

person or destroy property. Aggression differs from anger, which is a temporary emotional state, but anger may be expressed through aggression. Hyperaggressive behavior in preschoolers is characterized by unprovoked physical attacks on other children and adults, destruction of others' property, frequent intense temper tantrums, extreme impulsivity, disrespect, and noncompliance. Aggression is influenced by a complex set of biological, sociocultural, and familial variables. Factors that tend to increase aggressive behavior are gender, frustration, modeling, and reinforcement.

Evidence indicates that types of aggression differ between genders. Boys exhibit more physical aggression than girls during preschool years (Lussier, Corrado, and Tzoumakis, 2012). Relational aggression is exhibited at similar rates in boys and girls of this age group; however, differences in the frequency of relational aggression between genders can vary depending upon peer interactions in various situations and settings (McEachern and Snyder, 2012).

Frustration, or the continual thwarting of self-satisfaction by disapproval, humiliation, punishment, or insults, can lead children to act out against others as a means of release. Especially if they fear their parents, these children will displace their anger on others, particularly peers and other authority figures. This type of aggression often applies to children who are well-behaved at home but have a discipline problem at school or are bullies among their playmates.

Modeling, or imitating the behavior of significant others, is a powerful influencing force in preschoolers. Children who see their parents as physically abusive are observing behavior they come to know as acceptable and therefore may exhibit this behavior with others (Knox, 2010). Another aspect of modeling is the “double-standard” for acceptable conduct. For example, in some families, aggression is synonymous with masculinity, and boys are encouraged to defend themselves. Media exposure is also a significant source for modeling at this impressionable age. Numerous studies have found a positive correlation between viewing violent programs and developing aggression; therefore, parents should be encouraged to supervise programming, especially for children with aggressive tendencies (Fitzpatrick,