

ANGER IN CHILDREN: A MINIREVIEW

AGATA MALTESE^{1*}, PALMIRA ROMANO^{2*}, LUCREZIA D'ORO^{3*}, BEATRICE GALLAI⁴, ROSA MAROTTA⁵, FRANCESCO LAVANO⁵, SERENA MARIANNA LAVANO⁵, GABRIELE TRIPI^{6,7}, MARGHERITA SALERNO⁸

¹Department of Psychological, Pedagogical and Educational Sciences, University of Palermo, Italy - ²Centro LARS, Sarno, Italy - ³Centro Relax, Benevento, Italy - ⁴Department of Surgical and Biomedical Sciences, University of Perugia, Perugia, Italy - ⁵Department of Medical and Surgery Sciences, University "Magna Graecia", Catanzaro, Italy - ⁶Department PROSAMI, University of Palermo, Italy - ⁷Childhood Psychiatric Service for Neurodevelopmental Disorders, CH Chinon, France - ⁸Sciences for Mother and Child Health Promotion, University of Palermo, Italy

ABSTRACT

Aggressive behavior is a peculiar characteristic of most animal species playing an important role in species preservation and two types have been identified: interspecific and intraspecific aggression. The interspecific refers purely to the instinct of predation, while the intraspecific is the purpose for species preservation. Anger has been found in very young children between the ages of four and seven, is manifested through vocalizations, expressions and global movements affecting the entire body of the child: it is a means of communication privileged to express themselves and communicate. Anger must be considered a positive event, even if it may frighten it has a positive effect: transforming an event that could only be destructive and useless in a constructive process, and channeling the child's anger toward a specific goal.

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Introduction

Aggressive behavior is a peculiar characteristic of most animal species playing an important role in species preservation and two types have been identified: interspecific and intraspecific aggression. The interspecific refers purely to the instinct of predation, while the intraspecific is the purpose for species preservation. These aggressive behavior have been observed in all animals from fishes to Mammalians. Aggressiveness can be defined as defensive aggressiveness, indispensable to survival, adaptive aggression, which is about the evolution of the species and ultimately explorative aggression that allows the maturation of the individual.

The latter consists of the need for the puppy to experience the outside environment and to try it out, thus discovering the limits and obstacles it encounters in daily life. It has also been observed that aggressive behavior in domestic chicks determines the retention of hierarchy within the group. This is of utmost importance for the survival of a species because it guarantees peaceful coexistence and improves hunting techniques, which, by experimenting with them, becomes more effective. Considering the aggressive behavior of Primates, it turns out to be the closest species to the human being, it is manifested through the activation of the sympathetic system that prepares the body for a violent activity: the animal acquires strong amounts

of energy in Predicting the struggle for survival, you have the body expansion up to its maximum size, to intimidate your opponent by forcing it to yield or escape. One can therefore guess how certain aggressive behaviors we find in Humans are archaic behaviors and are characteristic of primates as of other animal species. In conclusion, we can assert that aggression is not only a destructive and negative character, but it has a crucial regulatory and evolutionary meaning, providing greater chance of success in the challenge of survival⁽¹⁻²⁵⁾.

Anger process in children

Anger has been found in very young children between the ages of four and seven, is manifested through vocalizations, expressions and global movements affecting the entire body of the child: it is a means of communication privileged to express themselves and communicate. Through simple bodily movement, the child is able to express sensations-emotions that turn into real feelings, in ways of being, in peculiar characteristics of one's character and personality.

The way children communicate, to send their messages outwardly, is through a very global expression, carrying a number of different information among themselves: they are relevant to understanding the inner world of the child and everything that emotionally experiences. The child talks through the body, the particular muscular tone, postures, movements and temperament.

In particular, there is a close relationship between the temperament and the emotional world of the child: temperament is defined as the innate repertoire of peculiar traits and features, a biological model that the child works to interact with the surrounding world.

The development of the child is basically based on four factors: maturation, experience, social transmission, and self-regulation process. Maturation is based on genetic basis, development is outlined by a natural trajectory that is established by the genes, while experience refers to an active interaction between the child and the environment, social broadcasting illustrates the information and habits passed on by parents to a child in a specific environment.

Finally, the self-regulation process can be defined as the basic psychological growth, because child tries to establish an equilibrium between what he knows and what he experiences.

Moreover, researches in the evolutionary field have identified three temperamental categories: "easy", "difficult", "slow to warm", also important for the therapeutic management⁽³⁻¹⁴⁾.

These features can easily be identified at birth:

1) the easy child looks happy, flexible, regular in his behavior, easily adapts to new situations;

2) the difficult child has completely opposite traits, looks very intense, inflexible, fickle, nervous, and often very angry;

3) The slow to warm up baby presents great difficulties in adapting to new situations, but unlike the infant, it has low intensity reactions. These different temperamental aspects are characterized by a low level of motor activation, tendency to withdraw from situations and interactions with non-familiar people. Children who have a difficult temper can learn to express anger less destructive, avoiding the suppression of this kind of emotion, necessary for the human being, is absolutely healthy, what is the "problem" is the consequences evoked by this kind of feeling⁽²⁻⁷⁾.

Some children are difficult to console from birth, they seem to feel more angry than others and are more likely to have colic and different physical problems and have difficulty in falling asleep. Temperament is defined based on the activity of the child, his/her impulsiveness, the intensity of emotions, its ability to respond to different situations, its ability to adapt, and finally how the eating, sleeping, evacuation. The child with a difficult temperament is always active, growing, even impulsive, showing intense reactions, is rigid, inflexible, and tends to have sagging and violent reactions as a result of new stimuli.

Kids with a certain temperament can change their way of relationship, their being, through the experience sphere and environmental influences: a child who has received the right care from the family will consider the environment as a safe place to make

Experience and face new achievements in a serene way. Healthy anger can lead to a positive change and growth by the baby. When anger becomes a destructive, constant force, escaping control of the individual and influencing relationships and the quality of daily life, then anger becomes a pathological event and it is necessary to intervene in a timely manner to reduce the damage could have significant consequences on the same individuals, on the other people and on the outside environment⁽⁵⁻¹²⁾.

When anger comes to a stressful event, our body undergoes specific modifications, determined by the autonomic nervous system activation: increases heart rate, increased muscle tension, sweating, and blood pressure. This type of emotion, moreover, is characterized by a well-delineated facial mimic: frowning eyebrows, uncovering and grinding teeth, or tightening their lips, voice changes (i.e. from more intense to threatening, shaky, or hissing). During the child development, we can observe how the manifestations of aggressive behavior may change over time.

Through maturation processes and above all through the new skills acquired, the communicative capacity is expanded: by simple body involvement, the only means of communication, it comes to the verbalization and therefore to the verbal display of their feelings. The child uses the muscular tone to exert his/her own discomfort or to request satisfaction for his/her need, showing flexion of the limbs, a high tone and can be accompanied by weeping, the child is consolable at the time of satisfaction. He/she may show anger through the involvement of the body, often not even the child himself can identify the cause of his illness, and manifests through hyperactivity, non-economic gestures, violent anger of the environment, people or towards oneself, taking antisocial behavior, which is usually suppressed and inhibited⁽²⁶⁻⁴⁵⁾.

In the course of development and thus pursuing the pursuit of new skills and autonomies, the child can manifest anger through the communicative channel of verbalization, then scream in situations that are not consonant, and involve the bodily level chaotic. The angry baby may have hyperactivity, great difficulty in attention, difficulty in graphic activity that may be confusing and may also have difficulty in language, which appears hasty and often the child is unable to verbally explain his/her mood. It is not necessary to suppress or inhibit anger, because it is nothing more than a means of communicating the child, who cannot use other and different communicative channels to express discomfort, malaise.

Trying to investigate the causes of child anger often takes into consideration the family environment, and in particular the relationships between mother and child. By observing the tonic dialogue established between mother and child, it is possible to understand how this a first report will provide the basis for the formation of the child's affective world and the establishment of future relationships during

the course of development. In this regard, it has been shown that a period of separation from the person from whom emotional dependence, called "attachment figure", as well as the threat of separation and other forms of rejection, causes children, as in adults, anxious behaviors and of anger. The anguish of separation and aggressive behavior are at the root of hostility towards the attachment figure: they symbolize a sort of rebuke to what has happened, hoping it will not happen anymore is a clear manifestation of discomfort⁽⁴⁶⁻⁷⁰⁾.

The child often feeling frustrated, expressing this malaise with anger and aggressive behaviors, often unable to deal with the obstacles that lie ahead of him, needs to relieve these accumulated energies within himself by aggressive acts towards objects that are not Using them in a functional way and often destroying them, and often using very animated verbalizations, or the child may resort to a total closure, never allowing relationship with each other and triggering an explosive rage by inducing the child to take antisocial behavior and experience great difficulties in understanding it and especially in consoling it. This close relationship between anger and attachment theory has been studied, and studies have been conducted in this regard, arguing that aggressive behavior often depends on a lack of development of the "reflective function", also called a "metacognitive function".

That is, the ability of the child to build the theory of the mind and hence to assume the vision of oneself, of the other and of objects in relation to feelings, beliefs to intentions and desires. The development of reflexive function depends specifically on the ability of the mother to recognize and understand the child's mental states, his inner world, that is, his feelings, thoughts, desires, and intentions. The caregiver performs a mirror function by showing that he understands the child's inner world. Only in this way does the child learn to read his mental states and even the others. The lack of process of mentalization, that is, of adequate psychic structures that allow him to understand himself and the intentions of others, can push the child to use the body, and thus also aggression, as the only communication vehicle. Anger must be considered a positive event, even if it may frighten it has a positive effect: transforming an event that could only be destructive and useless in a constructive process, and channeling the child's anger toward a specific goal. It is not necessary to suppress this feeling, but to support it because it is

often a cause for growth by the child, so it is necessary to ensure a safe environment, appropriate care to its needs, provide effective strategies to tackle obstacles during its development, avoiding mortification and, above all, avoiding repression of anger, which is an alternative child communication channel⁽⁷¹⁻¹⁰⁰⁾.



The two pictures represent two child's drawings about their anger state.

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Corresponding author

MARGHERITA SALERNO, MD

Sciences for Mother and Child Health Promotion

University of Palermo

(Italy)