experimenting with negative uses of their power. With positive adult guidance, most of them grow up to be caring, respectful people. Some people who recall intense episodes of strong feelings in childhood later become gifted writers, visionary leaders, or imaginative inventors as adults. When children experience strong feelings, they need their adults to invest time, patience, effort, and compassion to help them learn how to handle these feelings constructively. When children become overwhelmed, they might close down, tune out, become crushed with sorrow, or lash out verbally or physically. Be realistic and honest instead of denying that there is a problem. Too often, people ignore out of control behavior as being normal until it escalates in a destructive way. Aggressive behaviors do not mean that the children are bad or that either their parents or their teachers are incompetent. Meltdowns just mean that everyone involved needs support and skills in managing feelings before they reach the explosion point, in coping with overwhelm, and in controlling behavior so that everyone stays emotionally and physically safe. Identify and reduce causes of stress that trigger outbursts. Even though this is time-consuming, taking a week or more to write down all observations on when and how a child gets upset often will provide insights into what changes might lead to reducing the outbursts. Does anything stand out? Here are some very common triggers to consider: Even if doing lots of different things is very fun, too much change can lead to children becoming overstimulated. Many kids have far fewer outbursts when they have a calm, predictable schedule that includes time to play alone in their own space and regular special one-on-one time with their adults. Sometimes a simple change of plan for a while can make a world of difference. For example, if your toddler throws tantrums in the store, consider making arrangements to handle shopping without her for few weeks. Make leaving a favorite activity fun rather than stressful. If your child gets upset about leaving the park, agree on a plan before going to the park about how and when you are going to get ready to leave and give him lots of reminders about how much time is left. For many children, starting kindergarten can be a difficult transition. A child might start to struggle with power and control issues in an attempt to manage a new environment. If your child is having a hard time, try to volunteer in the classroom both to help support the teacher and to understand more about the context of the problem. Even positive changes such as a new sibling, a new home, or a birthday party are often

stressful to a young child. Of course, negative changes such as a divorce, a parent losing a job, or a death are likely to be hard on the whole family and to require extra support. Too hot or too cold. Some children can be highly affected by temperature. When they are even a little too hot or too cold, they are more likely to get upset and they often do not remember as they get focused to take on or off their jackets or get a drink of water. Practicing making sure their bodies are comfortable is very helpful so they will remember in the moment. Some children need a very strict bedtime and wake up routine to get enough sleep—some children just need more sleep and when you are interested in learning everything you can about the world like many five year olds! Some children need to start napping again for a while when they start new activities, such as taking a trip or going to a new school. Change is a big stress even when it is positive and having extra sleep can help kids with the transition. Needing more physical adult contact. Needing more physical activity. Some children need to move A LOT! In fact, moving can help them focus and integrate what they are learning. Being forced to sit still and pay attention for long periods of time can be extremely stressful for them. Some children get overwhelmed when they get crowded by others. This is why so many difficulties at school happen in transitions—in line going to lunch, circle time, etc. Children often seem to bunch themselves together as they get more agitated, rather than giving themselves more space. Have kids practice moving to the end of the line or the edge of the circle if they need space or calmly asking for some room. Have them practice stepping back and measuring with one arm to give lots of space in line rather than crowding forward. We tell kids it is more important to be safe in line, than first in line something very important to many younger kids and adults too. Help a child plan how to get space at the lunch table or when sitting in circle. Less is usually more in preventing meltdowns. Try changing your schedule and structuring your day and space so that children are doing less, having fewer toys or games out at the same time, and slowing down. Reduce or eliminate access to television or other technology so kids use their time doing imaginary play and being creative. Encourage the child to figure out interesting things to do on her or his own for a while and then make a plan to have your undivided attention at a time that works well for both of you. Not having enough healthy food to eat can also lead to a child being more likely to get triggered. Making a plan to make sure kids eat healthy food right before school, at recess, at lunch, and right after school can help. Medical or psychological issues. Even if a child is not acting aggressively, checking for potential underlying problems is important anytime a child seems to struggle without an obvious reason why. For example, my daughter at age 8 was having terrible trouble learning to read. No problem showed up on her regular check-up but, when I mentioned my concern to my own eye doctor in casual conversation, he checked her eyes out. Her relief at having a reason why she was having more trouble than her classmates was enormous. And, after a few months of adaptive physical education, she started to read easily and joyfully. Once you have identified possible triggers, experiment by making a change and seeing if it helps. Try slowing down the day, increasing physical activities, reducing stimulation, an extra snack, a long bath, cuddle and story time before bed, controlling body temperature, etc. Minimizing triggers is unlikely to stop all explosive behavior, but it can help children to have the best chance to prevent and control this behavior. Teach children how to recognize and manage the feelings and actions that lead to unsafe behavior. Discuss what is going on to help the child understand. Acknowledge that feeling angry and frustrated is normal but that we have to learn how to feel our feelings while staying safe with our bodies. Tell stories about times when you felt angry and hit or kicked. Discuss characters in books that make these kinds of mistakes. Act out situations with toys to show the problem and safe solutions. Make little books about the behavior the child is working on. Teach kids skills for stopping aggressive behavior in the moment. Provide ways to use aggressive energy safely. All children benefit from having opportunities to be successful in being active and learning new things while staying emotionally and physically safe and in control of what they say and do. Yoga, for example, can be a fun way for children to practice getting centered using their bodies in strong, peaceful ways. So can the right kind of martial arts program. When the child is calm, practice Kidpower skills as a fun and interesting way to be safe with people. Even children as young as two have been successful in learning and using these skills. Practice by having him pretend to be upset and then breathing slowly and deeply in and out, squeezing the palms of his hands together, and straightening his back. Remind him to use his Calm Down Power when he starts to get upset by coaching him through these motions and then

congratulate him when he manages to do this even partially. Mouth Closed Power – stopping herself from saying something that might be hurtful or inappropriate. Younger children might need to practice by pushing their lips together AND putting their hands over their mouths to help them to stop. You can rehearse by going over a situation that happened i. You can then come up with other situations. Do it multiple times a day at first. Reward her for practicing – a big hug, hi five, saying how proud you are, are all ways to make her feel good about learning. Hands Down Power – stopping himself from hitting or hurting others. This can be done by pressing his hands down at his sides or putting them into his pockets so they are hard to get out. Reward him for being safe with his hands – you may find an actual reward chart is helpful with this – with small tangible rewards that you phase out as he gets better at self-control. Move Away Power – moving herself to a quiet spot to calm down. Make a quiet space for her at home, school, etc. Her adults need to be able to come and check in with her quickly if s moves to this space to provide support if she needs it.

Chapter 3 : Helping Young Children Channel Their Aggression – ZERO TO THREE

Helping Children with Aggression Watch a segment from the Parent Rescue Squad series. Step one in helping a child is to stop the aggressive behavior by moving close and offering a warm connection.

Does a child you know exhibit aggressive behaviors? Do you want to learn more about aggression in children and how to help? You are not alone. When children exhibit high levels of aggression their parents and teachers worry. What is the problem? Why is the child behaving in this manner? And what can they do to help? Aggressive behavior children show distress and upset, and are often hard to calm. These behaviors contribute to problems for the aggressive child. He is often written off as "naughty" or "bad" and punished. Aggressive behavior children also cause considerable distress in others. They may have difficulty controlling their temper and are easily upset and annoyed by others. They are often defiant and may appear angry and resentful. Their aggressive behaviors can disrupt lessons in school and hurt, intimidate and frighten other children. Unless we intervene to help these children, they are at risk of developing serious behavior disorders like Oppositional Defiant Disorder or Conduct Disorder. Some children exhibit aggressive behaviors that are less extreme or problematic, but worrisome nonetheless. They may slap or poke other children or pinch them. Some children throw small objects or bang and break things when they are angry and upset. Others have temper tantrums and kick or scream. Some children are verbally aggressive. They call other children names, they threaten and tease them or they use emotional control to victimize and push other children around. They might ostracize them and spread rumors about them. Aggressive children need to develop healthy coping strategies to control their behaviors and manage anger and conflict, and other distressing feelings and situations. We need to teach them alternative ways to solve problems. We need to provide strategies to help calm and sooth their nervous systems, so they are not so easily triggered and thrown into the "fight " response when threatened. What Causes Aggression in Children? Children do not behave aggressively because they are "naughty or "bad. These brain patterns, in turn, trigger the "fight response. Consequently, it is often the brain, shaped, in part, by prior experiences, that lies behind the aggressive behavior. Multiple factors interact to foster aggression in children. Genes alone do not cause aggressive behaviors. Insecure or disorganized attachment patterns can shape brain patterns that can heighten the levels of aggression in a child.. Ongoing and unrelieved experiences of toxic stress. Lack of appropriate problem solving and coping strategies. Limited experience with role models e. Poor fit between parent and child: Family stress, disruption and conflict. Instability and the lack of a safe secure environment. Neurological insult such as acquired brain injury. Help Aggressive Behavior Children The following suggestions can help you, help aggressive behavior children. Try those that apply to your situation. Remember, behavior change takes time. It requires consistency and follow through. Be on the look out for small changes. Small steps make a difference and will lead you and your child toward a positive outcome. Notice when things are working or positive change is occurring, however small these steps may seem. Consistency, follow through and patience increases the chances that your efforts will pay off. Try some of the following and help Aggressive Behavior Children. Harsh, punitive punishment is associated with aggressive behavior in children. Remember parents and other adults are role models for their children. If parents respond with aggression, their children are likely to do the same. So be a good role model: Model appropriate emotional control and the management of angry feelings. Teach your children how to express their emotions – good and bad. This includes appropriate anger management techniques. Model assertiveness and appropriate problem-solving skills. Be the kind of person you hope your children will grow up to be. Parents, who are verbally or physically aggressive with each other, or with their children, promote aggression in their children. Reward Appropriate, Non-Aggressive Behaviors: When you notice your child behaving in an appropriate and non-aggressive manner, notice and commend her behavior. Tell her how proud you are. They also need to develop an internal sense of pride in themselves. Behavioral Contracts and Goal Setting: Let your child know exactly what behavior is expected and what behavior is not. Work with him to set goals for improved behavior. Write a contract based on these goals. Provide positive reinforcement e. Avoid Reinforcement of Aggressive Behavior: Teachers and parents may inadvertently reinforce aggressive behavior

through attention. Nagging or punishing children for acting aggressively can reinforce aggressive behavior. Some children feel that any attention is better than no attention. Consequently, negative attention can reinforce aggressive behavior. Praise, even the smallest attempt at appropriate behavior. Do your best to ignore negative behavior. Avoid parenting patterns that contribute to aggression in children e. For example, assertiveness, problem solving and decision making skills. Aggressive behavior children also need help to develop their social and conflict resolution skills. Teach them to control their impulses so they do not lash out without considering the consequences. Perspective taking and Reinterpretation of Situations: Aggressive behavior children often perceive or attribute hostile intent where none was intended. Encourage the aggressive child to take the perspective of others, including those he has hurt and those who he perceives have wronged him. Role Play and Consider Alternatives to Aggression: Aggressive behavior children may benefit from opportunities to role play or consider alternatives to aggressive behavioral reactions. When they behave aggressively help the child to talk the problem through. Encourage them to consider alternative solutions and to engage in these the next time this occurs. Sometimes it helps to ask children, especially younger children to draw alternative solutions to the conflicts they face. Talk openly with your child about emotions. Help them to express their feelings in an appropriate and healthy manner and consider appropriate ways to handle anger. Enhance Your Parenting Skills: Take parenting courses, refer to relevant books, or seek professional support to help you enhance your parenting skills and move toward the kind of parenting style that works. Eliminate underlying stressors or anxiety provoking behaviors: A Brief Time In: After the aggressive outburst provide a brief time out for both you and the child. This can help calm both of you down before you discuss the aggressive behavior with your child and decide how to address the issue. Finally, if the problem shows little sign of abating, despite your efforts to address it, a comprehensive psychological assessment or school neuropsychological evaluation is recommended to help get to the root of the problem, and point to evidence based interventions to address it. Children Who Lack Empathy If your child lacks empathy or concern for the people he has hurt or if he hurts and is cruel to animals seek professional help. Or visit your local library or book store and find resources to help increase your understanding of aggressive behavior children and how to help. You can also contact Dr. It increases understanding of aggressive children and how to help.

Chapter 4 : What is Passive Aggressive Behavior and How To Nip it in the Bud - A Fine Parent

Without further adieu - here are 10 tips from positive parenting experts on helping your child when they become aggressive! 1. Recognize the REASONS for Aggression.

Lack of adult supervision Mirroring the aggressive behaviors of other children around them One place to begin is to watch your child for cues to see if any of the situations described above brings about aggressive behavior. Learning as much as you can about the factors that trigger bad behavior is the best way to combat it when it occurs next time. Some questions you should ask yourself: Who does my child hit, bite or kick? Does he do it to one friend in particular? Does he only do it to me? Or does he tend to be aggressive with whomever he is with? Also, what seems to cause your child to act out in an aggressive fashion? Is it triggered by frustration, anger, or excitement? Notice if there are patterns. If you observe the situations carefully, you will likely notice patterns. Finally, how is his aggressiveness expressed? Is it through angry words or through angry behaviors? Does he become verbally aggressive first and then physically aggressive, or is his first response to strike out and hit? In my experience, consequences are imperative to ending aggressive behavior in young children. They teach your child that all behaviors have a consequence, whether good or bad, and will help him make better choices in the future when he is with his friends. Step in and Stop it Immediately At the first sign that your child is about to become aggressive, immediately step in and remove him from the situation. Be careful not to give too much attention to your child so that you do not give any negative reinforcement for the bad behavior. Young children are not able to hear long explanations of why their behavior was offensive. Other examples of too much attention include yelling at your child while attending to the victim, forcing your child to apologize immediately or continuing to talk to the other parents around you about how embarrassed or angry you are. Make a point of consoling the victim and ignoring the aggressor. If your child cannot calm down, remove him or her from the situation without getting angry yourself. When they are calm and ready to talk, you can discuss what happened. By walking an age-appropriate distance away from your child after he has acted out, you are sending the message that you will attend to him when he can calm down. In doing so, you are teaching your child that it is his responsibility to learn to calm himself and act appropriately. While it can be terribly embarrassing to have a child that continues to act out towards their friends, keep in mind that their negative behavior is most likely happening because they are still navigating their way through their social circles. This can be very difficult for some kids, so try not to over-react or personalize it. One technique that works very well for some children is to change the tone and volume of your voice. You can help your child stay calm by immediately lowering your voice when attending to the victim as well as to your child. I am going to help Josh and when I am done I want you to be done screaming. It hurt Josh and he is sad. If this does not work for your child and he simply cannot calm down, leave him where he is again, at an age-appropriate distance and ignore the tantrum. Most young children will not continue to act out if they no longer have an audience. Before you enter into a potentially difficult social situation, review the consequences with your child about what will happen if he cannot control his anger. In a steady voice, explain to your child that hitting, biting, kicking, and other aggressive behaviors are wrong. For younger children, those between 18 months and 2 years, keep it simple. Be firm and consistent each time your child becomes aggressive. Have a plan in place for consequences if aggressive behavior starts. At home, this can include a time-out chair away from the rest of the family where your child can stay until he can calm down. If you are away from home, pick a safe place, such as a time-out in a car seat or another place where your child is removed from the fun. This reinforces that you are not tolerating aggression in any form. For older children, those between 3 and 7, remember that they may be experimenting with cause and effect. In other words, they want to see what you will do when they act out. Since older children are more verbal, you can use a variety of phrases when they misbehave. You need to stop. Consequences can include leaving a play date immediately or losing video time. For a young child, biting or hitting someone is a whole lot easier! Plus, aggressive behaviors often give children a false sense of power over their peers. Help your child find their voice when they feel like acting out. By explaining and then practicing using their words, you are helping them to trade off

aggressive behavior in favor of more socially acceptable behavior. Too often a child reacts negatively to a friend or sibling instead of asserting themselves. Give your child a series of phrases to use with their friends when they are feeling angry or frustrated. Before you enter a situation that you know may cause your child to act aggressively i. If you know that your child targets a particular child at play group, you may have to hold off going to play group for a few weeks until he learns to control himself. Finally, if your child is exhausted, hungry, or over-stimulated, respect that and engage in low-key, slow-paced activities that will make aggression less likely. With your older, more verbal child, talk openly about situations that make him angry and work together to come up with solutions to help him through the problem next time. Be Appreciative of their Efforts When you catch your child being good, be sure to praise their hard work and efforts. For instance, if you observe your children in a power struggle over a toy that ends in them working it out peacefully with their friend, tell them how proud you are that they chose to use their words instead of resorting to aggression to get their way. Look for and continue to praise good behavior as a way to motivate your children to do better next time. What Not to Do Never bite or hit back. It can be tempting to want to teach your child a lesson in how it feels to be the victim of aggression, but when you succumb to a childlike form of communication, you are teaching your child that aggression is the answer to resolving a conflict. Do not expose your child to violent television or video games. Too often TV and videos portray the most violent character as the hero, which sends the message that violence is a means to an end for problem-solving. This message can easily be avoided if you are on top of their viewing habits. While TV or video violence may not affect some kids, it may greatly influence others who have a tendency to act out aggressively with their friends. If you have an aggressive child, switch your focus towards helping them express themselves in a more appropriate way and follow through when an incident occurs. Look for the following signs in your child: A pattern of defiant, disobedient, or hostile behavior towards you or other authority figures such as teachers or day care providers. A pattern means behavior that is not fleeting, but is chronic and does not respond to the above interventions. Loses their temper easily Deliberately engages in activities that knowingly annoy others Blames others Acts annoyed or is chronically touchy Exhibits ongoing anger Acts spiteful or vindictive It is important to recognize that all young children may exhibit any or all of the above problems at some point during their development. However, if your child persistently displays these behaviors and it affects their daily functioning, such as their ability to behave at school or maintain friendships, contact your pediatrician, as it may indicate that they have other psychological problems that need attention. In this case, you will need to have your child evaluated by a mental health professional. Parenting an aggressive child can be one of the greatest challenges you will face as you weave your way through the maze of his or her development. The key is developing a clear, uncomplicated, consistent plan and following it in a composed manner. Show Comments 69 You must log in to leave a comment. Create one for free! Responses to questions posted on EmpoweringParents. We cannot diagnose disorders or offer recommendations on which treatment plan is best for your family. Please seek the support of local resources as needed. If you need immediate assistance, or if you and your family are in crisis, please contact a qualified mental health provider in your area, or contact your statewide crisis hotline. We value your opinions and encourage you to add your comments to this discussion. We ask that you refrain from discussing topics of a political or religious nature. Joan Simeo Munson Dr. Joan Simeo Munson earned her Ph. She has worked with incarcerated individuals, families, adolescents, and college students in a variety of settings, including county and city jails, community mental health centers, university counseling centers, and hospitals. She also has a background in individual, group, and couples counseling. Munson lives in Colorado with her husband and three energetic children. She currently has a private practice in Boulder where she sees adults, couples and adolescents.

Chapter 5 : How to Manage Aggressive Child Behavior | Empowering Parents

Ask any parent whether she wants her child to be an aggressive person and you are likely to get more than one answer. After all, aggression is associated with both approved and disapproved behavior in our minds and in our society—both with the energy and purpose that help us to actively master the.

The very first step is to be aware of the patterns that have been created over the years with your child. Understand that patterns are particular to each person, situation and child. For example, some parents have trouble dealing with anger themselves. This only escalates the situation because if you respond aggressively, it teaches your child that aggression is how you solve problems. As a result, the child may not learn to behave any differently: In contrast, some parents are more passive—but their child may become aggressive due to his parent backing down and not dealing with issues directly. Let me be clear: But regardless of what your child is dishing out or what kind of label they have, you can still learn to be more effective. Aggressive behaviors need to change—and despite the labels, parents need to change, too. The way you handle aggression with your child may change from age to age, stage to stage. Pre-school Age Kids and Aggression 1. For younger kids, the key is to be consistent. You need to spend some time by yourself and calm down. Remove your child from the situation: Sometimes you need to take your child out of a situation to help him regain control of his emotions. Offer a pep talk ahead of time. If you know there are situations that are difficult for your child, give him a little pep talk ahead of time. If you start hitting him or hurt your cousins, we will leave immediately. Give younger children a timeout or a time away in a quiet place with some time alone. Coordinate with other caregivers: Check in with the caregiver regularly to make sure that the behavior is improving. Elementary School Age Children If you have a child in elementary school and aggressive behavior is happening on a regular basis, you need to have regular communication, probably daily, with the school to monitor this behavior. Find out what the consequences are at school—and make sure that there are consequences for misbehavior at school. But behaviors that are physically aggressive or verbally abusive are about your child and his inability to solve his problems appropriately. This behavior should be followed up at home with a discussion and a possible consequence. The reason you have to challenge the more disruptive behaviors at home is because home is the place where you have the time to teach your child about alternatives. That consequence could include any task that you think would be helpful to his learning about the situation for the amount of time it takes him to complete it. So grounding him for six hours is not helpful, but having him write ten things he could do differently next time is helpful. Hear what your child may be saying about his classmates or the other kids. Talk to the teacher while still holding your child accountable for any kind of aggressive behavior. Certainly, if you see the same behaviors at home, have a consistent consequence and let the school know what it is. At home, you need to set limits around aggressive behavior. You can either say the rules out loud or you can write them down; it often works well for kids to see things in black and white. That rule should be written on an index card with a black magic marker and posted on your refrigerator. You are responsible and accountable for your abusive behavior. Go to your room. For instance, the next time your son calls his little sister names and threatens her physically in order to get her off the computer, you should not only correct him, but later, have a conversation with him when things calm down. What can you do to get more rewards? I think we should be appealing to their self-interest, because self-interest is a very powerful motivator. Look at it this way: When you start changing your response to your child and become more empowered, your child will probably act out more initially. You need to stick with it. Your child has been used to a certain response from you over the years. So as a result, you have to be a little bit stronger. So when you get home from school, I want you to do the dishes. You also need to do your homework before you can have the car. This is also when you need to start looking for things to change. Does the dishwasher actually get emptied? Is the homework getting done? Kids want their parents to have a sense of control; it gives them a sense of security and safety. Changing and becoming a more effective parent can be a very long process. You need to keep sticking with it and understand that you can gain in your ability to be effective. The key is to be open to different ideas and different ways of doing things. Above all, I want to say this: Things can change at

any moment and at any time. In my practice with children and families, it was amazing to watch parents become more empowered. They developed a clear sense of who they were and how they could be more effective. And while your children are not going to thank you for becoming a more effective parent, down the road you will see them exhibiting the positive behaviors you helped them develop, which is the best reward of all. Show Comments 23 You must log in to leave a comment. Create one for free! Responses to questions posted on EmpoweringParents. We cannot diagnose disorders or offer recommendations on which treatment plan is best for your family. Please seek the support of local resources as needed. If you need immediate assistance, or if you and your family are in crisis, please contact a qualified mental health provider in your area, or contact your statewide crisis hotline. We value your opinions and encourage you to add your comments to this discussion. We ask that you refrain from discussing topics of a political or religious nature. A veteran social worker, she specializes in child behavior issues “ ranging from anger management and oppositional defiance to more serious criminal behavior in teens. In addition, Janet gained a personal understanding of child learning and behavior challenges from her son, who struggled with learning disabilities in school.

Chapter 6 : Taming aggression in children: 5 crucial strategies for effective parenting

Helping The Aggressive Child By Helene Rothschild | Submitted On April 16, Chuck, an active ten-year-old boy, was fidgeting as he was sitting in the large gold reclining chair.

About a month ago, I posted M is for Mellow as a guide to dealing with kids when they are upset. Well, you asked and I researched! Today is a summary of what I have found that parenting experts who focus on positive discipline , advise when your child becomes aggressive. This post contains Amazon Affiliates Links. Please see our full Disclosure Policy here. Aggression is definitely one of those characteristics that is a part of being human, and yet we fight to regulate it from an early age. After reading what all my favourite parenting experts had to say on the topic of child aggression, one thing seems clear. Yes, it is a natural tendency for young children to become aggressive when they are upset, frustrated, and angry. It can even be considered typical during toddler and preschooler years. Without further adieu – here are 10 tips from positive parenting experts on helping your child when they become aggressive! Transforming parent-child relationships from reaction and struggle to freedom, power and joy , the primary emotion behind aggression is a feeling of helplessness. The key then becomes helping them express what they want without them having to do those things. In an ideal world, we can catch our kids as they are getting upset, and acknowledge those upset feelings before aggression occurs. So, what do we do if our child becomes aggressive? Twelve Keys to Successful Parenting , it is important to respond to anger and aggression in a caring, supportive way, instead of with more anger. If your child is still actively trying to hurt you or another, they need some more time. Some kids need space on their own to cool down, and some need hugs. Some need to do an activity. Experiment to find out what your child needs by offering them different activities to help them calm down. Also Lemon Lime Adventures has a terrific article with ideas for helping an angry child calm down. Did I get it right – is that how you felt? Is that what you wanted? Hopefully, your child will be able to either agree with what you said, or tell you what they were really experiencing. Or you may just have to keep guessing for a bit until you get it right! Pam Leo, author of Connection Parenting: I need more space. I want that toy. The child who was hurt will hear it and feel better, and your child will benefit from hearing their thoughts expressed as well. Sometimes he gives an apology. And that brings us to the end of S is for Social. This humorous story follows a boy named Sam who has difficulty controlling his temper. To peaceful kids, A big thanks to the PODcast blog for the inspiration for this series! Please check out their photographic alphabetic journey!

Chapter 7 : How to Limit Bad Behavior - Aggressive Behavior in Young Children

At preschool pickup, the teacher pulls you aside. She has some concerns about your child's behavior. She reminds you that there is a zero tolerance policy for biting and aggressive acts like kicking and hitting may result in suspension.

A few more minutes pass and your patience begins to fade. I said for you to come here! Your blood begins to boil! You realize these annoyed tones and snide remarks are becoming the new normal in your relationship. A more detailed answer is: He or she may not even know why they are so angry. They are just angry. That is where you come in. As an adult you have to recognize and name the problem. Passive-aggressive behavior is the indirect expression of hostility, such as through procrastination, stubbornness, sullen behavior, or deliberate or repeated failure to accomplish requested tasks for which one is often explicitly responsible. Your child does not have to fall victim to this nasty little habit of showing passive aggressive behavior. They can cope and understand what is going on within themselves. They can learn to express what is going on inside of them. And grow up to be mature and emotionally intelligent adults with your help! Us, the ones that have cared for them since birth. The parents that read every parenting book one can imagine! The ones that keep researching and seeking out the best parenting options because we care about our kids! Yet, we are also the same parents that are human. A little bit of conflict in marriage is healthy. It is even healthy to show these things to our children. They will face conflict in life no doubt. It is important we be real with them so they can see and learn the correct ways to handle conflict. As parents, we have to do a self-examination to see how we actually handle conflict. Are we actually walking the walk? If you can have an honest moment with yourself and see your downfalls before speaking to your child, you can give them prime instances of areas that you need to improve on within yourself. Pointing out our faults, often lets our kids know that we are human. We are going to make mistakes and at times, they need to look at our behavior and decide for themselves if, even we, are acting in a right or wrong fashion. Talking to our kids about their emotions and how they are handling them is a lot easier when we can see how we are actually handling ours. It also gives us goals to work towards and areas to improve upon within ourselves. Passive aggressive behavior, however, is not a phase. It is not something that will just pass in time. It is a habit. It is a way your child has learnt to expressing themselves. It is actually a control mechanism on their part. James Lehman, at Empowering Parents actually refers to passive aggressive behavior as passive resistance and defines it as: Passive resistance is when kids learn to develop power over you by resisting you. When you call up to his room, he pretends not to hear you; instead, he makes you come upstairs. Understand that this is one way for a child to have power, and many become experts at this kind of passive-aggressive behavior. The goal of the passive aggressive person is to covertly get back another person and, in doing so, cause that person to blatantly act out the anger that the passive aggressive person is so studiously hiding. When I read this, I knew this is what I was dealing with. This is not a healthy lifestyle for our children. These behaviors will carry over with them into friendships, marriage, and working relationships. Those thoughts are what caught my attention and helped me to decide that as his parent I was going to help him overcome this. Not just because I was his parent, and he needed to have more respect for me than what he was showing though respect is of huge importance in our home. Passive aggressive behavior is a serious issue. After you define it and realize what you are up against it is time to grit your teeth, attack the behavior with as much positivity as you can muster, and pull love from the deepest depths of your heart! Level one is temporary compliance. This is the most common form of passive aggressive behavior in children. Level two is intentional inefficiency. This is when you ask your child to do something, and they leave the job half way done though they are capable of completing the task. Level three is letting a problem escalate. Level four is hidden but conscious revenge. This is where the child intentionally wants to get even but does not do it openly. Level five is self-depreciation. This is when the child is literally willing to hurt themselves or severely damage their future just to get back at someone. A prime example of this is a child misbehaving to a point that they might get thrown out of school. This ultimately impacts their school record but really, all they care about is the embarrassment their parents have to face. When I first realized that we were facing passive aggressive behavior with our son, he was sitting at level three. It has

taken a lot of work to help him deal with this behavior but knowing your starting point is vital in the process of overcoming it. As parents we have a tendency to lecture. I know I do! You want to share all of the wisdom you have gained through all of your years of life. We are parents and it is our job to help guide our children. I know it will be hard but really, in those moments where you catch direct passive aggressive behavior, all you should do is ask a few direct questions to encourage your child to express their feelings. Why are you so angry right now? Why are you trying to get me to express anger towards you? Why are you acting this way? They may not know on a surface level and it may take some time before the real reasons begin to surface, but kids are capable of reflecting. He was practicing passive aggressive behavior with his older brother. We began to notice he was eating a lot! Then I began noticing there were certain trends in his eating habits. If he thought there was something in our home that his older brother would enjoy eating, he would be sure to eat it himself. He would sneak it. Do anything he could to ensure his older brother did not get it! I began getting concerned as he was becoming less active. Finally, I went to him and asked him why he was so determined to eat any food that he thought his older brother wanted? However, I made it a point to pull him aside and speak with him every time he would start showing passive aggressive behavior towards his brother again. Eventually, the truth surfaced. Our middle child has a past that unfortunately involves being bullied. Since he still struggles to express his emotions, he goes about things in a passive aggressive manner. By listening instead of fulfilling my motherly instinct of lecturing, we were able to get to the bottom of the issue. We have created a rule in our house now that if a special treat comes in our home, no one is to take seconds until all of the kids get firsts. But to our middle child it was just one more time someone pushed him around and took what he felt to be rightfully his! This new rule protects him from those feelings. Keep it Real This is something I had such a hard time with when I first became a parent. I wanted to be that June Cleaver mom. I wanted my kids to live in a bubble where Mom and Dad never argued; siblings got along all of the time; the house was always spotless and constantly smelled of fresh baked goods; and life was just perfect. Yeah! then reality hit me! Mom and Dad do argue. We are married and it just happens. I am a mom of three boys! I clean non-stop but my house is rarely what I would call spotless. Work it out in front of them. They are learning while you all are resolving. Help them sort it out. Encourage your children to talk. This is a learning opportunity for them. When you lock your keys in the car; when someone cuts you off in traffic; when you have a rough day at work! use all of these moments to show your anger in a healthy form. All of these instances will help your passive aggressive child to realize that anger is okay.

Chapter 8 : About Your Privacy on this Site

Aggression in children can be a symptom of many different underlying problems. It's a very polymorphic thing, a commonality for any number of different psychiatric conditions, medical problems, and life circumstances. And so at the very essence of treating aggression is first to find out what's.

Toddlers are becoming aware that they are separate individuals from their parents and the other important people in their world. This means that they are eager to assert themselves, communicate their likes and dislikes, and act independently as much as they can! At the same time, they still have limited self-control and are just beginning to learn important skills like waiting, sharing and turn-taking. Consider the following example: Sherman, aged 2, grabbed the red bucket and began shoveling sand into it. Jojo follows Sherman, pushes him, grabs the bucket, and returns to the sandbox. When Sherman approaches the sandbox once more, Jojo carefully guards his bucket, wrapping his arm around it and watching Sherman closely. Please get it for me. Like most aspects of development, there is a wide variation among children when it comes to acting out aggressively. Big reactors rely more heavily on using their actions to communicate their strong feelings. As parents, one of your most important jobs is to help your toddler understand and communicate her feelings in acceptable, nonaggressive ways. This is no small task. It requires a lot of time and patience. But with your support and guidance, your child will learn to manage her strong emotions and reactions over the next months and years. What to Think About No two children or families are alike. Thinking about the following questions can help you adapt and apply the information and strategies below to your unique child and family: What kinds of situations usually lead to your child acting aggressively? Why do you think this is? When your child acts in ways that seem aggressive, how do you typically react? Do you think this reaction is helpful to your child or not? What to Expect from Birth to 3 From Birth to 12 Months Lacey, aged 11 months, wants a bite of the cookie her mother is eating. Lacey kicks her feet, waves her arms, and makes lots of sounds. But her mother just gives her another spoonful of squash. Squash on the wall! Lacey bangs her hands on the high chair and starts to cry. One of the greatest challenges in dealing with aggressive behavior is that it can feel very hurtful to parents, both emotionally and physically. However, babies do not mean to hurt or upset their loved ones. They are simply exploring the world around them through their senses. They learn how the world works by biting, mouthing, grabbing, shaking and dropping, and swatting and seeing what happens as a result, which is usually a pretty big reaction. From 12 to 24 Months Try not to negotiate. Having consistent rulesâ€”about things like holding hands in a parking lot, sitting in a car seat, or brushing teethâ€”actually helps children feel safe and secure. He presses buttons and makes all kinds of pictures come up on the screen. This is not for kids. When his dad picks him up to calm him down, Justin kicks again with both feet. Aggression hitting, kicking, biting, etc. They are just beginning to develop empathyâ€”the ability to understand how others feel. So, they cannot yet say, Mommy, I am mad that Zachary grabbed my favorite doll. But I know he just wants to play with me. So how about I offer him a different doll to play with? Instead, your toddler may bop Zachary on the head with a toy truck. From 24 to 36 Months Bella, aged 30 months, is having a hard time saying goodbye to her mom at child care. Bella surprises her by roughly pushing her arm away and running to her cubby. Bella sits curled up under her coat hook, crying. When Talisa, one of the teachers, approaches Bella to see if she wants to read a story, Bella hits her. She then helps Bella get involved in an activity with her friends. Aggressive acts, such as punching a parent, often emerge when toddlers are overwhelmed by a distressing situation or by difficult feelings like anger or jealousy. These moments can be extremely challenging for parents because they are hurtful. Parents often expect that as their older toddlers become more and more verbal and advanced in their thinking skills, they are capable of more self-control than they really are. At this age, emotions still trump thinking skills almost every time. The bottom line is that when a toddler is aggressive, it is an important sign that he is out of control and needs help to calm down before any teaching or learning can take place. Staying calm yourself is the best response as it helps your child calm down more quickly. Read below for ways to handle aggression in your young child. How You Can Respond to Aggression in 3 Steps Aggressive acts, such as punching a parent, often emerge when toddlers are overwhelmed by a distressing

situation or by difficult feelings like anger or jealousy. You can use this information to decide the best way to respond. Where is the behavior happening? If it is only happening in one setting, could there be something about that environment i. Is the behavior directed toward one specific person or a small group of people? When does the behavior usually happen? For example, right before nap time, when your child is tired? At times of transition, such as going from one activity to another? These kinds of stressors are common triggers for aggressive behavior. For example, had you just announced it was time to stop playing and get in the car? Had another child just taken a toy out of his hands? Has there been a recent change in her world that is making your child feel upset, out of control, sad, or perhaps less safe and secure overall? Events like switching rooms at child care, moving homes, a new baby or the loss of a pet can make your child feel insecure and therefore less able to control her impulses. Other important factors to consider: For example, some hitting and biting is normal for toddlers, but biting multiple times during the week would be more of a concern. For example, a very intense, sensitive child may feel overwhelmed in settings where there is a lot of stimulation, such as free playtime at child care. He may bite as a way to cope—perhaps to keep people at a distance to protect himself. A slow-to-warm-up child may hit a parent when left with a new babysitter. Fear often gets expressed as anger in young children not to mention many adults. Your Own Temperament and Life Experiences: Is this behavior particularly difficult for you? How do you handle your own feelings when your child acts out aggressively? Are you able to calm yourself before you respond? How effective do you feel you are in helping your child to manage his aggressive feelings? What do you feel your child is learning from the way you respond when he is aggressive? Respond to your child based on your best understanding of the behavior. Use what you know about your child to plan ahead. For example, if you know that she feels very shy when meeting new people, you may want to start flipping through the family photo album during the weeks before you attend a big family picnic so she can start to recognize extended family members. During playtime, you might have a pretend picnic with her Aunt Laila and Uncle Bert. You are helping her manage what, for her, is a very challenging situation. This helps her learn how to cope when she encounters new people in a new setting, such as school. Give advanced notice of an upcoming change. Which book do you want to read? Help your child understand her feelings and behavior. This self-awareness helps him learn to manage his feelings in positive ways. For example, you might say to an older toddler who has a difficult time moving between activities: Which do you want to do? With younger children, put words to their feelings and then redirect them. But look at this cool ball and how it bounces. They are not offered as prescriptions, but ideas that can be adapted to meet the needs of your individual child and family. This is the essential first step. Try taking some deep breaths. Staying in control makes it more likely that your child will calm down more quickly. Let your child know that you understand what he wants to do: You want to play with the water, but you cannot spill the water from your sippy cup on the floor. Or, You are really angry. You want to stay longer at the playground, but it is not okay to hit mommy.

Chapter 9 : Dealing with Hostile and Aggressive Behavior in Students

If you don't feel able to get the aggressive behavior under control, talk to your child's teachers, day care providers, or pediatrician. They may be able to help guide you toward other solutions or support.

They are capable of dominating and controlling others through intimidation and irrational, often explosive behavior. This blog post looks at the characteristics of the classic hostile-aggressive student, examines reasons for such behavior, and gives suggestions for dealing with such students. How does the hostile-aggressive student act out? One can categorize the acting-out behavior of hostile-aggressive students into three general categories: What distinguishes these behaviors as exhibited by the hostile aggressive student is that they are done with intent to do harm, whether that be physical, emotional, or for revenge and retaliation. Verbal aggression includes defiance, continuous arguing, cut-downs, threats, swearing, bossing, sarcasm and teasing. Physical aggression can be exhibited as kicking, hitting, fighting, spitting, throwing materials with intent to do harm either to a person or to objects, e. Vandalism includes not only destruction or damage to property but theft as well. What causes students to behave this way? There are many theories as to what causes hostile-aggressive behavior in children. Several of which are especially important to teachers are as follows: Children observe hostile-aggressive behavior modeled by parents, teachers, peers, and in the media. Threats from parents, yelled reprimands from teachers, and violence among peers and in the media are then mimicked by the child. Behavior such as fighting is reinforced by peers when they take sides in or cheer for individuals who are fighting. This leads to an increase in hostile-aggressive behavior. Children lack the social skills necessary to deal with stressful situations in an assertive rather than aggressive manner. Their repertoire of problem-solving skills is limited to aggression, so they use this to fulfill their needs. The hostile-aggressive child acts out of anger. According to researcher J. Their behavior has led to rejection by both adults and peers, which causes their self-esteem to further plummet. What causes conflict with the hostile-aggressive student to escalate? Student frustration triggers hostile-aggressive behavior. Frustration with others or oneself is dealt with through physical or verbal aggression or vandalism. With this behavior, the student gains negative attention from the teacher or peers. The teacher instinctively responds by reprimanding the student or asking him or her to cease the behavior which the student is using to gain attention. This leads to the next phase of the cycle: The teacher is left with feelings of failure, defeat and confusion, while negative feelings toward the student are reinforced. What are the typical teacher responses to these behaviors, and how do students react to these responses? Teachers typically respond in one of two ways: When teachers respond authoritatively, it is because they feel they have lost control over the situation. Reacting as an authoritarian figure, the teacher gives ultimatums: You cannot make any student do anything. While reacting authoritatively is an understandable response from the teacher, it is simply ineffective. The other way teachers typically respond is by attempting to reason with the hostile-aggressive student. This teacher attempts to explain with kindness and understanding what is really going on. However sincere these attempts are, they usually lead to circular arguments, dead ends or resentment from the student. The teacher ends up expending huge amounts of energy and is left feeling frustrated and unsuccessful. How do I intervene with a hostile-aggressive student? Identify those behaviors which are inappropriate and perform a functional assessment. Next, examine how you have been dealing with the behavior and evaluate what has been contributing to conflict and whether anything has de-escalated these situations in the past. Drop what is not working and identify any methods which are working. A good rule of thumb is if you are left feeling angry and out of control, your method is ineffective. After you have evaluated the behavior of both the student and yourself, it is time to put together a proactive intervention plan. Let the student know what is and is not acceptable and how you will help him or her to learn behavior which is appropriate. Stick to and periodically evaluate your intervention. Keep in mind that it took the student a long time to learn these behaviors and it will likely take a long time to replace them with others. Do not let yourself fall into old patterns of reacting angrily. Let the student know you care about him or her. Make it a point to give the student some brief friendly attention each day. Give the student the opportunity to talk about feelings and give reinforcement. Give the student special responsibilities. This will show that while

you do not appreciate his or her behavior, you do see him or her as a worthwhile and capable individual. It is important that the student learn that it is okay to feel frustrated and angry and that there are acceptable ways of expressing these emotions. What proactive interventions are effective in changing hostile-aggressive behavior? Modeling and role-playing help the student learn new behavior. Token economies can also be useful in motivating the student to change behavior. Cooperative learning gives students the opportunity to learn from their peers. Self-monitoring and cueing can help a student assume more responsibility for his or her behavior. How do I avoid being drawn into the conflict or get out of it once I recognize that it is going on? Remember, these tactics are only to help you avoid or get out of a conflict cycle. To do this, you must perform a functional assessment and implement a long-term proactive intervention plan, including techniques such as those listed earlier. First, you must learn to not allow yourself to be emotionally manipulated. It is not a personal attack against me, and I will remain calm while trying to help the student. The student needs support. Helping the student to recognize his or her emotions and giving the student the opportunity to deal with them effectively will help. You might have a quiet spot in the room where students can go when they feel that their emotions are getting the best of them. If the cycle has not been stopped at the frustration stage, you will have to deal with the next stage: At this point, you will need to set limits for the student. For example, if the student has been verbally abusive to another student, you might establish limits in the context of a choice: You have also stepped out of a conflict cycle by remaining calm. If the student persists and becomes more aggressive, for example, by beginning to verbally abuse you, you need to provide control. Do not give her the opportunity to argue with you and escalate the conflict further. You can either come and sit quietly in the class or you can sit here in the hall until you are able to control yourself. Either way, I need to attend to the other students in the class. We will talk about this after you have demonstrated that you are in control by either sitting quietly here or in the classroom until I am ready to speak with you. Often hostile-aggressive students see authority figures as deliberately waiting for them to mess up, as waiting to set them up for failure, and this view can hinder progress. It can be confronted by having a private conference with the student. You may begin by talking about all the progress and positive change you have seen. Let the student know that you see that he or she can continue to have more and more success, but that this will be difficult if teachers, etc. Engage the student in a conversation about what generally happens to students or people in general who do and do not cooperate with teachers and other authority figures and rules. Remain calm and courteous so that you display the fact that you do care and that you do want the student to succeed. Finally, let the student know that it is up to him or her to decide whether to take this final step. Do not expect the student to make a decision then and there. It may take time, so continue to be caring and courteous, modeling a friendly authority figure. Not every student will make that final leap and it is something which only the student can decide. One thing you can continue to do, no matter what, is to work with the student to build their self-esteem. This may help the student to choose to see authority figures as people who can help and to see him- or herself as worthy and entitled to this help. Positive reinforcement, being given special responsibilities in the classroom, and tutoring peers are all ways to help build student self-esteem. Other issues in dealing with hostile-aggressive students First, as you get to know a student and he or she begins to make progress, there may be times when the student appears to be behaving in a hostile fashion, but closer observation reveals that he or she is following through with what has been requested. If you want help, raise your hand. In the meantime, please pick up your books. I hate this stupid class and I hate you, too! This is a time to ignore his outburst, let him pick up his books, cool off, and talk about it later. Second, never corner a student who is emotionally out of control. Leave a student who is out of control with a large personal space and a way out of the room. Running out of the room is much more appropriate than hitting a teacher. Finally, do not argue with students. Give choices and the option to discuss an incident later, but do not argue. These are not the same. Discussion leads to collaborative solutions while arguments lead to defensiveness.