



VIOLENCE RESEARCH LAB

Physical Violence among Preschool Children

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Aim

- to analyse and present the latest scientific research on the problem and prevention of physical violence among preschool children



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Definiton

- violence is defined as deliberate use of physical force and power by threatening or acting on oneself or on another person, which may result in or result in injury, death, psychological consequences, underdevelopment or deprivation
(Krug et al., 2002)
- physical violence is the most visible form of violence among preschool children and includes hitting, kicking, biting, pushing, grabbing, pulling, shoving, beating, twisting, choking and destroying a child's clothing and belongings
(Kraljic Babić, Vejmelka, 2015; Provençal, Booij, Tremblay, 2015)



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Origin of aggression

- questions concerning the developmental origins of aggression were investigated by many scholars from ancient Greece to modern times
- central issue over the centuries has been the nature–nurture origin of aggression
(Tremblay, Vitaro, Cote, 2018)



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Physical violence among preschool children

- belief that physical violence appears during late childhood and early adolescence as a result of social learning (peer influences, media violence) and increased levels of male hormones

(Tremblay, 2010)

- start of physically aggressive behaviour as early as 12 months after birth
- frequency peaks around 2–4 years of age and decreases in frequency until early adulthood
- minority of children (3–7%) maintain a high frequency of physical aggression from childhood to adolescence

(Provençal et al., 2015)



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Risk factors for development of physical violence

- individual – sex, impulsivity, hyperactivity, negative emotionality, low score in cognitive abilities (language and executive function skills)
(Provençal et al., 2015; Berk, 2017; Kung, Li, Golding & Hines, 2018)
- family - mothers' behaviour problems during adolescence, mothers' poor education, mothers' first pregnancy at a young age, mothers' smoking during pregnancy, dysfunctional relations between mother and father, parents' depression, presence of siblings, low family income and parental raising practices (parental power assertion, critical remarks, physical punishment, inconsistent discipline)
(Berk, 2012, 2017; Tremblay, 2015; Teymoori et al. 2018)
- peers – sociometric status, group norms

(Boivin, Vitaro & Poulin, 2005)



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Consequences

- rejection by the majority of their classmates, poor grades, disruption of school activities, placed in special classes, schools, and institutions with other “deviants”, most delinquent from preadolescence onward, first to initiate substance use, first to initiate sexual intercourse, most at risk of dropping out of school, becoming unemployed, having a serious accident, being gang members, being violent offenders, having psychiatric problems in adulthood (depression, addiction, personality disorders), substance abuse, smoking during pregnancy

(Boivin et al., 2005; Tremblay, 2010; Junger, Feder, Côté & Tremblay, 2010; Berk, 2017; Girard, Tremblay, Nagin, & Côté, 2018; Teymoori et al. 2018)



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Prevention

- importance of early childhood prevention (Perry Preschool Project; Early Head Start)
(Junger et al., 2010; Berk, 2017; Tremblay et al., 2018)
- support for at-risk females from pregnancy onwards (Nurse-Family Partnership)
(Vitaro, Brendgen, Tremblay, 2017; Tremblay et al., 2018)



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Conclusion

- the emerge of physical aggression around 1st year
- peak of frequency in use of physical aggression between 2 and 4 years
- 3-7% maintain a high frequency of physical aggression from childhood to adolescence
- importance of early identification of potential problems (the prevention should start by supporting girls who have behavior problems and will become the mothers of the next generation of violent boys)



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