Why Children are Aggressive

Children who have a spirited or sensitive temperament usually have a lower tolerance for stress and/or change.

The most important/helpful thing you can do as a parent is change the way you see your child when he/she is aggressive: *An aggressive child is a scared child*
Your younger child does not necessarily know what they are afraid of.
It could be: a move/new preschool/loud noise/surgery/divorce/another child at preschool/different teacher or move to another room.

With fear comes a need for release. Children do not hit unless they are afraid. Thrashing is part of the release process. Hitting is instinctual. Children almost always have to get physical to fight through the fear. Children cannot make sense of what is going on their brain. We have a difficult time understanding this because their behavior is not stereotypical for fear (cry, laugh, tremble are all examples of fear). If a child keeps this in, it will come out at a later date in other inappropriate behaviors.

Steps to Calm Aggressive Behavior

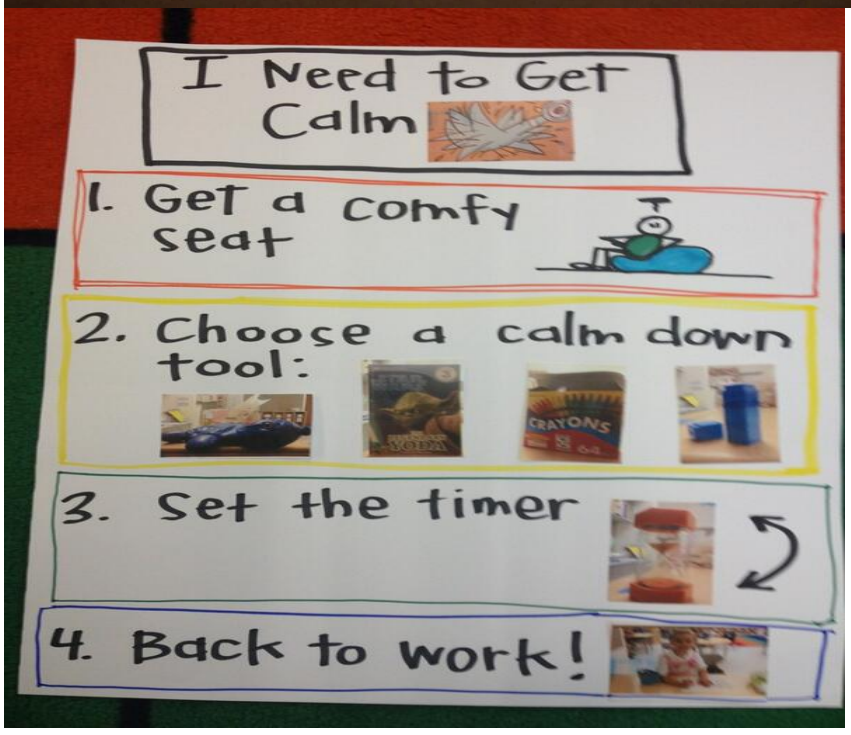
1. Touch and eye contact are important. Be careful and move in slowly and don't say much while your child is aggressive. It is the same as when your child is "In the midst of a bad dream". Your child feels alone. Stay, listen, Say, I'm here"/hug him. Help him to unload the anger. Then it is entirely possible that you can prevent more hitting by responding with firm kindness. You can also probably move him through this phase faster by **giving him words for his feelings** so he won't have to act them out. He doesn't have to be able to say them, he just has to hear that you are understanding him.
Since he understands the message ***"We don't hit,"*** he is ready to begin comprehending messages like ***"You are so sad; you wanted that."*** Follow that empathy with the limit, just as you are doing: ***"You can be as mad as you want, but I won't let you hit me."*** Give him a chance to express his feelings by crying, offering him comfort and empathy: *"You feel so sad and mad." Hold his arms or hands and tell him that you will not let him hurt you.*

2. Encourage your child to go to the "Calm Down" Corner. He/she can choose whatever they want to do to calm. Create a basket with all calm down activities

- Blow cotton balls with a straw
- Take deep breaths (5 are usually all they need to calm)

- Look at the calm down jar. http://lemonlimeadventures.com/lego-calm-down-jar/#_a5y_p=1634359
- Squeeze a stress ball
- Listen to relaxation for children CD http://www.relaxkids.com/UK/Audio_CDs

Deep Breaths
5 4 3 2 1
X X X X X


I Need to Get Calm
1. Get a comfy seat
2. Choose a calm down tool:
CRAYONS
3. Set the timer
4. Back to work!