



Aggression in Toddlers

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Disclosures

- None

Temper Tantrums

- *Severe* temper tantrums, aggression, pervasive noncompliance are relatively common in 9-15% of preschool-aged children (Egger *et al.*, 2016)
- Peaks at age 3, and most outgrow by kindergarten
- Includes crying, kicking, stomping, hitting, pushing
- Children < 4 years old can have up to 9 tantrums per week that last 5-10 min (Yale Medicine Child Study Centre)

Emotional Development

- Critical component of healthy development
- Emotional growth guided by adults in child's life
- Emotional development leads to key skills
 - Self-awareness
 - Social-awareness
 - Emotional regulation
 - Responsible decision making
 - Relationship building



- In Canada, 25-30% of children may not be developmentally ready for school entry (Kershaw *et al.*, 2016)

Stages of Social-Emotional Development

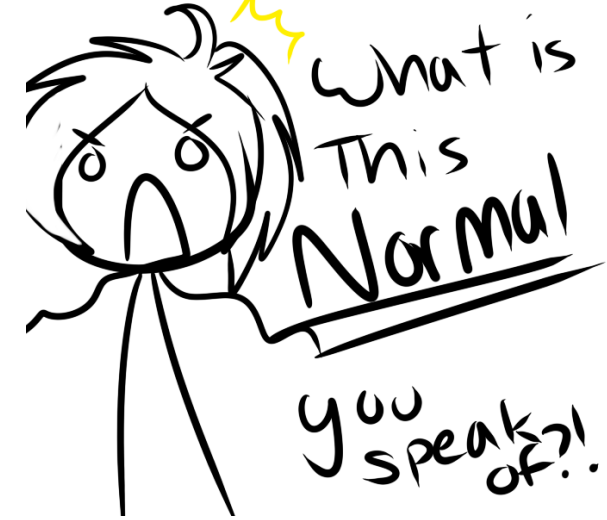
1. NOTICING EMOTIONS: 0-1 year old

2. EXPRESSING EMOTIONS: 2-3 years old

3. MANAGING EMOTIONS: 3-5 years old



Normal Development vs. Disorder



- Aggression can be risk factor for, and/or potential component of neurodevelopmental or mental health disorders
- Must consider range of environmental, developmental, family and parent-child relationship factors
- Cluster of disruptive behaviours is considered to be at the disorder level when :
 1. Atypical for child's developmental age and persists for ≥ 6 months
 2. Occurs across situations, and results in impaired functioning
 3. Causes significant distress for both child and family



Disruptive Behavior in Preschool Children: Distinguishing Normal Misbehavior from Markers of Current and Later Childhood Conduct Disorder

Ji S. Hong, MD, Rebecca Tillman, MS, and Joan L. Luby, MD

Table IV. Important behavioral markers in the preschool period

Normative preschool misbehaviors	Behaviorial markers of preschool conduct disorder	Behavioral markers predicting school-age conduct disorder
Low-intensity destruction of property	High-intensity argument/defiant behavior Low- and high-intensity aggression to people/animals High-intensity destruction of property	High-intensity argument/defiant behavior Low- and high-intensity aggression to people/animals High-intensity destruction of property
Low-intensity deceitfulness/stealing	High-intensity peer problems High-intensity deceitfulness/stealing	High- intensity peer problems High-intensity deceitfulness/stealing
Losing temper	Vindictiveness	Inappropriate sexual behavior

Take Home Messages

1. Tantrums can be normal
2. Aggression is a behaviour you have to unpack
3. Normal versus disorder remains ambiguous



Thank You!

References

- Egger HL, Angold A. Common emotional and behavioural disorders in preschool children: Presentation, nosology, and epidemiology. *J Child Psychol Psychiatry* 2006;47(3-4):313-37.
- May 7, 2022. Yale Child Study Center. “Anger, irritability and aggression I kids”. <https://www.yalemedicine.org/conditions/anger-issues-in-children-and-teens>.
- Charach A, Ageranioti Belanger S, McLennoan JD, Nixon M. Screening for disruptive behaviour problems in preschool children in primary health care settings. *Paediatrics & Child Health* 2017;22(8):478-484.
- May 7, 2022. Kershaw P, Irwin L, Trafford K, Hertzman C. The British Columbia Atlas of Child Development, 1st edn. Human Early Learning Partnership and Western Geographical Press, 2005. <http://earlylearning.ubc.ca/media/publication/bcatlasofchilddevelopment>.