



# CARE INSTRUCTIONS

KAISER PERMANENTE

## Dealing With Aggressive Behavior in Young Children: After Your Child's Visit

### Your Kaiser Permanente Care Instructions

All children have times when they are angry and defiant. Many children begin to express these emotions during their second year. It is a normal part of a child's urge to take charge of his or her life. However, your child may act out in ways that puzzle or frighten you. It can be very painful to see your child bullying other children or becoming violent.

You can help your child learn to understand and control angry feelings. Show your child the behavior you want to see. Set firm, clear limits around what behavior is okay. If you are consistent in your own behavior, it will help your child understand how to behave with other people.

**Follow-up care is a key part of your child's treatment and safety.** Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if your child is having problems. It's also a good idea to know your child's test results and keep a list of the medicines your child takes.

### How can you care for your child at home?

- Teach your child ways to express anger that do not hurt others. Do not reward angry or violent behavior.
- Show your child how to use words to express feelings. Praise your child when he or she uses words instead of fists.
- Engage your child in games and activities where playing well with others pays off. Children can learn a lot about "cause and effect" by rolling a ball back and forth with someone.

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- Teach your child that sharing and give-and-take mean that both people win. For example, have one child divide a snack and have the other child pick first, or have one child suggest two games and have the other child choose first.
- Your child needs to learn that it is okay to be angry at times and that there are healthy ways to work through that anger.
- Be consistent with your limits, and make sure your child understands what the limits are. Just as important, follow through on what happens if your child exceeds limits.
- Try using a "time-out" to stop aggressive behavior. Time-out means that you remove your young child from a stressful situation for a short period of time. The rule of thumb is 1 minute for each year of age, with a maximum of 5 minutes. This gives your child time to calm down and think about his or her actions.
  - Time-out works if it happens right after the bad behavior. Do not wait until later in the day or week.
  - Small children need an adult with them during time-out. Let the child talk about what just happened.
  - When you put your child in time-out, do not do it in anger. Be calm and firm.
- Talk to your doctor about parent education classes or helpful books about child behavior.
- Talk with other parents about the ways they cope with behavior issues.

### When should you call for help?

**Call 911** anytime you think your child may need emergency care. For example, call if:

- You are so frustrated with your child that you are afraid you might cause him or her physical harm.

Contact your doctor if:

- You want tips on helping your child control his or her behavior.
- You would like to see a behavior counselor.

### Where can you learn more?

Go to <http://www.kp.org>

Enter P463 in the search box to learn more about "**Dealing With Aggressive Behavior in Young Children: After Your Child's Visit**".

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