Handling Your Child’s Aggression 

All children play aggressively once in awhile. They are frustrated when they can’t have control, or power, or don’t have the verbal skills to say what they want.

Anytime that your child is aggressive (shoves, pushes, bites, kicks, throws something) you must immediately show them how to express themselves more appropriately.

~Act promptly.

~Say, “No, that hurts!” Never do the same behavior back to them because that only reinforces the behavior.

~Tell them it hurts someone physically and emotionally.

~Natural consequences work best and make the most sense. If they are hitting people, they need a time out away from people. If they are breaking toys, the toys get taken away. If they are screaming at you, don’t engage in conversation until they can calm down and speak in a somewhat normal tone of voice. If you with hold a privilege, it needs to be somehow connected to the aggressive behavior.

~Consequences need to be within a short time range. With holding an outing next weekend will not make sense to the child.

~Teach them to apologize in 2 parts. “I’m sorry I \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(hit you, took your toy). Next time I will\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (use my words, ask you first, walk away until I calm down).”

~Always validate their feelings. Feelings are not right or wrong, but how we express them is. Let them know that you understand their frustration, anger, sadness etc. and there is a better way to express it.

~Help them recognize the red flags of knowing when the angry feelings are getting out of control. (Heart pounding, feel like hitting, face gets hot) Teach them to walk away and take deep breaths.

~Help prevent the fury by noticing if your child is more aggressive when tired, in a new situation, over-stimulated and work to avoid those situations when possible.

~Make sure they are getting plenty of one on one time so they don’t need to get your attention by acting out.

~Keep your expectations realistic.

~Be a good role model! If you shout and curse, complain about others and are aggressive on the road or in stores…your child will be, too.