

Supporting Children with Aggressive Behaviour at Home



Many children behave differently at home than they do at school. Some children work very hard to cope with the demands of the school day and may release their emotions when they get home, where they feel safe and secure.

Remember: Behaviour is Communication

Aggressive behaviour is often a sign that a child is struggling with something rather than simply choosing to behave badly.

Ask yourself:

- What is my child trying to tell me through their behaviour?
- Are they tired, overwhelmed, anxious, frustrated or overwhelmed by sensory experiences?
- Have there been any recent changes or worries?

Look for Triggers

Keeping a simple diary can help identify patterns.

Record:

- What happened before the behaviour?
- What was your child doing?
- Who was present?
- What happened afterwards?

Common triggers may include:

- Tiredness
- Hunger
- Changes in routine
- Ending screen time
- Homework
- Sensory overwhelm
- Sibling disagreements

Allow Time to Decompress After School

Some children need time to recover from the demands of the day.

Try:

- A snack and drink

- Quiet activities
- Time outdoors
- Favourite calming activities
- Avoiding lots of questions immediately after school

During an Aggressive Incident - Focus on Safety First

Try to:

- Stay as calm as possible
- Use short, clear sentences
- Reduce the amount of talking
- Give your child space if safe to do so

For example: "I can see you're upset. I'm here to help keep everyone safe."

Avoid:

- Long lectures
- Repeated questioning
- Arguing
- Demanding apologies in the moment

Help Your Child Regulate

Children find it difficult to think clearly when they are overwhelmed.

Helpful strategies may include:

- Movement and exercise
- Deep breathing
- Quiet spaces
- Listening to music
- Sensory activities
- Spending time with a trusted adult

Remember: **Regulate → Relate → Reason**

Children are more able to discuss what happened once they are calm.

Use Predictable Routines

Many children feel safer when they know what is happening next.

Helpful ideas:

- Consistent bedtimes

- Visual timetables
- Warnings before transitions
- Clear routines for mornings and evenings

For example: "Ten minutes until screens go off," rather than "Turn it off now."

Offer Choices

Providing choices can help children feel more in control.

Examples:

- "Would you like to do your homework before or after your snack?"
 - "Would you like the red cup or the blue cup?"
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Repair and Reflect Afterwards

When everyone is calm:

- Talk about what happened.
- Be curious rather than blaming.
- Help your child identify feelings and triggers.

For example: "I wonder what was making things feel so difficult earlier?"

Seek Further Support If Needed

Talk to your GP or other professionals if:

- Aggression is frequent or severe.
- Your child is becoming increasingly distressed.
- Behaviour is impacting family life significantly.
- You have concerns regarding autism, ADHD, anxiety or other developmental differences.

You do not need a diagnosis to start using supportive strategies at home.

Key Message

Your child's behaviour is giving you important information. By staying curious, providing structure and helping them regulate their emotions, you can support them to feel safer, calmer and more successful at home.