



## BRINGING OUT THE BEST

# AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIORS

*Aggressive behavior is a way for a child to communicate using their body inappropriately.*

### What You Might See:

- Yelling/screaming
- Throwing things
- Hitting, pinching, biting, and kicking self and/or others
- Breaking toys and belongings
- Shouting “I hate you!” or “Go away!”
- Noncompliance/shutting down

### What May be Going on:

- Child is attempting to avoid an undesirable task
- Child is trying to control the situation/environment
- Child lack problem solving skills
- Child lacks the ability to communicate appropriately using words
- Child is in a state of being overwhelmed/dysregulated
- Child feels isolated or in danger of some kind
- Child is looking for help from an adult but doesn’t know how to ask for help
- The environment and/or people in the environment may not be a good match
- Child feels stressed, crowded, tired, hungry, thirsty, and/or anxious
- Child is overstimulated by sensory input of some sort (noise, light, smells, etc.)
- Child may have trouble waiting for long periods of time or doesn’t do well with transitions

### How to Intervene and Connect:

- Offer calming strategies (deep breathing, heavy work, stomping feet, squeezing hands together, using words to express themselves (“I’m mad!”)).
- When the child is calm, work on recognizing and labeling emotions
- Remind the child of limits, “You may not throw the ball, you may (give alternative)…”
- Focus on positive behaviors and praise specifically when they occur
- Don’t take aggression personally
- Set up your environment using: visual schedules, transition cues (timers, songs, etc.), visuals (what we do in circle, centers, etc.), calming areas, preplanned activities, ample space for movement, and lessons re: how to handle emotions, how to share, how to ask for help, etc.

Adaptations based on information from the Center for Community Inclusion & Disability Studies (University of Maine) and LemonLimeAdventures.com

