

FAMILY VIOLENCE AS A PREREQUISITE FOR THE MANIFESTATION OF AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR IN CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT

Violence has become widespread in various spheres of human life and is considered one of the most important problems of the modern era. When discussing violence, we are dealing with specific actions directed toward achieving a particular objective - namely, causing harm to another person. The suffering inflicted as a result of such actions may constitute both a motive and an intended outcome.

Approximately 90% of violent crimes are committed primarily in conflict-ridden families, within the context of personal, domestic, and social relationships. Family violence differs from other forms of violence in that it occurs between family members who are connected by kinship or close personal relationships. The group of women studied had been subjected to various forms of domestic violence.

Based on the results of the study, it can be stated that women and children constitute approximately 70% of victims of violence. They suffer severe physical and psychological trauma, which, in turn, contributes to increased mortality among children, older adults, and persons with disabilities. Family violence cannot be regarded solely as an intra-family problem; this phenomenon must also be addressed and discussed at the state level. Discussion at this level contributes to the effective resolution of the problem. Therefore, the roles of public organizations, the mass media, and the state should be coordinated in addressing this issue. Society must not turn a blind eye to this persistent phenomenon, and individuals subjected to violence should be encouraged to speak out and oppose it.

As a consequence of family violence, preschool-aged children may display aggressive behaviour. In order to prevent such behaviour, appropriate pedagogical approaches should be implemented in cooperation with parents.

Keywords: *conflict, aggression, aggressive behaviour, family violence, physical violence, preschool age.*

INTRODUCTION

Violence has become widespread in various spheres of human activity and is regarded as one of the most significant problems of the modern era. The question of what determines human aggressiveness - biological or social factors - continues to be debated in the scientific literature.

On the one hand, aggression is viewed as a genuine innate instinct. It is considered primary, directed toward the preservation of the species, characteristic of all living beings, and capable of manifesting itself suddenly. On the other hand, aggression may be understood as a conscious form of human behaviour aimed at causing physical or psychological harm to another person. From this perspective, aggressive behaviour is not regarded as an innate phenomenon; rather, it develops under the influence of the environment and is considered a consequence of a distorted socialization process.

The instinctive nature of aggression confirms that it is characteristic of all living beings. However, when discussing violence, it is necessary to understand it as a manifestation of aggression in interpersonal relationships. Therefore, the term “violence” should be used only in relation to extreme forms of aggression manifested through deliberate and purposeful behavioural actions. Thus, aggression, by its very nature, represents an expression of violence that emerges through the initiatives and actions of the individual (Berkowitz, 2001).

When examining violence within a social context, it is necessary to consider the role of the social and domestic environment, since a significant proportion of violent crimes are committed at the household and community levels. Approximately 90% of violent crimes are committed primarily in conflict-ridden families, on the basis of personal, domestic, and social relationships.

The family, as the oldest social institution, is regarded as the foundation of society. It is within the family that the first stages of an individual’s socialization take place. Like any social organism, the family develops and transforms together with society, responds to social demands, and at the same time expresses its own distinctive attitude toward social norms and customs. It also provides economic, social, and physical protection for its members. Today, in the context of family violence, particular attention must be paid to the cruel and concealed realities of intra-family life (Jaffe, 2000).

The increase and criminalization of violence in society are directly connected with family relationships. Family violence differs from other forms of violence in that violent acts are committed between family members who are connected by blood or close personal relationships; in other words, such acts occur within the family environment. As a result, children develop negative behavioural patterns (Potapova, 2000).

The purpose of this study is to examine aggressive manifestations in the behaviour of preschool-aged children and to apply appropriate methods for overcoming them. Children who grow up in families where violence occurs often display aggressive behaviour. Therefore, we emphasized the importance of the family environment and, in cooperation with parents, attempted to correct children’s aggressive behavioural manifestations.

MAIN CONTENT OF THE STUDY

A group of women who had experienced various forms of family violence was selected for the study. The research focused on the following forms of violence:

1. violence against children;
2. violence against one of the spouses;
3. economic violence;
4. emotional and psychological violence (Shvedova, 2000).

Crimes committed on the basis of family violence generally arise within personal, domestic, and social relationships. According to statistical data, women and children constitute approximately 70% of victims of family violence. They suffer severe physical and psychological injuries, which contributes to an increase in mortality among children, older adults, and persons with disabilities.

A group of the women surveyed 65% believed that the intrusion of family violence into family life destroys the family's existence. Another group agreed that it leads to improper family upbringing 58%. Furthermore, 90% of respondents stated that violence within the family leads to child neglect and encourages children to consume alcohol and drugs, while also contributing to their involvement in criminal environments.

Thus, the criminalization of the family takes place, giving rise to a specific way of life in which violence, alcoholism, and drug addiction become normalized patterns of behaviour. These patterns may subsequently be transmitted from one generation to the next.

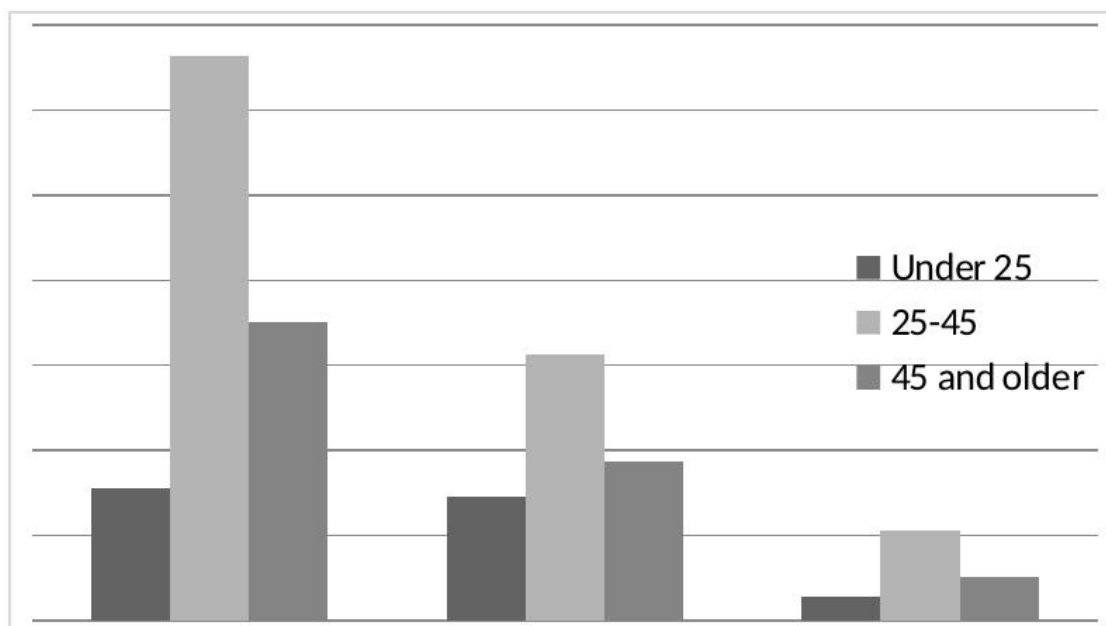
Based on the survey results, psychological violence was reported in 58.5% of cases within Armenian families, while physical violence accounted for 32.2% and sexual violence for 9.3%.

Distribution of Forms of Violence by Age Group

Table 1. Distribution of Forms of Violence by Age Group (%)

Age group	Psychological	Physical	Sexual
Under 25	7.8	7.3	1.4
25–45	33.2	15.6	5.3
45 and older	17.5	9.3	2.6
Total	58.5	32.2	9.3

Figure 1.



The studies described above are not an end in themselves. It is well known that parents influence the development of their children's behaviour, character, views, and convictions primarily through their own example and authority. Our observations revealed that children growing up in families where violence occurs tend to display aggressive behaviour.

A considerable number of theoretical studies have been devoted to aggressive behaviour, including the works of K. Lorenz, A. Bandura, R. Baron, D. Richardson, I. A. Furmanov, R. S. Nemov, V. Zinchenko, I. Zagradova, A. K. Asinsky, N. D. Levintov, R. S. Homans, V. Klein, and E. Fromm.

Studies show that aggressive behaviour formed during the preschool period may remain a stable personal characteristic and persist throughout a person's later life if preventive measures are not taken. According to research, childhood aggression is socially conditioned behaviour. It may emerge when a child's physiological needs, sense of security, need for love and affection, respect, self-expression, and trust in the world remain unmet.

A child's lack of trust in other people and in the world largely depends on the quality of maternal care directed toward the child. Childhood aggression is expressed through behaviour that causes harm, insult, or pain to others. It may arise and intensify as a result of strong negative experiences, frustration, opposition to the child's wishes, or the inability to fulfil those wishes (Kornienko, 2017).

Preschool-aged children are highly sensitive to various factors. Their first fears, first sympathies, first social interactions, family circumstances, and the first aggressive actions directed toward them by other people leave a deep imprint on their developing psyche and character.

The family, family relationships, and the style of family upbringing are important factors in the emergence of aggressive manifestations in a child's behaviour. Families in which members are emotionally alienated from one another, conflicts and acts of violence occur, parents show little interest

in the child's life, neglect the child, behave harshly, or use physical punishment contribute to the development of aggressive behaviour.

The causes of aggressive behavioural manifestations may include biological factors, socio-psychological factors, and individual personality characteristics.

In order to prevent aggressive behaviour among preschool-aged children, we conducted an experimental study based on the following objectives:

1. To examine aggressive manifestations in the behaviour of older preschool-aged children.

2. To test game-based exercises, corrective methods, and clay therapy aimed at overcoming aggressive behaviour in preschool-aged children.

3. To summarize the results.

The study involved 20 children aged five to six. First, we identified the levels of aggressive manifestations in their behaviour by observing them during various activities and joint interactions. We then attempted to determine their family circumstances through conversations and questionnaires administered to their parents.

The study was conducted at Yerevan Municipal Non-Commercial Organization "Nursery-Kindergarten No. 8" from October 2024 to March 2025. Twenty children from the senior group of the kindergarten participated in the study - 12 boys and 8 girls - as well as four parents. The parents were informed in advance about the nature of the work, were introduced to the purpose of the study, and were invited to cooperate with us.

During the study, we used systematic observation and psychological interviews. The choice of these methods was determined by the fact that the study of aggressive behavioural manifestations involves certain difficulties related to the potentially dangerous nature of such behaviour. Naturally, methods that could cause harm to the children or to one another could not be used. Therefore, we selected relatively gentle and safe research methods.

OBJECTIVES OF SYSTEMATIC OBSERVATION

1. To obtain information about aggressive manifestations in the children's behaviour for preliminary psychological analysis.

2. To determine the degree to which older preschool-aged children are inclined to display aggressive behaviour.

During the systematic observation, we used an observation sheet consisting of 18 items designed to record aggressive behavioural manifestations (Lavrentieva, Titarenko, 1992).

The results of the systematic observation showed that the number of aggressive manifestations observed in the children's behaviour varied considerably, ranging from 1 to 14.

Based on the number of aggressive behavioural manifestations, the children were conditionally divided into three levels:

1. Low level: Aggressive manifestations were minimal or almost absent; 1–4 manifestations were recorded out of 18.
2. Medium level: Aggressive manifestations were noticeable; 5–9 manifestations were recorded out of 18.
3. High level: Aggressive manifestations occurred frequently; 10–14 manifestations were recorded out of 18.

The results of the systematic observation showed the following:

- 16 children demonstrated a low level of aggressive manifestations;
- 2 children demonstrated a medium level;
- 2 children demonstrated a high level.

The results are presented in the form of a diagram.

Figure 2.

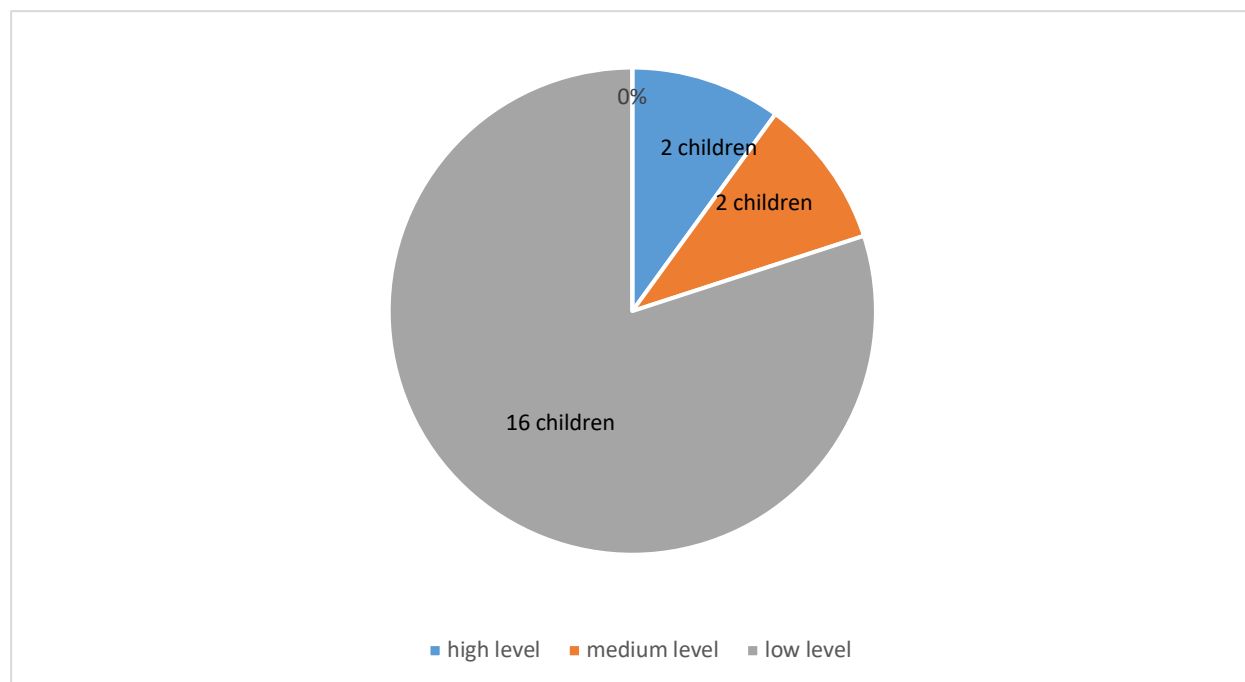


Table 2. Episodes Recording Aggressive Behavioural Manifestations (Main Stage)

N	Child	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Results
1	A.D.	+	+	+	-	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	14
2	M.A.	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	+	+	-	+	14
3	R.K.	+	+	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	+	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	9
4	M.V.	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	6

Note: "+" indicates the manifestation is present; "-" indicates it is absent.

The table clearly shows that the behaviour of these four children included various manifestations that differed both in nature and frequency, as well as several common manifestations characteristic of all four children. These common manifestations were as follows:

- 1. The child frequently became intensely angry.**
- 2. The child constantly needed the teacher's assistance and supervision.**
- 3. The child often responded to friendly treatment with suspicion or hostility.**
- 4. The child hid or destroyed objects belonging to others.**

The results of the study were regularly discussed with the group teacher and were also presented to the parents.

Analysis of the diagnostic results allows us to conclude that aggressive manifestations were most active and pronounced in the behaviour of four children from the senior preschool group. Subsequent corrective work was therefore conducted with these children.

Corrective Work

At this stage, the aim of our work was to reduce the children's negative emotions and teach them socially acceptable ways of expressing themselves and their emotions. Through the use of games, we set ourselves the following objectives:

- to develop the child's ability to recognize and accept their own emotions, including anger and hostility;
- to teach children to regulate and control their emotional states;
- to contribute to the development of positive emotions;
- to develop the ability to transform destructive aggressive manifestations into constructive forms of behaviour.

Based on the recorded results, we focused our attention on the four older preschool-aged children who had demonstrated medium and high levels of aggressive behavioural manifestations. After analysing the aggressive manifestations present in their behaviour, we selected and developed special games corresponding to their individual needs. These games were subsequently used in the corrective activities organized with the children.

During the corrective work, we attempted to follow the following principles:

- treating the children with attention and patience;
- allowing children to express their aggressive behavioural manifestations while directing them toward objects that do not pose a threat to others;

- demonstrating effective behaviour through personal example, including ensuring that adults do not display aggressive behaviour toward other people in the presence of children;
- creating a positive atmosphere in which children could feel that they were loved, valued, and accepted as they were.

It should be noted that the other children in the group also participated voluntarily in the games we organized. At times, we deliberately involved them, especially in games that required the participation of a larger number of children. The group teacher also participated in the games, including “The School of Friendship and Kindness,” “The Trash Bin,” “The Magic Chair,” “The Wave,” and “Drops.”

The children demonstrated interest and positive emotions while participating in these games. The parents were regularly informed about the progress of the games and the children’s impressions.

In order to determine the effectiveness of the main stage of the intervention and to verify the proposed hypothesis, systematic observation and a questionnaire survey among the parents were conducted during the final stage. The questionnaire was based on the method developed by G. P. Lavrentieva and T. M. Titarenko. These activities were carried out in March 2025.

During the systematic observation, we again used the observation chart consisting of 18 episodes for recording aggressive behavioural manifestations. We observed the behaviour of the four children who had previously demonstrated medium and high levels of aggression throughout the entire period of their stay at the kindergarten.

When recording aggressive behavioural manifestations, we considered both their presence and their frequency.

Table 3. Episodes Recording Aggressive Behavioural Manifestations (Final Stage)

N	Child	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Results
1	M.A.	-	+	+	-	+	-	-	+	-	+	+	-	-	-	+	+	-	+	9
2	A.D.	-	+	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	8
3	R.K.	-	+	+	-	-	-	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	5
4	M.V.	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	2

Note: "+" indicates the manifestation is present; "-" indicates it is absent.

The analysis of the results obtained during the final stage shows that changes occurred in the behaviour of all four children. These changes are presented in the form of a histogram.

Figure 3.

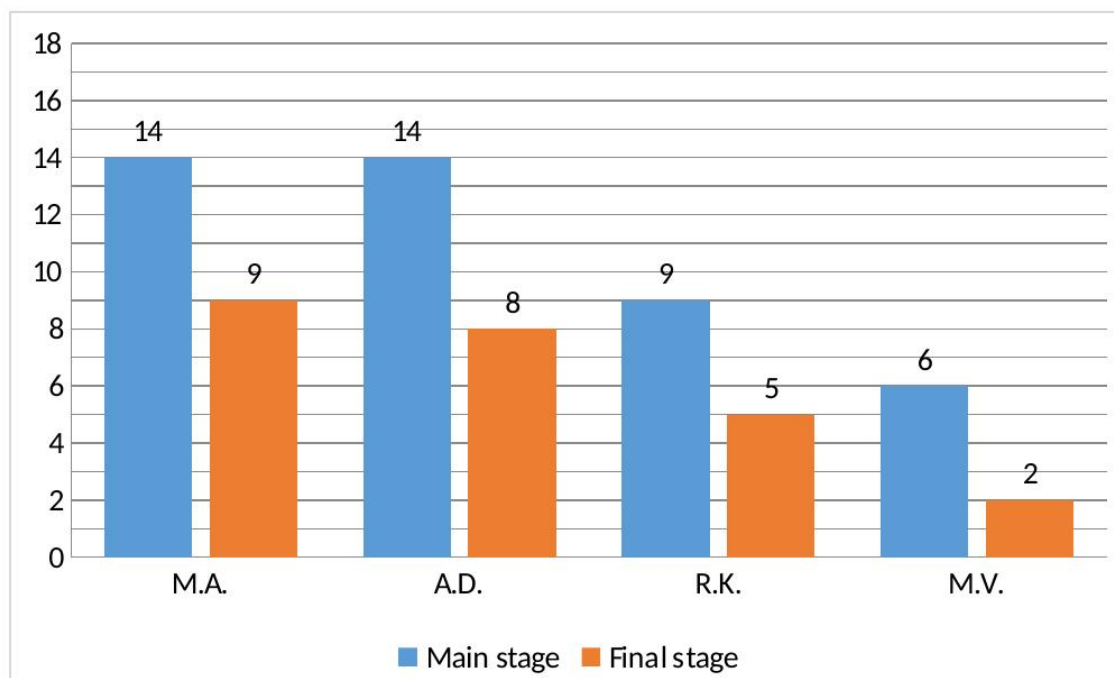


Table 4. Comparison of Levels of Aggressive Manifestations in Children's Behaviour

Child	Result at the main (recording) stage	Result at the final (control) stage
A.D.	High level	Medium level
M.A.	High level	Medium level
M.V.	Medium level	Low level
R.K.	Medium level	Medium level (shift from the upper to the lower boundary)

It is noteworthy that by this stage, the following two common manifestations had almost disappeared from the behaviour of all four children:

- 1. The child frequently became intensely angry.**
- 2. The child hid or destroyed objects belonging to others.**

The effectiveness of the work carried out during the main stage is also confirmed by the results of the questionnaire administered to the parents at this stage. These results almost coincided with the results of the systematic observation.

The results of the questionnaire were as follows:

A.D. – 10 points: medium level;

M.A. – 8 points: medium level;

M.V. – 7 points: medium level;

R.K. – 5 points: low level.

As a result of the study, the children began to demonstrate calmer and more balanced behaviour within their families. They also began to speak more frequently with family members about their feelings, particularly when they were angry. They were able to describe their emotions verbally and explain how they felt in different situations.

This indicates that during the corrective programme, the nature of the aggressive manifestations in the behaviour of the older preschool-aged children changed, and positive changes were observed in their emotional development. The children acquired certain abilities to express their feelings and emotions in socially acceptable ways, as well as the ability to share and talk about their experiences. During joint games, the children became more tolerant toward one another.

Thus, national traditions, patterns of thinking, and established practices often lead people to regard the resolution of violence-related issues as a private matter belonging to each family. Many people believe that every family should resolve its problems independently. However, addressing this issue requires a state-level approach.

Particular importance should be attached to the legal dimension of the family, in which people are connected through a system of legal, marital, and familial obligations. From a sociological perspective, importance is placed on the stable unity and shared life of family members. They are connected through marital, familial, and personal relationships, share common interests, and care for one another.

Considering family violence in a social and legal context requires a continuous search for new solutions. Family violence may be defined as an intentional violent act committed by one person against another member of the family. Such an act violates the person's constitutional rights and freedoms as an individual and citizen, causes physical and psychological pain, and harms their health.

Armenian families possess distinctive characteristics and are traditionally known for their strength and longevity. At the same time, Armenian women, as custodians of the family home, should not forget their rights and responsibilities.

Socio-economic factors also play an important role and may have a destructive influence on family stability. These factors include unemployment, migration, and other difficult social circumstances. Therefore, the state should address these challenges at the legal and organizational levels.

The role of public organizations should also be strengthened. Specialists working in the field of family welfare can provide assistance to families facing such difficulties. Particular attention should be paid to children who have experienced cruel treatment and whose human dignity has been undermined.

In all known cases, such treatment contributes to indifference toward children, the absence of adequate family upbringing, and an increase in social orphanhood. It may also lead to numerous physical and psychological consequences for children and slow down their development.

Children subjected to violence face considerable difficulties in the process of socialization. They may also become transmitters of cruelty themselves. Later, when they establish their own families, they may encounter similar difficulties.

According to statistical data, 80% of children recognize and understand the harmful nature of violence. Cruel treatment contributes to increasing social tension in contemporary society and intensifies the instability of criminalized environments.

Therefore, this complex problem requires a comprehensive solution. Every person must understand that this destructive phenomenon can enter even a family that appears to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Consequently, society must not turn a blind eye to this social evil.

CONCLUSIONS

The study of psychological and pedagogical literature, together with the analysis of the results of the experimental work conducted by us, allows us to draw the following conclusions:

1. The problem of family violence should not be regarded solely as an intra-family issue. It must also be addressed and discussed at the state level, which would contribute to the effective resolution of the problem.
2. Having summarized the characteristics of the concept of “aggression” found in the professional literature, as well as the definitions and explanations provided by various approaches and theories, we can define aggression as an oppressive or violent action motivated consciously or unconsciously. Such an action contradicts the norms and rules governing human life and interpersonal relationships in society and is aimed at causing harm to another person, either physically or psychologically, including through negative emotional experiences, fear, tension, or suppression.
3. Among the causes of aggressive manifestations in the behaviour of older preschool-aged children, we identify not only family violence but also the children’s lack of knowledge of socially acceptable ways of self-expression and emotional expression.
4. Games specifically designed for this purpose may serve as a means of teaching children socially acceptable forms of self-expression and emotional expression.
5. Through the use of specially developed games, it is possible to prevent and reduce aggressive manifestations in the behaviour of older preschool-aged children.

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