

PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCES

AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR IN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS PSYCHOSOCIAL FUNDAMENTALS

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Abstract

The article examines the causes and socio-psychological sources of aggressive behavior observed in childhood and adolescence. The main factors affecting the formation of aggression, such as family relationships, unmet emotional needs, communication problems, and the influence of the media and digital environment, are analyzed. The changes in behavioral reactions during the transition from childhood to adolescence and the risk factors of these changes are highlighted. The article presents practical preventive approaches for parents to manage and prevent aggressive behavior, and emphasizes the importance of redirecting aggression to constructive forms of behavior.

Keywords: aggression, destructive behavior, psychological discomfort, conflict, physical force, constructive solution

Introduction

Aggression is an integral part of human social life. "Aggression (from Latin "aggređi" - to attack) is a motivated destructive behavior that contradicts the norms and rules that ensure the existence and coexistence of people in society. It is based on attacking animate and inanimate objects, causing physical and moral harm to people, and causing psychological discomfort in them" [1, p. 243]. Aggression mainly occurs as a reaction of the subject to frustration and is accompanied by emotional states such as resentment, anger, hostility, and hatred. An aggressive person can lose everything he has gained in life through his behavior.

Aggression is not only a means of self-defense or protection of the needs of the individual, but also a form of destructive behavior that can have negative consequences in social interactions. There are various types of it: physical, indirect, irritating, verbal and negativism. In addition, aggression is also divided into hostile and instrumental forms. The purpose of hostile aggression is to harm the other party, while instrumental aggression is used as a means to achieve a certain goal.

Aggression can also manifest itself as a self-protection, emotional release, or defense mechanism in a person. Child aggression can be identified both in a collective setting and during individual observations.

A child's attitude to the world begins to form during the mother's pregnancy. The mother's psychological state and emotional tension directly affect the child's future emotional development. For example, the mother's state of stress, fear, and anxiety creates a sense of danger and unpredictability in the child's early experiences.

Studies show that aggressive behavior is more common in boys than in girls. During group play and interactions, children exhibit different behavioral patterns, and unfortunately, these behaviors are destructive rather than positive.

Aggressive behaviors are considered a behavioral disorder in psychology. Aggressive behaviors include: shouting loudly, using abusive language, crying for no reason, physically harming others, harming oneself, "attacking" sometimes with action, sometimes with words, inability to adopt ethical norms, not obeying "social laws", often being tense and irritable, having difficulty communicating with others, always being ready for conflict, not solving problems constructively, always relying on physical strength etc.

If a child repeats his behavior regardless of time, place, or the people around him, then aggressive behavior can be considered a psychological behavioral disorder. For example, if a child behaves in accordance with all ethical and social norms in kindergarten, but responds to demands made on him at home by shouting, biting, or other aggressive methods, this is only considered aggressive behavior. However, if a child shows the same destructive reactions both at home and in kindergarten, this is already a sign of a systemic psychological behavioral disorder, and in such cases, the intervention of a professional psychologist or psychiatrist is definitely required.

Before children develop speech, they communicate their natural needs to their parents mainly through crying. During this period, crying becomes their main means of communication. Over time, children's emotional expression gradually takes a back seat, and as they grow older, they begin to express their thoughts through speech. It is crucial for parents to understand their children correctly and support their speech development. Otherwise, a child who is not understood correctly or does not receive an adequate response from their parents may show aggressive reactions. In this case, the child tends to express his dissatisfaction by harming those around him. For example, if a one-year-old child cannot throw an object on the table, a 4-5-year-old child can already do this with ease and at the same time may demonstrate other unpleasant, destructive behaviors.

Aggression in children can be caused not only by psychosocial factors, but also by organic causes. For example, inflammatory processes in the central nervous system or other neurobiological disorders can influence the emergence of aggressive behavior. In such cases, medical treatment and appropriate therapeutic intervention are required for proper management of behavior and symptom relief.

A child's inability to adequately release pent-up physical and emotional energy can also lead to aggressive behavior. To prevent this situation, it is recommended that the child regularly spend time outdoors, engage in physical activities such as sports and swimming, and allow him to release his energy through constructive play with peers.

One of the main reasons for the formation of aggressive behavior in children is the aggressive examples they observe. These examples can be the child's parents, relatives, close circle, social environment or television characters. The television and other media programs that children watch should be carefully monitored. As much as possible, it should be ensured that children are not exposed to aggressive scenes, and if they accidentally come across such scenes, those scenes should be explained by a parent or teacher and it should be emphasized that they are not true.

The lack of love, insufficient attention to the child, a tense atmosphere at home, conflicts between parents, as well as various family problems have a great psychological impact on children, creating deep trauma in them. Most children who have suffered such traumas exhibit aggressive behavior. Since children have weak psychological defenses, they are helpless and psychologically helpless against any shock. Psychological trauma inflicted in childhood can harm the child's future life, future development, and limit his development as a person. Taking all this into account, parents should try to keep their children away from family problems.

The modern era is full of both opportunities and challenges. New technologies provide children with the opportunity to obtain useful information, expand their knowledge and develop their creative abilities. At the same time, these technologies and their products can lead to the formation and strengthening of aggressive behavior in children. Computer games and online games in particular encourage aggressive reactions in children. School-age children are more sensitive to these influences and are prone to psychological damage. Children are sometimes even ready to resort to uncensored methods in games to defeat their opponents. This situation shows that there are numerous factors that negatively affect the psyche of children and it is not easy to prevent them. Therefore, every parent should be aware and take timely preventive measures so that children are not affected by such harmful games.

Almost at all ages, parents complain about their children's aggression. Unfortunately, parents often do not know that they are the cause of this aggression. In fact, instead of preventing aggression in children, they make them even more aggressive with their own reactions [3, p.16].

It is important to remember that each child is a mirror of his or her family. The difficulties a child experiences often stem from the family. Children reflect their experiences in the family in their behavior and demonstrate this at school, in their peer group, and in other social groups. If the school environment is friendly and supportive, and aggressive behavior is only rarely seen in one or two children, the problem is mainly related to the family environment.

Parents should understand that any factor that prevents aggressive children from expressing their feelings can negatively affect their emotional and physiological state, and as a result, the risk of developing nervous system disorders and somatic diseases increases. For this reason, it is important to teach children to express their aggressive feelings in an appropriate and constructive way. Parents should not expect that the child's aggression will not affect our internal dissatisfaction. On the contrary, they should monitor their own behavior and the behavior of the child, and communicate with them in a calm and polite manner. It is possible to raise the tone of voice when evaluating the child's behavior, but this should be done without touching the child's personality. The parent should only criticize the child's behavior, not interfere with his or her self. This approach allows aggressive behavior to be directed into a constructive and socially acceptable form.

One of the typical manifestations of deviant and destructive behavior, which also manifests itself in adolescence, is aggression. It is noteworthy that the intensity of aggressive behavior in adolescents is at a different pace and occurs at different ages in boys and girls. It has been established that the peak of aggression in adolescent boys occurs at the ages of 12 and 14-15, and in girls at the ages of 11-13.

Aggression occurs in adolescents for the following reasons: when they are unable to adequately express their thoughts and feelings verbally; when they think that the other party is being aggressive or aggressive towards them; when under psychological pressure; when feeling personal inadequacy, failure; when disappointed, etc.

Adolescence is characterized as a complex and emotionally stressful period for adolescents. During this period, adolescents are more prone to aggressive behavior, try to defend their rights, and sometimes demonstrate a protesting attitude towards their parents because they do not yet fully understand their personal desires. During this age period, harmful behaviors such as running away from home, risk of suicide, drug and alcohol use, and early initiation of sexual activity can also be observed, which results in regret for both the adolescent and his family. With these behaviors, the adolescent sends a message to those around him: "I can live without you." At the same time, coming home late, spending a long time with friends, staying alone, and trying to prove their different opinions from their parents are also considered typical behavioral patterns of this period. In such circumstances, restricting the teenager's freedom, trying to control him by force, or dictating to him increases tension and leads to a deepening of behavioral problems.

There is a significant interaction between adolescents' self-esteem and aggressive reactions. Thus, adolescents with high levels of self-esteem also have a high level of aggressive reactions. This interaction is manifested in both instrumental and other types of aggression - especially in hostility and hostility behaviors. Thus, adolescents with high self-esteem also have a high level of physical aggression. At the same time, a relationship has been established between the aggression of adolescents prone to leadership and the assessment of their physical "I". Adolescent girls tend to evaluate themselves as more positive, socially desirable, kind, affectionate, caring and sensitive. Adolescent boys, on the other hand, consider themselves less active and more hostile than girls.

The types of aggression displayed by adolescents at school are divided into four main categories by Moeller:

Low level aggression – this category includes using bad language, pushing other students, being rude, and writing negative wall posts;

Aggression against real property (vandalism) – covers cases such as damaging school property and starting fires;

Dangers – this category includes a teenager openly threatening other students;

Physical aggression – fighting, violence, mockery, carrying and using weapons, as well as threats against teachers and other students are assessed in this group.

Providing children with love and attention from a young age, and growing up in a warm and supportive environment, can reduce the level of aggressive behavior during adolescence and help them become calmer and more regulated.

Prevention of aggression. Aggression is very difficult to deal with. If aggression continues for a long time, it becomes stronger and more difficult to prevent it. Also, if you try to hide and suppress aggression internally, it can manifest itself in a stronger and more harmful form the next time. Although aggression is difficult to control, it is possible to prevent it. Therefore, it is better to take preventive measures in advance. First of all, it is important to identify the factors that cause aggression. If necessary, the parent can use the support of a specialist in this matter.

Parents should never suppress aggression in children, because this feeling is natural in humans. Otherwise, suppressing aggression can lead to autoaggression (injury to oneself physically and morally) or psychosomatic problems in the child. Parents should teach their children not to suppress their aggression, but to control it.

If the aggression in children is not dangerous and understandable, ignoring the child's reaction is one of the effective ways to prevent unpleasant behavior. However, there are other effective ways: redirecting the child's attention elsewhere, offering him a different activity, saying words that show that we understand the child (for example, "it affects you, I understand you"), as well as interpreting the child's behavior in a positive way (for example, "you are angry because you are tired"), etc.

When you encounter aggressive behavior in children, criticize the child's actions, not his personality. For example, instead of saying, "You are a very bad child," it is more appropriate to use phrases like, "You are a very smart child, but this action you did is wrong, it does not suit you." It is necessary to describe how the child behaved, the words he said, and the actions he performed during aggression. It is important to pay attention to analyzing only the behavior that occurred "here and now," and not remembering past actions. Otherwise, the child may feel bitter feelings and be unable to criticize his own behavior. The most important thing is to discuss the child's behavior after he has calmed down, not during the aggression. This discussion should be held alone and in a calm situation. The child should be explained that the harm caused by aggressive behavior is more to him than to those around him. Children's negative actions should never be discussed in front of others so as not to embarrass them.

In addition, the child should be offered alternative activities where he can release his energy - for example, sports, music or other favorite hobbies. You can focus his attention on the positive through the art form or activity that your child is interested in. An atmosphere of peace should be ensured within the family, and violence should not be allowed under any circumstances. It is not right to respond to aggression with aggression. On the contrary, calm and constructive conversations should be held with children, and physical force should not be used. The child should not get what he wants through aggressive behavior, and the parent should demonstrate a firm and principled position on this issue.

In addition to all this, parents can apply a number of tips to help their children go through this stage relatively comfortably during adolescence. Even if you have a different opinion, listen carefully to your child and do not attribute their wrong behavior to their personality. Discuss their actions that you consider wrong together, evaluate them and set an example. Appreciate their positive behavior, be interested in what they do and pay attention to them. Do not hurt the child by fighting or applying harsh punishment; on the contrary, try to reach an agreement and find common solutions. Pressuring the child to fulfill your demands can lead to new aggression and conflicts. Do not try to completely subordinate the child to you. Create opportunities for them to fulfill your demands by understanding them and of their own will. Pay attention to your child's mental, emotional and social development and be open to criticism. This is your child in front of you - talk to them and listen to them with this in mind, not forgetting that they are your most valuable asset. Remember that this is a stage when they are going through hormonal changes.

"At the same time, demonstrating the ability to be restrained, patient, to constructively resolve challenges and conflicts, and to keep oneself within the framework of moral norms has no less impact on people than demonstrating aggressive behavior. A powerful tool that causes aggression is the presence of stimuli that are incompatible with violence. Kindness, compassion, humor, interest in joint cooperation, apology, etc. such

actions significantly weaken aggressive tendencies” [2, p.264]. To get rid of aggression, it is advisable not to react immediately to stress and to stay away from negative thoughts.

As a result, it can be noted that aggressive behavior in children and adolescents is not random and is mainly formed as a result of the interaction of numerous psychosocial factors. Family environment, parent-child relationships, level of emotional security, as well as social and digital influences directly affect the intensity of these behaviors. Aggressive reactions observed at an early age, if not managed with the right approach in a timely manner, can develop into more complex and risky forms of behavior during adolescence. In this regard, understanding the causes of aggression and directing it constructively, rather than punishing it, should be considered a more effective

approach. The joint activities of parents, teachers and specialists create conditions for the formation of a child's emotional regulation skills, resolving conflicts in non-violent ways, and developing healthy social behaviors. The consistent and systematic application of preventive measures can significantly contribute to the reduction of behavioral disorders in the future and the formation of a psychologically healthy generation.

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