Hitting / kicking / pushing other children

Hitting Kicking and pushing others can be a stage within most children’s development.

When they start to learn to interreact, use different toys, enjoy different tactile experiences or they are learning the cause and effect relationship. Adults need to support children in how to use these physical attributes in a positive way.

What is the child trying to communicate?

I may be tired, hungry or thirsty.

The setting today is too busy and/or noisy

I want to copy/ repeat behaviour that I have witnessed at home or within the setting eg watching wrestling or playing superheroes.

My favourite activity/toy is not out or is being used by someone else.

I am not able to communicate wants and needs and would like the adults attention.

I want to learn with my senses.

Developmental stage. Strategies to use:

Always comfort the child who has been hit, kicked or pushed so the child doesn’t get the immediate attention they may be wanting.

After the incident get down to the child’s level, acknowledge their feelings. Ask them what they think was wrong, if unable to answer or they are not sure, the adult should explain what behaviour was inappropriate and why.

Encourage the child to come up with their own solution on how to make them feel better, such as playing outside or with something they can hit/kick or push. Remember to ensure language is age appropriate and use gestures or visuals where needed.

Some children may need some time in a cosy/calming area to focus.

Communication Friendly Spaces: where children can go and sit to support their self-regulation.

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More time outside with different sized balls and different targets such as goal posts, a hoop, a net, chalk markings on the floor or fence. Bean bags with pots/boxes to throw into or at. Large blocks to build towers and push down in a controlled safe environment. Space hoppers to jump on.

Emotion cards for children to access to show an adult or their peers. Mirror Play that supports emotions. Problem solving activities or a social story would also help.

Playdough station that children can access freely.

Engage in an appropriate sensory activity. Sensory trails inside and out: Sensory Walk - Can you adapt this to incorporate different textures such as sliding feet in beans, jumping in straw, throwing wet/painted tea bags?

How we work with Parents

Explaining age appropriate behaviour and share strategies to ensure there is consistency on how to teach children to manage their behaviour at home.

Clear communication about what has happened at nursery and things that they may have happened at home.

Providing information to help.