

# The Influence of Family on Young Children's Aggressive Behaviors

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**Abstract.** The family has a significant influence on the life of a child. It is important to note that most behaviors a child exhibits are directly linked to what they have experienced in life. Especially aggressive behaviors among children have a familiar tendency when they manifest. The parenting style, the behavior of the family as well as the socioeconomic status of the family have an impact on the aggressive behavior expressed by various children. This paper aims to establish the influence of family on young children's aggressive behaviors, analyze why families impact young children's aggressive behavior, and finally draw relevant conclusions. Reviewing previous studies found that some aspects of the family impact children's aggressive behavior. Some findings include how preschool children express aggressive behavior, including shouting, irritability, restlessness, and impulsiveness. Childhood families have a considerable role in designing the behavior of a child. This varies from families from loving and supportive families to those that come from uncondusive families to raise good child behaviors such as those that have episodes of parents fighting. The significance of this paper on the influence of family on young children's aggressive behavior is that it assists in understanding the factors that contribute to aggression in children. The past limitations of the references include being correlational, making it hard to establish the cause. Some of the prospects include the role of specific familiar processes in determining aggressive behavior in children.

**Keywords:** Family; Children; Aggressive Behaviors.

## 1. Introduction

A family is an essential socializing avenue for children. It is the first and most influential group to which children are exposed and belong. The family provides the framework within which children learn about themselves, develop their sense of personal and social identity, and learn society's basic rules and expectations. The family also plays a critical role in developing aggressive behaviors among children. Studies have shown that children who come from homes with many conflicts are more likely to be aggressive [1]. This is because they learn from their parents that aggression is an acceptable way to resolve conflict. Additionally, children who witness their parents being physically aggressive are more likely to be aggressive themselves. This is because they learn that physical aggression is an acceptable way to express anger and frustration.

Many other factors can contribute to the development of behavioral aggressiveness among children. However, the family is one of the most important. Therefore, it is crucial to understand the role of the family in developing these behaviors. Various studies established that children raised in homes with many conflicts are more likely to be aggressive than those raised in homes with little conflict [1]. Despite this result, it is clear that there are still few articles systematically exploring the role of the family in determining the manifestation of aggression among children. Therefore, this assisted in exploring the article's topic of the role of the family in determining aggressive behaviors.

This paper aims to discover how family influences young children's aggressive behaviors. In this paper, the major aspects to be explored include how preschool children express aggressive behavior, the influence of early childhood families, and the cause of family influence on the aggressive behavior manifested by children. The paper will involve many facts from literature from acknowledged paper studies by various scholars.

## **2. Expression of Aggressive Behavior in Preschool Children**

### **2.1 Definition of Aggressive Behavior**

According to psychology, aggressive behavior is any act or behavior that aims to harm a person, animal, or physical property [2]. Some of the aggressive acts termed aggressive behaviors that children manifest includes; shouting, harsh language, and physical violence. On the other hand, aggression refers to a range of behavior that may harm a person physically or psychologically.

### **2.2 Manifestations of Aggressive Behavior in Young Children**

Young children can manifest aggressive behavior in several ways. These include bullying other children, engaging in gossip, ignoring a person, even the grown-ups, and having difficulty calming down oneself. Threatening other children and angry tantrums such as biting, kicking, and hitting others or objects are also ways children may manifest aggressive behavior. A child may appear very irritable, restless, and at times impulsive. Non-physical types of aggression are common and vary harmful and might be elicited among family members, not excluding children [3]. Often the child might show signs of releasing frustrations associated with screaming, biting, and even kicking things. The child becomes disobedient to teachers and even resentful to their parents.

### **2.3 The Impact of Aggressive Behavior on Young Children**

Aggressive behavior among children has many effects. These include discipline problems, poor academic performance, and a lack of respect for others. Children who experience physical threats or aggressive behaviors from those taking care of them develop post-traumatic stress reactions, which may even result in several psychological problems [4]. Aggressive behavior has many effects on the health of the child. The child tends to experience hormonal imbalance, which might cause the feeling of self-harm and even full of suicidal thoughts. The child always feels like engaging in fights, and there is an increased risk of developing psychic problems at the end of the day.

Moreover, aggressive behavior in childhood is a risk factor for developing mental health problems, such as anxiety and depression, in adulthood. Aggressive children are subject to issues with mental health, substance abuse, and criminal behavior [1]. Additionally, aggressive behavior in young children can negatively impact social and academic functioning.

## **3. The Influence of Early Childhood Families**

The influence of early childhood families is profound. Children from loving, supportive families do better in school and life than those without. They express higher self-esteem, better social skills, and career success. Children from loving, supportive families do better in school and life than those without. Based on this perspective, it is evident that families matter when considered based on their effect on the children. Children who grow up in homes with violence, abuse, or neglect are more likely to be aggressive than children and adults [5]. Other risk factors for aggression include poverty, witnessing violence, having a parent with a history of aggression, and being exposed to media violence. While it is not possible to completely prevent all aggression in children, there are things that families can do to reduce the risk. These include creating a loving and nurturing home environment, teaching children how to resolve conflicts peacefully, and providing positive role models.

### **3.1 The Impact of Parenting Styles on Young Children**

Based on statistics, it is evident that approximately 46 percent of all parents use an authoritative parenting style, at least 26 percent use authoritarian, 18 percent use permissive, and around ten percent use a neglectful style of parenting citation [6]. There are different types of parenting styles that end up with different results among children being raised. An example is the authoritarian design of parenting which often leads to having children who are proficient and obedient but may have low

expression of happiness, self-esteem, and social competence. The other type of parenting is permissive, which raises children who are poor in self-regulation and happiness as well. The child here might have poor authority skills and school performance. Authoritative parenting style results in successful children with potential and happiness on many occasions [5].

Moreover, parenting styles can have a significant impact on the behavioral development of young children. Parents who wish to promote their children's cognitive development would do well to adopt an authoritative parenting style. Essentially, in uninvolved parenting, the performance in child rearing is very low, yielding children who are less competent in life situations, lack self-control, and have low self-esteem. The relationship between children and parents, violence, and physical punishment influence aggressive expression among children [7]. Using the 5-point Likert scale to rate mothers' parenting styles and children's aggressive behaviors, Azimi et al. [7] investigated the relationship between maternal parenting style and a child's aggressive behavior. They found that there is a relationship between the style of parenting and the behavioral development of the children. This translates to the aggressive behavior discussed in this paper [7].

### **3.2 The Impact of Parental Relationships on Young Children**

The family is a child's central and fundamental living environment and the most proximal point from which a child's lifestyle is shaped based on several aspects. It is important to note that negative characteristics of parental relationships, such as violence and the presence of conflict, negatively affect the children being raised. A high rate of occurrence of these aspects causes the child to have behavioral and emotional problems, comparatively poor academic performance, insecure feelings while around parents, and social problems whereby the child finds it hard to socialize with others, and later in life, this might also manifest in the form of poor relationship success [8]. Strengthened partner relationships positively affect the parent-child relationship, child advancement, and adjustment. Children are directly linked to good behavioral expression when parents are supportive, can manage conflicts, and have suitable communication methods [8]. In this regard, aggressiveness, a negative trait expressed by the children, is likely not to develop since the child is raised in a good founded familial relationship. On the other hand, when mothers conflicted with their children's fathers, the children were more likely to use aggressive strategies when resolving conflicts with their peers [1].

### **3.3 The Impact of Parent-Child Relationships on Young Children**

The parent-child relationship has a significant impact on young children. This is because the parent-child relationship is the first and most important relationship that a child has in their life. The parent-child relationship shapes how a child views themselves, other people, and the world around them. Parents must nurture and foster a positive and loving relationship with their children to help them develop into happy and well-adjusted individuals. The parent-child relationship helps curate a child's social, emotional, and physical development. This forms a unique bond from which the child and the parent enjoy and feel bonded. This is the foundation of the personality traits the child is likely to express later in life, the complete behavior, and the making of life choices that affect their day-to-day lifestyle [9]. Some of the benefits associated with the parent-child relationship include; the promotion of the child's mental and emotional prowess, development of happiness and contentedness in life, learning to manage stress and challenging situations, development of problem-solving skills, and the child also exhibit optimism and confidence in what they undertake to do [6].

In the study conducted by Schulich et al. [1], a questionnaire was applied to investigate the effect of mothers' conflict on the presenting child's behavior. The sample involved included 170 Israeli children between the age of six to eleven years. Mothers who portray aggressive behavior and engage in conflicts with their children end up raising children with more social conflict behaviors [1]. The study found that marital conflict hurts children's representations of family relationships and children's dispositions towards peer conflict strategies. The major findings of the article show that marital

conflict significantly affects the children's representations of family relationships and children's dispositions towards peer conflict strategies.

### **3.4 Family-Level Educational Strategies to Improve Aggressive Behavior in Young Children**

Family is a great institution capable of counteracting the risk of the child developing violent and aggressive behaviors. Some family strategies to help manage aggressive behaviors among children include being calm when the child shows many emotions. This helps regulate the child's emotions more than if the parent overreacts, triggering the child even more. Moral development is also crucial for managing aggressive behavior among children [10]. The parents and other family members should also avoid giving to aggressive behavior; for example, when a child demand to be bought a snack, the parent should not do it since rewarding such an aspect may cause the development of inappropriate behavior. The article reveals that the parent has a role in ensuring all tantrum behaviors are curbed and not encouraged [11]. The parents have a role also to do what is called catching a child being good. This aspect implies that the parent rewards their child's good behaviors and recognizes and praises their strengths to help them learn that good behavior is essential and advocated for. The children need to be taught how to express themselves, especially when they have emotional issues.

## **4. Causes of Family Influence on Aggressive Behavior in Young Children**

### **4.1 Social Learning**

Children's aggressive behavior is subject to social learning by the children. That is social learning and imitation. For example, if children are often beaten in the family, this can lead to imitation and learning, thus increasing aggressive behavior. Another example is that children learn aggressive behavior through imitation in parental relationship conflicts. Some other activities in a family in which a child learns and results in aggressive behavior include verbal aggression among the family members and the parents, such as yelling or name-calling; physical aggression, such as hitting, kicking, or biting (this is often for parents whereby they might involve in domestic violence as the child watches them); and relational aggression, such as excluding others or spreading rumors [12].

Families whereby some members, such as the father involved in drug abuse, physical fights, and present threats toward the children are likely to yield an instance whereby the child develops aggressive behaviors. Children grow to model their parents in a case whereby they master particular habits of their parents by observing of behavior and how they manage their situations [13]. In this case, the family plays a crucial role since it is the central unit for the child's development. This is essential, revealing that whatever parents do becomes manifested by their children in one way or the other.

### **4.2 Family Socioeconomic Status (SES)**

The correlation between family socioeconomic status and the child's behavior is always present and is manifested by a child depending on their background. Studies have shown that children from lower-income families are more likely to exhibit behavioral problems than those from higher-income families [14]. This is likely due to several factors, including exposure to stress and trauma, lack of resources and opportunities, and limited access to quality education and family exposure.

Family socioeconomic status significantly impacts parenting style, which can translate into different child behaviors. For example, children from lower-income families are more likely to be raised in authoritarian households, where rules are strictly enforced, and there is little room for negotiation or flexibility. This parenting style has been linked with several negative outcomes in children, including poorer academic performance, lower self-esteem, aggressive issues, and more behavioral problems [15]. In contrast, children from higher-income families are more likely to be raised in permissive or indulgent households. Parents are more responsive to their children's needs and desires and are more likely to give in to demands [15]. This parenting style has been associated with more positive outcomes in children, including higher academic achievement and self-esteem.

## 5. Summary

This paper explored the expression of aggressive behavior among preschool children, the impact of early childhood families, and the causes of family influence on childhood aggressive behavior. Some of the ways that children express aggressive behavior include; bullying other children, engaging in gossip, ignoring a person, even the grown-ups, having difficulty calming down, threatening other children, and having angry tantrums such as biting, kicking, and hitting others. This paper's key findings include that family structure, parenting styles, and parental conflict are associated with young children's aggressive behavior. If a child comes from a family whereby the parents get involved in conflicts; the child is likely to develop such behaviors in the future. The child can learn what the parents and other family members are doing through social learning. The family's socioeconomic status is likely to manifest behavior depending on the background they are coming from. Low socioeconomic families tend to be more aggressive compared to those from high standards families. The article concludes that there is a direct correlation between the family and behavioral manifestation among children. Aggressive behavior, as per the findings here, factors such as family conflicts, parenting styles, and socioeconomic factors have an impact n shaping aggressive behavior among children.

The significance of the article on the influence of family on young children's aggressive behavior was to help identify the potential causes of aggression in children and help develop interventions to prevent or reduce aggressive behavior. It has been established that aggressive behavior is learned from observing family members such as parents or growing up in a chaotic, abusive, or violent home environment.

The inadequate availability of reliable and up-to-date papers on the topic. Furthermore, there is a challenge in accurately assessing the impact of family on children's behavior due to the many factors that can contribute to aggression. Finally, data on young children's aggressive behavior is often collected by self-report from parents or caregivers, which can be subject to biases and inaccuracies. Future reviews should focus on families (e.g., single-parent vs. two-parent households) and how family structures may impact children's aggressive behaviors. In addition, attention can also be paid to specific parenting practices (e.g., corporal punishment and verbal aggression) in children's aggressive behaviors.

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