



# CSPV SCHOOL VIOLENCE FACT SHEET

FS-SV04

1998

## Juvenile Aggression

- The most significant settings for the development of aggression in childhood are the home and school.
- Children's aggression in the home is often, but not always, related to their aggression at school.
- Research indicates aggression in school is most often directed at peers. Most aggression is displayed by male students and directed at male students.
- Female incidents of aggression appear at lower but not negligible rates.
- Assaults on teachers are not uncommon. A national survey in 1991 found that 28% of public high school teachers were verbally abused, 15% threatened with injury, and 3% were physically attacked by a student.
- Research shows that weapon carrying in schools significantly varies by school setting. The number of students carrying a weapon in some schools is much higher than in other schools.
- Research indicates that typical school fights are about retaliation, rules of games, and possession of toys, equipment and/or territory.
- Children's physical aggression in schools is important not only because of the harm it inflicts, but also because it has long term consequences for settings beyond the school. For instance, consistent physical aggression by boys in schools predicts later antisocial acts, delinquency, and violent offending in the community.
- A proportion of boy fighters have already emerged during kindergarten. When the fighting persists through the first part of elementary school, these boys are highly likely to continue to fight in later grades. Other fighters emerge during the elementary years or a little later. Yet, most of the boys who fight appear already aggressive by age eight or nine.
- Early identification of the aggressive, antisocial, or delinquent child is one of the most important markers for identifying chronic juvenile delinquency.
- Juvenile aggression tends to be stable over time. One of the research challenges is to identify youth before their aggression becomes stable.
- Youth behavior can be charted on a developmental pathway that contains incremental stages for delinquency and violence. On this pathway individuals begin with minor offenses and work their way up to more serious offenses. The earlier the minor offenses begin, the more likely the individual will eventually engage in more serious violent behavior.
- Early onset of problem behaviors and children's position on the developmental pathway are important markers that can help identify those youth at highest risk for violence.

- The theoretical model that best explains the transmission and consistency of aggression across settings (such as the home and school) is the person-environment model. This model integrates children's family functioning with their relationships with peers outside the home.
- Interventions are probably most effective if they can address both the individual characteristics of children and the social contingencies that affect their aggressive responses.
- Child abuse, parents' inadequate child rearing practices, disruptions in family functioning, antisocial parents, and aggressive interactions between siblings are risk factors in the home that are associated with children's aggression at school.
- There is evidence that juveniles' aggression in the home influences their level of aggression in the school setting; therefore, interventions in the home appear to be more beneficial than school interventions.

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The information for this fact sheet was excerpted from the following book chapter. *Violence in American Schools* was developed by CSPV through a grant from the W.T. Grant Foundation:

Loeber, R., & Stouthamer-Loeber, M. (1998). Juvenile Aggression at Home and at School. In D.S. Elliott, B. Hamburg, & K.R. Williams (Editors), *Violence in American Schools: A New Perspective*, (pp. 94-126). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

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