

Dr. Fay's Love and Logic – Aggressive Toddlers

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It is the beginning of the week and you are getting yet another call from your child's daycare that they are dealing with aggressive behaviors from your toddler. You are at your wits end, especially now that you have to take more time off from work.

Your toddler has been dealing with biting, hitting, spitting, kicking, slapping, and other aggressive behaviors because they are unable to self-regulate and communicate their feelings and emotions effectively. It is important to remember that children are going to be frustrated, but how do we help them learn that the aggressive acts are not acceptable and causing them trouble? Dr. Charles Fay outlines ways for parents and teachers to redirect children in a positive way.

One way to address this behavior is to learn the “[uh, oh](#)” song. This song is representative of a way to take “good care of ourselves, while sending a strong, but loving message that aggressive behavior doesn't work out so well” (Fay). He states that it is important to remain calm and it only works with smaller children who are upset because they are unable to adequately express their needs (food, comfort, sleep, etc.). Much easier said than done, but reacting in a negative way to a child's negative behavior only reinforces that it is okay for them to act that way. We want to show the children that we are calm and can handle the situation they are dealing with.

Fay points out that it is about finding different ways for the child to communicate when they are angry, frustrated, or upset. We want to remove the child from the situation. This could mean moving them to a different room, moving them to a different activity, to a highchair – anything that is nice and safe for them to regulate. Be stern and consistent, children are only able to come out and rejoin their friends and family once they are calm, plus every minute for the child's age. He reiterates that this is not designed to be a punishment, but to send them message to the child that they cannot be around others when they are not being nice. As a parent and caregiver, it is also important to note that there are no reminders or second chances; we must follow through with very few words, no lectures, etc. Fay says it's important to move right back into the daily routine.

Some other issues Fay discusses is the possibility of: lack of sleep, whether the child is engaged in too much screen time, whether they have been taught the correct way to communicate what they really want, and their need for quiet time. All of these are important issues to take into consideration and ensure that the children are receiving the adequate amount of time and attention to all their needs.

Everything in this discipline technique is that we are concerned for their safety. Children need to know that, and your actions as parents and caregivers must be guided by the concern for their well-being in order for this discipline technique to be effective.

For more information, check out Dr. Charles Fay's Love and Logic Website [here](#).