

**AN INVESTIGATION OF CHILDREN'S AGGRESSION IN  
THE FOUNDATION PHASE: A SOCIO-EDUCATION  
PERSPECTIVE**

by  
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## DECLARATION

I declare that *An investigation of children's aggression in the Foundation Phase: a socio-education perspective* is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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Ms. Kumaree Padayichie

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Date

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I wish to extend my heartfelt thanks to:

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## **SUMMARY**

This study served to highlight the aggressive nature of learners in the Foundation Phase, namely of those who are between the ages of 5 to 6 years. The project is based on qualitative research, and the data were collected from three primary schools in the northern suburbs of Johannesburg. Interviews were conducted with two principals, three educators and three parents. Four learners were used in order to gather further information on the causes of the aggressive behaviour of learners.

Their input assisted the researcher to understand the various discipline structures within the school and also, how parents and educators manage the aggressive behaviour of learners.

The study sought to identify whether primary and secondary socialisation, and the influence of the media are related to learners behaving aggressively.

The information collected confirmed that children model the behaviour of adults and of their peers. The principals and the educators were of the opinion that positive primary socialisation is of the utmost importance, as it lays the foundation for future socialisation.

## **KEY TERMS**

children

aggression

overt aggression

covert aggression

reactive aggression

proactive aggression

primary socialisation

secondary socialisation

the media

direct and indirect aggression

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# Chapter 1

## ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

This study aimed to explore the incidence of aggression in children in the Foundation Phase of the primary school, as well as the strategies used by teachers in dealing with the phenomenon.

The study sought to find answers to the question, namely, what are the causes of aggressive behaviour amongst children? The target group in this study was a group of children of five and six years old. The study was conducted at three schools in the northern suburbs of Johannesburg. A qualitative approach was used. Qualitative research has actual settings as the direct source of data, and the researcher is the key instrument. Qualitative researchers go to the particular setting under study because the focus of the study is the specific context. Actions can best be understood when they are observed in the setting in which they occur, together with the data that are collected by people engaging in natural behaviour (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007:3-4). Interviews were conducted with principals, teachers and parents, and the children were observed in the classrooms and on the playground.

This study consequently also explored the role of the teacher in inhibiting and/or preventing children's aggressive behaviour in the primary schools.

### **1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH**

As indicated above, this study explored the incidence of aggression in children, as well as the corrective measures put into place by teachers to assist the children to deal with aggression.

The study aimed to identify the occurrence of acts of aggression and to provide reasons for it, and what corrective measures could be put into place to assist the children to deal

with their aggression. The following question was also attended to, namely, is it possible that a child's self-image may contribute to his/her aggressive behaviour?

Sociologist, Charles Horton Cooley believed that we shape our self-images by means of our interaction with various people. His theory engages the notion of the looking glass, which refers to a self-image that is based on how others perceive us. He suggests that (1902:179-184), as we see our faces, figures and dresses in the glass, and are interested in them because they are ours, and as we are pleased or not with them as they do or do not answer to what we should like them to be, so in imagination we perceive in another's mind some thought of our appearance, manners, aims, deeds, character, friends, and so on, and are affected by it. A self-idea of this kind seems to have three principal elements: the imagination of our appearance to the other person, the imagination of his judgement of that appearance, and some sort of self-feeling, such as pride or mortification. The comparison with a looking glass hardly suggests the second element, the imagined judgment, which is quite essential. What moves us to pride or shame is not the mere mechanical reflection of ourselves, but an imputed sentiment, the imagined effect of this reflection upon another's mind (1902:179-184).

Hence, if we use Cooley's theory to determine a child's self-image, then it is understood that he or she would base his/her self-image on how their peers felt about them. If their peers, teachers, or family members have a negative perception of them, their self-image will be low. On the other hand, if their peers, teachers or family members have a positive perception of them, their self-image will be high.

Positive self-identity includes a sense of competence, of personal power, of self-worth and of purpose. Children who feel good about themselves are more likely to have positive interpersonal relationships and anticipate success in their encounters with other people (Han & Kemple 2006:242). The child with a low self-esteem can become trapped in a cycle of feelings of failure and rejection. Teachers, especially, play an important role in facilitating the growth of a child's positive self-identity (Han & Kemple, 2006:242).

Children form their own groups on the playground. These networks are based on social attraction and a common interest, beginning in early childhood. Social networks vary with the child's sex, age and social reputation. Girls' networks are both smaller and more exclusive than boys' (Hartup, 1992:260).

Popular children are members of social networks; but children who are disliked are also members of a network (Hartup 1992:276). Observational studies reveal, however, that the social networks of popular children differ substantially from the social networks of rejected children: the social networks of popular children are larger, more likely to include children older than the child him/herself, and are more likely to include other well-liked children. When aggressive, disliked children have friends these relationships are likely to be with other aggressive, disliked children, rather than with their better-liked peers (Hartup 1992:260). Becoming friends and maintaining these relationships is vital during the early and middle school years. Hence, good entry skills usually characterise children who are generally socially competent. Children who have difficulties in relating to other children should be regarded with concern. Being disliked is not a happy experience, and in combination with aggressiveness, is a negative indication of future development (Hartup, 1992:276).

The study investigated alternative intervention methods that can be positively embraced by educators and family members before the learner progresses further in his or her grades, with the aim to find ways in which the learner's aggression can be managed in the classroom, on the playground and in the school environment. According to Brown and Parsons (1998:136), the first step in trying to assist the child to counteract his or her aggression, is to identify the type of aggression being exhibited. This is an essential first step in the employment of an intervention program. A model for identifying childhood aggression provides insight both into the complexity of childhood aggression, and in the need to tailor intervention strategies to this specific area. There exist two kinds of childhood aggression, namely reactive and proactive aggression. Understanding the unique characteristics of each subtype may serve as a basis for an accurate diagnosis, and may also represent the essential first steps to planning intervention.

According to Von der Haar (2005:160), the Social Learning Theory explains how attitudes are formed. It suggests that children can learn attitudes by simply observing and imitating other people.

The Social Learning Theory of aggression distinguishes between the acquisition of behaviours that have destructive and injurious potential factors, and that determine whether a person will perform what he has learned, good or bad (Bandura, 1973:65).

Von der Haar (2005:160) indicates that one of Albert Bandura's best-known experiments involved the behaviour of children who observed an adult's attack on a large, inflated Bobo doll. In the one instance, the adult received a soft drink and candy after hitting the doll. In the second case, the adult spanked the doll with a magazine when he hit the doll. In the third instance, no consequences resulted when the adult hit the doll. Later the children were left alone with the Bobo doll. The results showed that the children observing the punishment that the adult received after hitting the doll, were less likely to imitate his behaviour. The question still remained whether the children had learnt anything by the experiment. Bandura then offered the children a reward for imitating what they had seen. In every instance the children were able to reproduce the behaviour they had observed (Von der Haar, 2005:161).

The amount of aggression displayed by the children was rated. The results showed that children who observed an aggressive adult attack and shout at the Bobo doll, tended to imitate what they had seen. They kicked, punched and hit the doll, and they shouted verbal assaults at it. Thus it may be concluded that parents serve as the first models for their children, and they may thus be the primary models of aggressive behaviour. Children witnessing physical violence between their parents, re-enact what they had seen in other relationships, especially as adults in their own marriages (Von der Haar, 2005:301).

The modelling influences can produce three kinds of effects in observers, each of which explains different aspects of aggression. First, observers can acquire new patterns of behaviour through observation (Bandura, 1973:68). A second major function of modelling influences is to strengthen or weaken inhibitions of behaviour that observers have previously learned. Inhibitory and dis-inhibitory effects are largely determined by observing the rewarding or punishing consequences accompanying the models' responses. Thirdly, the actions of others also serve as social prompts that facilitate similar behaviour in the observers (Bandura, 1973:69).

As mentioned by Von der Haar (2005:301), parents serve as first models for their children, and they provide the primary models for aggressive behaviour, thus they are responsible for the child's primary socialisation. The process of socialisation begins at birth and involves many agents of socialisation. The primary agents of socialisation are the family members, who serve as the most important agents of socialisation. Socialisation at school serves as the next most important agent of socialisation, followed by the mass media (Von der Haar, 2005:64). As socialisation at school is the second most important agent of socialisation, Ahn (2005:55) states, children in the early childhood years need considerable help and practise to identify their feelings and to learn appropriate ways to deal with them. In addition to serving as models for the expression of appropriate emotions, teachers need to give their learners concrete suggestions for dealing with their feelings. One way of doing this is to help the children to learn to verbalise their emotions, instead of physically acting them out.

Parents take most of the responsibility for the primary socialisation of their child. They ultimately make decisions about how much influence the other agents of socialisation exert on their children. Successful socialisation provides a solid foundation for the challenges that lie ahead (Von der Haar, 2005:67).

According to Leaman (2008:167), if a child meets the ten symptoms of attention deficit disorder (ADD) then he or she is labelled, and receives medication. Leaman questions what the purpose is of giving the child a label. He believes that labelling the child gets him off the hook for his behaviour, and it gives parents a convenient excuse for the way their child behaves, so that they do not have to do anything about it other than agree to medicate their child.

Patterns of behaviour can be acquired through direct experience or by observing the behaviour of others. Direct experience is largely governed by the rewarding and punishing consequences that follow any given action (Bandura, 1973:43). Man's capacity to learn by observation enables him to acquire complex patterns of behaviour by watching the performances of exemplary models. Witnessing the affective reactions of others punished for their actions can also develop emotional responses toward certain places, persons or things. Finally, the expression of previously learned responses can be socially regulated through the actions of influential models. This does not imply that modes of behaviour exist only through experience, either of a direct or observational

sort. Biological structures obviously set limits on the types of aggressive responses that can be successfully perfected, and genetic endowment influences the rate at which learning occurs (Bandura, 1973:44).

The present understanding of the problem is that there exists a large body of evidence demonstrating that aggression is a behaviour that is steady across time. Behaviours such as severe irritability, non-compliance, inattentiveness and impulsivity in children as young as two and three have been found to be antecedents for conduct problems in later childhood (Petersen, 1998:1).

The parameters of this study also include concentration problems that may occur, and whether it is necessary to prescribe medication such as Ritalin. Ritalin is a drug used as a stimulant in the treatment of various mental disorders and depressive states, and is routinely prescribed for children who experience problems concentrating (World Book Dictionary, 1983:1890).

An aggressive pre-schooler is likely to become a primary school child with a behaviour disorder (Oppositional Defiant Disorder – ODD), or a delinquent, or a conduct disordered teenager. Aggression in children and adolescents predicts aggression, violence and other anti-social behaviours, such as substance abuse, or a criminal record in adulthood (Petersen, 1998:1).

According to Kakouros, Maniadaki and Karaba (2005:204-205), two separate lines of research have provided clear evidence that children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (AD/HD) and the attendant socially aggressive behaviour, constitute an exceptionally high-risk population for later psychological, emotional and social impairments. The pre-school years appear to serve as a critical period during which clinically significant disruptive behaviour problems may emerge and continue into childhood and adolescence.

According to Kakouros, *et al.* (2005:204-205), it has been suggested that AD/HD and aggressive behaviour are more frequently manifested in boys than in girls. Boys are said to display more disruptive and aggressive behaviour than girls. Girls often display less appropriate behavior, and peer aggression.

Bjorkqvist, Osterman and Kaukiainen (2000:191) suggest a developmental theory with regards to styles of aggressive behavior, such as physical, direct verbal and indirect aggression. They are not only three different strategies, but they also constitute three developmental phases, partly following, partly overlapping each other during childhood and adolescence. Children who have not yet developed verbal and social skills to any considerable degree will have to resort to physical aggression. When verbal and social skills develop, these facilitate the expression of aggression without their having to resort to physical force.

When social intelligence develops sufficiently, the individual is fully capable of indirect aggressive behavior; he or she is able to induce psychological, sometimes even physical, harm to a target person by mere social manipulation, without putting him/herself at direct risk of retaliation. A consequence of the Developmental Theory is that social intelligence should be expected to correlate more with indirect than with direct forms of aggression, since indirect aggression, by definition, requires skills at social manipulation (Bjorkqvist, *et al.* 2000:191).

The researcher is a Reception Year educator, and has often witnessed learners who act aggressively towards their peers and teachers. She is inspired to research this behavioural pattern, and to find an approach that can support the learners and assist the educators in the classroom. Over a number of years the researcher, as a teacher, has had contact with boys and girls who have displayed aggressive behaviour. Are their actions gender-specific and do they lack impulse control? Are their emotional outbursts frequently based on their need to be in control of the situation? Do they demand immediate attention and gratification? Do children need to be guided towards understanding their emotions? How does their behaviour impact on the learning environment? In what predicament does this place their peers and teachers who are often on the receiving end of their anger? Does this affect the learners' socialisation at school? Do they become isolated from their peers because of their behaviour?

The results of this research will hopefully provide answers to these questions.

There are different types of aggression, such as, amongst others, *reactive* aggression, which is defined as *a defence response to a perceived threat or provocation*. The threats are most often viewed as blocks to the learner's goal achievement and as such, elicit

frustration, which serves as the root of the aggressive behaviour. This type of aggression causes aggressive behaviour. *Proactive* aggression, on the other hand, stems from unprovoked, aversive behaviour. This subtype of aggression may be thought of as a learned behaviour, controlled by contingencies (Brown & Parsons 1998:136-137). Often this behaviour is intended to harm, dominate or coerce another person (bullying), or to acquire a desired goal. While reactive aggression appears to be an explosive, unmediated response, proactive aggression, at times, appears to be well-planned and goal-directed (Brown & Parsons, 1998:136-137).

According to Brown and Parsons (1998:135), when faced with an aggressive child, the first choice is to apply the response-cost, rewards and punishment. If that intervention proves ineffective then the parents, teachers and other support professionals may go through their checklist for alternative strategies in the hope that they find one that works, or otherwise conclude that the learner is beyond help. The problem with this approach is that it fails to recognise the importance of identifying the specific type of aggression being exhibited, and to initiate interventions suited to that specific type of aggression.

Persons who have behavioural problems usually display the above two forms of aggression. The characteristics of these two forms of aggression are easily observed on the playground and more so, in the classroom environment.

According to Archer (2001:269-270), childhood aggression is explained in terms of deficits or biases in processing social information. For example, aggressive children may attribute more hostile intent to others than do non-aggressive children. Thus, aggressive behaviour is explained as deficits or distortions in the normal cognitive mechanisms, or as deviant ways of coping with the social environment.

According to Crick, Casas and Mosher (1997:579), *overt* aggression harms others through physical reaction, or the threat of such reaction, *e.g.*, by pushing, hitting, kicking or threatening to beat up a peer. *Relational* aggression, on the other hand, harms others by means of damage to their peer relationships, *e.g.*, by using social exclusion, or rumor-spreading as a form of retaliation.

*Self-regulation* means regulating oneself or itself, being able to control yourself and your behaviour on your own (World Book Encyclopaedia, volume I-Z 1983:1890). Much self-

regulation involves the management of emotion. This includes the ability to control impulses, delay gratification, resist temptation and peer pressure, to reflect on one's feelings, and to monitor oneself (Han & Kemple, 2006:241-242).

Because most aggressive children display high levels of both reactive and proactive aggression, therapists generally need to gain an understanding of other existing types of aggression. For some children, however, a more focused treatment-approach is indicated, for example, treatments that teach self-control skills should benefit the reactive aggressive child more than the proactive aggressive child (Cavell, 2000:21).

Important factors in the handling of aggression are the parents' effectiveness as disciplinarians, their tendencies to be overly punitive, or emotionally rejecting their child, their level of warmth and positive involvement, their ability to monitor their children's whereabouts, and the level of stability and organisation they have in their homes (Cavell, 2000:13).

Dobbs, Arnold and Doctoroff (2004:281-283) mention that the attention the parents give their children can affect their children's behaviour. It is well-documented that teachers give high-misbehaving children more attention when discipline is included in the measurement of attention. On the other hand, the teachers' behaviour toward frequently misbehaving children outside of discipline has not been considered. Thus, the question that needs to be answered is: Are teachers paying more attention to these children even when they are not acting up? If teachers turn away from difficult children when they are being good, then teachers need to be encouraged to seek out positive interactions with children. However, if difficult children tend consistently to receive the bulk of the teacher's attention, teachers may need to attend more to quieter children.

As Cavell (2000:5) points out, before children who display aggressive tendencies are given support, the following information is needed:

- Normative information

Accurate information on what is normative for aggressive children. The source of this information is based on empirical research, documenting the characteristics and tendencies of aggressive children in general, or on average (Cavell, 2000:5).

- Idiographic information

Secondly, persons providing the support, need idiographic data regarding the child in question. This information addresses the specifics of the onset of the problem, the severity and duration thereof, as well as the presence of various risk and protective factors that can function to intensify or improve a child's subsequent adjustment (Cavell, 2000:5).

- Relational information

Thirdly, relational information has to do with the relationship within which aggressive children and their parents operate. It is necessary to understand how the relationship between parent and child works (Cavell, 2000:5).

Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) is diagnosed when a child displays a persistent or consistent pattern of defiance, disobedience and hostility toward various authority figures, including parents, teachers and other adults (Keith, 2008:1). ODD is characterized by such problem behaviours as persistent fighting and arguing, being touchy or easily annoyed, and deliberately annoying or being spiteful or vindictive to other people (Keith, 2008:1).

Children with ODD may repeatedly lose their temper, argue with adults, and deliberately refuse to comply with the requests or rules of adults, blame others for their mistakes, and are repeatedly angry and resentful. Stubbornness and the testing of limits are common (Keith, 2008:1). These behaviours cause significant difficulties with family members and friends, and at school or work. ODD is sometimes a precursor of conduct disorder (Keith, 2008:1).

In the light of the "looking-glass," theory articulated by Charles Horton Cooley, regarding human society functions and self-individualism, this study investigates how teachers approach aggressive children in their classrooms. The focus of this study will be on how parents approach their aggressive children at home. Also, on what the causes are of aggressive behavior.

### **1.3 STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT**

Within the context of aggressive children in the classroom/school, the study aimed to explore the strategies used by the teachers, the parents, and the community by providing answers to the research question.

The study sought to address the aggression demonstrated by children in primary schools, and investigated strategies used by the teachers in dealing with the phenomenon.

The study aimed to answer the following questions:

- What is the influence of primary socialisation by the parents and the home?
- To what extent does parent and community-involvement at school help in preventing children's aggressive behaviour?
- What is the influence of secondary socialisation, namely peer groups, adults and the media on children's aggressive behaviour?
- Is teacher efficacy feasible in the classroom?
- Are there any factors relating to aggressive behaviour among children?

The study investigated strategies used by the teachers, the parents and the community by providing answers to the questions.

The type of questions asked was exploratory questions, namely the following:

1. What are the causes of children's aggression?
2. What are the causes of aggressive behaviour amongst children?
3. Is the poor primary socialisation of children the main cause of aggressive behaviour? Why?
4. Is there a link between childhood aggression and the culture the child comes from? Provide a reason.
5. Is child-aggression gender-biased? How is this evident?
6. Is child-aggression the result of poor family relationships? What are the indicators?
7. Is child-aggression hereditary? What evidence is there to support this theory?

#### **1.4 AIMS OF THE RESEARCH**

The study focused on the significance of the primary socialisation of children, and the role of parents and teachers.

The aims of this research were to:

- determine the factors relating to aggressive behaviour among children;
- determine the ways in which learner's aggression can be managed within the classroom, on the playground and in the school environment;
- determine whether at this age, there is a pattern between overt (verbal and physical) and covert (e.g., stealing and truancy) aggression forms, as part of anti-social behaviour in children;
- elaborate on the impact aggression has on the social skills, the confidence and the self-concept of children;
- discuss alternative intervention methods that can be positively embraced by the educators and the family before the learner progresses further in his or her grades;
- determine whether the primary socialisation of children is the main cause of aggressive behaviour.

#### **1.5 THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research design of this investigation was based on a qualitative research approach.

*Qualitative research* means collecting data in narrative form; it tends to leave the environment in its natural format (Drew, Hardman & Hosp, 2008:25).

The researcher's target population was twelve participants aged five to six, in primary schools in northern Johannesburg.

Researchers need to conduct their enquiry when small sample sizes exist. Qualitative methods allow the researcher to approach the subject, probe the setting and describe it in its natural form and in great depth (Drew, *et al.* 2008:187). An important strength of

observation research is the study of participant routine behaviours within the natural environment (Drew, *et al.* 2008:71).

Qualitative methods provide an answer to the challenge to learn more about how people behave in their typical surroundings, *i.e.*, their natural settings. Qualitative research methods is specifically suited to this study as it seeks to answer questions that

- require the natural surroundings;
- examine unfolding events;
- focus on a broad analysis of an entire phenomenon or context;
- require the exploration of reasons for behaviour and the ways in which behaviour unfolds;
- need exploration, explanation, description and illustration; and
- lack global settings or has a small sample size.

As the researcher focused on the aggression of children, the researcher needed to study them in a place where incidents occurred, and where they recorded their perceptions and interpretations in their own words. The qualitative method is therefore appropriate in this study, as the researcher sought to understand why children behave aggressively (Drew, *et al.* 2008:186).

According to Drew, *et al.* (2008:186), qualitative research methods enhance the researcher's ability to study events as they occur naturally. The critical variables affecting unfolding events are not known in advance but must be discovered and observed as they occur. A qualitative researcher observes and describes events as they occur. Thus, a characteristic of the qualitative design is that it maintains design flexibility. Because the researcher observes and describes events as they occur, additional variables or people to observe, settings to observe in, or methods to observe or to record data may need to be added or removed. It is important for the researcher to be able to "follow the data".

The research is based on the aggressive behaviour of children. The qualitative method is well-suited in this regard because the researcher seeks to understand the reasons why behaviours occur as they do. The need to explore, explain, describe or illustrate behaviour and interactions to better understand them, as well as to uncover inadequately understood variables provide situations in which the qualitative methods are appropriate. A long tradition of research affirms that human beings' behaviours are

shaped by their interpretations and beliefs as strongly as by 'objective' events around them. Some approaches of qualitative research not only include the participants' interpretations and perspective, but those of the researcher as well. Because the researcher has direct contact with the participant(s), he or she develops a unique personal insight through his or her own experiences, culture and perspective. Therefore it is important for the researcher to retain empathic neutrality. This is different from objectivity, in that there is no assumption of a lack of opinion or perspective. With empathic neutrality, the researcher can and should have his/her own perspective and values. These should be used in a non-judgmental way, to illuminate an issue or clarify a description, but should not be used to make a value judgment about the behaviours, values or experiences of the participants (Drew, *et al.* 2008:186-187).

The data collected in qualitative research are descriptive and are analysed inductively. The theory developed in this way emerges from the bottom up (rather than from top to bottom), from many disparate pieces of collected evidence that are interconnected. The theory is grounded in the data. The data collected take the form of words or pictures rather than numbers (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007:6). The process of using a variety of different sources, collection methods or perspectives to check the consistency or accuracy of research conclusions is called *triangulation* (Drew, *et al.* 2008:188). Bogdan and Biklen, (2007:115-116) further define *triangulation* as the fact that many sources of data are better in a study than a single source, because multiple sources lead to a fuller understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

The data collected can have different perspectives, namely emic, etic or negotiated. The *emic* perspective is how the participant(s) view the phenomenon being described or analysed. The *etic* perspective is the viewpoint of the researcher as an outsider - possibly his or her interpretation of the participants' perspective. The *negotiated* perspective involves both the emic and the etic perspectives, but requires that the researcher and participant(s) discuss each perspective and the differences between them. The common methods of data collection used in qualitative research are interviews, observations and the reviewing of existing documents, or archival research. A *thick description* will be written, as it is a narrative description that provides a clear and accurate picture of the nature of the phenomenon being described (Drew, *et al.* 2008:188).

The primary data collection strategy means that the researcher will return to the site for observation and reports. This researcher is with the learners every day, and hence will be able to report and analyse their behaviour. Due to the environment where the research is to be done, the participants are available, and the researcher will have the time and opportunity to complete the research (Drew, *et al.* 2008:193).

The advantage of an interview is that it is flexible, and can be more detailed to accommodate the information that is needed. The personal perspective of the respondent is thus provided, and meanings or feelings can be detailed. In interviews dialogue to clarify questions or responses is possible, and is encouraged. This includes follow-up questions. Interviews also provide greater depth (Drew, *et al.* 2008:190).

In this study the researcher will conduct interviews with two principals, three educators and three parents. Ethical measures will be adhered to and the researcher will ensure that she receives the consent from all the participants. Their participation in the investigation will be anonymous, and will at all times remain completely confidential. Interviewing participants requires copious notes to be taken and also requires the ability to listen, to think and to write. Although this process is very accurate, it does leave room for controversy and disputation if only one person is in the room in addition to the respondent. However, note-taking is less obtrusive than tape-recording (Drew, *et al.* 2008:193).

Although audiotapes are a common method for recording interviews as they are accurate and indisputable, they can be intimidating to some respondents.

The researcher will not be doing an audiotape interview, for the following reasons:

- It sometimes dampens candour, it requires great trust, as well as the assurance that the tape will be destroyed after the inquiry is completed, because the voices of the respondents may be recognised.
- Researchers often recount experiences where respondents asked them to turn off the tape before they will answer a sensitive question, or they open up at the end of the formal interview when the tape-recorder is turned off.
- If the tape-recorder malfunctions, it may not be discovered until the researcher is at the point of transcribing, which may be weeks or months later. Hence, the

interviews will have to be conducted again, and this may affect the respondents' candour and cooperation, since they then have to double their commitment of time and energy. They may become reluctant to participate again (Drew, *et al.* 2008:193).

As the researcher will be observing the children in the classroom and on the playground, it will provide a direct method to record human behaviour and events as they occur, namely by watching. In qualitative research observation may be divided into participant and non-participant observation. In *participant* observation the individual conducting the investigation actually participates in the setting or activity being observed. Participant observation is commonly used in anthropology, and not so often in education and the other social and behavioural sciences. This is due to the fact that when engaging in participant observation, the researcher must primarily act as a participant in the group under study (Drew, *et al.* 2008:195-196).

The disadvantages of participant observation are:

- there is a loss of objectivity through emotional attachment;
- settling too early on a particular theory about the setting;
- the tendency to accept others' explanations too readily or miss subtle features that are taken for granted by insiders; and
- the data often cannot be recorded immediately (Drew, *et al.* 2008:196). Thus, vital material may not be recorded.

In *non-participant* observation, the investigator plays an outsider role and does not actively participate in the setting or activity.

This researcher selected non-participant observation as a strategy for her research as it includes non-reactive, unobtrusive research. The researcher is not directly engaged in the central behaviour and activities in the situation, is acknowledged by the participants but is not involved.

Research by means of non-participant observation includes studies of behaviour in natural settings, such as during interaction in a classroom; also descriptions of social behaviour in a variety of settings (Drew, *et al.* 2008:197).

The advantages of this strategy is:

- the researcher can remain objective and neutral;
- data can be recorded immediately;
- the observer can also interview the participants, especially as follow-up observations (Drew, *et al.* 2008:197).

The most common method of data collection during observation is the taking of in-depth, comprehensive field-notes. The structure of the field-notes are, namely, a detailed description of the setting, events, statements and actions observed, a record of the affective aspects of the observation, including observer responses and attitudes, and reflections, and preliminary sense-making (Drew, *et al.* 2008:198).

The researcher will also be reviewing existing written, audio and visual records.

In analysing these records a researcher gains knowledge of the history of the social group, culture, organisation and events that are central to the research. Archival records contribute data that are independent of the researcher's presence, interpretation or pre-existing theories. These sources provide different perceptions and verifications on forms of data collected more directly. Materials prepared by and for others serve as an important resource for field research that added to the data obtained directly (Drew, *et al.* 2008:198).

## **1.6 DEFINITION OF THE TERMS**

### **1.6.1 Aggression:**

*Aggression* is defined as angry, hostile behaviour that is intended to hurt or upset others (World Book Encyclopaedia, volume c-ch, 1983:362).

In this study *aggression* refers to behaviour that results in personal injury and in the destruction of property. The injury may be psychological (in the form of devaluation or degradation), as well as physical (Bandura, 1973:5).

1.6.2 **Self-regulation:**

regulating oneself or itself. Being able to control yourself and your behaviour on your own (World Book Encyclopaedia, volume l-z, 1983:1890).

1.6.3 **Overt aggression:**

Verbal and physical aggression (Crick, Casas & Mosher, 1997:579).

1.6.4 **Covert aggression:**

Children engage in acts of stealing and truancy (Cavell 2000:5). It is anti-social behaviour that also involves lying (Cavell, 2000:141).

1.6.5 **Reactive aggression:**

Defensive aggression to a perceived threat. It is accompanied by visible displays of anger (Cavell, 2000:21).

1.6.6 **Proactive aggression:**

Aggressive acts that are intended to achieve some instrumental goal, such as the retrieval or possession of an object, or domination over others (Cavell, 2000:21).

1.6.7 **Ritalin:**

A drug used as a stimulant in the treatment of various mental disorders and depressive states.

The idea that hyperactivity has a biological basis is further strengthened by the dramatic change in behaviour produced in many children by a stimulating drug such as amphetamine or methylphenidate (World Book Dictionary, 1983:1890).

1.6.8 **Emic perspective:**

How the participant(s) views the phenomenon being described (Drew, *et al.* 2008:206).

1.6.9 **Empathic neutrality:**

Is often presented as an alternative to objectivity. Rather than assuming the researcher has no opinion or perspective, his or her opinion or perspective is openly acknowledged and described. Thus the researcher must be willing to suspend his/her view and not make judgements on the views of participants that may differ from his (Drew, *et al.* 2008:206).

1.6.10 **Etic perspective:**

The viewpoint of the researcher as an outsider (Drew, *et al.* 2008:206).

1.6.11 **Non-participant observation:**

An approach to an observation where the researcher is not a full, active member of the setting or group being observed (Drew, *et al.* 2008:206).

1.6.12 **Participant observation:**

An approach to an observation where the researcher is a full, active member of the setting or group being observed. It often involves deception in that the other participants cannot know the observer is actually observing (Drew, *et al.* 2008: 206).

1.6.13 **Thick description:**

Narrative descriptions that provide a clear and accurate picture of the nature of the phenomenon being described (Drew, *et al.* 2008:206).

1.6.14 **Triangulation:**

A process of using a variety of different sources, collection-methods or perspectives to check the consistency or accuracy of the research conclusions (Drew, *et al.* 2008:206).

## 1.7 **CHAPTER DIVISION**

### **Chapter 1:**

Introduction, motivation for the research, background to the study and formulation of the problem.

### **Chapter 2:**

Literature review. The theoretical background to the study, namely what causes learners aged five to six years to react aggressively, and how do they cope within the school environment?

### **Chapter 3:**

The research design. The construction of an interview guide, the selection of the participants, conducting the interviews, transcribing the interviews and analysing the data.

### **Chapter 4:**

An overview of the findings of the interviews with the teachers and the parents, and classroom observation.

### **Chapter 5:**

The research results: the presentation and discussion of the findings.

### **Chapter 6:**

Conclusions, limitations and recommendations

## **1.8 CONCLUSION**

In chapter 1 an introduction to the study on the aggressive behaviour of children was given. The chapter also presented an overview of the background to the research, the research statement was identified, the aims and the objectives of the study were explicated, as well as the demarcation of the field of study, the research methodology and design, and the division of the chapters.

In chapter 2 the literature on children's aggressive behaviour will be reviewed.

## Chapter 2

# THE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR OF LEARNERS

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

In the previous chapter the general background to the aggressive behaviour of learners in the Foundation Phase was discussed.

In this chapter the social developmental theories of Bandura and Berkowitz will form part of the investigation. The theories of Bandura and Walters (1963:4-5) state that children develop a habit of imitating the behavior of those they consider successful.

The literature review, as depicted in this chapter, explores the importance of the relations of the parents and the educators in the learners' social development, and how the parents can assure that these relationships are adequately formed in their children. By means of the literature study the researcher seeks to answer the question, namely what the factors are that give rise to the aggressive behaviour of children in the Foundation Phase, as well as the strategies that are used by the teachers in dealing with the phenomenon. Thus, the following themes will be explored, namely the primary and secondary socialisation of learners, factors influential in their social development, and the socio-educational strategies of dealing with aggressive behavior in schools.

### **2.2 THEORIES ON AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR**

The manner in which learners acquire the appropriate social behavior is difficult to identify as so many factors are involved in this process. In order to comprehend the aggressive behavior of learners in the Foundation Phase, Bandura's social behaviour theory (Bandura & Walters, 1963-5) and Berkowitz's two systems of aggressive behaviour (Tedeschi & Felson, 1994:49) will be discussed in the following sections.

### **2.2.1 Bandura's social behavior theory**

Bandura states that children develop the habit of imitating the behavior of those people they consider successful (Bandura & Walters, 1963:4,5).

Learned patterns of response tend to generalize to situations other than those in which they were learned, the extent of generalization being a function of the degree of similarity between the original learning situation and the novel sets of indications (Bandura & Walters, 1963:8).

In order to gain an understanding of what accepted behavior is, the study will determine how the aggression of learners are managed by the teachers in the classroom, on the playground and in the school environment.

The researcher will then investigate strategies used by the teachers, the parents and the community by providing answers to the question within the socio-educational measures. In the study the significance of the primary socialisation of children, the role of the parents and of the teachers will be specified.

Studies have been carried out to demonstrate the process of observational learning. The Bobo Doll experiment allowed the researcher to establish if children actually do learn aggressive behaviour from observing the behaviour of others, after witnessing how the adult reacted to the Bobo doll by repeatedly hitting and punching the doll and by making hostile comments. Then, at times, the model was rewarded for good behaviour. The children were then asked to recall as much as they could of the happening. It was concluded that those that reacted as the model did, reacted through learned observation responses (Tedeschi & Felson, 1994:104).

As observational learning conveys to the individual the type of actions that would result in rewards or punishments when the situation similar to which the child observed occurs, cognitive associations are likely to occur. Bear in mind that no drive or energy is postulated as pushing the person into behaving; rather, the cognitive associations that allow the person to anticipate the future pull of the behavior (Tedeschi & Felson, 1994:104,105) and that behaviour is also instigated and maintained by models. Taking this statement into the classroom on how aggression is managed, the learners observe

from their peers how to behave and the reward or consequences administered by the teacher.

Recent studies have shown that social learning is an important factor in acquiring new behaviour, for example, Tedeschi and Felson (1994:108) show that learners often learn behaviour explicitly, and that behaviour is also instigated and maintained by models.

Tedeschi and Felson (1994:104) rationalize that behaviour learned in the modeling procedures causes the learners to become more aggressive on the playground.

Cillessen and Mayeux (2007:137) explain the differences in aggression by acknowledging that much of the development of aggression is due to learning in the context of social groups. The social learning theory states that individuals behave in ways that are reinforced by their social environment and the peer group. Consequently, some forms of aggression in some contexts are strongly re-enforced in the peer culture by the increased social attention, higher status, social power and other benefits they afford. In respect of this, many instances of aggression can be viewed as entirely functional and reinforced (Cillessen & Mayeux, 2007:137).

Tedeschi and Felson (1994:110) do not distinguish between aggressive and other kinds of behaviour. Persons learn how to manipulate their environment to achieve goals. Behaviours tend to be viewed as skills the person learns, and these skills can be applied to any number of situations. A child may learn to hit, kick and pummel in the laboratory and then may apply these skills in some other situation if he/she perceived that using them can achieve interpersonal objectives (Tedeschi & Felson 1994:110).

Tedeschi and Felson (1994:111) describe that the social learning theory is on the individual, and the theory tends to ignore the reciprocal actions of people engaged in social interactions. Also, Cillessen and Mayeux (2007:137) further state that the social learning theory has frequently been used by peer relations' researchers to explain the association between aggression and high status. This researcher will also discuss two other theoretical perspectives: group dynamics and dynamic systems theories that have been applied less often but offer much promise.

In the next section Berkowitz's two systems of aggressive behavior will be discussed.

### **2.2.2 Berkowitz's two systems of aggressive behaviour**

Berkowitz's theory involves two systems of aggressive behavior, one of which is intended to revitalise the classic frustration-aggression theory (Tedeschi & Felson, 1994:49). His theory is important because it may assist in answering the research question, namely how does aggression impact on the social skills, the confidence and the self-concept of learners?

*Frustration* is defined as "...an act or event of others that prevents an organism from obtaining a goal that they are actively pursuing" (Tedeschi & Felson, 1994:39). The amount of frustration is directly affected by the strength of the response that is frustration. For example, taking a child's favourite toy would produce a more negative response than taking a rarely used toy. Secondly, the degree of interference with a response is directly related to instigation to aggression (Tedeschi & Felson, 1994:40).

Frustration has long been known to be a clear source of aggression. The question is then raised, "What are the major sources of frustration at school-age?" Generally, problems at school, such as not being able to complete work correctly or not completing the work at all, become the largest source of frustration. For some the structure and order of the classroom are too much to cope with (O'Leary, 1984:65). Berkowitz's theory can clearly offer an explanation to the research question, namely whether teacher efficacy is feasible in the classroom. On this level it is evident that some learners are not able to cope with classroom learning.

O'Leary (1984:65) discovered that poor social skills affect the interactions with other learners during break and at play cause them the greatest problems. On the question of what the alternative intervention methods are that can be positively embraced by the subjects of this study, are the educators and the family. If the learners are poorly socialised by their primary care-givers, it will result in them having poor social skills, and this will have a direct impact on their skills at school, their secondary socialisation.

Not being chosen for games and being left on the sidelines can be especially frustrating for the child (O'Leary, 1984:65).

## **2.3 THE SOCIALISATION OF THE CHILD**

*Socialisation* refers to the process whereby the standards of any given society are transmitted from one generation to the next (Schaffer, 1996:232). The acquisition of such standards is one of the principal tasks during childhood. How children come to conform to them and eventually adopt them as their own, is thus the basic issue of socialisation (Schaffer 1996:232). According to Hartup (1986:1), *socialisation* involves the construction of relationships as well as the inculcation of social skills, social motives and social norms.

### **2.3.1 Primary socialisation**

The term *socialisation* denotes the process children go through while growing up; they learn and develop by following the example of their families, their peers, teachers, and the media. Along the way they develop a sense of self and become their own person. This is known as *internalization*, the process whereby people take as their own and accept the norms, values, beliefs, and language that their peers attempt to pass on (Oppapers.com, 2012:1).

The family is a social group which offers face-to-face contact and strong emotional ties. To develop normally, children need close contact and stimulation. Adequate stimulation comes from a strong relationship with a caring adult. For a child to have this bond to help him/her develop, there must be at least one person who knows the child well enough to understand his or her needs and feelings, and who will act to satisfy them. For example, children go to adults with their questions and needs; the adults respond by offering explanations, expressing concern, or even no concern. This is one kind of socialisation. The family is an important agent of socialisation, because it gives individuals their deepest and earliest experiences with relationships and their first exposure to the 'rules of life'. In addition, the family teaches its members about the social and physical environment (Oppapers.com 2012:1).

In the following section the role of the parents in the socialisation of their children will be discussed.

### **2.3.1.1 The role of the parents**

The social causes of aggression, or the ways in which aggression is learnt, include the role of the parents.

According to Train (1993:87), parenting styles are learnt from childhood. If we understand how a parent was raised, we may be able to understand why the child acts aggressively (Train 1993:87).

Severe punishment and erratic discipline may also lead to aggression (O'Leary, 1984:74). There is evidence that parents who use severe punishment and who frequently punish their children are likely to have aggressive children. Severe punishment, general disagreement between the parents, hostility between them, and rejection by them are associated with aggression in learners. Furthermore, there is considerable evidence that aggression is a relatively stable characteristic. In fact, intelligence and aggression appear to be the most stable characteristics in learners. Aggression at age five is a clear predictor of aggression at age ten (O'Leary, 1984:66).

It is possible that excessive punishment by the parents originates from their having to cope with their child's aggressive outbursts (O'Leary 1984:66). The parents should not conclude that because their child is more active or misbehaves more than others, severe punishment practices are justified (O'Leary, 1984:67).

According to Bronkhorst (2006:16), negative parenting facilitates aggressive and non-compliant behaviour in learners.

Parents who are overly strict and harshly punitive, who do not reason with their children, and who give strong indications of their anger, model aggressive behaviour to their children (Bronkhorst, 2006:17).

Economic and social adversity is directly related to the functioning of the child, but also indirectly affects it through various mechanisms, including parental mental health and parenting practices.

As Domitrovich and Greenberg (2003:2) put it, the parents of children with behaviour problems tend to have more difficulty managing their children's behaviour. The patterns of behaviour problems are especially detrimental to children, because they reinforce a negative behaviour pattern, and 'teach' them that aggression and negative behaviour are effective ways to achieve personal objectives. Children who display elevated levels of aggression, particularly in more than one setting, are more likely to have difficulty transitioning into school and engaging in the learning process. They have less social and emotional skills, which places them at risk for peer rejection. Their negative behaviour also undermines their ability to have positive relationships with their teachers. Negative behaviour, poor engagement, and rejection from adults and other children, all undermine academic achievement, and this becomes an added risk factor in future maladaptation.

Four parenting styles will be discussed below:

- **The authoritarian parenting style**

The main characteristic of this educational style is inflexibility. These parents have a low self-image. In order to maintain their position of authority, they show no flexibility in their decision-making in respect of their children, and are oppressive. The child's wishes, needs or preferences are not taken into account; and allowances are not made for them as learners. Verbal communication is not encouraged. When the parents do communicate, it is one-sided, autocratic, contradictory and negative. Hence their children develop severe stress and are insecure. This can lead to excessive dependence, and fear of responsibility; and this leads to them becoming challenging, negative, hostile and aggressive (Fourie, 2000:44).

Bronkhorst (2006:16) believes with the above parenting style the child becomes frustrated when he cannot express himself. Because he cannot cope with the growing levels of anger and frustration within himself, he 'acts out' or becomes aggressive.

- **The permissive parenting style**

This parenting style is exactly what the name implies. The parents are lenient in their control of their children, and leave most decision-making to them.

Few demands are made on the children in respect of responsibility and organisation. They have too much of a say when decisions are made, and are allowed to regulate their own activities. When the parents do decide to become participants in and their children feel the effect of wrong-doing, they do so by withdrawing their interaction with their children. They give their children little guidance in order for them to gain insight in their behaviour (Fourie, 2000:44).

Aggressive children often come from families where the lines of communication and authority are blurred (Train 1993:82).

Aggression is enforced in relationships where the parents do little to encourage polite and considerate behaviour. When the child yells or throws a tantrum, he gets attention. The parent eventually gives in and the child wins - starting a vicious cycle of aggression and non-compliance (Bronkhorst, 2006:16).

Children with conduct problems see their parents as unable to set limits to their behaviour (Train, 1993:83).

- **The neglecting style**

This parenting style allows the children to feel rejected and insecure, and this tends them to mistrust their fellow human beings. There are no constraints, no nurturing, no communication and no demands (Fourie, 2000:44).

- **The personal authoritative parenting style**

With the above parenting style there exists a balance between constraints and nurturing, and also on making demands and clear communication. (Fourie, 2000:44). The exercise of authority is based on reasoning, linked with mutual trust and responsibility. The children are educated to practise self-control. The parents correct behaviour by reasoning with them. Their communication is also flexible, democratic, affirming, positive and rational, and allows room for dialogue (Fourie, 2000:46).

An aggressive child has less self-control: he is impulsive. He needs someone to create a safe environment for him, and before he can acquire self-control he must have experienced these controls from outside himself (Train, 1993:96).

Discipline is important for all, since it implies that there are boundaries for behaviour, a shape to existence (Train 1993:83).

If the parents shout, they only teach their child how to shout. The saying, 'actions speak louder than words' is relevant here. His loud actions tell you that he is falling apart; your quiet but firm approach should inform him of your strength and make him aware that you are in control (Train, 1993: 153).

The parents also have to be consistent in their exercise of discipline at home. They should reprimand their child, and if the behaviour regresses, the consequences should be that privileges or objects be taken away, for example, play-station games, viewing television, a party, etc.

The total setting in which the aggressive child exists, whether at school or at home must be consistent (Train, 1993:143).

The dominant, legitimate definition of the *normal* family is based on a constellation of words – house, home, and household – which, while seeming to describe a social reality, in fact, constructs it (Bourdieu 1998:34). In family discourse, the language used is seen as an active agent (Bourdieu, 1998:35).

The more vulnerable a child is, the more will he require a supportive environment (Train, 1993:72). He/she needs the security of a fixed pattern of relationships, and cannot cope with family conflict or instability (Train, 1993:73). In many families where there is a disturbed and aggressive child, there is a high level of violent interaction between the family members (Train, 1993:74).

It must be emphasised that children with behaviour problems can contribute to or accentuate marital disputes. This issue becomes obvious when you repeatedly hear parents argue about how they should discipline the child, or whether they should discipline the child, or not. There may also be a reciprocal relationship between marital conflict and childhood problems (O'Leary 1984:67). The parents should recognise this (O'Leary, 1984:68).

Often children from large families have a lower level of verbal intelligence and reading attainment. They may suffer from overcrowding and material hardship, and parental discord and conflict are evident here. The level of parental control and the quality of discipline can be jeopardized in such circumstances (Train 1993:80). Accordingly, children from large families are often more restless, disobedient and destructive. They tend to bully and fight more than children who come from smaller families (Train, 1993:80).

In many instances the mother is emotionally dependent on the child (Train 1993:80). If she lacked warmth and love whilst growing up she will over-compensate and give the child all the love she missed. If she has no social life, she will invest all her emotional energy in the child, recognising the futility of her marital discord. The more the child is smothered, the more he will react with aggressive outbursts (Train, 1993:81).

Children normally develop their first relationships with their parents. These relationships are crucial as they are the secure basis for the child's emotional and social development, and act as models for later relationships. The parent and educator at school should work closely together, agreeing on learning priorities for the child, and setting the same expectations and boundaries in the home as in the school (Ward, 2009:20). In establishing a good relationship with a parent, it opens the doorway to discuss sensitive issues, such as behavioural concerns that involve managing aggressive behaviour.

The aim of a partnership between the parent and the teacher in respect of learning, is to develop a joint approach with shared objectives, where the teacher and parent can work together. It is important that teachers develop a respectful and sensitive relationship with parents when they the parents first enter the setting (Ward, 2009:38).

Thus, *parent involvement* can be defined as "... the willing and active participation of parents in a wide range of school and home-based activities" (Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2009:14). Research indicates that children benefit significantly when their parents are involved in their education (Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2009:14). A review of many studies has shown a positive link between parent involvement and behaviour at school (Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2009:15).

Feedback to parents by teachers is very important. It establishes a link between parent and educator. At times a child is unresponsive to teacher attention and praise but is

likely to respond to parent attention (O' Leary, 1984:105). With the involvement of parents, they can praise, reward and motivate at home. Examples of rewards can include a special dessert, a game with a parent, or a family outing of the child's choice (O' Leary, 1984:106). The cooperation between parent and educator is vital in ensuring positive results.

The feedback to parents can backfire if the child frequently obtains negative evaluations from the teacher, or if the parent is generally punitive (O' Leary, 1984:106). According to Lucas (2006:58), parents and teachers have different views on acceptable behaviour. Most schools have rules, whereas many homes have none. A good starting point is to ask the parents these questions, possibly as part of a workshop:

- What behaviour do you like in your child?
- What would you like to change or improve?
- Do you have any rules in your home? If so, what are they?
- When your child misbehaves, what do you do to alter his/her behaviour?

and the following five tips will assist the parents when dealing with poor behavior, according to Lucas (2006:59):

- Catch your child being successful.
- Talk things through.
- Be firm, reasonable and calm.
- Provide a diversion.
- Let the child experience the consequence of his/her behavior.

Parents need to be role models, as children learn behaviour by imitation. If a parent upholds a certain behaviour, he or she must be sure to be a role model of that behaviour at all times.

Sometimes the parents must allow their children to experience the consequences of bad behaviour. To be an over-controlling parent, who protects the child from negative outcomes, creates dependency. As a child learns to obey external rules, he or she

internalizes discipline and becomes self-disciplined and independent. This should be the ultimate goal of all parenting.

### **2.3.1.2 The role of the home**

At the moment of birth a child enters upon an immediate and absorbing relationship with two other people, his mother and father. When he comes into existence, he creates a new social unit, a family (Simms & Simms, 1969: 3). Only fifteen percent of a child's conscious life from birth to sixteen years is spent at school; the remaining eighty-five percent is spent in the home and community, and is powerfully influenced by the family. The parents are the child's primary care-givers (Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2009:7). Thus, as Schwartz (1975:64) states, starting from infancy then, the family provides an arena in which positive and negative emotional feelings are created, and in which irresolvable conflicts are translated into love-hate relationships that last throughout his or her life. Part of early childhood socialisation includes learning to cope with the frustrations that develop from the interactions with other people and things that appear to have wills of their own. The patterns that deal with the interplay of love and hate that are developed in these early years usually set the mode of social interaction in later life (Schwartz, 1975:65).

In this respect it is the researcher's aim to establish what the role of primary socialisation agents, namely the parents and home are, to what extent parent and community involvement at school helps in preventing learner aggressive behavior, and what the influence of the secondary socialisation agents, namely peer groups, adults and the media are on a child's aggression. The researcher investigated teacher efficacy in the classroom and whether it influenced learning in the classroom. An investigation was also carried out to find out if there were any factors relating to aggressive behaviour amongst children.

Aggression is a factor that influences the emotional development of a child. Aggressive behaviour comes to the fore when the child is frustrated in attaining his goal. It is marked by a desire to remove or injure the person who is preventing him or her from attaining the end. Such a person is depriving him of the reinforcement which would accompany successful achievement. It is at first an unlearned response. Between the ages of two and six, the child has an increased verbal facility, and finds new forms of

expressing aggression (Simms & Simms 1969:11) The incidence of frustration does not decline, because parental restrictions continue to accompany the increasing socialisation of the child through toilet training, behaviour during mealtimes, and with the sharing of toys. Children who are highly active are exposed to a wider range of frustrations caused by their explorations. They become agents of their own frustrations and are more likely to express them in destructive play. The situation is worsened when legitimate outlets have not been offered through the provision of such play materials as clay, dough and hammering toys (Simms & Simms, 1969:12).

In seeking to injure others or their property, the nature of the aggressive response is essentially destructive. Every social culture has realized the need for approving of certain responses and disapproving of others, according to their effect upon the stability of the society. In normal family relationships the chief aggressive model is the father. An aggressive adult has a twofold effect upon a child. He increases the incidence of aggressive responses on the part of the child, and he provides him/her with examples of new forms of aggression, which a child learns to make his own. A considerable element of physical and verbal aggression is found in the behaviour of learners from families where physical and verbal threats provide the sanctions for child-rearing practices (Simms & Simms, 1969:12).

The child's response to frustration may be changed according to the pattern of social relationships in which he or she finds him/herself. The frustration of dependency by adults either by failing to reinforce the child's behaviour or by doing it so inconsistently is a frequent cause of aggressive responses. Where a child does not know if what he does will receive his parent's approval or not, he loses confidence in his ability to cope with the events and the relationships of his family life. This leads to a state of anxiety. To this some learners react by withdrawal and apathy, and others by forms of aggression and anti-social behaviour (Simms & Simms, 1969:13).

*Proactive* aggression and *instrumental* aggression refer to aggressive acts that are intended to achieve some instrumental goal, such as the retrieval or possession of an object, or domination over others (Cavell, 2000:21). *Instrumental* aggression (proactive, cold-blooded or offensive) generally refers to aggression that is deliberately enacted (Card & Little, 2007:108).

Children who have been identified as engaging in high levels of *proactive* aggression, and not high levels of reactive aggression, have average social-cognitive skills, are perceived by their peers as leaders, and are both popular and disliked; thus they have a controversial peer status (Cavell, 2000:21).

*Affective* aggression often becomes a preoccupation that takes the attention away from other matters. For example, a child who has been repeatedly disturbed by someone while concentrating on getting a high score on a video game, may become aggressive and injure the person who has broken his/her concentration (Budhal, 2006:10).

### **2.3.1.3 Relationship with peers**

This researcher intends to discover what the influence of the secondary socialisation agents, such as peer groups, is on the child's aggressive behaviour.

*Overt* aggression generally refers to:

- “physical acts, such as pinching, pushing, kicking and hitting (part of direct/confrontational aggression);
- verbal acts, such as name-calling, threatening, harmful sarcasm and harassment (part of direct/confrontational aggression);
- non-verbal acts, such as ‘eye-daggers’, and offensive gestures directed at the target (part of direct/confrontational aggression) (Card & Little, 2007:108); and
- material acts, such as defacing, damaging or destroying a target's personal property (part of indirect/non-confrontational aggression) (Card & Little, 2007:109).”

In addressing the aims of the research, secondary socialisation (peer relations) will assist educators in what ‘sets’ the aggressive child ‘off’. Are peer relations the cause of aggressive behaviour?

*Social-relational* aggression refers to interpersonal acts of reputational or emotional harm, such as talking about others behind their backs, intentionally excluding them from the group, spreading rumors, gossiping, ‘eye-rolling’, gesturing about the target (person

anger is directed towards) and the hurtful manipulation of relationships (part of indirect/non-confrontational aggression) (Card & Little, 2007:109).

Interpersonal acts of social-relational aggression also involve enlisting others to gang up against the target (person anger is directed towards), which embodies direct – confrontational-aggression (Card & Little, 2007:110).

Group dynamics perspective can be used to explain aggression in the peer-group. Group dynamic principles are often present in research on peer relations but are not mentioned explicitly. This view highlights the influence of group dynamic factors on the behaviour of individuals, dyads and groups within the larger social network. Not only do group dynamic factors and processes impact upon aggression, but also the outcomes associated with them (Cillessen & Mayeux, 2007:139).

The occurrence of aggression can depend on specific aspects of the immediate social situation in which the aggression occurs. With this view in mind, aggression does not occur as the result of a history of social learning that has taken place over time, but rather as an immediate response to situational cues. Three further points of this view are the effects of group norms on behaviour, the phenomenon of in-group out-group bias, and the effect of threats to the self on aggression (Cillessen & Mayeux, 2007:140).

Aggression is more likely to occur in groups which is normative or accepted (Cillessen & Mayeux 2007:140). Threats to the self are related to aggression in groups in multiple ways. If a child is in a position of high status and a peer threatens that status in some way, the child can be expected to aggress against the challenger. This effect may be exacerbated if status is a central component of the individual's self-concept (Cillessen & Mayeux, 2007:141).

Aggressiveness in children takes on different forms, and children exhibit aggression in different ways.

Direct aggression occurs in the presence of, and is aimed at the victim (Tedeschi & Felson, 1994:98). Direct aggression (confrontational aggression) overlaps with overt aggression; it may be physical, verbal or non-verbal. Passive acts of direct (confrontational aggression)

are evident when children ignore or refuse to acknowledge the target's (person whom anger is directed towards) presence (Card & Little, 2007:110).

Active and direct aggression allows the victim to clearly identify and retaliate against the aggressor (Tedeschi & Felson 1994:98).

Passive acts of indirect (non-confrontational aggression) are evident when learners do not share secrets, withhold information that would benefit the target (person whom anger is directed towards) (Card & Little, 2007:110).

Forms of indirect aggression include spreading vicious gossip, or slashing the tyres of a victim's car. Passive aggression involves an action or inaction that blocks the target (person whom anger is directed towards) from obtaining a desired goal. The harm experienced by the victim of passive aggression often occurs in the absence of the aggressor. Passive and indirect aggression may allow the aggressor to escape identification, responsibility and punishment (Tedeschi & Felson, 1994:98).

It has to be indicated that anger is a feeling, and that aggression is a behaviour (Hemmeter, 2003:1). According to Budhal (2006:10), aggression is an observable behavior, physically or verbally, overtly or covertly, or it tries to harm or cause pain to objects or persons within his/her environment.

Schools and families share the responsibility of the socialisation of the child (Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2009:23).

This leads to the discussion of secondary socialisation, namely the role of the school.

### **2.3.2 Secondary socialisation**

#### **2.3.2.1 The role of the school**

The school has a powerful influence on the child, but it can only build on the foundation laid by the family (Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2009:7). Therefore, the school undertakes the secondary socialisation of learners. When school socialisation is effective, many social expectations are widely shared. This simplifies communication, fosters consensus and

encourages individuals to conform voluntarily to the established requirements of group life (Schwartz 1975:94). By providing socialisation, the schools can help the learners cope with the demands that society makes on them and can add to the quality of the learners' personal lives (Schwartz 1975:99-100). Faith in education is so widespread that schools are generally viewed as the road to social progress, and the panacea for most social problems (Schwartz 1975:103). The most significant features of schools are their rules prescribing the rights, duties and obligations of each role. Rules introduce rationality, and provide the basis for many repetitive patterns of behaviour (Schwartz, 1975:105).

This researcher's aim is, amongst others, to determine if learners lash out towards the peers that they see as a threat, or whether it is a defensive action. Therefore, the researcher will investigate if reactive aggression is the type that is most likely to occur at school.

For this reason it is necessary to define *reactive aggression* for a better understanding. *Reactive aggression* refers to a defensive reaction to a perceived threat and is accompanied by visible displays of anger (Cavell, 2000:21). Learners identified as possessing reactive aggression are more than likely to misperceive their peers' actions as hostile, and are deficient in generating non-aggressive solutions to social problems. Reactive aggressive boys tend to be socially withdrawn, are seen by their peers as both unpopular and rejected, they lack pro-social skills, are inattentive and poorly self-controlled (Cavell, 2000:21). Reactive aggression - defensive or hot-blooded aggression - refers to aggression that is an angry, often emotionally dis-regulated, response to perceived offenses or frustrations (Card & Little, 2007:108).

Discipline measures have also to be in place when learners do not conform to boundaries (rules set out and agreed upon) within the classroom.

If the educator has, to no avail, discussed his negative behaviour with the aggressive child, and he ignores the educator's instructions, the solution is to recognise that his behaviour will not change unless he has felt the consequences of his actions. Instead of making a huge verbal issue of the behaviour, calmly tell him of your disapproval. Later when he is expecting a reward, it should be cancelled. Your actions should not be explained or excused, as you are now allowing him to believe that your decision is open

to negotiation. The matter should NOT be open for discussion. Take action calmly at the time of the event in order to prevent harm coming to anyone; later follow it with a consequence (one that has been agreed upon by teacher and learner) (Train, 1993:151).

The researcher aims to determine whether, at this age, a pattern building between overt (verbal and physical) and covert (*e.g.*, stealing and truancy) aggression forms part of anti-social behaviour in learners. She also aims to elaborate on the impact aggression has on the social skills, the confidence and the self-concept of learners. Learners who engage in direct aggression will be the appropriate subjects to answer this aim.

When defining the socialisation role of the school, it is important to understand that most sociologists believe that socialisation is brought about by a number of different and complex processes (Schwartz 1975:64). Therefore, a socialisation theory would be concerned with how best to prepare a child to become an effective agent within a particular society (Nyberg & Egan, 1981:34).

As the school sets in place its process of socialisation, committees are established and rules and regulations are set in place. One such committee, which is held in high esteem, is the School Governing Body. The School Governing Body has to perform certain tasks and functions.

According to Bisschoff, Bray, De Waal, and Joubert (2007:40), in terms of accepted management theory and practice, certain functions of the School Governing Bodies are clearly management tasks, such as:

- **Policy-making functions:**

Which includes the acceptance of a code of conduct.

The Governing Body of a school can and should play an important role in the establishment and maintenance of sound discipline. The Code of Conduct is a form of subordinate legislation, in the sense that it should reflect the democratic principles of the Constitution by supporting the values of human dignity, equality and freedom. It should demonstrate behaviour that fits in with an open and democratic society. In the formulation of the Code of Conduct the development level of the learner should be kept in mind (Bisschoff, *et al.* 2007:80).

Classroom rules should be consistent with the school rules and the overall Code of Conduct, and make provision for a fair warning. The school rules should be clear and concise. The younger learners in the Foundation Phase should be informed verbally or through practical demonstration what the school rules imply. Provisions for fairness must be included. The learners are obliged to adhere to the school and classroom rules. The consequences of breaking the rules should also be indicated. The punishment must fit the offence and be graded to make provision for repeated offences (Bisschoff, *et al.* 2007:81).

### **2.3.2.2 The role of the educator;**

According to O' Leary (1984:104), the educators should praise and support appropriate behaviour. A positive reaction from the teacher (*e.g.*, a hug, a smile or a compliment) can assist the learner in behaving positively. The educators should also ignore inappropriate behaviour such as fidgeting, and the calling out of answers without a raising hand. Most importantly, the educators should reprimand softly, so that the reprimand is only audible to the child concerned. This attitude has been proven to be very useful with learners who have problems with aggression. The rules must be clear to all the learners, and the teachers must discuss the goal (positive behaviour) and give intermittent feedback to the learner regarding progress toward reaching the goal (positive behaviour) (O'Leary, 1984:105).

The concept *in loco parentis* is specifically used in the educational context to describe the role of care that a teacher takes in the place of the parent. In Latin *loco* means *place* and *parentis* means *of the parent*. *In loco parentis* literally means *in the place of the parent* (Tucker, 2008:1). It recognises the rights and responsibilities of an individual or an institution to care for a minor. Educators have the rights and responsibilities to act *in loco parentis* under the South African law. Section 28 of the South African Constitution's Bill of Rights defines *a child* as someone being under the age of 18, and specifies that a child's best interests are of paramount importance in every matter concerning him or her (Tucker 2008:1).

The duties of educators extend to ensuring the educational and general welfare of learners that are in their care. This includes making sure their physical and mental health, and their safety is protected at all times (Tucker, 2008:1).

## **2.4 RELATIONSHIPS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT THAT INFLUENCE AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR**

It is a known fact that factors influential to learners' aggressive behaviour are linked to relationships. It is imperative that children form relationships with peers and adults as these relationships offer significant experiences. The family, school, peer group and the mass media are all major agents in a child's socialisation. Without interacting with these agents, a child can suffer in many ways. Extreme isolation can affect a child's emotional, mental, and physical development. Alternatively, if a child experiences nature, is nurtured, gets to watch television and interacts with other people, he or she will be able to develop as a person, learn, and acquire normal social graces (Oppapers.com 2012:1).

According to Hartup (1986:6), the manner in which the child's development generates changes in the patterning and functioning of relationships has only received scattered attention. The relevant issues range from the extent to which children increasingly 'drive' the relationships in which they are involved, to the manner in which new understandings about the social world are reflected in the interactions occurring within a relationship. These issues are significant for the study of relationships involving the child, and many different individuals, including the parents, peers, siblings and teachers (Hartup, 1986:7).

### **2.4.1 Peer relationships**

Peer interactions are salient for the child, beginning at a very early age (Hartup, 1986:12). Peer relations are known to differ along dimensions of 'intensity' and 'exclusivity'. Some children have close, intimate friendships while others do not. Some have many friends, others have a few; still others do not have any.

A strategy is needed, namely a classification of peer relationships – not according to popularity or the amount of contact that children have with one another, but rather, on the basis of sociability, exclusivity, acceptance-rejection and social influence taken together (Hartup, 1986:17). The latter, will have a direct influence on the level of

aggression a learner may experience, and this may supply an answer to the research question, namely what the influence is of secondary socialisation, amongst others, peer groups, and whether there are any factors relating to aggressive behaviour among children.

According to Schaffer (1996:313), peer relations make certain unique contributions to a child's development, and just because the partner is of equal status. Thus, children help to socialize each other. The peer group is, in fact, in many respects a miniature society in its own right. With children there are vertical relations, which are formed with someone older than him/herself, such as a parent or a teacher. However, horizontal relationships are formed with individuals having the same social power as the child. The function of horizontal relationships is to give children the opportunity to learn those skills that can be acquired only amongst equals, such as those involving cooperation and competition. Experience in interacting with other children thus fulfills certain unique functions, which cannot be fulfilled by vertical relationships (Schaffer, 1996:312).

#### **2.4.2 The role of the media**

The media plays a role in the aggressive behaviour of learners. Bandura's social learning theory has been very influential in the study in respect of how people learn aggressive behaviour by observing others. It has stimulated research on the effects of observing violence in the mass media, and also the impact of physical punishment by parents for the child's aggressive behaviour (Tedeschi & Felson, 1994:93).

In the early 1960s Bandura and his colleagues at Stanford University in California were engaged in a series of experiments which demonstrated how young children readily imitate aggressive models. The children who viewed movies of others behaving aggressively displayed more aggressive behaviour than the children who viewed movies without aggressive scenes. These experiments were vital in their outcomes, as it served as a platform to inform us of the powerful effects of peer models (O'Leary, 1984:61). The conclusion of these experiments proved that learners who are exposed to violence and aggression would model that behaviour.

According to Jewett (2009:2), children who exhibit instrumental and hostile forms of aggression during their early years, have been exposed to adults who encourage, model

or condone aggression by using discipline techniques that are punitive, rigid and authoritarian; by ignoring or permitting aggressive actions by the child and others; by providing or tolerating aggressive toys or aggressive images from the television, movies or books in the child's surroundings; or by modeling aggression in their own interpersonal interactions.

### **2.4.3 The role of the community**

According to Stewart (2008:1), there is a number of underlying issues that cause aggressive behaviour in young children, including low self-esteem, limited communication or problem-solving skills, frustration, stress, exposure to violence in the home and community, emotional problems, abuse, and spending time with peers who are aggressive and temperamental. It is important to bear in mind that the community a child is raised in, is the community that the parents have selected to live in, and this lays the foundation for the socially-accepted norms that the learner is exposed to, and influences the child's peer networks. Bukatko and Daehler (2004:500) clearly indicated that parents manage aspects of their child's life that, in turn, influence his/her social development. Bukatko and Daehler (2004:601) further indicated that the neighborhood matters with respect to behavioural and emotional problems; both are likely to be present in communities with a low socio-economic status. When parents have greater social support from family and friends within the community, the negative effects that often accompany increased parental stress in poor neighborhoods may also be reduced. The individual and the collective efforts of community members to monitor and assist in the supervision of children and adults may be important avenues for promoting the child's development.

## **2.5 FACTORS THAT LEAD TO AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR**

The researcher intends to also try to discover if aggression is gender-related. Barnow and Freyberger (2003:217) showed that gender has proven to be a robust predictor of later aggressive behaviour - boys are three times more likely to display aggressive behavior than girls (O'Leary, 1984:41).

Studies have indicated that boys are more likely to retaliate with physical aggression when they are attacked or when someone interferes with their objectives. The kinds of

aggression observed in nursery school are more noticeable in boys than in girls. Boys are more active, overtly aggressive and combative than girls, and they also elicit more aggressive responses from other children. Among boys there is a greater degree of acquisitive competition, and they are more retaliatory than girls (Train, 1993:34). Kutnick (1992:133) also believes that physical aggression is more prevalent in boys than in girls. Another possible explanation for the differences in aggression between girls and boys is that their parents socialise them differently. Generally, girls are supervised more closely, and boys are encouraged to be tough and to take risks.

According to Barnow and Freyberger (2003:217), less overt forms of aggression, such as tattling and conspiracy, are more prevalent among girls.

Train (1993:34) believed that the reason why boys predominantly react in this way (physically aggressive) is because they receive far more attention than girls when it comes to aggressive behaviour. Their parents expect from boys to be more aggressive than girls. Aggression is a masculine stereotype.

Gender aggression can be linked to the conflict theory.

Conflict is a pervasive aspect of existence. It occurs at all levels of social life: inter-personal, inter-group, inter-organisational and international, and not only between social units, but also within the different types of social units, within persons as well as within nations (Deutsch, 1991:26).

If a child has had difficult experiences in his or her life and has not developed the emotional capacity to process and cope efficiently with the feelings, he/she may harbour many negative internal responses like shame, resentment, anger, frustration, fear, anxiety, confusion, insecurity and guilt. Without helpful channels of expression, these feelings remain internalized and often unexplored. But, high levels of stress or tension have to come out somehow (Leaman, 2005:8), such as aggressive, controlling, bullying, unpredictable, high-tempered and obstructive behaviour vented on anyone or anything. Schools are perhaps a fairly safe place to express anger: there are people around who can take control, keep order and pick up the pieces (Leaman, 2005:8).

Anger appears to be reinforced by the actions that it motivates, such as coercion, revenge and the removal of unpleasant stimuli, by thoughts related to moral justification, and by images of revenge and coercion. Based on the above, effective anger interventions would then focus on social problem-solving training that may help the individuals to become aware of the long-term negative consequences of their anger and to identify new responses (DiGuiseppe, Cannella & Kelter, 2007:73). Behavioural rehearsal interventions that teach new responses via modeling, coaching and feedback would be helpful. To encourage the reduction in anger-arousal, relaxation responses and the use of discrimination-training to learn to perform these responses when confronted with previous anger-provoking stimuli, could be learned. Thus, these exposure-based interventions would teach the individuals to confront an anger-provoking stimulus, and to quickly perform a new reaction, before anger-arousal is achieved. However, additional research on the effectiveness of interventions based on these principles is needed to establish the value of the suggestions.

Because most indications of aggression display high levels of both proactive and reactive aggression, practitioners will need to gain an understanding of both types of aggression to formulate a treatment plan. For some learners a more focused treatment-approach is necessary. For example, treatments that teach self-control skills should benefit the reactive aggressive child more than the proactive aggressive child (Cavell, 2000:21).

According to O' Leary (1984:1), a threefold approach is necessary if one is to understand fully and deal with aggressiveness and hyperactivity. The first is a thorough assessment of the child's perceptions, observations and feelings about the environment in which he or she lives. The second is a review of the history, causes and description of the problem through the eyes of the parents and professionals. The third is a complete assessment and review of the most up-to-date pharmacological, dietary and psychological treatments, and where help can be found.

Hyperactivity and attention deficit is a precursor to aggressiveness. The primary symptoms of ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) namely impulsivity, inattention and hyperactivity place a child at risk of a multitude of problems that can set the platform for future aggression (Cavell, 2000:11). For example, untreated ADHD symptoms often make it difficult for parents to manage their child's behaviour (Cavell, 2000:12).

There are many causes or factors of aggressive behaviour. According to Leaman (2005:146), unresolved emotional issues such as anger, resentment or jealousy, leads to aggressive behaviour. He further states that an underdeveloped communication skill, which is the inability to articulate or express thoughts and feelings effectively, leads to frustrated behaviour. Also, unfulfilled physiological needs, such as a lack of sleep (a common problem) or the lack of nutritious food could lead to aggression. The cause of aggressive behaviour could also be in order to gain peer recognition, namely by seeking their attention by making them laugh, gaining 'respect', and by living up to a reputation of being aggressive (Leaman, 2005: 147).

## **2.6 SOCIO-EDUCATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR PREVENTING CHILDREN'S AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR**

According to Domitrovich and Greenberg (2003:1), the socio-educational aggressive behaviour and conduct of children are generally difficult to prevent, because they are determined by many factors and are maintained within various ecological systems, such as the family, peer group and school. The risk factors associated with these behaviour problems tend to cluster together, and the risk factors from a given developmental stage tend to increase the risk in subsequent phases.

Since children's cognitive, linguistic, and emotional development shows dramatic advances during the preschool period, at this stage they are better equipped to learn social and emotional skills that serve as protective factors against the development or continuation of aggressive behaviour patterns. It is important to note that several preventive interventions, particularly those focusing on enhancing children's cognitive skills, have reduced child-aggression (Domitrovich & Greenberg, 2003:2).

According to Domitrovich and Greenberg (2003:3), overall, interventions intended to reduce aggression fall into three categories, namely

- 1) interventions that focus primarily on the child, and attempt to reduce risk by improving his or her social, emotional, or cognitive skills;
- 2) interventions that improve parental functioning, parental childrearing skills, or the quality of the parent-child relationship; and

- 3) multi-component interventions that integrate several interventions and target multiple contexts.

An example of each type of program will be described next.

- Child-focused programs

Very few child-focused programs are delivered alone. At a minimum, most also include a parental component. In general, child interventions are delivered as universal programs within classrooms, or as interventions targeting small groups of children. They typically involve teaching children social, emotional, or problem-solving skills, or to utilise contingency systems to alter their behaviour (Domitrovich & Greenberg, 2003:3).

- Parent-focused programs

Given the family risk factors that contribute to the development of child aggression, there has been a strong tradition of working with parents to improve their parenting practices. Parent-training programs are typically delivered in small group settings. One program that has an extensive research base is the *Incredible Years Training for Parents*. This program is unique, because it uses videotapes and written material to foster positive parent-child relationships, to teach parents how to use positive discipline strategies, and to help parents learn how to support their children's learning and achievement. In one clinical trial evaluation, a sample of *Head Start* parents participated in the program. Findings indicated that children of the intervention parents exhibited fewer behaviour problems, were less negative, and displayed more positive affect both at the end of the program and one year thereafter (Domitrovich & Greenberg, 2003:3).

- Multi-component programs

While programs that target a single domain are important and useful, they are not as effective as multi-component interventions that integrate a variety of strategies to address multiple sources of risk. One example of an effective multi-component intervention to reduce child aggression is the *First Steps* program. This program includes a comprehensive screening process, which identifies children with elevated behaviour problems during kindergarten. The intervention consists of both a parent-training component and a skill-building component for the children. In an evaluation of the program, the teachers described the children who underwent this kind of intervention as less aggressive at post-test and follow-up stages (Domitrovich & Greenberg, 2003:4).

In conclusion, the field of prevention is growing rapidly. The most robust results have been found in multi-component programs that target multiple domains, changing systems and environments, as well as individuals and family units (Domitrovich & Greenberg, 2003:4).

## **2.7 SUMMARY**

Problems of aggression are predictive of difficulties in adolescence and adulthood, such as a low self-esteem, poor social skills, even car and motorcycle accidents, and poor school grades. Of great importance to aggressive children are parents and teachers who believe in them and recognise their worth. Inappropriate aggression is social behaviour which can be reduced, and fortunately it can be gradually eliminated in the majority of cases (O' Leary, 1984:41).

Children who have an aggressive nature may be quarrelsome, noisy, bossy, quick-tempered; they may show demanding behavior, and/or they may pester others, whine or seek attention. Both the abovementioned groups of aggressive learners are extremely unpopular with their peers (Train, 1993:38).

Teamwork is necessary if there is to be consistency in the life of an aggressive child, *i.e.*, between teachers as professionals and between parents and teachers (Train, 1993:143).

According to Train (1993:182), teachers should be trained to deal with difficult learners; training courses should embrace preventative techniques and give emphasis to the fact that teachers are employed because the learners need them as people. If the behaviour of learners was seen as the primary concern of teachers rather than a secondary matter, then the delivery of the curriculum would proceed much more smoothly. Difficult learners would not be seen as a nuisance; their needs would be met, and others could benefit as a result.

Train (1993:202) indicates that it is impossible to gauge accurately the success of any particular approach when dealing with aggressive children. A guiding principle is that the people surrounding the aggressive child must become detached from him, must look

at his aggression as a condition, which needs attention rather than being part of his interactional style.

It is Train's (1993:202) contention that we all have an emotional quotient: we are either fragile or resilient. Aggressive learners are aggressive because they are emotionally fragile, and react extremely sensitively to the setting in which they find themselves.

In the following chapter, the research design, research methodology, data collection techniques and analysis of qualitative data will be discussed.

## Chapter 3

### THE RESEARCH DESIGN

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The literature review in chapter 2 provided a theoretical framework for the empirical part of the investigation into the aggressive behavior of learners in the classroom.

In this chapter the researcher will present a detailed research design and the methodology of this study, which will include the data collection and data analysis procedures.

#### **3.2 THE RESEARCH DESIGN**

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006:22), a *research design* refers to the plan and structure of the investigation used to gather evidence to answer the research questions. In addition, the research design describes the procedure for conducting the study, including when, from whom and under which conditions the data will be obtained.

In this study, the researcher will follow a qualitative research design.

The data will be obtained from naturally occurring phenomena (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:26). The researcher will conduct the research and gather the data in the learners' natural surroundings (Christensen 2004:52), namely in the classroom and on the playground. She will thus interact with the individuals in their natural settings.

The researcher will personally observe the selected learners at their primary schools. Two principals, three educators, three parents and four learners are included in the research project. The learners being investigated will be studied in their natural environment, and not in a researcher-controlled environment under research-controlled conditions, as is the case in a quantitative study. The researcher will not manipulate the subjects or what they experience, and she will not have any control over what will happen. The

quantitative researcher in an experimental design manipulates what the subjects will experience and has control over what will happen to the subjects by systematically imposing or withholding specified interventions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:23).

This researcher views the qualitative research approach as the best approach for this project because it will provide her with the opportunity to understand the social phenomena from the participants' perspectives. This understanding will be acquired by analyzing the various contexts, and by interpreting the participants' meanings, which include their feelings, beliefs, ideas, thoughts and actions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:315).

The researcher will use a qualitative design because it is a form of social inquiry that focuses on the way people interpret and experience events and the world in which they live. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006:315), qualitative research is based on shared social experiences that are interpreted by the individuals. Reality is a social construction; that is, individuals and groups derive or ascribe meanings to specific events, persons, processes and objects. People form constructions to make sense of their world, and reorganize these constructions as viewpoints, perceptions and belief systems. Thus, people's perceptions are what they consider real and what directs their actions, thoughts and feelings (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:315). Accordingly, the researcher will make use of the qualitative approach to explore the perspectives and experiences of the participants. This is in line with what Christensen (2004:52) points out, namely that the basis of qualitative research lies in the interpretative approach to social reality.

In quantitative research, deductive logic is employed in selecting the construct, variables and operational definitions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:71), whereas all the analytical strategies of qualitative research is primarily an inductive process of organizing data into categories and identifying patterns (*i.e.*, relationships) among the categories (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:364). In quantitative data collection a hypothesis should offer a tentative explanation based on theory or previous research. A well-grounded hypothesis indicates that there is enough research or theory for considering the hypothesis important enough to test (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:60).

The research design describes how the study is being conducted (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:22). It summarises the procedures for conducting the study, including

when, from whom, and under what conditions the data will be obtained. It indicates the general plan, how the research is set up, what happens to the subjects, and what methods of data collection are used. The purpose of a research design is to specify a plan for generating empirical evidence that will be used to answer the research questions. The intent is to use a design that will result in drawing the most valid and credible conclusions from the answers to the research questions. The research design is a very important part of an investigation, since certain limitations and cautions in interpreting the results are related to each design, and because the research design determines how the data should be analysed (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:22).

This researcher has selected a qualitative research design which is an inquiry where researchers collect the data in face-to-face situations by interacting with selected persons in their settings (*e.g.*, field research) (McMillan & Schumacher 2006:315). The participants whom the researcher will interact with in this study are principals, educators, learners and parents. The settings to be used for the interviews are the offices of the principals, and classrooms for the teachers and the learners. The observations of the learners will be done in the classrooms and on the playground. The parents will be interviewed telephonically, as due to their work commitments it would be easier to conduct interviews by phone with them. The researcher selected this research method as it describes and analyses people's individual and collective social actions, beliefs, thoughts and perceptions. Qualitative studies are important for the illumination of social issues. This researcher's research is based on a socio-education perspective, and therefore the qualitative research design is the best approach.

In this respect the qualitative design approach is best suited to the researcher's study, the reason being that the qualitative design is descriptive, and it examines social phenomena. A quantitative research design adopts a positivist philosophy of knowing that emphasizes objectivity and the quantification of phenomena. An important sub-classification of quantitative design is experimental/non-experimental (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:23).

One of the research questions in this study is: Are Grade R children violent, or aggressive in the classroom?

In an attempt to answer this question the following questions are pertinent:

- How do teachers teach their learners pro-social behaviour in the classrooms?
- How do parents teach their children pro-social behaviour in the homes?

### **3.3 THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Ethnography is the theoretical paradigm of this study. This implies an attempt to describe culture or aspects of culture (Biklen & Bogdan, 1992:38). The focus is on learned patterns of actions, language, beliefs, rituals, and a way of life (McMillan & Schumacher 2006:26). The ethnographer's goals are to share in the meanings that the cultural participants take for granted, and then to depict a new understanding for the reader and for outsiders (Biklen & Bogdan, 1992:39).

Ethnographic techniques are empirical, and are almost without exception completed in naturalistic settings. This researcher aims to observe how individuals and groups behave in their own real-world settings, being not manipulated by the researcher. The ethnographic research attempts to present the totality of the phenomenon under investigation.

Behaviour is seen to have a history and an anticipation of the future (Uzzell, 1995:305).

This research will focus on a descriptive approach. A *descriptive* study is a form of qualitative research which is used to look at a small group of participants. McMillan and Schumacher (2006:24) define *descriptive research* as method of research that gathers information about a present existing condition. The purpose of most descriptive research is limited to characterizing something as it is. This seemed the best method that the researcher could employ in describing the 'present existing condition', which is the aggressive behaviour displayed by Grade R learners.

#### **3.3.1 The population**

A *population* is "...a group of elements or cases, whether individuals, objects or events, that conforms to specific criteria and to which we intend to generalize the results of the research" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:119).

In this study the population consists of individuals in Grade R who were selected from three schools.

The target population is often different from the list of elements from which the sample is actually selected, which is termed the *survey population* or *sampling frame* (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:119). This research topic entails an investigation into the aggression of children in the Foundation Phase in Northern Johannesburg. Here the target population is then learners from three schools in Northern Johannesburg.

### **3.3.2 Sampling procedure**

The samples are selected on grounds of the likelihood that they are knowledgeable and information-rich in respect of the research problem that the researcher is investigating (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:319). As this researcher aims to investigate the aggressive behaviour of Grade R learners, she selected learners from three schools, using purposive sampling (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:319). The participants whom the researcher selected are learners who exhibit characteristics of aggressive behaviour, educators who deal with this manner of conduct, and parents who have to cope with this behaviour at home. They are therefore 'information rich', and would be able to answer the questions as set in this study.

McMillan and Schumacher (2006:319) define *purposeful sampling* as that a few cases are studied in depth to yield much insight about a topic. Purposeful sampling is done to increase the utility of information obtained from small samples. McMillan and Schumacher, (2006:336) provide further clarity on the definition of *purposeful sampling* by indicating that small samples are selected to study in depth, without desiring to generalize the outcomes to all relevant cases.

The researcher selected informants from three multi-cultural schools in Northern Johannesburg who seemed information-rich as they are likely to be knowledgeable and informative about the phenomena that the researcher is investigating (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:319).

Qualitative research inquirers view sampling processes as dynamic, and a qualitative sample seems small when compared to a sample needed to generalize the outcomes to a larger population (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:321).

Choosing the site is a negotiation process to obtain freedom to access the site that is suitable for research problems and feasible for the researcher's resources of time, mobility and skills (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:342).

After the researcher has identified a possible site, contact is made with a person who can grant permission for the research to be done (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:342).

The researcher made formal contact with the principals of the schools and the Grade coordinator, after receiving informal confirmation that the research proposal would be positively reviewed (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:342).

The researcher prepared a brief written statement that specified the site, the participants and the activities, the length of time of the entire study and the researcher's role (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:342). The written statement was e-mailed to the principals and appointments were arranged with them to discuss the research. The researcher then had to make contact with the Grade coordinators to discuss the research, and consent forms were sent to the participants' parents, requesting their consent for their children to participate in the research. The statement also provided information about the researcher, and the general use of the data, including the protection of the rights of the learners (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:342). The researcher informed the principals that on completion of the research project a copy would be given to them.

Access to the site and the people are crucial at this stage (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:342). The criteria are related and appropriate for the research problem and purpose (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:319). In this regard the research problem is to investigate aggression of Grade R learners. Therefore, the site selected had to be one in which these actions of aggression are present and can be studied. These sites are the classrooms and the playgrounds of the three selected schools. Permission was granted to the researcher to access these sites.

With regards to mapping the field, the researcher will establish good relations with all individuals at the research site in order to gain entry into the field (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006:343).

### **3.3.3 The sample size**

McMillan and Schumacher (2006:119) define a *sample* as a group of subjects or participants from whom data can be collected. The sample can be selected from a larger group of persons, identified as the *population*. Thus, a *sample size* is the number of informants selected for the investigation.

However, the logic of the sample size is related to the purpose, the research problem, the major data collection strategy, and the availability of information-rich cases. As the researcher's study is a descriptive one, it does not need many informants (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:322).

Qualitative researchers need to conduct their enquiry when small sample sizes exist (Drew, *et al.*, 2008:187).

This researcher selected a total of twelve informants from the schools, indicated as schools A, B and C.

## **3.4 DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES**

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006:340), forms of conversations and observations are also the primary data collection strategies in qualitative research.

In this study, observations and standardized open-ended interviews will be used. This research method will enable the researcher to gather valuable data on how teachers and parents teach pro-social behavior in the classroom and in their homes.

The qualitative parts of data collection and analyses are interwoven and occur in overlapping cycles. There are five research stages that need to be implemented in data collection. They are: stage one, planning (the researcher located and gained permission to use the site or network of persons). Stage two, beginning data collection (this stage

includes the first days in the field, in which the researcher established rapport, trust and reciprocal relations with the individuals). Stage three, is basic data collection, namely when the researcher begins to hear and see what is occurring, and which goes beyond merely listening and looking. Choosing data collection strategies and informants continue to be made. Stage four, closing the collection of data, when the researcher 'leaves the field'. Finally, stage five, the completion of active data collecting blends into formal data analysis and the construction of meaningful ways to represent the data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:322).

In this case, the conditions under which the data were collected were the participants' natural surroundings. The researcher collected the data by observing the learners in their classrooms (during teaching time and free play) and on the playground. Extensive notes were made in the field, and each learner was observed individually. The learners also completed a Draw a Person Test (DAPT) and Children's Apperception Test (CAT) procedure.

The collection of data generates the information required for the research project. The researcher made use of ethnography. It involves prolonged fieldwork and employing observation and with participants of a shared group activity and collecting group artifacts (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:26). A technique that ethnographers use is in-depth interviews with members of the group being investigated (Christensen 2004:55).

Qualitative researchers are guided by circumstances. For instance, a study may have a small sample size, but the researcher may continually be returning to the same situation or the same informants, seeking conformation. The number of days in the field is usually reported (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:322).

### **3.4.1 Interview;**

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006:350), in-depth interviews include open-response questions to obtain data of participant-meanings – how individuals conceive their worlds and how they explain or make sense of the important events in their lives.

The researcher selected this method of interview.

Key informants-interviews are in-depth interviews with individuals who have special knowledge, status or communication skills that they are willing to share with the researcher. They are selected because they have access to observations unavailable to the researcher (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:351).

In this study the principals were selected as they may have information on the daily occurrences of behaviour that is not socially acceptable. The educators were selected as they are in contact with the learners on a daily basis for a considerable amount of time. The parents are privy to observations that occur within the home structure. The researcher's observations are based on the time spent at the site. Therefore, interviewing the principals and teachers will enlighten the research with information that is of huge significance.

The researcher introduced the topic to the respondents, explaining the purpose of the research. The research was conducted in the natural setting with the principals, the educators and the learners. The interviews with the parents were conducted telephonically. Due to the busy schedules of working parents, a compromise had to be reached.

### **3.4.2 Observation**

*Qualitative field observations* are detailed descriptive recordings, presented as field-notes of events, people, actions and the objects in the setting (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:359).

The researcher made use of observation to gathering information. It is a technique for collecting data, in this case by observing the learners in the classrooms and on the playground. This method relied on the researcher seeing and hearing things and recording these observations, rather than relying on the subjects' self-report responses to questions or statements (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:207).

The researcher believes that observations are suitable in this study, as they may lead to field-records that note non-verbal interviewee body language and facial expressions which may help to interpret the verbal data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:359). The

researcher selected a non-participant strategy (explained below) in this research. The observations made will thus hopefully be more objective.

As indicated in chapter 1, the advantages of non-participant strategy is, namely

- the researcher can remain objective and neutral;
- the data can be recorded immediately;
- the observer can also interview the participants, especially as follow-up observations (Drew, *et al.* 2008:197).

The researcher observed the learners in their natural settings, namely the classrooms and the playground, and then took down extensive field-notes.

A technique familiar to all qualitative researchers and one the researcher employed is field observation. *Field observation* refers to direct, eyewitness accounts of everyday social interactions and settings that take the form of field-notes (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:358).

The researcher took down detailed notes of all incidents that transpired in the classrooms and on the playground. The behaviour of the learners was noted, also how they responded to their peers and the teachers. Notes were furthermore made on how they participated within a group in the class, and during free play.

In this study the researcher relied on careful observation while she explored several areas of interest at the site, searching for patterns of behaviour and relationships (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:359).

The observation process lasted for three weeks.

### **3.5 THE ANALYSIS OF THE QUALITATIVE DATA**

Qualitative data analysis is the relatively systematic process of coding, categorizing and interpreting data to provide explanations of a single phenomenon of interest (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:364).

After the fieldwork is completed and the information recorded, the data will be compared and contrasted and thereafter coded. Categories will be formed from the coded topics. A *category* is a more general and abstract entity that represents the meaning of similar topics (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:370).

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006:373), the ultimate goal of qualitative research is to make general statements about relationships among categories by discovering patterns in the data. A *pattern* is a relationship among categories.

Pattern-seeking means that the researcher examines the data in a variety of ways. The patterns that are found serve as an outline for the analysis of the data collected (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:373).

The researcher also constructs a visual representation which is an organized assembly of information such as integrative diagrams. Descriptive contextual data accompany diagrams (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:375).

### **3.5.1 Ethical issues**

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006:334), a *credible research design* involves not only selecting informants and effective research strategies, but also adhering to research ethics. In gaining permission for the research most researchers give the participants assurances of confidentiality and anonymity, and describe the intended use of the data.

The researcher will protect the participants (keeping their details anonymous) and at the conclusion of the research, will share the findings with the participants.

In this case the researcher did not force the participants to participate in the research. She received the signed consent forms from all the participants before the research project began.

### **3.5.2 Trustworthiness**

Selecting trustworthy data involves an awareness of the researcher's assumptions, predispositions and influence on the social situation. Trustworthy data should be selected to determine if any patterns occur (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:374).

### **3.5.3 Validity**

The *validity* of qualitative designs is the degree to which the interpretations have mutual meanings between the participants and the researcher claims of validity rest on data collection and analysis techniques. Qualitative researchers use a combination of any ten possible strategies in order to enhance validity: prolonged field-work, multi-method strategies, participant verbatim language, low-inference description, multiple researchers mechanically recorded data, participant researcher, member checking, participant review and negative data. Choosing from strategies involves of feasibility and ethics. Strategies are added as appropriate to maintain the least amount of intrusion while increasing the quality of the data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:324). The strategies that the researcher intends to use are prolonged fieldwork, multi-method strategies, participant *verbatim* language, and low-inference description (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:325).

### **3.5.4 Reliability**

*Reliability* refers to the consistency of measurement. The extent to which the results are similar over different forms of the same instrument or occasions of data collection. Another way to conceptualize reliability is to determine the extent to which measures are free from error. If an instrument has little error, then it is reliable (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:183).

The researcher's documentation of events which state where the observations took place and the time of day will assist in the reliability of the data collected.

### **3.5.5 Objectivity**

*Objectivity* is both a procedure and a characteristic. It implies that a procedure is unbiased, open-minded and not subjective. As a procedure, *objectivity* refers to data-collection and analysis procedures from which a reasonable interpretation can be made. It furthermore refers to the quality of the data produced by procedures that either control for bias or take into account subjectivity (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:9). Characteristics of objectivity include the explicit description of data-collection and analysis procedures (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:10).

### **3.6 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter the researcher presented the methodology that will be used to obtain answers to the research questions.

The researcher will use a qualitative approach and collect information by observing learners in their natural settings, that is, in the classrooms and on the playground. Extensive field-notes will be made whilst observing the learners. Principals, educators, parents and learners will be interviewed to yield the information required.

Qualitative research uses a small sample size for the investigation. The participants comprised of two principals, three educators, three parents and four learners, namely twelve persons. They were selected from three schools in Northern Johannesburg.

Chapter 4 will present an overview of the findings from the interviews with the teachers and parents, the classroom observation, the playground and the results of the Draw a Person Test and the Children's Apperception Test.

## Chapter 4

### THE ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this research project was to examine the management of aggressive behaviour of Foundation Phase learners in three selected primary schools in the Northern Johannesburg region. The research was done mainly by means of literature study and an empirical investigation.

In this chapter a report will be given of the empirical investigation by providing answers to the question as to how the school management teams in the Northern Johannesburg region manages aggressive learners. The information was collected by means of a qualitative data gathering method, which involves the use of observation and interviews. The researcher conducted interviews with principals, educators and parents.

The following section presents an analysis of the data from the principals.

#### 4.2 ANALYSIS OF THE DATA: THE PRINCIPALS

In this section the researcher reports on the ages, the working experience, the gender, the race and the home language of the participants.

**Table 4.1.1: Age**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
20 – 29	0	0
30 – 49	0	0
50 years and older	2	100
Total	2	100

With regard to the participants who were involved in the study, all of the participants were 50 years and older.

**Table 4.1.2: Working experience**

<b>Working experience</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1-20 Years	0	0
20-30 Years	0	0
30-50 Years	2	100
Total	2	100

It is clear from the table 4.1.2 that 100% of the participants' working experience ranges from 30 to 50 years.

**Table 4.1.3: Gender**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Female	1	50
Female	1	50
Total	2	100

With regards to gender, the results revealed that all of them (100%) were female.

**Table 4.1.4: Race**

<b>Race</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
White	1	50
White	1	50
Total	2	100

With regards to race, the results revealed that both participants were White.

**Table 4.1.5: Home language**

<b>Home language</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
English	1	50
Afrikaans	1	50
Total	2	100

From the above table it can be deduced that Principal 1 was English-speaking and Principal 2 Afrikaans-speaking.

In this section, the researcher was interested in getting to know the role of the school principal in managing the aggressive behaviour of learners. In order to achieve that, eighteen questions were asked to ascertain whether the principals were informed in respect of issues involving the aggressive behaviour of the learners (See Appendix 1).

The results revealed that both principals were aware of the learners' aggressive behaviour. The participants differed in their views on the causes of the aggressive behaviour.

Principal: (P-01) said,

*The lack of supervision at home and the fact that the children are left in the care of helpers contribute to their behaviour. Also, they are left to their own devices, and also play out what they have seen.*

Principal: (P-02) said,

*Parents do not hold their children responsible for their behavior, and there are no consequences for negative behaviour.*

The participants agreed that learner aggression has to do with the learners watching too much television. One principal mentioned that the learners are often attention-seeking, due to the fact that not enough time is spent with their parents, and they do not have enough time to play outside. It was further stated by the principal that often there are no rules at home, and the children watch unsupervised television.

The researcher also investigated whether the participants were aware of the role of the principals, and how the learners' aggression can be managed in the classrooms, on the playground and in the school environment. It was discovered by means of this study that the participants (principals) had different views regarding the role of the principal in managing the learners' aggressive behaviour. The participants (principals) stated the following as the roles of the principal in managing learner aggressive behavior, namely

- to provide the parents with the opportunity to discuss the learners' behaviour at an arranged meeting;
- to offer the parents support, and to encourage the parents to maintain routine and consistent discipline;
- to promote the importance of a positive relationship between parent and teacher; and
- to convince the parents of the importance of the consequences of negative behaviour.

The researcher was also interested to discover whether, at this age (5-6 years old), a pattern between overt (verbal and physical) and covert (*e.g.*, stealing and truancy) aggression forms part of the anti-social behaviour of children.

Cavell (2000:5) defines *covert aggression* as children engaging in acts of stealing and truancy. However, the two principals differed in their responses. One principal believed that stealing is only a once-off occurrence, and that at that age (5-6 years old) no evidence of a pattern was evident. The other principal believed that it does occur sometimes, and is evident from a learner's record from a previous school. The principals explained that this type of covert aggression is not as evident as overt aggression. The one principal does, however, believe that it is never too late for the learner to be accountable and for the parents to become involved.

The participants (principals) concurred that boys generally engage in physical aggression, and girls in verbal aggression. This statement is supported by Train's (1993:34) observation that studies have found that boys are more likely than girls to retaliate with physical aggression when they are attacked, or when someone interferes with their objectives.

The participants (principals) were aware of the following causes of learner's aggressive behaviour, namely:

- Primary socialisation is the main cause. The principals believed that it stems from home. Ward (2009:20) believes that learners normally develop their first relationships with their parents. These relationships are crucial as they are the secure base for the child's emotional and social development, and the parents act as models for later relationships.

The one principal stated that in today's career-driven society both parents have to work because of financial responsibilities. Babies - just a few weeks old - are placed in a crèche, and others are enrolled in after-care facilities. The fathers often come home late. The parents do not spend quality time with their children.

Furthermore, the children are not held accountable for their behaviour, and they are not taught to be socially responsible. The parents allow their children to watch television programmes that are not age-appropriate, and the children are often unsupervised. The children also have access to the internet and have cell phones, often with dire consequences.

- Children are daily in contact with their peer groups, and are easily influenced by them. They are influenced by their peer's manners, and their use of inappropriate language. Children often copy behaviour patterns from their peer group.

Stewart (2008:1) states that there is a number of underlying issues that causes aggressive behaviour, one of which is spending time with peers who are aggressive and temperamental. Bukatko and Daehler (2004:500) further state that parents manage other aspects of their learner's lives that in turn influence learner's social development. The parents choose the neighbourhood where the family lives, and this influences the learners' peer networks.

- Adults play a major role in the behaviour patterns of children. For example, the divorce of their parents affects their children. Often, prior to the divorce, the parents are workaholics and come home late from work. After divorce, single mums have no control over their children, and many children are placed in after-care. Children also copy the behaviour patterns of the adults whom they come into contact with.

- The media has a huge impact on the learners' behaviour, and this may contribute to aggressive behaviour. The principals are aware of the fact that learners see certain actions displayed and take charge of this and make it their personality. The learners watch movies that are violent and have too much of aggression in them. Even the cartoons that they watch encourage aggressive behaviour.
- Jewett (2009:2) supports the principal's views on the role that adults and television plays in the causes of aggression. He states that learners who exhibit instrumental and hostile forms of aggression during their pre-school years have, in family interaction, been exposed to adults who encourage, model or condone aggression by using discipline techniques that are punitive, rigid and authoritarian; by ignoring or permitting aggressive actions by the child and others; by providing or tolerating aggressive toys or aggressive images from television, movies or books in the child's surroundings; or by modelling aggression in their own interpersonal interactions.
- Community involvement plays a huge role in the behaviour of children and the principals believed that parents need to make a concerted effort to attend functions at school, such as concerts. The children need to see their parents getting involved in projects such as gardening and painting in the community. Parental involvement, according to the one principal, is crucial to a child's development.

Stewart (2008:1) supports the principal's statement that the community plays a vital role in the example it sets and the morals conveyed. He states that another underlying issue that causes aggressive behaviour is exposure to violence in the community. Regarding the research question on the role of the community, it is important to bear in mind that in the community that a child is raised in, is the community where the parents have selected to live, and this lays the foundation for the socially-accepted norms that the learner is exposed to. Bukatko and Daehler (2004:601) state that neighbourhoods matter with respect to behavioural and emotional problems; both are likely to be present in communities with a low socio-economic status. When parents have greater social support from family and friends within the community, the negative effects that often accompany increased parental stress in poor neighbourhoods' may also be reduced. The individual and collective efforts of community members to monitor and assist in the supervision of learners and adults may be important avenues for

promoting learner development. The participants also indicated that different factors give rise to the learners' aggressive behaviour.

- The one principal believed that there has been a change in the social system. Too little time is spent in the family as a unit. Day-care and after-care have become popular options for working mothers. Children wake up early in the morning and spend a lot of time in the traffic. This results in the mother and the child being very tired at the end of the day. The way of living is unhealthy. No quality time is spent with their children. Leaman (2005:146) supports the principal's statement that children are not given balanced meals to eat, and most of the lunch packed for school is take-aways, as parents do not have time to make lunch by stating that unfulfilled physiological needs such as lack of nutritious food could lead to aggression.
- The one principal also stated that deep-seated emotional trauma is a contributing factor to aggressive behaviour. Leaman (2005:146) supports the latter statement that unresolved emotional issues such as anger, resentment or jealousy, lead to aggressive behaviour.
- The divorce of parents may have a detrimental effect on children due to the changed home environment. Prior to the divorce, some parents become workaholics and come home late. Possibly the parents argued a lot and the children witnessed violence. Train (1993:74) states that in many families where there is a disturbed and aggressive child, there exists a high level of violent interaction between family members.
- Secondary socialisation also plays an influential role in the learner's development. This includes their peers, other adults and the media. According to Ahn (2005:55), socialisation at school is the second most important agent of socialisation. Von der Haar (2005:64) concurs with Ahn that socialisation at school serves as the next most important agent of socialisation, followed by the mass media (Von der Haar 2005:64).
- The principals also stated that the media is a factor of learner aggressive behaviour, and that movies such as *Transformers* are scary. Often the parents do not control what programmes their children view, and discipline is not enforced at home. Thus, children are psychologically affected by what they watch. The principals are supported by O'Leary (1984:61), who stated that learners who viewed movies of learners behaving aggressively displayed more aggressive behaviour in their classes than learners who viewed movies without aggressive

scenes. Experiments were conducted in the early 1960s by Bandura and his colleagues at Stanford University in California and were most important in their outcomes, as they served as a platform to inform us of the powerful effects of peer models (O'Leary 1984:61). The conclusion of these experiments proved that learners who are exposed to violence and aggression, also model that behaviour.

- A lack of discipline plays a very big role. Both participants agreed that there are no rules and no boundaries established. This view is supported by Van Wyk and Lemmer (2009:39), who stated that learners who are aggressive are often those with a poor discipline structure at home, and who do not follow a set routine. According to Van Wyk and Lemmer (2009:39), discipline is one of the trickiest areas of parenting. Many parents equate discipline with corporal punishment, and are at a loss when it comes to exercising any other form of discipline.

The principals also emphasized that the behaviour modification of aggressive learners can be improved by means of encouraging positive relationships with peers, and by motivating the parents into maintaining consistent boundaries at home. This is supported by Domitrovich and Greenberg (2003:3), Interventions that are intended to reduce aggression are the following, namely

- interventions that focus primarily on the child, and attempt to reduce risk by improving their social, emotional, or cognitive skills; and
- interventions that improve parental functioning, parental childrearing skills, or the quality of the parent-child relationship.

The participants revealed that learner aggressive behaviour has an impact on their social skills, confidence and self-concept. The principals believed that many children come from single-parent homes and their negative behaviour may be because they want attention. If they do not receive attention they become aggressive. The participants also believed that the learners' social skills are affected due to their negative behaviour, and hence other children do not want to play with them, and they feel rejected. This eventually affects their later interactions as adults.

Moreover, the participants indicated that the following factors) may affect the school and classroom management, namely Time. The principals stated that in a classroom each child has different needs and that she (principal) has to consider other learners who

have needs as well, in doing so to find the balance to be there for all of them. It does become time consuming, as change does not happen immediately for an aggressive learner and it is a work in progress. Principals concur with Lewis and Greene (2007:66) that by providing the child with new and more acceptable ways of displaying emotions and controlling events can only bring about the long-term reduction of aggression.

The participants believed that teacher efficacy (effectiveness) is not always possible as there are too many children and the teachers do not receive enough support from the parents. Principals support Train's view (1993:143), that teamwork is necessary if there is to be consistency in the life of an aggressive child, that is, between the teachers as professionals and between parents and teachers.

Principal: (P-01) differs in her view that that teacher effectiveness is possible.

She stated that,

*It (teacher effectiveness) becomes much harder as the year progresses as the listening, manners and behaviour of the children deteriorate.*

As indicated previously, Leaman (2005:8) stated that schools are perhaps fairly safe places to express anger: there are people around who can take control of the anti-social behaviour of learners, keep order and pick up the pieces.

Both principals concurred that they (principals) need to find a balance. The participant (principal) firmly believes that parents need to understand that they need to rectify the learners' behaviour by implementing discipline at home.

Principal: (P-01) said,

*If parents implement discipline at home then teachers will have few problems with learners in the classrooms.*

The parents are encouraged to maintain a routine and consistent discipline. Lucas indicates (2006:59), that sometimes the parents have to allow their children to experience the consequences of bad behaviour. To be an over-controlling parent, who protects the child from negative outcomes, creates dependency. As the child learns to obey rules, he or she internalizes discipline and becomes self-disciplined and independent. This should be the ultimate goal of all parenting.

Principal (P-01), also a teacher, said,

*I do not like reprimanding children as it goes against the grain of teaching and being strict is tiring.*

She also believes in firm discipline and if you let go, children walk all over you.

Principal (P-01) said,

*There has been a change in children over the years and it is very draining, especially if you have a passion for teaching.*

The participant (principal) concluded by stating that it is rewarding when you change a child's life, and add direction to it. When the learners understand their actions, they take this knowledge with them.

In order to promote socio-education strategies, alternative intervention methods that can be positively embraced, educators and family before the learner progresses further in his or her grades. The participants stated that the principal should establish a climate of positivity. In addition, he/she should encourage group-interaction and discussions. The establishment of peer programmes and team-building would be of value to learners.

The participants identified the following alternative intervention methods that can be embraced by the teachers/educators, namely

- monitoring the learner's behaviour when playing at school; whether he/she plays with just one person or in groups;
- arranging play dates and group dates to allow the learner the opportunity to socialise with others, and thus build friendship bonds outside of school, and bring this back to the classroom;
- the early detection of behavioural problems by the teachers is imperative, and corrective measures have to be in place;
- therapy is a route to follow when all avenues have been exhausted;
- utilising the "Thinking Skills" Programme.

In the next section the analysis of personal data of the educators will be presented.

### 4.3 ANALYSIS OF THE DATA: THE EDUCATORS

The data were gathered by means of structured interviews with the educators, using the questionnaires contained in Addendum B.

In this section an indication will be given of the educators' ages, working experience, gender, race and home language.

**Table 4.2.1: Age**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
20 - 29	1	0.33
30 - 39	0	0.00
40-49	2	0.67
50-59	0	
Total	3	100

With regard to the participants who were involved in the study, one of the participants was aged between 20 to 29 years, and two between 40 to 50 years.

**Table 4.2.2: Working experience**

<b>Working experience</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1-20 Years	1	0.33
20-30 Years	2	0.67
30-50 Years	0	
Total	3	100

It is clear from the table 4.2.2 that two of the participants' working experience ranged from 20 to 30 years, and one's between 1 and 20 years.

**Table 4.2.3: Gender**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Female	1	0.33
Female	1	0.33
Female	1	0.33
Total	3	100 (rounded off)

With regards to gender, the results revealed that (100%) were female.

**Table 4.2.4: Race**

<b>Race</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
White	1	0.33
White	1	0.33
White	1	0.33
Total	3	100 (rounded off)

With regards to race, the results revealed that all the participants were White.

**Table 4.2.5: Home language**

<b>Home language</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
English	2	0,67
Afrikaans	1	0,33
Total	3	100

As regards home language, one educator was Afrikaans-speaking and the other two English-speaking.

In this section the researcher was interested in getting to know how the educators manage aggressive learners. In order to achieve that, questions were asked to determine

whether the educators are well conversant with the issues of aggressive learners (see Appendix 2).

The results indicated that the participants were aware of the strategies for managing aggressive learners in the classrooms and on the playground.

- Educator 1 said,  
*In the classroom and on the playground behaviour is discussed. The learners receive a warning (when?) and then have to suffer the consequence.*

- Educator 2 said,  
*The learner has to first acknowledge his/her anger and then recognise the reason for the anger.*

The participant discusses with the child the reaction of the impulse (behaviour) and encourages the learner to participate in the discussion of the consequences/punishment. Thereafter the participant indicates the different ways that the learner could handle his/her aggression/frustration.

- Educator 3 said,  
*Inside the class-group the learners first acknowledge the feeling and then are given time-out. This gives them time to control their emotions. They are then given an indication of acceptable behavior. Consistency is very important. On the playground the learner is removed before hurting his peers, and given time-out. Physical emotions are higher on the playground than it is in the classroom. In the classroom, the learner is eager to resume the activity (currently participating in) and this heightens the frustration.*

The educators were asked by the researcher if there were any consequences for negative behavior, and how do the learners deal with the consequences emotionally.

- Educator 1 said,  
*They sit on the naughty tyre for five minutes if the negative behaviour occurs during break. They don't attend the computer classes and 'tuck shop' is taken away. I have a motivation chart where positive behaviour is acknowledged, and an 'oopsy chart' for negative behaviour.*

*Sometimes the learner acknowledges the behaviour, and at times no remorse is shown. The learner sulks and still continues to behave unacceptably. Some 'switch off' and don't talk to others, or throw a tantrum.*

▪ Educator 2 said,

*They must understand what is negative or unacceptable about their behaviour. They lose privileges (games and free time), are demoted on the star chart, given time-out, and finally we have a conference with the parents.*

*By understanding them after having agreed on them in earlier class discussion. They need to understand that it is not the person but the action that is unacceptable. The learner has to accept the teacher's authority. The learner may feel rejected. He, however, must have a trusting relationship with the teacher.*

▪ Educator 3 said,

*The learner is made aware of the consequences prior to the situation that arose. The learner has to acknowledge inappropriate behaviour. The learner is removed from the situation and given time-out. A discussion with the family is then necessary, the sooner the better. Follow the notion, "Strike the iron while it is hot!"*

*Initially the learner is resentful, and he/she believes that he/she has been treated unfairly. The consequences have to be consistent, and learner must be aware of the consequences of negative behaviour. The consequences are then accepted, and the learners regulate their behaviour. The latter does not happen instantly. It takes time, especially with really aggressive children.*

The researcher was able to gain insight into the behaviour patterns of learners and how the educators are able to manage the learners' behaviour, how to provide consequences for negative behavior, and how the learners deal with their emotions.

However, the researcher also believed that it was imperative to discover how the educators felt emotionally after reprimanding the learner.

- Educator 1 said,  
*I feel a sense of achievement for those who understand wrongful behaviour.*
  
- Educator 2 said,  
*I am calm, knowing that we agreed on the consequences. Being consistent builds confidence and the learners know what to expect.*
  
- Educator 3 said,  
*At the time I am quite empathetic towards the aggressor and the victim. Show empathy towards the aggressor and thus limit the damage.*

#### **4.4 ANALYSIS OF THE DATA: THE PARENTS**

In this section the researcher measured the parents' ages, gender, race and home language.

**Table 4.3.1: Age**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
20 -29	0	0
30-49	3	100
50 years and older	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>100</b>

With regard to the parents who were involved in the study, all of them were between 30 and 49 years old.

**Table 4.3.2: Working experience**

<b>Working experience</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1-20 Years	1	0,33
20-30 Years	2	0,67
30-50 Years	0	0
Total	3	100

It is clear from the table 4.3.2 that 0.33% of the participants' working experience ranged from 1 to 20 years, and 0.67% of their working experience ranged from 20 to 30 years.

**Table 4.3.3: Gender**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Male	1	0.33
Female	2	0.67
Total	3	100

With regard to the participants who were involved in the study, one of the parents was male, and the other two female.

**Table 4.3.4: Race**

<b>Race</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
White	1	0.33
White	1	0.33
White	1	0.33
Total	3	100 (rounded off)

With regards to race, all the participants were White.

**Table 4.3.5: Home language**

<b>Home language</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
English	2	0,67
Afrikaans	1	0,33
Total	3	100

One of the parents was Afrikaans-speaking, and the other two English-speaking.

In this section the researcher was interested to know how the parents managed the aggressive behaviour of their children at home. In order to achieve that, questions were asked to determine whether the parents were well-conversant with the strategies of managing the behaviour of aggressive children (See Addendum C).

According to the participants, aggressive behaviour is managed at home.

Parent 1 said,

*I manage aggressive behaviour by using soft and gentle guidance, and by using a calming voice. Sometimes I manage the anti-social behaviour of my child by brushing (a method discussed with me by the occupational therapist), verbal and physical stimulation and by the repetition of tasks and chores.*

*My discipline measures involve using a star chart and rewards, the time-out corner and taking privileges away, such as watching television, riding his bike, or playing with his friends.*

Parent 2 said,

*I send her to the 'Thinking Chair' or the bathroom, which is bare and bland, and she is isolated. But sending her to the bathroom does not happen often. Thereafter, she may apologise by saying "I am sorry" too quickly, only to get back an item that was taken away from her, like her radio. When the item is given back she has to understand the action and the consequence, and see it through. Discipline measures involve taking things away, such as the radio, and keeping it for a week. It gets returned when her behaviour has improved.*

Parent 3 said,

*I ask him open-ended questions and use a scale from 1 to 5 to measure how his behaviour was at school, 5 being excellent, and 1 denoting physical aggression. He can explain what he has done, and answer from his frame of mind to explain his actions. He has to give his own consequences and acknowledge his actions. It is also difficult to ascertain, as the behaviour occurs behind the parents' backs, and his sister is manipulative. Both may get a smack. His sister often works him up, and then he retaliates. He gets provoked, based on previous experiences. My assumption is that he reacts before thinking. The discipline measures depend on how often he receives a verbal warning. When he gets out of hand he receives a smack. He is given time-out in his bedroom, and only allowed to come out for supper.*

#### **4.5 ANALYSIS OF THE DATA: THE LEARNERS**

In this section the researcher measured the learners' age, gender, race and home language.

**Table 4.4.1: Age**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
5 – 6 years	4	100
Total	4	100

As regards the participants who were involved in this study, their ages ranged between 5 and 6 years.

**Table 4.4.2: Gender**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Male	3	0.75
Female	1	0.25
Total	4	100

Three of the participants in this study were male and one female.

**Table 4.4.3: Race**

<b>Race</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
African	1	0.25
White	3	0.75
Total	4	100

With regard to the participants who were involved in the study their races differed. Three participants were White and one was African.

**Table 4.4.4: Home language**

<b>Home language</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
English	4	100
Total	4	100

All four the participants in this section spoke English.

#### **4.5.1 The use of pictures to identify aggressive behaviour**

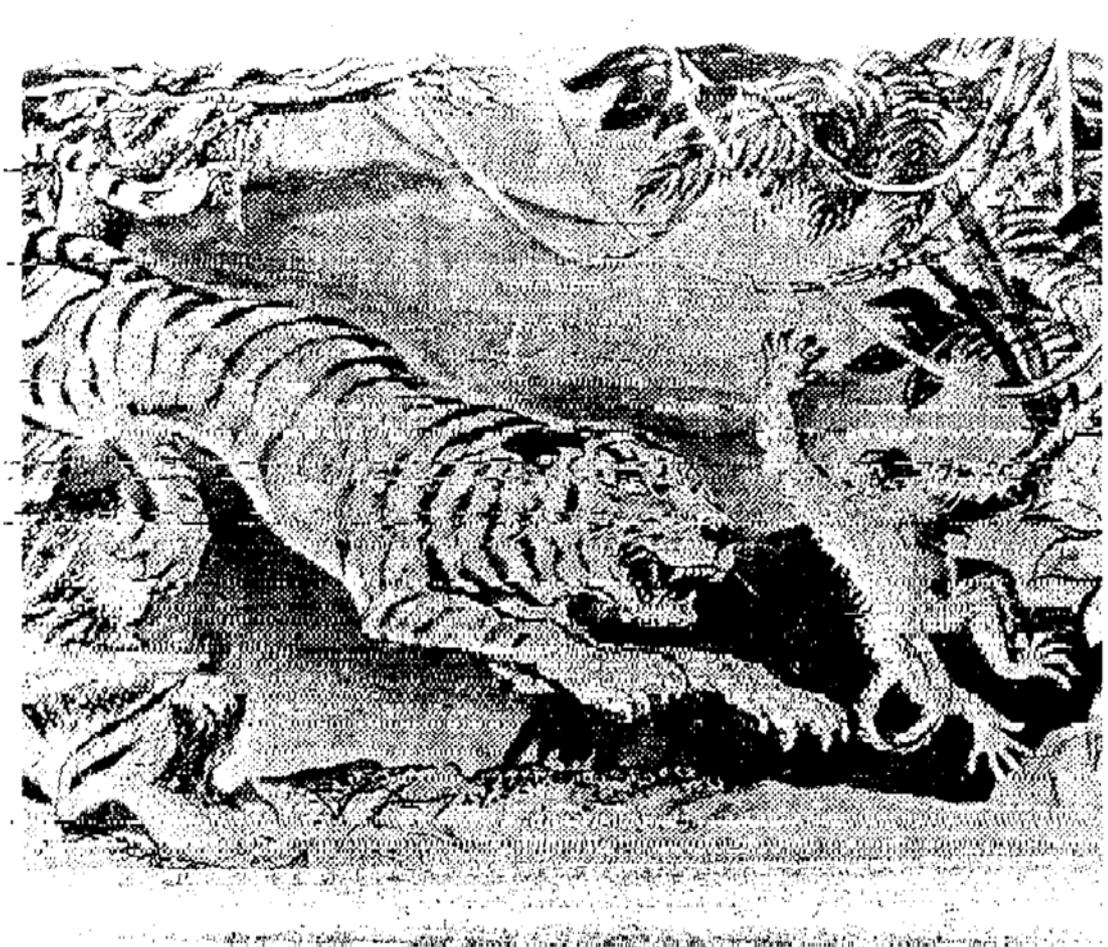
In this section the researcher was interested to identify aggressive learners. In order to achieve this, the learners were asked to point at the pictures, and thereafter questions

were asked to determine whether a correlation existed between the pictures and the behaviour of the learners (See Addendum D).

Interviews were not conducted with the learners, as it could not be used as a reliable source of evidence. Instead, the learners were asked to interpret a picture of a tiger attempting to catch his prey, namely a picture of a tiger with bared fangs and claws leaping at a monkey, which is also leaping through the air (Bellak, 1975:188).

Bellak (1975:188) explains that the picture may illustrate fear of aggression, and manners of dealing with it. The degree of anxiety in the child may become apparent. It may be so great as to lead to the rejection of the picture, or his/her defenses may be good enough (or unrealistic enough) to turn to the inoffensive story The monkey may even outsmart the tiger. Refer to appendix 3 for example card and assessment sheet.

**Figure A**



The researcher provided the following instruction when administering the C.A.T.

*We are going to play a game. Please make up a story for me about the animals that you see in the picture card. Tell me what the animals are doing now, what happened before, and what you think will happen next.*

Learner 1 said,

*The tiger is running and he is going to kill the hyenas. The monkey is climbing in the tree because the tiger is coming. The monkey and the tiger are doing bad stuff. The tiger is fighting. The tiger kills the cheetah, and caught the monkey and eats him. Bad monkey.*

After analysing the responses to card 7 of the CAT (see Appendix 3), it is evident that learner 1 is inclined towards physical aggression. There were clear indicators of aggression present in the learner's DAPT (see Addendum D). The learner displayed anxiety, as the greater the shading, the more intense the anxiety is felt. The further shading of the arms reveals aggressive impulses. The learner chose to color the body red, which means that he/she is likely to give in to outbursts of temper, and will be more emotional than most. The learner's responses to questions from the DAPT reveal that he/she is inclined towards physical aggression.

The learner displays physical acts such as hitting that is part of direct/confrontational aggression (Card & Little, 2007:108).

Learner 2 said,

*The tiger and monkey are fighting. The other animals are hiding away. The tiger is coming to hunt for them. The tiger is hiding in the bushes, and comes out to attack the monkey. The tiger stops and walks away to the bushes. The tiger won't hurt the monkey. Tigers don't eat monkeys as they have fur.*

After analysing the responses to card 7 of the CAT, it is evident that this learner is inclined towards physical aggression. There were definite signs of aggression present in the

learner's DAPT. The poor integration of parts in the figure reveals low frustration-tolerance and impulsivity. The shading of the face denotes a learner who is disturbed and has a poor self-concept. The short arms revealed a tendency to withdraw, and to turn inward, and an attempt to inhibit his impulses. The big hands suggest acting out behaviour. The learner's responses to questions from the DAPT revealed that he/she is verbally and physically aggressive.

The entire outline of the body is drawn in red, and when this color dominates a picture, it usually indicates hostility and aggression. Thus, the child is given to outbursts of temper, and is more emotional than most.

The learner engages in physical acts such as pinching, pushing, kicking and hitting, and verbal acts such as name-calling, which is part of direct/confrontational aggression (Card & Little 2007:108).

Learner 3 said,

*The tiger is trying to catch the monkey. He wants to eat the monkey; he is hungry. The monkey will escape and climb up the tree.*

After analysing the responses to card 7 of the CAT, it is evident that the learner is inclined to physical aggression. There were clear signs of aggression present in the learner's DAPT. The learner's figure has short arms, which shows a tendency to withdraw, turning inward, and an attempt to inhibit his/her impulses. The hands are not drawn, which reveals a troubled, inadequate person. The learner's responses to questions from the DAPT revealed physical aggression.

The learner engages in physical acts such as pinching, pushing and hitting, and in non-verbal acts, such as 'eye-daggers', which forms part of direct/confrontational aggression (Card & Little, 2007:108).

Learner 4 said,

*The tiger is chasing the monkey! The tiger is hungry. The tiger was sitting down and saw the monkey coming past. He was hungry, and chased after him. The monkey will get eaten because the tiger is hungry.*

After analysing the responses to card 7 of the CAT, it is evident that the learner is inclined to physical aggression. The DAPT revealed big hands, which suggest acting out behaviour. Sharp angles and jagged and straight lines suggest aggressive traits. The learner's responses to questions from the DAPT also revealed that he or she is inclined to physical aggression.

The learner engaged in physical acts such as pinching, pushing, and hitting, and which are indications of direct/confrontational aggression (Card & Little, 2007:10).

#### **4.5.2 Analysis of learner's' aggressive behaviour – the role of pictures**

- Children's Apperception Test (CAT) Appendix 3

The Children's Apperception Test (CAT.) is a projective method, and is referred to as a *perceptive method* of investigating personality by studying the dynamic meaningfulness of individual differences in the perception of standard stimuli. The CAT is ideally suited to test children aged from three to ten years. It was designed to facilitate the understanding of a child's relationship to important figures and drives. The author also wishes to elicit the child's fantasies regarding aggression (Bellak, 1975:173).

Bellak (1975:174) believes that the CAT may be clinically useful in determining what dynamic factors might be related to a child's behaviour in a group, in a school or to events at home. The CAT is culture-free. Because animal pictures are used, it is user-friendly for all children belonging to different race groups, as children are familiar with animals. In the administration of the CAT the general problems of child-testing must be taken into account. Good rapport must be established with the child. The CAT must be presented as a game (Bellak 1975:185). According to Bellak (1975:186), encouragement and prompting may be necessary, and interruptions are permitted.

Instructions to the child was used with vocabulary that is age-appropriate, namely

- We are going to engage in a game where in which you have to tell a story about the pictures.
- What is going on?
- What are the animals doing now?

- What went on in the story before, and what will happen later? (Bellak, 1975:186).

An additional analysis of the drawings was used by looking at the detailed aggressive indicators. Some of the indicators of aggression (Oster & Gould, 1987:25) that were used as a guideline were the following:

**Table 4.5: Indicators of aggression**

Poor integration of parts in a figure	Low frustration tolerance and impulsivity
Shading	Anxiety (the greater the shading, the more intense is the anxiety felt)
Shading of face	Seriously disturbed, poor self-concept
Shading of arms	Aggressive impulses
Tiny figure	Extreme insecurity, withdrawal, depression, feelings of inadequacy
Big figures	Expansiveness, poor inner controls
Transparencies	Immaturity, impulsivity, acting-out
Teeth	Aggressiveness (orally related)
Short arms	Tendency to withdraw, turning inward; attempt to inhibit impulses
Long arms	Ambition for achievement or for acquisition,(reaching out towards others
Big hands	Acting-out behaviour
Hands cut off	Troubled, inadequate
Claw-like hands	Aggression (Oster & Gould, 1987:23)

Other indicators of aggression that were used as guidelines were the following:

Big dangerous arms with long fingers	Aggressive child (Wohl & Kaufman, 1985:xvi)
Sharp angles and jagged lines instead of smooth curves	Aggressive traits (Lewis & Greene, 2007:64)
Straight lines and acute angles	Aggressive traits (Lewis & Greene, 2007:64)

#### 4.6 ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS

In analysing the data the researcher followed the process suggested by McMillan & Schumacher (2006:322-323), that consists of five phases, *i.e.*, planning, beginning data collection, basic data collection, closing data collection, completion.

- **Planning**

Analysing the problem statement and initial research questions will suggest the type of setting or interviewees that would be logically informative, (literature review chapter 2). In phase one, the researcher locates and gains permission to use the site or network of persons McMillan & Schumacher (2006:322).

- **Beginning data collection**

*Beginning data collection* is when researchers obtain data primarily to become oriented and gains a sense of totality for purposeful sampling. Researchers also adjust their interviewing and recording procedures to the site or persons involved. This was suggested by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000:286) as being useful, as it "...captures the essence of the phenomenon being investigated". After the researcher had gone through every sentence of the interview transcriptions systematically, each response was coded, using descriptive abbreviations. The next stage was to categorise the data to identify differences and similarities, and relations between the data elements. Clustering the different codes also helped to reduce and organise the amount of data. Organising and ordering the data in such a way helped the researcher to be able to answer the research questions.

The researcher's task is now to reduce the mass of data for analysis purposes. 'data reduction' as the process is called, consists of coding data in preparation for analysis (Cohen, *et al.* 2000:265). To reduce the data from the questionnaires, similarities in the data were identified, coded and grouped together according to themes. Cohen, *et al.* (2000:265) suggest that questionnaires should be checked prior to coding, and they refer to this process as *editing*. The editing of the questions prior to coding was very helpful, because it helped with analysing the data later on, as well as with data reduction – eliminating irrelevant data that could, according to Cohen, *et al.* (2000:265), reduce the validity of the data. The researcher had to identify mistakes made by the respondents in the interviews which could influence the validity of the research, for example ticking the obviously wrong box, questions not filled in, and irrelevant answers that had nothing to do with the research. These were expected, because of the immaturity of the respondents. Being a teacher herself and having knowledge of working with children, made the researcher more aware of what could be expected from the learners in each age group.

- **Basic data collection**

Choices of data collection strategies and informants continue to be made. Initial descriptions are summarized and identified for later corroboration (McMillan & Schumacher 2006:323). As the researcher's study was based on participants in a classroom, categories were easily established. The researcher used the setting, the situation, the participants' perspectives, the participants' ways of thinking of people, instructional strategies, relationships and social structures (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:368).

- **Closing data collection**

The researcher leaves the field or conducts the final interview, ending data collection is related to the research problem and the richness of the collected data. More attention is given to possible interpretations and verifications of the emergent findings with key informants, remaining interviews and documents (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:323). After the participants' responses were analysed, the researcher was able to draw a conclusion from the information provided. The information provided from the questionnaires and interviews helped to answer the research question.

- **Completion**

Completion of active data collecting blends into formal data analysis and construction of meaningful ways to present the data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:323). Referring to the schools' codes of conduct, school rules and policies helped to corroborate some of the data from the interviews with the principals. Copies of the school policies were not requested, but the principals were asked that if the behaviour persisted, in terms of school policy, how is learner aggression dealt with?

Their responses are given below.

Principal (P-01) said,

*The problem is addressed at school. A parent-conference is held, with the teacher and headmistress present. If all of the above methods have been used and there has been no improvement in the learner's behaviour the parents are requested to take the learner for an assessment. Depending on the outcome of the assessment, play therapy has previously been recommended (See Addendum A: What strategies do you initially use as a principal in managing aggressive learners in the school?).*

Principal (P-02) said,

*At registration, the parents sign a code of conduct. It is first the learner's responsibility to behave in an appropriate manner. Thereafter, it is the parent's responsibility.*

#### **4.7 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter an overview was given of the use of the qualitative research design. The use of the data collection tools, namely interviews and questionnaires, was also described. The suitability of the qualitative method in the research design was emphasised, the choice of the participants for the interviews and the questionnaires was the data to arrive at answers to the research questions.

The themes that emerged from the data analysis will be discussed in the next chapter, chapter 5.

## Chapter 5

# RESEARCH RESULTS: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter the focus will be on the specific themes that emerged during the study, and the results of the analysis of the interviews and questionnaires will be presented. The data obtained from the individual interviews and questionnaires were analysed. Written documents collected from the selected schools, such as the school rules, codes of conduct and safety policies were also reviewed to extend the theory generated in the research, and have been included in the data reflected in this chapter. Deliberate attempts were made to connect the findings to the existing literature on the topic.

#### **5.1.1 Summary**

In chapter one the introduction, background, statement of the research, research questions, aims of the study, research methodology, limitations and delimitations, the significance of the study, definitions and an exposition of the study were presented.

In chapter two a discussion was given of the literature review on the role of the school and the home in the socialisation of learners, and the strategies used to prevent learner aggressive behaviour.

The research design and methodology used in conducting the study were described in chapter three. The research design, research methodology, research population, sampling procedure, data collection techniques and ethical consideration, validity and reliability of the study were presented.

Chapter four dealt with an analysis of the data obtained by means of interviews with the principals, the educators and the parents.

In chapter five a summary and discussion of the findings will be presented.

Chapter six consists of the conclusions, recommendations, limitations and contribution of this study.

### 5.1.2 The schools in the research

**Table 5.1: Individual school profiles**

<b>Primary schools</b>			
Schools	A	B	C
Learners per schools	1	1	2
Educators interviewed per school	1		2
Parents interviewed per school		1	2
Principals		1	1

Three primary schools (A-C) were chosen for this research.

School A, B and C are situated in middle class areas in Northern Johannesburg.

The learners do not come from the same socio-economic status. Learners from school B and C have parents that are in the middle class bracket, and learners in school C is from a low-income bracket.

According to Ross and Roberts (2012: 1), to succeed later in life, children need to develop good social skills and learn positive ways of interacting while they are still young. This is a learning process, shaped in part by the child's temperament, and also significantly affected by the adults and peers with whom the child relates. Evidence of negative behaviour, such as indirect aggression, is a strong indicator that a child is headed for trouble, if not immediately, then possibly in his or her teen or adult years. Anti-social behavior inevitably leads to difficulties at school, the workplace or in the home, and places the child at risk of coming into conflict with the law at some point. Commonly known as 'troublemakers', children who are indirectly aggressive tend to instigate fights and cause conflict among their peers or family members.

Research on the prevalence of behavior problems in preschool children from low-income families, and the risk factors associated with these behaviors, was reviewed. Children from low socio-economic status (SES) backgrounds were found to demonstrate a higher incidence of behavior problems, as compared to the general population. Behaviour problems associated with multiple risk factors found in these children's lives related to child, parent, and socio-economic characteristics (Qi & Kaiser, 2012:1)

## **5.2 THE RESULTS, AND DISCUSSION**

### **5.2.1 The interviews**

Data by means of interviews were collected from principals, educators and parents in the respective schools.

Interview guides were used, as indicated below.

Appendix 1 - Interview with the principals

Appendix 2 – Interview with the educators

Appendix 4 – Interview with the parents

During the interviews the researcher used the questions as laid out in the interview schedule. The interviewees did not receive a copy of the interview beforehand. The interviews were not recorded, and therefore no permission for the use of a recorder had to be obtained. The researcher transcribed the interviews *verbatim*.

The interview with the principals consisted of 18 questions, the interview with the educators of 15 questions, and the interview with the parents consisted of 11 questions, which were open-ended.

The researcher used a qualitative research approach in the study, and utilised the qualitative data through reading the transcripts of the interviews. The data were then grouped together - using codes for responses, or elements of responses, that were similar - creating categories. Finally the categories were grouped together to identify themes.

The method referred to by McMillan and Schumacher (2006:368), as *unitising* data was followed, and the steps followed are explained as follows:

▪ **Unitising interview data**

The researcher divided the data into parts – that is, smaller pieces of data containing some descriptive meanings. These parts are called segments, incidents or units. A data unit is comprehensible by itself and contains one idea, episode or piece of relevant information. Each unit has two contexts. The first is the data set in which the part is embedded, that is, the particular field observation or interview. The second context is the category of meaning that each unit fits. The researcher got a sense of the research after reading it, and this enabled her to gain insight into the data units and the larger phenomenon of interest. Then codes were generated from the data. The descriptive name for a subject or topic is a *code*. Thereafter codes were compared for duplication (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:368). The interviews were transcribed to do the unitising. This was done in order to find relationships and emerging patterns with regard to discipline and aggression in schools.

The ultimate goal of qualitative research is to make general statements about relationships among categories by discovering patterns in the data. A *pattern* is a relationship among categories (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:373). Grouping was used to find emerging patterns regarding the aggressive behaviour of learners.

▪ **Key themes**

The following seven key themes emerged from the responses of the participants in the three schools, and are clustered according to the data derived from the interviews.

**i) The causes of learners' aggressive behaviour in the classroom**

It seems as if all three school principals and educators interviewed made it their duty to investigate possible causes of aggression in the classroom. However, sometimes the educators consider the learners' aggressive behaviour as the responsibility of the principals. Though, it seems that in all the schools the educators do try to investigate the causes of learner aggressive behaviour in the classroom.

One respondent said,

*The causes of aggressive behaviour include being unable to communicate effectively, and this results in frustration. They cannot adequately express themselves, and because they are visual learners, they copy what they have seen happening in respect of their parents and other siblings. Their immaturity is also a factor.*

Different reactions to the causes of aggressive behaviour are indicated in the interviews with the educators - see Addendum B.

Question 1

*The causes of aggressive behaviour are emotional immaturity, the home environment and possible abuse at home.*

Another respondent believed, namely that

*the causes of aggressive behaviour are frustration, and the inability to express themselves. Envy, jealousy and sibling rivalry play a role as well. Also, family violence and trauma experienced by the family, for example hijacking, or the loss of a family member.*

However, according to question 1, Addendum A, the one principal believed that the causes of aggressive behaviour could be,

*the lack of supervision at home as children are left in the care of helpers. They are left to their own devices and play out what they have seen elsewhere. The lack of discipline at home and of quality time spent with parents. There are no boundaries or consistency in respect of rules. The children watch too much television. They are attention-seeking, as not enough time is spent with their parents. They do not have enough time to play outside*

The one principal believed that,

*the parents do not hold their children responsible for their behavior, and there are no consequences for negative behaviour. There are no rules. The children do not have established boundaries. They watch television unsupervised.*

## **ii) The influences of secondary socialisation on learners' aggressive behaviour**

Question 8 was posed to find out from the interviewees whether the learners' aggressive behaviour is influenced by secondary socialisation or not.

The respondents' comments regarding secondary socialisation and its influence on aggressive behaviour is given below. All the educators agreed that the media is the biggest influence in respect of negative behaviour.

Educator 1 commented that the learners' peers influence them, as they have the habit of engaging in 'copycat' behaviour. They look up to adults (parents) as their positive role-models. Therefore, the parents should practise what they preach. The media is a very relevant influence, for example the program *Transformers*. It is very negative; and the children tend to copy that behaviour. Television shows such as *Bakugun*, and also wrestling contests, display very aggressive behaviour.

Educator 2 indicated as follows, namely

*the biggest influence is set by example. The peer group either accepts or rejects you, and this affects socialisation. Adults influence their children by the example they set, and the way they treat children. The media affects children by the violence shown, without any parental control.*

Educator 3 stated that,

*peer groups greatly influence a child's behaviour. Learners at school are often exposed to different cultures and have an opportunity to experience, to stick up for values the correct way. There must be relationship of trust between parents. If it is not checked, the media's influence can be very dangerous. It offers instantaneous gratification. Also, the visual and auditory effects of the television have no value for the learner. Where there is no control, the influence may be negative.*

## **iii) Disciplinary procedures and consequences in the classroom**

In response to Question 10 (indicated in Addendum B) two educators concurred that consistency in the classroom is very important in order to maintain discipline.

The approach to providing the learners with consequences differed among the educators, whilst some methods were similar.

Two of the educators believed that time-out, whereby removing the learner from the situation, is necessary when incidents occur. They lose privileges (tuck shop, games and free time), and computer lessons are taken away. The learners are given a visual representation of their actions by means of a behavioural chart (an 'oopsy' chart for negative behaviour), and by being demoted, on a star chart. Two of the educators suggested engaging in meetings with the parents.

The parents do not all manage behaviour at home the same, as it is based on different parenting methods. All the respondents differed in their responses. Parent 1 makes use of soft and gentle guidance with a calming voice. He also engages in brushing, verbal and physical stimulation and the repetition of tasks and chores. Parent 2 asks her child open-ended questions, and uses a scale of 1 to 5 to measure his behaviour at school, five being excellent, and one denoting physical aggression. The child is given the opportunity to explain what he has done, and to answer from own his frame of mind to explain his actions. He indicates his own consequences and acknowledges his actions. It is also difficult to ascertain as the behaviour occurred behind the parents' back and sister is manipulative. Both will get a smack. His sister works him up and then he retaliates. He gets provoked based on previous experiences. Her assumption is that he reacts before thinking. Parent 3 responds by saying that her child is sent to the 'Thinking Chair' or bathroom (which is bare and bland) with door closed and she is isolated. However, sending her to the bathroom does not happen often. Thereafter, she apologised by saying "I am sorry" too quickly, only to get back item (radio). When item is given back she has to understand the action and consequence and see it through. Parent 3 is the only parent that takes items away as a consequence.

#### **vi) School rules and Codes of Conduct**

Due to the age groups of the learners the discipline structures of the schools are handled differently. In general, meetings are first held with the parents to explain the learners' negative behaviour, and suggestions are made to the parents to improve the child's

behaviour. Further meetings are held and intervention is put in place. Therapy is suggested as an alternative if all other interventions were not successful.

**vii) The impact of aggression on social skills, confidence and the self-concept**

Educator 1 believed that, regarding social skills, peers do not be their friends as they are socially difficult. They (children) become too confident and bully the other children. Those who are not confident. they process the information and then react physically. Bullies have a positive self-concept

Educator 2 responded that it has a very negative impact as social skills deteriorate. The self-concept of a child worsens and it breaks down his or her self-esteem. It forms a vicious circle that is difficult to break and worsens as the child grows older. Children see themselves negatively and there is no remorse for their actions.

Educator 3 stated that aggression impacts on their (children) social skills as peers identify aggressor within group and hence stay away from them. Thus, the aggressor becomes more aggressive. If aggression is allowed to go unchecked it impacts on their self-confidence and they morph into bullying behaviour. Learners see themselves as the 'behaviour' and must understand that it is the 'action' not the 'person' that is unacceptable. However, once the learner identifies what aggression is and starts to work to control it, he/she finds a social circle and grow. The learner then becomes acceptable to his peers, and then has an incentive to improve more.

Principal 1 believed that it (aggression) does affect their social skills and parents need to support the teachers. They (parents) sometimes need to attend therapy sessions as a corrective measure. Many parents are single parents, and the children only want attention, and when they do not receive it they turn on their parents by acting in an aggressive manner. Their confidence is low and they are embarrassed others have a positive self-concept.

Principal 2 commented that it has a huge impact on their social skills, confidence and self-concept. The reasons for their behaviour have deep seeded emotional trauma. Children start to have a negative self-image and their confidence is impacted. Their

social skills are affected as, due to their behaviour, other children do not want to play with them, and hence they feel rejected. This effects their interaction with others as adults.

### **5.2.2 The questionnaires**

Three schools participated in the study where questionnaires were used, and 15 questions were asked. The data collected from the questionnaires were made more manageable to analyse and to be presented. The sample was constituted according to the age, grade, gender, home language and race.

The ages of the participants (educators) who were involved in the study differed. One of the participants was between 20 to 29 years old. The participants' working experience ranged from 20 to 30 years. As regards gender, all of the participants were female, and all of them were White. As regards home language, one educator was Afrikaans-speaking and the other two were English-speaking.

The following themes that emerged from the data were identified, and the questions were clustered accordingly:

- i) The causes of the learners' aggressive behaviour (questions 1, 2, 3, 5, 6).
- ii) The influences of secondary socialisation on the learners' aggressive behavior (questions 7, 8).
- iii) The impact of aggression on their social skills, confidence and self-concept (questions 12, 14, 15).
- iv) Disciplinary procedures and consequences (questions 9, 10, 11).

### **5.2.3 Informal observations**

The researcher made field-notes in respect of her general observations during her visits at the schools. During her fieldwork she observed the learners inside the classroom and on the playground.

#### **LEARNER 1**

##### **In the classroom:**

Learner 1 was quiet in the classroom early in the morning. He sat next to his friends in a group and did not talk to anyone. He coloured in his work and used bright colors. He willingly completed tasks and talked to his friend next to him. They started laughing. The teacher gave instructions. The learner seemed to lose concentration and played with his pens on his table. He continued with his work and talked to his friends. When his work was done he went to the fantasy area to play. He played by himself, even though there were other learners in the group. It was more a kind of parallel play. It was time for a snack and he took out his snack and sat and ate quietly. He enjoyed free play in the fantasy area again.

##### **On the playground:**

The learner played by himself first and then moved to own space (own area of play). He called out to his friends but nobody responded. He played crawling games and hunting' and then joined friends at the car playing "Lion King". He played next to the girls and boys. He got into the car and pretended to drive, and told everyone that he was going to the movies. "Look at the animals". He then moved away.

He moved away to play at the jungle gym. When he saw another learner playing at the car, he went back to the car and wanted it back from the girl who was sitting on it. He hit her with his hat. He continued to play quietly by himself, as the rest of the group had now left. He then went to his teacher for a while. He returned to the car and played by himself for half an hour.

He then went to play with a group of girls, and had a confrontation with a friend over his hat. The friend grabbed his hat from his head. He wanted to grab it back, and then

moved away. His friend threw his hat back to him. Learner 1 went to play with the girls with their dolls in their play area. He accidentally hurt a girl whilst moving the tyre. He walked away to play with the boys. He played for a while and then went to play by himself.

Then he went back to the car and played on his own for twenty minutes. He walked onto the playground and started throwing stones at his friends for no reason. The teacher placed him on the 'Naughty Tyre' for five minutes.

He sat quietly on the 'Naughty Tyre' and watched his friends play. After five minutes he went to the jungle gym and played crawling animal games. He bit the girls on their legs, and then ran off to play by himself. He found a tyre and started rolling it around the playground. He then stopped and went to sit with two boys. He played in a circle with his friends, keeping the tyre next to him. He then played quietly with another boy, and was joined by another friend.

He moved away from everyone and played by himself, rolling the tyre on his own. He then went to the bathroom, leaving the tyre outside. He came out, and holding onto the tyre, observed his friends playing. He then participated in parallel play and continued to move the tyre across the playground. He went to one of his friends and talked about the 'Naughty Tyre'. Nobody listened to him. He moved away again and played on his own. He lay face down on the ground, keeping the tyre close to him.

He moved to the jungle gym and discarded the tyre. He now played alone on the jungle gym. He tried to join a group, but to no avail. A peer joined him. He moved away, found his tyre, and played alone. He joined two peers, and then started shoving and pushing them away. He moved to the jungle gym and played alone, and thereafter moved to the car and played alone again.

This learner displayed physical acts, such as hitting, which is part of direct/confrontational aggression (Card and Little, 2007:108).

## **LEARNER 2**

### **In the classroom:**

Learner 2 sat in front of the teacher's table and completed a worksheet. Once he was done, he went to the carpet and attempted to complete a pegboard. He waited for his teacher to praise him and he enjoyed this a lot. He then took more beads than necessary from his friend to complete his design and a fight broke out. He started to grab the beads, and the teacher intervened. With the teacher's guidance, he was able to share. After a while he lost interest and did not want to do the pegboard activity. He became distracted. He was very playful and was involved in a lot of name-calling between his friends, *e.g.*, 'butt man', 'snotty pig', and 'Mr Poffy'.

The teacher requested the learners to take out their lunch. They prayed first. Learner 2 was distracted, but he joined in. He ate his lunch quietly and occasionally talked to his friends.

At circle time he did a 'karate chop' on his friend's head. He started play fighting on the carpet and crawled around, distracting the other learners. The teacher began a counting game, but he was a non-participant in this activity. The teacher drew his attention to the game, but he was still distracted – looked at the ceiling, shifted around, rocked and shoved his friends. The teacher tried to involve him, and he said, "I don't know it." The teacher called him to the front, next to her, and did the activity with him. He succeeded at the number game, and his teacher and peers were very proud of him. He thrived on this, and had a huge smile on his face. He returned to his place at the carpet and resumed his distraction (crawling, fidgeting) He then started talking to his friend.

At story time, he sat quietly waiting in anticipation for the story to begin. He sat quietly, becoming actively involved in the story.

### **On the playground:**

He was very active, and did not slow down or have a rest at all. He played with two specific friends from another class. However, the two other friends had a closer bond with each other. Learner 2 played touches with his friends, and then he joined the girls.

Learner 2 played by himself, and then joined two other learners, pushing each other on the swing. All three were getting upset with one another for not pushing one another correctly, and not taking turns. Learner 2 got upset, as his friends were not pushing him hard enough to go higher. He began to sulk.

They stopped playing at the swings, and went onto the grass area and 'played fight'. Learner 2's friend gave him the rules of the game "No kicking, punching, hitting!" Learner 2 was very physical and his friends kept pushing him away, saying, "You are getting out of control!" and punching him. His friends told him, "I am stronger than you!" This encouraged him to get more physical. His friends started pulling at his t-shirt, and they rolled onto the ground together. Learner 2 was now holding his friend in a grip and his friend tried to pull away. The teacher intervened and told learner 2 and his friends not to play rough.

The friends moved away from learner 2, and then ran towards him to pull him down. He ran away from them and joined another friend who was playing alone. They started playing pet games. Learner 2 got pushed to the ground very hard, and he hurt his head. He retaliated by punching the learner who had pushed him on his back. Learner 2 started to engage in very rough play. His two friends from the other class were playing on their own and he now joined them. They started playing rough again, and the teacher intervened and provided guidance and the rules of the playground.

As teacher walked away, Learner 2 began rough play again, and his friends moved away from him. They left him out of the new game, and learner 2 began to sulk. After a while they joined him again and started hitting him. The one friend pulled him to the ground, and played touches tackling him roughly. This spurred him on to retaliate. The two other boys started playing boisterous games, but informed learner 2 "There will be no punching or hitting!"

They held one another in a body grip, and a body huddle, and then jumped on one another, doing body slams, pretending to be WWE wrestlers.

This learner engaged in physical acts such as pinching, pushing, kicking and hitting, and also verbal acts such as name-calling, which is part of direct/confrontational aggression (Card & Little 2007:108).

## **LEARNER 3**

### **In the classroom:**

Learner 3 enjoyed the classroom environment and she got involved in all the activities. The teacher called them to the carpet and explained a concept to them. She volunteered answers and was very confident in her demeanor. However, the teacher had to remind her not to shout out answers but to raise her hand. The teacher continued to explain, and again she interrupted and talked above her peer's voice who had already volunteered the answer. There was a lot of pushing on the carpet and she pinched the friend who had answered the question. The friend started to cry and the teacher intervened and asked learner 3 to explain what had occurred. When the other learners tried to explain to the teacher what had happened, learner 3 started shouting at them and threw a tantrum, where she burst into tears. She started to sulk and refused to answer the question, but looked at the teacher defiantly. She no longer participated in the lesson and even when the teacher tried to draw her into the lesson, she ignored the teacher. Her anger towards the teacher was very evident. The peers sitting next to her now moved away, and she was sitting alone with no one on either side of her.

The lesson continued and they used counters for numeracy. Learner 3 refused to participate and still ignored the teacher. The teacher motivated her to participate and gradually she joined in again. She now raised her hand to volunteer answers.

The learners needed to go back to their tables to color in their pictures. Learner 3 was very excited and began her task enthusiastically. The learners were chatting to one other another. Learner 3 used a very good vocabulary, and was very confident when expressing herself.

When she had completed her task, she went to the Fantasy Area to play in the Shopping Centre. She took on the role of the shopkeeper. Initially she was alone and was enjoying this. Her friends joined in and then she started to give them roles that they did not want to accept. She found this difficult to understand, and she got into an argument with her friends, as she did not want to take turns. She started grabbing everything. The teacher

intervened by distracting her and by giving her another task to perform. She was quite upset, but was willing to proceed to the next activity.

### **On the playground:**

Learner 3 went to the playground very excitedly with her friends. She played with a group of friend, and wanted to control what the group could play. The group rejected all her suggestions, and she stomped off to play on her own in the sandpit. She was involved in parallel play and did not speak to anyone for a while in the sandpit. She took the sandpit toys from others who were playing with them and refused to give them back. The teacher on playground duty intervened and explained to her that she had to share. She stormed off sulking and sat in the shade by herself.

Learner 3 found her friends and joined in their games, but tried to take one of the girls away from the group of 3 girls by whispering in her ear. The friend refused to go. Learner 3 continued to play with the group and laughed and played. After a while she again whispered in her friend's ear and the friend went off with her. Learner 3 was now very happy as she had her friend with her, while the other two girls looked on. Learner 3 and her friend played with the bikes and were having fun.

Learner 3 decided to play 'dress up'. Her friend found a 'princess dress' and was very excited to wear it. Learner 3 had still not found one. She grabbed the dress from her friend and her friend wanted it back. Her friend did not want to let go of the dress. Learner 3 slapped her friend and ran off with the dress to put it on. The friend was left crying. The teacher intervened and learner 3 started crying and screaming. The teacher placed learner 3 in 'time-out', and thereafter discussed with her what had occurred. The teacher explained to learner 3 that she needed to learn to share. Learner 3 spent the rest of the playtime sulking and refused to apologise to her friend.

Learner 3 engage in physical acts such as pinching, pushing and hitting, and in non-verbal acts such as 'eye-daggers', which all form part of direct/confrontational aggression (Card & Little, 2007:108).

## **LEARNER 4**

### **In the classroom:**

Learner 4 worked well in the classroom with his peers. The learners were sitting on the carpet in a circle and were ready to start the lesson. The learner was having difficulty to sit quietly and was restless. The teacher directed his attention towards her. He focused and started with his alphabet. He was still not comfortable sitting on the carpet. The teacher suggested that he brings his cushion to the carpet. They progressed onto to counting up to 100, and learner 4 started to distract his friend next to him by poking at him, pushing him, and rocking into him. This resulted in the friend behaving in the same manner. The teacher separated them and continued with the lesson. Learner 4 started rolling onto the carpet and making jokes.

The learners went back to their tables to complete an art activity. Learner 4 punched his friend next to him as his friend bumped his paint over. His friend was in tears, the teacher intervened and learner 4 apologised reluctantly.

After learner 4 had completed his artwork, he went to the carpet area to play with the wooden blocks. He was busy constructing a building and was very focused on the task at hand. After a while another learner came and accidentally broke up the construction that the learner had built. Extremely angry, learner 4 punched the learner across the face. The teacher did not see this, and the learner who was punched went to complain to the teacher. The teacher spoke to learner 4 and asked him to explain why he had punched his friend. Learner 4 became tearful and explained that he took a long time to build his construction and his friend broke it. The teacher explained that it was an accident, and asked him to apologise to his friend. He refused, saying that his friend should apologise first for breaking his construction. He friend apologised and then learner 4 reluctantly apologised, but he wanted to play on his own.

### **On the playground:**

Learner 4 was very popular on the playground and was never without a friend. He was very agile and was always running, jumping and climbing. The very same learner that he punched in the class was playing with him now. Learner 4 starts off on the jungle gym followed by his group of friends. They played together, taking turns with their games.

Learner 4 decided to leave the group and to play in the sandpit. His friend followed him to the sandpit and they played together.

Learner 4 suddenly scratched his friend, for no reason. His friend went to complain to the teacher on duty. Learner 4 was given 'time-out', as he was unable to give a reason for hurting his friend. Learner 4 sat tearful during 'time-out'. After his 'time-out' had expired, learner 4 went to the bike track and started to play. His group of friends joined him again and they played together without any fighting.

This learner engaged in physical acts such as pinching, pushing, and hitting, all of which are part of direct/confrontational aggression (Card & Little, 2007:108).

The researcher spoke to the educator concerned about the learner's behavior, and was informed that it was a continuous problem. The parents were aware of the situation. The educators were working with the parents to improve his behaviour.

#### **5.2.4 The South African Code of Conduct**

Children have a constitutional right to receive education. According to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 84 of 1996), the Code of Conduct states that

- (1) subject to any applicable provincial law, a governing body of a public school must adopt a code of conduct for the learners after consultation with the learners, parents and educators of the school;
- (2) a code of conduct referred to in subsection (1) must be aimed at establishing a disciplined and purposeful school environment, dedicated to the improvement and maintenance of the quality of the learning process;
- (3) the Minister may, after consultation with the Council of Education Ministers, determine guidelines for the consideration of governing bodies in adopting a code of conduct for learners;
- (4) nothing contained in this Act exempts a learner from the obligation to comply with the code of conduct of the school attended by such learner;
- (5) a code of conduct must contain provisions of due process safeguarding the interests of the learner and any other party involved in disciplinary proceedings (South African Schools Act, 1996:5).

### **5.3 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter were discussed the responses of the principals, the educators and the parents during the interviews.

Themes were identified, and the data from the questionnaires explored, referring to the responses of the educators. The data from the interviews were interpreted. The South African Code of Conduct was indicated (5.2.4) and discussed with principals and educators.

In the following chapter the conclusions and recommendations, based on the interviews, will be discussed.

## Chapter 6

# CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter concludes the study by drawing conclusions about the possibility of the successful intervention in dealing with aggressive learners, as well as on strategies to reduce or eliminate violence. Policy recommendations and recommendations for further study will be made, and the limitations of the study will be indicated.

### **6.2 CONCLUSIONS**

#### **6.2.1 The role of educators and other role-players in the establishment and maintenance of discipline in the classroom**

The data collected should provide evidence of

- the role of primary socialisation by the parents and the home;
- the extent to which parent and community involvement in the school help in counteracting children's aggressive behaviour;
- the influence of secondary socialisation, namely peer groups, adults and the media on children's aggressive behaviour and teacher efficacy in the classroom.

The educators believed that primary socialisation is of vital importance, and has a huge impact on the child. They indicated that the parents often have very little social contact with their children, and do not give them enough attention at home. The children then start believing that negative attention is better than no attention at all. Also, children learn from the examples set by their parents. Uninvolved parents ignore their responsibility by not setting an example, or by setting poor examples at home. Older parents give children the vocabulary to express themselves and they are not aggressive. The latter is mature parenting and the vocabulary is better. The younger parents are immature and don't teach children manners and children have no guidelines.

Educators responded to community involvement in school help in preventing children aggressive behaviour that parents need to ensure proper discipline at home and this is not the case. Community involvement refers to when learners are taught the foundation of acceptable behaviour through their religious institution. A healthy environment creates a healthy, happy atmosphere of working together and accepting one another. This also sets examples. Not all communities are involved. Previously, the community was involved and was like a village. This does not happen anymore. The community needs to reinforce appropriate behaviour by setting a good example. Parent and community involvement helps in preventing aggressive behaviour to a large extent. After the primary family set the rules and boundaries there is a follow through at school. There has to be a link between school and home. Community involvement comes through religious instruction. Communities should work on the same level and consolidate concepts taught and teach children to verbalise emotions and not react physically.

The educators agreed that teacher efficacy is feasible in the classroom. They responded that considering the amount of children in the class (24). Teachers need to be positive all the time being the secondary caregiver, the teacher sets the tone by accepting each child unconditionally, by teaching social skills and ways to deal with anger). There are times when it is difficult as there is no parent support. as parents are too busy with careers to be involved. Younger children, especially, need guidance and assistance them to be able to react in an acceptable manner at the time when behaviour is displayed. When emotion fades behaviour is forgotten. It is manageable with other learners and it gives them added security. The environment they are in allows them to express themselves better. If there is no teacher control, the learner has no security and the situation becomes worse.

### **6.2.2 The experiences of the victims and of the educators in the maintenance of discipline in the classroom**

The objective of this study was to obtain insight into how educators maintain discipline in their primary schools with regard to the different forms of aggression at school.

The aims of this research were to:

- determine the factors relating to aggressive behaviour among children;
- determine the ways in which the learner's aggression can be managed in the classroom, on the playground and in the school environment;

- determine whether at this age (5-6 years), a pattern between overt (verbal and physical) and covert (*e.g.*, stealing and truancy) aggression forms part of the anti-social behaviour in children;
- elaborate on the impact aggression has on the social skills, the confidence and the self-concept of children;
- discuss alternative intervention methods that can be positively embraced by the educators and the family before the learner progresses further in his or her grades; and
- to determine whether the primary socialisation of children the main cause of aggressive behaviour.

It was indicated that the factors relating to aggressive behaviour are frustration, the inability to communicate feelings, and poor primary socialisation. Regarding whether at this age, a pattern between with overt (verbal and physical) and covert (*e.g.*, stealing and truancy) aggression forms part of anti-social behaviour in children, the educators stated that covert behaviour (stealing) is a once-off happening. Money went missing just once, and if toys were taken home, mum returned them. The learners took them only to see what will happen. Stealing and truancy were not applicable in this study. If verbal and physical aggression are not dealt with in the early years and the causes thereof not dealt with, it may lead to worse forms of aggression and anti-social behaviour later, even more so as young adults. In the beginning of the year, the pattern is more often. This is when rules are not yet clear and have not been integrated with learning. As the year progresses the learners' behaviour becomes better. Once learners are challenged they work slowly to improve behaviour? The implementation and maintaining of Rules need to be consistent and there has to be a parent/teacher support system. Stealing and truancy has not been encountered. However, children do manipulate their parents for them to stay at home.

Principals responded to the question of discussing alternative intervention methods that can be positively embraced by, educators and family before the learner progresses further in his or her grades and to determine whether primary socialisation of children is the main cause of aggressive behaviour.

Principals commented that the learner's behaviour must be monitored when playing at school, whether he/she plays with just one person or in groups. Play dates and group

dates must be arranged to allow the learner the opportunity to be able to socialise with others, and thus build friendship bonds outside of school and bring this back to the classroom. It needs to be detected early by teachers and corrective measures have to be put into place. Therapy is a route to follow if all avenues have been exhausted. This will assist the learner to improve his/her behaviour and progress to further grades positively and to utilise the “Thinking Skills” programme and encourage group interaction and discussions. Establish peer programmes and team building.

### **6.2.3 The role of school rules and the Code of Conduct**

According to the South African Bill of Rights Chapter 2, every child has the right not to be required or permitted to perform work or provide services that are inappropriate for a person of that child's age; the child's well-being, education, physical or mental health or spiritual, moral or social development may not be placed at risk (South African Government Information, 2009:6).

A child's best interests are of paramount importance in every matter concerning him or her. In this respect ‘child’ means a person under the age of 18 years (South African Government Information 2009:7). Furthermore everyone has the right to basic education, including adult basic education; and to further education, which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible (South African Government Information, 2009:7)

Educators have an important role to play in education, and one of it is that they have to act *in loco parentis*, meaning in the place of the parent who has entrusted the custody and control of his or her child to the educator (Asmal, 2002:4). Educators have a duty to care for and protect learners from violence because of their *in loco parentis* status (Asmal, 2002:9).

The role of parents in behaviour modification is to serve as the first models for their children. Children who witness physical violence between their parents re-enact what they have learnt in other relationships, especially eventually in their own marriages (Von der Haar 2005:301). The role of primary socialisation by the parents and the home is to provide a loving, stable and nurturing environment where relationships and bonds between family members are cemented, and for the passing of cultural values. Von der

Haar stated (2005:64), “The process of socialisation begins at birth and involves many agents of socialisation. The primary agents of socialisation are the family who serve as the most important agent of socialisation since the beginning of recorded history”. The parents need to take the advice of the teachers and work with the teachers in order to modify the learner’ behaviour.

No matter how much consultation a parent receives from a professional, eventually the parent has to provide his/her child with necessary daily support and guidance.

General rules for helping the aggressive child change are namely,

- model behaviour yourself that you want to see in your child;
- make the house rules and expectations clear;
- encourage desired behaviour with praise and affection;
- punish as infrequently as possible;
- listen carefully to your child’s reaction to school, friends and relatives; and
- give your child reasons for your actions (O’ Leary, 1984:126).

### **6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS EMANATING FROM THE STUDY**

This study was limited to the precinct of Johannesburg North in the Gauteng Province. Further research should be done which includes more respondents from other provinces to provide more generalisability.

School management should implement Life Orientation programmes to support the programmes focusing on parent guidance to help the parents with educating their children on anger management and the prevention of aggressive behaviour at school. Parent-involvement needs to be encouraged, as the lack of parent involvement was highlighted by all the interviewees.

- The amount of time children spend in front of the television needs to be monitored, and they should only watch age appropriate programmes.
- Children need to be encouraged to spend more time outdoors.

- Communities should be more involved and send out a positive message to learners on acceptable social behaviour.
- Children engage in 'copy-cat' behaviour. The parents should ensure that they model the correct behaviour to their children.
- Educators should adopt various strategies in their lesson planning to motivate and encourage the learners' pro-social behavior by making the learning content interesting so that learners will want to learn.

#### **6.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

This study was limited in that it only concentrated on Grade R-learners in the Foundation Phase, namely those aged 5 to 6 years. Future research could concentrate on learners throughout the Foundation Phase, namely Grades R-3. The outcomes should be compared to those of the learners in the Intermediate Phase.

#### **6.5 THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY**

This study contributed to the field of socio-education, as it presented an insight into the predicament of teachers in the classroom when dealing with learners with aggressive tendencies. It proved that primary socialisation is at the root of the problem as children model behaviour seen around them. The parents need to play a more constructive role in their children's socialisation. More stringent rules need to be in place when children watch television, because they role-play what they watch. The parents need to enforce age restrictions. Suggestions were made on how teachers can deal with learners demonstrating aggressive behaviour.

#### **6.6 FINAL WORD**

The school has a powerful influence on the child, but it can only build on the foundation laid by the family (Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2009:7). Therefore, the school undertakes the secondary socialisation of learners. When school-socialisation is effective, many social expectations are widely shared. This simplifies communication, fosters consensus and encourages individuals to conform voluntarily to the established requirements of group-life (Schwartz, 1975:94). By providing socialisation, the schools can help the learners cope

with the demands that society makes upon them and can add to the quality of personal life (Schwartz 1975:99- 100). Faith in public education is so widespread that schools are generally viewed as the road to social progress and the panacea for most social problems (Schwartz, 1975:103). The most significant features of the schools are their rules prescribing the rights, duties and obligations of each role. Rules introduce rationality and provide the basis for many repetitive patterns of behaviour (Schwartz 1975:105). They reduce extraneous behaviour, which might impede formal education (Schwartz, 1975:106).

The role of the teacher is to support the learners and to encourage them to express their feelings positively. Ahn (2005:55) states that as the school is the second most important agent of socialisation, children in the early childhood years need considerable help and practise to identify their feelings and to learn appropriate ways to deal with them. In addition to serving as models for the appropriate expression of emotions, teachers need to give children concrete suggestions on dealing with their feelings. One way of doing this is to help the children to learn to verbalise their emotions instead of physically acting them out.

The safety of learners is of paramount importance in the classroom. The educator needs to be vigilant in the classroom and playground as he or she is responsible for the learners' safety. Guidance and ensuring that the learners who have aggressive tendencies are being given the necessary support will ensure that the learning environment is a safe one.

The class needs to be managed effectively by the educator. The educator has to be in control of her class. If the latter is in place the learners will feel safe, there are boundaries and there is structure.

To assist the aggressive learner to cope within the classroom the following aspects have to be taken into consideration, namely the classroom, and the management of aggressive children.

These will next be discussed.

## **6.6.1 The classroom**

### **6.6.1.1 Furnishings and equipment**

The furnishings and equipment should be designed and arranged for the physical safety of the aggressive child (Train, 1993:126).

All items within the classroom should be considered as a potential threat to the child. Ensure that anything that can be used to inflict serious harm on someone if he suddenly has an outburst is out of reach, *e.g.*, scissors (Train, 1993:125). The following example is quoted, namely if a birthday party is held in the class, see to it that a lighter or matches, and a knife, is out of reach; ensure that immediately after they have been used they are removed.

The aggressive learner should have his or her own storage cubicle and own space. He or she will benefit from this a great deal. He or she needs his or her possessions and territory more than most other children. Their possessions mean more to them than people (Train 1993:125). Aggressive children are very impulsive. It would be a great disservice to them if no attention was paid to adjust the surroundings to meet their needs (Train, 1993:126). However, if the physical environment is pleasant, there is a good chance that it will be reflected in the child's behaviour (Train, 1993:126).

### **6.6.1.2 The group setting**

In the classroom, adjust the groups in accordance with the learners' personalities. In this way, the teacher will be able to see where the aggressive child could be placed to minimize the chance of an outburst. Often a child may react particularly badly with another one and simply by rearranging the seating the problem is solved (Train, 1993:126).

By altering the group in the class you may find that the aggressive child becomes less so. It is in the interests of all the children for their groups to be changed, but for the aggressive child, it could be seen as a fresh start (Train, 1993:126). If the aggressive child is working well within his group, it is in his best interests that changes are kept to the minimum. He would prefer it if no changes were ever made (Train, 1993:127).

In the group the learner can also keep a rubber ball the size of a tennis ball in his hand and squeeze it (stress ball) when he is overcome with emotion.

### **6.6.1.3 Activities**

The aggressive child is easily distracted; he has a short concentration and attention span, and because of his anxiety, finds it difficult to maintain attention, and to retain information. If he is restless and behaving poorly, it will be because he has been distracted, because he cannot do the work, or because the task that was set was too huge for him or could be overwhelming (Train, 1993:127).

When the child has completed a short piece of work, he should be permitted to participate at other activity tables (Train 1993:127). It is crucial for the teacher to recognise that he may only cause difficulty if the learner has to remain seated at a desk for more than what is age-appropriate. If the facilities are there, use it as an incentive to encourage positive behaviour for all learners (Train, 1993:127).

An aggressive child may be weak in literacy and numeracy. Many explosions of aggression are caused by frustration caused by not being able to accomplish the task and experience success. Educators should use skills that the child has as the foundation or building blocks, and allow him to use them; he will then be capable to do the work. If the teacher does not take the initiative to find out what he is capable of, the teacher risks abusing the learner, and placing him in a situation where his condition will be exacerbated rather than improving it (Train, 1993:128).

The aggressive child has a low self-esteem, and any prospect there may be to boost it should be seized. The learner must be permitted to take up certain duties and responsibilities e.g. a job chart detailing the learner's tasks for the day (Train, 1993:128).

An aggressive child needs consistency and routine. In his mind consistency is associated with equality, and he will react aggressively if he recognises that you have not used the rules agreed upon. His negative behaviour must not be ignored; the situation must be addressed instantly. Although the violation might seem minor, it may escalate into a

major altercation. The smallest transgression may seem insignificant, but to the aggressive child it may seem as major as ever (Train, 1993:143).

#### **6.6.1.4 Monitoring outcomes and reviewing aims**

It is extremely useful to monitor developments, progress, other outcomes and issues arising with the individual child, group or the whole class during the sessions. This can be done in various ways (Ross, 1997:10), for example by

- keeping an ongoing record of the general behaviour of the learner
- keeping a diary of the incidents, noting emerging issues and assessing changes in the children's perceptions and feelings about themselves and in relation to the school's context;
- periodic interviews, discussions or consultations with other staff members, the children, parents or care-givers to compare perceptions, observations and concerns; and
- keeping a record of individual children withdrawn for sessions run by another staff member (Ross, 1997:10).

#### **6.6.1.5 Helping the aggressive child**

When caused by a threatening situation, aggression takes the form of a short-lived mood experienced by a child not normally hostile or angry. As a personality factor, aggression reflects a tendency to respond with hostility – either actively or passively. Such aggression is often associated with a low tolerance of frustration and the absence of the vital skills necessary for coping with setbacks in a more effective manner. A frequent response of adults to aggression is to become physically violent themselves. The lesson that children learn is that violence is a perfectly acceptable method for persuasion – so long as you have might, if not right, on your side. Therefore, the least effective method for handling it is by means of an equally aggressive response (Lewis & Greene, 2007:65).

According to Lewis and Greene (2007:65), if the learner's drawing/behaviour reveals aggression, it is suggested that earlier pictures are viewed to discover whether angles in the place of curves have been persistent features. If angles have developed over a period of weeks or months, try to recall any major changes that happened around the

time the features began appearing. Possible events include the birth of a new baby, conflicts in a marriage, moving to a new school or environment, etc.

If the drawings do not present indication to the parents and the teachers, inquiry should still be carried out to determine the reasons behind the aggressive behavior, instead of simply trying to reduce aggression through condemnation and reprimanding. Learners often behave aggressively when they cannot see any other option of expressing their feelings, or of altering circumstances, which is regarded as unendurable (Lewis & Greene 2007:66).

The learner should be provided with new and more acceptable ways of exhibiting emotions and controlling incidences can only bring about long-term decline of aggression. When a learner's aggression is displayed in terms where he/she refusal to family rules or comply with realistic requests, the question should be asked whether the learner may not be modeling responses from members of the family, especially adults or older children. Busy parents can inadvertently provide a model for such conduct by rejecting reasonable requests from the learner, "Not now..." snaps the father when asked for help with homework, or "Can't you see I'm too busy to pay attention to you now?" complains the annoyed mother (Lewis & Greene, 2007:66).

When the learner hears this as frequent response, the child may come to assume the same mannerisms (of mum and dad) and say 'no' more often than 'yes' when engaging with adults (Lewis & Greene, 2007:66).

Irrespective of how busy a parent's work program is, definite time must be made to spend with the learner; to talk and help him/her. Other members of the family must be informed that this is quality time and should not be interrupted. The child should receive your exclusive attention (Lewis & Greene, 2007:66).

Finally, parents should also consider how much aggression – verbal or otherwise - is shown towards the child. Many adults order children around in manners that would be unacceptable to other adults. When parental attitudes are typified by harshness and disrespectfulness, it is not astounding that the child will then model similar behaviour patterns, either when dealing with adults or with other children. The exposed expression

of aggression by children who score high on this personality factor is often an accurate reflection of levels of aggression within the home (Lewis & Greene, 2007:67).

### **6.6.2 The management of aggressive children**

The key features of the management of effective, meaningful behaviour are the following, namely

- Set clear boundaries

Boundaries provide a sense of security, safety and stability, and they help to establish an understanding of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour (Leaman, 2005:11).

- Be consistent

Consistency is imperative in acquiring trust and obedience. If responses to challenging behaviour are consistently calm, firm and thorough, the learners will recognise that you are able to remain in control of the class (Leaman, 2005:12).

- Use a sliding scale of intervention

The emphasis should be on diffusing the situation with minimum influence on the teacher and the children. It is important to intervene at the least invasive level possible and increase intensity as and when necessary (Leaman, 2005:13).

- Emphasise choice

Learners must be encouraged to make their own choices and this allows them to be accountable for their actions. If a child has a choice of actions and corresponding outcomes, the responsibility is his or hers. The correct choice leads to positive things; the incorrect choice therefore leads to negative ones. Presenting a choice also offers an escape for the child, allowing him/her to retain control of his or her experience that is particularly essential when dealing with individuals that resent feeling trapped (Leaman, 2005:15).

- Use 'time-out'

The child should view 'time-out' as a consequence for challenging behaviour. If the individual is asked to remove himself from a tense situation, it may assist in preventing the situation from escalating. eliminate the audience and allow the child time to reflect

or calm down (Leaman, 2005:15). Another term, which can be used instead of 'time-out', is 'the thinking chair'.

Once the time has lapsed from the 'time-out' (5 minutes or less), the child's willingness to return to the lesson needs to be assessed and the next steps instituted, namely facing responsibility, apologising, returning to the class. Time-out should act as a barrier between difficult behaviour and its consequences. The children must understand the reasoning behind it (Leaman, 2005:16).

- Provide meaningful rewards and consequences

An influential way of reinforcing how things should work in the classroom is by providing a clear and just system of rewards and consequences. The latter is the resulting action of inappropriate behaviour (Leaman, 2005:17).

Children can receive incentives or rewards for good behaviour, working quietly, being helpful, listening. By drawing attention to this, they, in return, feel good about themselves creating a positive self-image (Leaman, 2005:18).

Before children are referred for clinical treatment, the following can be done:

In order for young children to overcome their aggressive ways, they need positive, consistent, nurturing discipline. They need to learn positive problem-solving techniques. The parents and the teachers need to position them in environments that offer a setting and support for learning positive social behavior, rather than aggressive, hostile, anti-social acts (DeBord, 2000:4).

The following can also be done, according to DeBord (2000:4):

- Observe to get the facts. Keep a record to find the theme of what triggers the acts of aggression; then help the child steer clear of these activities.
- Share your notes or journal with the parent or caregiver. Compare to see if similar behaviours are triggered at home and at school.
- Take a look at the environment, surroundings, setting. Is some activity or room arrangement causing anxiety or frustration? Does the child feel crowded, or is he or she made to sit too long? Does the child have enough personal space?

- For school-age children, write a plan of action for what the child will do when the negative behaviour occurs.
- Make a list of activities to do 'instead' (play with Play-Dough, Use a visual representation if the child cannot read.
- Recognise success. "Even though I could tell you were mad, that was a great way you controlled your anger!"
- Teach the child deep breathing and visualization relaxation exercises.
- During a calm time, talk with the child so he or she may understand the consequences of his/her actions.
- If all of your approaches have been used and is not successful, seek counseling or assistance in developing a child/family plan to learn the management of aggression.

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APPENDIX 1:  
INTERVIEW WITH THE PRINCIPALS

**SECTION A**

**PLEASE ANSWER THE QUESTIONS AS HONESTLY AS POSSIBLE AND  
KEEP IN MIND THAT YOUR RESPONSES ARE BASED YOUR  
CORRECTIVE MEASURES.**

**1. What are the causes of aggressive behaviour amongst children?**

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**2. Is the poor primary (parents) socialisation of children the main cause of aggressive behaviour? Why?**

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**3. Is there a link between childhood aggression and the culture a child comes from? Provide a reason.**

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**4. Is child-aggression gender-biased? How is this evident?**

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**5. Is child-aggression the result of poor family relationships? What are the indicators?**

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**6. What is the role of primary socialisation by the parent; and the home?**

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**7. To what extent does parent and community-involvement at school help in preventing children's aggressive behaviour?**

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**8. What is the influence of secondary socialisation, namely peer groups, adults and the media on children's aggressive behaviour?**

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**9. Is teacher efficacy (effectiveness) feasible in the classroom?**

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**10. How do you manage the learner's aggression in the classroom, on the playground and in the school environment?**

**11. What are the consequences of negative behaviour?**

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**12. How does the learner deal with the consequences emotionally?**

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**13. After reprimanding the learner, how do you feel emotionally?**

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**14. At this age, is there a pattern between overt (verbal and physical) and covert (e.g., stealing and truancy) aggression, which forms part of anti-social behaviour in children?**

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**15. Elaborate on the impact aggression has on the social skills, the confidence and the self-concept of children.**

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APPENDIX 2:  
INTERVIEW WITH THE EDUCATORS

**SECTION A**

**PLEASE ANSWER THE QUESTIONS AS HONESTLY AS POSSIBLE AND  
KEEP IN MIND THAT YOUR RESPONSES ARE BASED ON YOUR  
CORRECTIVE MEASURES.**

**1. What are the causes of aggressive behaviour amongst children?**

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**2. Is the poor primary (parents) socialisation of children the main cause of aggressive behaviour? Why?**

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**3. Is there a link between childhood aggression and the culture a child comes from? Provide a reason.**

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**4. Is child-aggression gender-biased? How is this evident?**

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**5. Is child-aggression the result of poor family relationships? What are the indicators?**

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**6. What is the role of primary socialisation by the parents and the home?**

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**7. To what extent does parent and community-involvement at school help in preventing children's aggressive behaviour?**

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**8. What is the influence of secondary socialisation, namely peer groups, adults and the media on children's aggressive behaviour?**

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**9. Is teacher efficacy (effectiveness) feasible in the classroom?**

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**10. How do you manage the learner's aggression in the classroom, on the playground and in the school environment?**

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**11. What are the consequences of negative behaviour?**

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**12. How does the learner deal with the consequences emotionally?**

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**13. After reprimanding the learner, how do you feel emotionally?**

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**14. At this age, is there a pattern between overt (verbal and physical) and covert (e.g., stealing and truancy) aggression, which forms part of anti-social behaviour in children?**

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**15. Elaborate on the impact aggression has on the social skills, the confidence and the self-concept of children.**

APPENDIX 3:

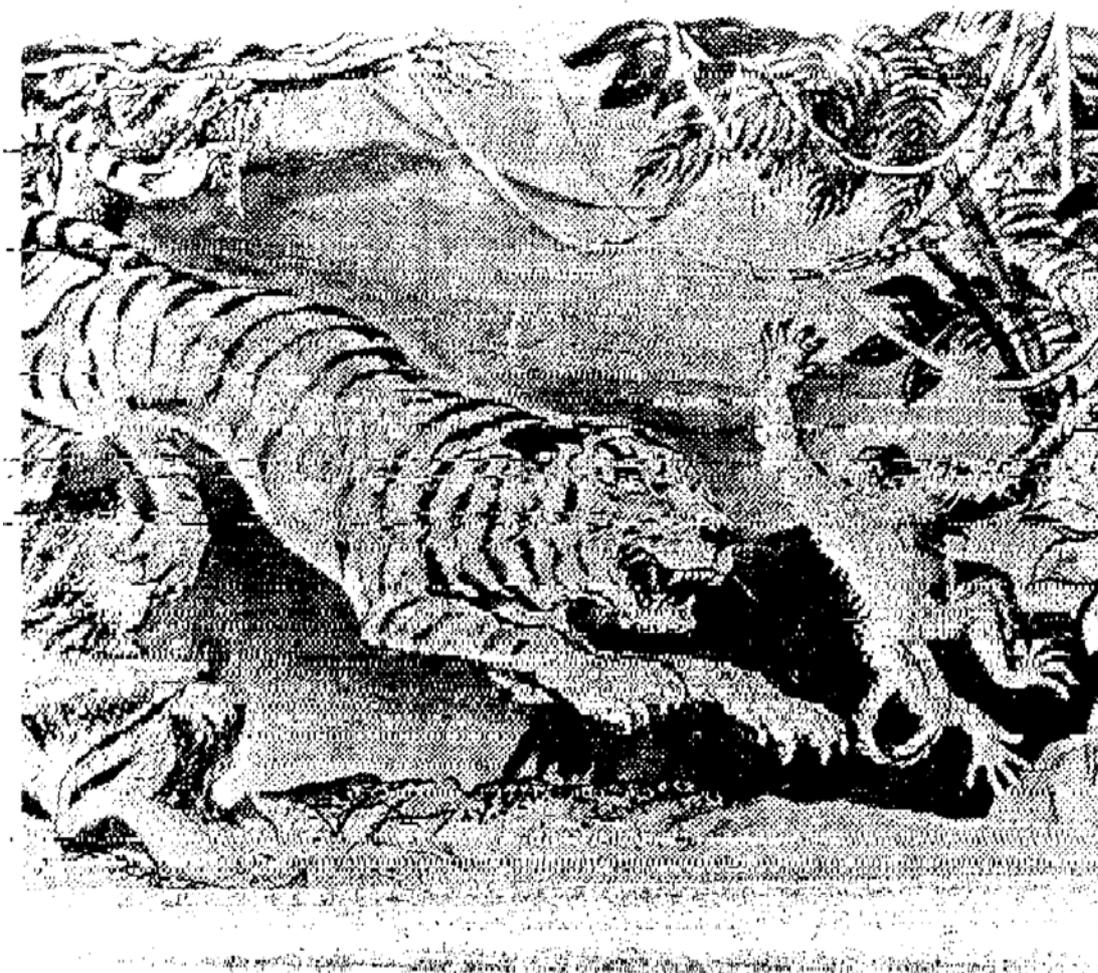
CHILDREN'S APPERCEPTION TEST (CAT)

**CARD 7:** *A tiger with bared fangs and claws leaping at a monkey, which is also leaping through the air*

**INSTRUCTION:**

**We are going to play a game. Please make up a story for me about the animals that you see in the picture card. Tell me what the animals are doing now, what happened before and what do you think will happen next?**

**STORY**



APPENDIX 4:  
INTERVIEW WITH THE PARENTS

**PLEASE ANSWER THE QUESTIONS AS HONESTLY AS POSSIBLE.**

**1. What are your parenting methods?**

Mum:

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Dad:

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**2. What discipline measures do you have in place?**

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**3. Are decisions regarding discipline made together? Reasons.**

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**4. Elaborate on the impact aggression has on the social skills, the confidence and the self-concept of your child.**

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**5. In your opinion, what is the role of you as parents?**

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**6. How have you managed your child's aggression at home?**

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**7. Is your child's aggression hereditary? Please elaborate.**

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**8. Is there sibling rivalry? Please elaborate.**

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**9. Has your child's aggression had an impact on your family life? Please elaborate.**

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**10. Has your child's aggression had an impact on your marriage? Please elaborate.**

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**11. What measures have you taken to assist your child to manage his/her aggression?**

## APPENDIX 5

### PERMISSION TO USE LEARNERS IN THE RESEARCH

#### **5.1 Letter to the Gauteng Department of Education**

12 July 2010

Gauteng Department of Education  
Research Department

Attention: The Minister of Education

Dear Madam,

I, Kumaree Padayichie, am currently a student at the University of South Africa (UNISA). As part of my studies for the degree Master of Education, I am doing a research study. I would appreciate it if you could please grant me permission to make use of learners from schools in Northern Gauteng to complete my research.

My research is of an observational nature - I will be observing learners in the classroom and on the playground. I will be asking learners to draw pictures of themselves and will be questioning them on their interpretation of their drawings.

I assure you that

- The confidentiality of the learners will be respected.
- Prior permission will be obtained from the school principals and parents.
- Observations will be done unobtrusively. Thus, the children would not be made aware that they are being observed.

#### **TITLE OF THE RESEARCH:**

**An investigation into children's aggression in primary schools in Northern Johannesburg: a socio-education perspective.**

## **AIMS OF THE RESEARCH**

To determine the factors relating to aggressive behaviour among children.

To determine the ways in which learner's aggression can be managed within the classroom, the playground and the school environment.

To determine whether, at this age, a pattern between with overt (verbal and physical aggression) and covert (e.g. stealing and truancy) forms part of anti-social behaviour in children.

To elaborate on the impact aggression has on the social skills, the confidence and the self-concept of children.

To discuss alternative intervention methods that can be positively embraced by learners, educators and the family before the learner progresses further in his or her grades.

To determine if there are any factors relating to aggressive behaviour among children.

Thanking you in advance for your assistance and co-operation.

Yours sincerely

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Ms Kumaree Padayichie

Contact details:

[thivkum@hotmail.com](mailto:thivkum@hotmail.com)

082 782 8440

## APPENDIX 5

### PERMISSION TO USE LEARNERS IN THE RESEARCH

#### 5.2 Letter to the School Principal

20 August 2010

Attention: The Principal

Dear Madam

I, Kumaree Padayichie, am currently a student at the University of South Africa (UNISA). As part of my studies for the degree of Master of Education, I am doing a research study. I would appreciate it if you would grant me permission to make use of learners from your school to complete my research. I also need to interview teachers and selected parents. I may need to return to the school, should I require more information from the learners and the teachers.

My research is of an observational nature - I will be observing learners in the classroom and on the playground. I will be asking learners to draw pictures of themselves, and will be questioning them on the interpretation of their drawings.

I assure you that:

- The confidentiality of the learners will be respected.
- Prior permission will be obtained from the parents.
- Observations will be done unobtrusively. Thus, the children would not be made aware that they are being observed.

#### **TITLE OF RESEARCH**

**An investigation into children's aggression in primary schools in Northern Johannesburg: a socio-education perspective.**

**AIMS OF THE RESEARCH**

To determine the factors relating to aggressive behaviour among children.

To determine the ways in which learner's aggression can be managed within the classroom, the playground and the school environment.

To determine whether, at this age, a pattern between overt (verbal and physical aggression) and covert (e.g. stealing and truancy) forms part of anti-social behaviour in children.

To elaborate on the impact aggression has on the social skills, confidence and self-concept of children.

To discuss alternative intervention methods that can be positively embraced by learners, educators and the family before the learner progresses further in his or her grades.

To determine if there are any factors relating to aggressive behaviour among children.

Thanking you in advance for your assistance and co-operation.

Yours sincerely

---

Ms Kumaree Padayichie

Contact details:

[thivkum@hotmail.com](mailto:thivkum@hotmail.com)

082 782 8440

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Principal

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Date

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School Governing Body

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## APPENDIX 5

### **PERMISSION TO USE LEARNERS IN THE RESEARCH**

#### **5.3 Letter to the parents requesting permission to use their child**

20 August 2010

Dear Parents,

I, Kumaree Padayichie, am currently a student at the University of South Africa (UNISA). As part of my studies for the Master of Education degree I am doing a research study. I would appreciate it if you would consent to your child participating in my research.

My research is of an observational nature - I will be observing learners in the classroom and on the playground. I will be asking learners to draw pictures of themselves and will be questioning them on the interpretation of their drawings. I also need to have an interview with you.

I assure you that

- The confidentiality of you and your child will be respected.
- The observations will be done unobtrusively. Thus, the children would not be made aware that they are being observed.

#### **TITLE OF RESEARCH**

**An investigation into children's aggression in primary schools in Northern Johannesburg: a socio-education perspective.**

Thanking you in advance for your assistance and co-operation.

Yours sincerely

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Ms Kumaree Padayichie

Contact details:

[thivkum@hotmail.com](mailto:thivkum@hotmail.com)

082 782 8440

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Mother

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Father

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Date

## APPENDIX 5

### PERMISSION TO USE LEARNERS IN THE RESEARCH

#### 5.4 Follow-up letter to the parents

10 September 2010.

Dear Parents,

Thank you for consenting to your child participating in my research. It is much appreciated.

I also need to conduct an interview with you. Listed below is a flexible schedule for interview times. However, if these times do not suit you, please list an alternative time and date.

#### **INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

<b><u>DAY</u></b>	<b><u>DATE</u></b>	<b><u>TIME</u></b>	<b><u>ALTERNATIVE</u></b> <b><u>DATE</u></b>
TUESDAY	14 SEPTEMBER	18:00 - 18:30	
		18:30 - 19:00	
		20:00 - 20:30	
		20:30 - 21:00	

Thanking you in advance for your assistance and co-operation.

Yours sincerely

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Ms Kumaree Padayichie

Contact details:

[thivkum@hotmail.com](mailto:thivkum@hotmail.com)

082 782 8440

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Mother

Father

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Date

**Contact details:**

**Cell:**

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**Alternative number:**

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## ADDENDUM A: INTERVIEWS WITH THE PRINCIPALS

### **PRINCIPAL 1:**

#### **1. What are the causes of aggressive behaviour amongst children?**

The lack of supervision at home as children are left in the care of helpers. They are left to their own devices and play out what they have seen. Lack of discipline at home and quality time spent with parents. There is no boundaries or consistency with rules. Children watch too much television. They are attention seeking as not enough time is spent with parents and they do not have enough time to play outside.

#### **2. Is the poor primary (parents) socialisation of children the main cause of aggressive behaviour? Why?**

Yes. It stems from home. Too many working mum and babies (just a few weeks old) are placed in a crèche. Dad comes home late. There has been a change in the social system. Too little time spent as a family.

#### **3. Is there a link between childhood aggression and the culture a child comes from? Provide a reason.**

No.

#### **4. Is child-aggression gender biased? How is this evident?**

No. But, it is more with boys and they lash out physically whereas girls are verbal.

#### **5. Is child-aggression the result of poor family relationships? What are the indicators?**

Yes. The indicators are: social change. Many children spend time at aftercare. They wake up early in the morning and spend a lot of time in the traffic. This results in mum and child being very tired by the end of the day. The way of living is unhealthy. There is no quality time spent with children. Children are not given balanced meal to eat and most of the lunch packed for school is take-away, as parents do not have time to make lunch.

## **6. What is the role of primary socialisation by the parents and the home?**

The parent's role is to spend quality time with children. To provide special time and things for children and not monetary value. Parents must be involved in their lives playing; board games, fantasy games, story telling, nursery rhymes. Sitting down and having supper together in the evenings. To use this time to discuss the day's events involving all members of the family. Parents should select age appropriate movies on television. Parents' need to encourage religious instruction to instil morals and values.

## **7. To what extent does parent and community involvement at school help in preventing children's aggressive behaviour?**

It plays a huge role. Parents need to attend functions at school (concerts). Children need to see parents involved in school (gardening, painting), in the community. Children need to be taught to respect other cultures. Through the church and worshipping children can receive guidance on acceptable behaviour.

## **8. What is the influence of secondary socialisation, namely peer groups, adults and the media on children's aggressive behaviour?**

Children are easily influenced by their peers (manners, inappropriate language). The divorce of parents affects learners as prior to divorce parents are workaholics and come home late. Parents are angry and sometimes violent towards each other which is witnessed by children. They argue all the time not creating a happy home life. After divorce, single mums have no control and most children are placed in aftercare. Media has a huge impact. Movies (e.g. Transformers) are scary and parents do not control what children watch, as there is no discipline at home. Children are psychologically affected by what they watch.

## **9. Is teacher efficacy (effectiveness) feasible in the classroom?**

Yes. But it becomes much harder as the year progresses. Listening, manners and behaviour of the children deteriorates.

**10. How do you manage the learner's aggression within the classroom, on the playground and in the school environment?**

I talk to the learner in a questioning manner and role reversal assists. There are also other learners to consider who have needs as well. I have to find the balance to be there for all of them.

**11. What are the consequences of negative behaviour?**

Time out. If the behaviour persists, privileges are taken away. Such as computers, sport and playtime.

**12. How does the learner deal with the consequences emotionally?**

The learner sulks or cries. Some children do not care, they are punished so much that the consequences no longer have an effect on them.

**13. After reprimanding the learner, how do you feel emotionally?**

I do not like reprimanding children as it goes against the grain of teaching. Being strict is tiring. I believe in firm discipline, if you let go children walk all over you. There has been a change in children over the years.

**14. At this age, is there a pattern between overt (verbal and physical) and covert (e.g., stealing and truancy) aggression, which forms part of anti-social behaviour in children?**

Stealing – once off and there has been no pattern.

**15. Elaborate on the impact aggression has on the social skills, the confidence and the self-concept of children.**

It does affect their social skills and parents need to support the teachers. They sometimes need to attend therapy as a corrective measure. Many parents are single parents and the children only want attention and when they do not receive it they turn on their parents by acting in an aggressive manner. Their confidence is low and children are embarrassed. They have a positive self-concept.

**16. What strategies do you, as the principal, initially use in managing aggressive learners in the school?**

The teacher first has a meeting with the parents to discuss the learner's behaviour. If the situation continues, the headmistress has a meeting with the parents and teacher to discuss the way forward. Parents are encouraged to maintain routine and consistent discipline. There are at times daily incidents and meetings with parents occur often. Parents need to understand that they need to rectify the learner's behaviour by implementing discipline at home. If they do this, it will have less implications at school for the learner firstly, teacher and lastly the principal. Teachers work with parents and use stickers, motivation charts to reinforce positive behaviour. If behaviour continues, take the television or anything else away as a consequence.

**17. If the behaviour persists, in terms of school policy, how is learner-aggression dealt with?**

The problem is addressed at school. There is a parent conference with the teacher and headmistress present. If all of the above methods have been used and there has been no improvement in the learner's behaviour the parents are requested to take the learner for an assessment. Depending on the outcome of the assessment, play therapy has previously been recommended.

**18. What alternative intervention methods can learners, educators and the family embrace positively before the learner progresses further in his or her grades?**

Monitor the learner's behaviour when playing at school, whether he/she plays with just one person or in groups. Arrange play dates and group dates to allow the learner the opportunity to be able to socialise with others and hence build friendship bonds outside of school and bring this back to the classroom. It needs to be detected early by teachers and corrective measures have to be put into place. Therapy is a route to follow if all avenues have been exhausted and this will assist the learner to improve in behaviour and progress to further grades positively.

## **PRINCIPAL 2:**

### **1. What are the causes of aggressive behaviour amongst children?**

Parents not holding learners responsible for their behaviour and there is no consequences for negative behaviour. There are no rules. Children do not have established boundaries. Children watch unsupervised television.

### **2. Is the poor primary (parents) socialisation of children the main cause of aggressive behaviour? Why?**

Yes. Children are not held accountable for their behaviour and they are not taught to be socially responsible.

### **3. Is there a link between childhood aggression and the culture a child comes from? Provide a reason.**

Most certainly. Whatever happens in life is often exacerbated by what learners see and learn from. Certain aspects are diminished.

### **4. Is child-aggression gender biased? How is this evident?**

Yes. Fathers are more aggressive with their sons than they are with their daughters. They easily accept aggressive behaviour from their sons than they are with their daughters.

### **5. Is child-aggression the result of poor family relationships? What are the indicators?**

Yes. Parents allow children to watch television programmes that are not age appropriate and often unsupervised. Children also have access to the Internet and cell phones.

### **6. What is the role of primary socialisation by the parents and the home?**

It is extremely important. They are the primary caregivers from birth and the parents establish the child's social manners. Parent should be teaching children what is socially acceptable behaviour.

**7. To what extent does parent and community involvement at school help in preventing children's aggressive behaviour?**

It is very important. Parent involvement is crucial to a child's development. The community plays a vital role in the example it sets and morals conveyed. Places of worship are an extremely good place to start from.

**8. What is the influence of secondary socialisation, namely peer groups, adults and the media on children's aggressive behaviour?**

Secondary socialisation is very influential in a child's life. Children copy behaviour patterns from their peer group and adults that they come into contact with. A huge factor is media. Learners see certain actions displayed and take charge of this and make it their personality. Learners watch movies that are violent and have levels of aggression in it. Even the cartoons that they watch encourage aggression.

**9. Is teacher efficacy (effectiveness) feasible in the classroom?**

Not always as there are too many children and the teachers do not receive enough support from the parents. Parents support the children's negative behaviour and do not hold children responsible for their behaviour.

**10. How do you manage the learner's aggression within the classroom, on playground and in the school environment?**

By using the Thinking Skills Programme. Having a discussion with the children and explaining rules and regulations. Making them understand their actions, the validity of it and the consequences of their actions. It is time consuming, as change does not happen immediately, it is a work in progress. Sometimes there are daily occurrences and it has to be dealt with. Being principal I have to find a balance.

**11. What are the consequences of negative behaviour?**

Behaviour is discussed with the learners and the parents are contacted for a meeting. Learners need to experience consequences for their actions.

**12. How does the learner deal with the consequences emotionally?**

Not very well. Therefore the adults are there for guidance. Learner needs to understand and accept the consequences and be involved in the process. They need to accept the choices they made and actions.

**13. After reprimanding the learner, how do you feel emotionally?**

It is very draining, especially if you have a passion and energy for teaching and children. It is rewarding when you change a child's life and adds direction to it. After learners understand their action they take this knowledge with them.

**14. At this age, is there a pattern between overt (verbal and physical) and covert (e.g., stealing and truancy) aggression, which forms part of anti-social behaviour in children?**

Yes, sometimes. This can be picked up from a child's record from a previous school. It is never too late to be accountable and parents involved.

**15. Elaborate on the impact aggression has on the social skills, the confidence and the self-concept of children.**

It has a huge impact on their social skills, confidence and self-concept of children. The reasons for their behaviour have deep seeded emotional trauma. Children start to have a negative self-image and their confidence is impacted. Their social skills are affected as due to their behaviour, other children do not want to play with them and hence they feel rejected. This effects their later adult interaction.

**16. What strategies do you, as the principal, initially use in managing aggressive learners in the school?**

Teacher's discuss the matter with the learner and put methods in place to encourage positive behaviour. If there is no improvement, a meeting is arranged with the parents.

**17. If the behaviour persists, in terms of school policy, how is learner-aggression dealt with?**

At registration, the parents sign a code of conduct. It is first the learner's responsibility to behave in an appropriate manner. Thereafter, it is the parent's responsibility.

**18. What alternative intervention methods can learners, educators and the family embrace positively before the learner progresses further in his or her grades?**

Utilise the “Thinking Skills” programme and encourage group interaction and discussions. Establish peer programmes and team building.

## ADDENDUM B: INTERVIEWS WITH THE EDUCATORS

### **EDUCATOR 1**

**1. What are the causes of aggressive behaviour amongst children?**

The causes of aggressive behaviour are emotional immaturity, the home environment and possible abuse at home.

**2. Is the poor primary (parents) socialisation of children the main cause of aggressive behaviour? Why?**

Yes. Parents have no social contact with their children and give them no attention at home. Children then start believing that negative attention is better than no attention at all.

**3. Is there a link between childhood aggression and the culture a child comes from? Provide a reason.**

Yes. In some cultures the male figure is more dominant and children see it at home and bring this to school. Learners watch how spouses speak and act towards each other and pick up on this behaviour.

**4. Is child-aggression gender biased? How is this evident?**

No. Boys are physically aggressive and girls are more emotional.

**5. Is child-aggression the result of poor family relationships? What are the indicators?**

Yes. Mum is busy watching television and the games that children play is not age appropriate.

**6. What is the role of primary socialisation by the parents and the home?**

To be responsible and loving. To ensure that their children receive enough love and attention at home and then all else will follow.

**7. To what extent does parent and community involvement in school help in preventing children's aggressive behaviour?**

Parents need to ensure proper discipline at home and this is not the case. Community involvement is when learners are taught the foundation of acceptable behaviour through their religious institution.

**8. What is the influence of secondary socialisation, namely peer groups, adults and the media on children's aggressive behaviour?**

Their peers influence them as they engage in copycat behaviour. They look up to adults (parents) for positive role models. Therefore, parents should practise what they preach. The media is the main influence, example Transformers. It is very negative and learners copy behaviour. Television shows such as Bakugun and wrestling displays very negative behaviour.

**9. Is teacher efficacy (effectiveness) feasible in the classroom?**

Yes. Considering the amount of children in the class (24). Teachers need to be positive all the time.

**10. How do you manage the learner's aggression within the classroom, on the playground and in the school environment?**

Within the classroom and playground, the behaviour is discussed. They receive a warning and then the consequence. There is discipline.

**11. What are the consequences of negative behaviour?**

They sit on the naughty tyre for five minutes if negative behaviour occurs during break time. They don't attend computers and tuck shop is taken away. I have a motivation chart where positive behaviour is acknowledged and an 'oopsi chart' for negative behaviour.

**12. How does the learner deal with the consequences emotionally?**

Sometimes the learner acknowledges the behaviour and at times no remorse is shown. The learner sulks and still continues to behave unacceptably. Some learners switch off and don't talk to others and throw a tantrum.

**13. After reprimanding the learner, how do you feel emotionally?**

I feel a sense of achievement for those that understand wrongful behaviour.

**14. At this age, is there a pattern between overt (verbal and physical) and covert (e.g., stealing and truancy) aggression, which forms part of anti-social behaviour in children?**

No. Covert behaviour (stealing) is once off. Money went missing just once and if toys are taken home, mum returns it. Learners take it only to see 'what will happen?'

**15. Elaborate on the impact aggression has on the social skills, the confidence and the self-concept of children.**

Regarding social skills, peers do not be their friends as they are socially difficult. They become too confident and bully the other children. Those that is not confident, they process the information and then react physically. Bullies have a positive self-concept.

**EDUCATOR 2**

**1. What are the causes of aggressive behaviour amongst children?**

The causes of aggressive behaviour are; frustration, the inability to express themselves. Envy, jealousy and sibling rivalry play a role as well. Family violence and trauma experienced by the family (hijacking and loss of a family member).

**2. Is the poor primary (parents) socialisation of children the main cause of aggressive behaviour? Why?**

Yes. Children learn from examples set by parents. Uninvolved parents default the responsibility by not setting the example.

**3. Is there a link between childhood aggression and the culture a child comes from? Provide a reason.**

Not necessary. I do think that poverty in any culture can cause stress and this leads to aggression.

**4. Is child-aggression gender biased? How is this evident?**

No. The difference is in how they deal with aggression. Boys are physically aggressive whereas girls are more emotional, manipulative and verbally aggressive.

**5. Is child-aggression the result of poor family relationships? What are the indicators?**

Poor family relationships and the lack of a loving, safe environment of acceptance can lead to feelings of poor self-esteem, lack of acceptance, frustration and aggression.

**6. What is the role of primary socialisation by the parents and the home?**

To make the child feel loved and accepted for what he/she is, just the way he/she is. Forming a loving family group sets the trend for socialisation in bigger groups.

**7. To what extent does parent and community involvement in school help in preventing children's aggressive behaviour?**

Healthy environment creates a healthy, happy atmosphere of working together and accepting each other. This also sets examples. Not all communities are involved. Previously, the community was involved. The community was like a village not anymore. The community needs to re-inforce appropriate behaviour by setting a good example.

**8. What is the influence of secondary socialisation, namely peer groups, adults and the media on children's aggressive behaviour?**

The biggest influence is set by example. Peer group either accepts or rejects you and this affects socialisation. Adults influence children by the example they set and the way they treat children. Media affects children by the violence shown and no parental control.

**9. Is teacher efficacy (effectiveness) feasible in the classroom?**

Yes, being the secondary caregiver, the teacher sets the tone (by example, by accepting each child unconditionally, by teaching social skills and ways to deal with anger). There are times when it is difficult as there is no parent support as parents are too busy with careers to be involved.

**10. How do you manage the learner's aggression within the classroom, on the playground and in the school environment?**

To first acknowledge that there is anger and then recognise the reason for the anger. I discuss the reaction of the impulse (behaviour) and let learner participate in discussion of consequences/punishment. I then discuss different ways to handle aggression/frustration. Consistency in the classroom is very important in maintaining discipline

**11. What are the consequences of negative behaviour?**

They must understand what is negative or unacceptable about their behaviour. They lose privileges (games and free time), demoting on star chart, timeout and finally conference with parents.

**12. How does the learner deal with the consequences emotionally?**

By understanding them after having agreed on them in earlier class discussion. They need to understand that it is not the person but the action that is unacceptable. Learner has to accept teacher's authority. The learner feels rejected and must have a trusting relationship with the teacher.

**13. After reprimanding the learner, how do you feel emotionally?**

I am calm, knowing that we agreed on consequences. Being consistent builds confidence in you and learners and they know what to expect.

**14. At this age, is there a pattern between overt (verbal and physical) and covert (e.g., stealing and truancy) aggression, which forms part of anti-social behaviour in children?**

Stealing and truancy is not applicable. If verbal and physical aggression is not dealt with in earlier years and the causes of it not dealt with, it can lead to worse forms of aggression and anti-social behaviour in later (teen) years and even more so in young adults.

**15. Elaborate on the impact aggression has on the social skills, the confidence and the self-concept of children.**

A very negative impact as social skills deteriorate. The self-concept of a child worsens and it breaks down their self-esteem. It forms a vicious circle that is difficult to break and worsens, as the child grows older. Children see themselves negatively and there is no remorse for their actions.

**EDUCATOR 3**

**1. What are the causes of aggressive behaviour amongst children?**

The causes of aggressive behaviour are being unable to communicate effectively and this results in frustration. They cannot adequately express themselves and because they are visual learners, they copy what has happened (parents and siblings) and their immaturity is also a factor.

**2. Is the poor primary (parents) socialisation of children the main cause of aggressive behaviour? Why?**

Yes. The setting of poor examples at home. Older parents give children vocabulary to express themselves and they are not aggressive. The latter is mature parenting and the vocabulary is better. The younger parents are immature and don't teach children manners and children have no guidelines.

**3. Is there a link between childhood aggression and the culture a child comes from? Provide a reason.**

No. I have taught children across the board and it prevalent in all cultures.

**4. Is child-aggression gender biased? How is this evident?**

No. Boys are physical and impulsive and there is no control over their bodies and engage in physical aggression. Girls engage in verbal aggression, as they are more mature and stronger verbally.

**5. Is child-aggression the result of poor family relationship? What are the indicators?**

It could be, but not the only reason. The indicators are friction between mum and dad and the discipline style. This impacts on family life and arguments occur. Children feel unsure and frustrated and this manifests in aggression. They need to express their hurt and confusion as they are caught between adults that argue.

**6. What is the role of primary socialisation by the parents and the home?**

The passing of culture and values within the home. Parents need to be acceptable role models and cement relations and create bonds between family.

**7. To what extent does parent and community involvement at school help in preventing children's aggressive behaviour?**

Parent and community involvement help in preventing aggressive behaviour to a large extent. After the primary family set the rules and boundaries there is a follow through at school. There has to be a link between school and home. Community involvement comes through religious instruction. Communities should work on the same level and consolidate concepts taught and teach children to verbalise emotions and not react physically.

**8. What is the influence of secondary socialisation, namely peer groups, adults and the media on children's aggressive behaviour?**

Peers greatly influence learner's behaviour as learners are exposed to different cultures and have an opportunity to experience, to stick up for values the correct way. There must be relationship of trust between parents. The media's influence is very dangerous especially if it is not monitored. It is instantaneous gratification and the visual and auditory effects from the television bear no value to the learner. Where there is no control there is a negative influence.

**9. Is teacher efficacy (effectiveness) feasible in the classroom?**

Yes and it is very important. Younger children especially need guidance and you need to assist them to react in an acceptable manner at the time when behaviour is displayed. When emotion fades, behaviour is forgotten. It is manageable with other learners and it gives them added security. The environment they are in allows them to express themselves better. If there is no teacher control, the learner has no security and the situation becomes worse.

**10. How do you manage the learner's aggression within the classroom, on the playground and in the school environment?**

Inside the class group learners first acknowledge feeling and then are in time out. This gives them time to control emotion. They are given a firm way of acceptable behaviour and consistency is very important in order to discipline to reign in the classroom. On the playground, learner is removed before hurting peer and placed in timeout. Physical emotion is higher on the playground than it is in the classroom. In the classroom, the learner is eager to resume the activity and heightens the frustration.

**11. What are the consequences of negative behaviour?**

Learner has been made aware of the consequences prior to the situation that arouse and the learner acknowledges inappropriate behaviour. Learner is removed from the situation and placed in timeout. Discussion with the family is then necessary, the sooner the better. Follow the notion; "Strike while the iron is hot!"

**12. How does the learner deal with the consequences emotionally?**

Initially the learner is resentful, as he/she believes that they have been treated unfairly. Consequences are consistent and learner is aware of consequences of negative behaviour. Consequences are then accepted and learners regulate behaviour. The latter does not happen instantly, it is over a long period especially with really aggressive children.

**13. After reprimanding the learner, how do you feel emotionally?**

At the time, I am quite empathetic towards aggressor and victim. Show empathy towards aggressor and thus limit the damage.

**14. At this age, is there a pattern between overt (verbal and physical) and covert (e.g., stealing and truancy) aggression, which forms part of anti-social behaviour in children?**

At the beginning of the year, the pattern is more often. This is when rules are not clear and have not been integrated with learning. As the year progresses the behaviour is better and learners mature. Once learners are challenged they work slowly to improve behaviour. Rules need to be consistent and there has to be a parent/teacher support system. Stealing and truancy has not been encountered. However, children do manipulate parents to stay at home.

**15. Elaborate on the impact aggression has on the social skills, the confidence and the self-concept of children.**

Aggression impacts on their social skills as peers identify aggressor within group and hence stay away from them. Thus, the aggressor becomes more aggressive. If aggression is allowed to go unchecked it impacts on their self-confidence and they morph into bullying behaviour. Learners see themselves as the behaviour and understand that it is the 'action' not the 'person' that is unacceptable. However, once the learner identifies what aggression is and starts to work to control it, they find a social circle and grow. The learner then becomes acceptable to peers. The learner then has an incentive to improve more.

## ADDENDUM C: INTERVIEWS WITH PARENTS

### **PARENT 1**

#### **1. What are your parenting methods?**

Mum:

Not available.

Dad:

I am strict but fair. Although, I do get pushed over from time to time.

#### **2. What discipline measures do you have in place?**

I use the star chart and rewards, time out corner and take away privileges such as television, riding his bike and playing with his friends.

#### **3. Are decisions regarding discipline made together?**

We are divorced. However, the foundation for discipline was laid down a long ago and put into practice and upheld by both parents.

#### **4. Elaborate on the impact aggression has on the social skills, confidence and self-concept of your child.**

I feel that in most cases it is not aggression that is displayed but more frustration caused by being a little behind from peers. It will impact on his social skills, confidence and self-concept of our child.

#### **5. In your opinion, what is the role of you as parents?**

To be a role model, a voice and figure of authority and to provide a safe haven for him. I also need to be an emotional, physical and psychological comforter. A confidant and pillar of strength. To be an educator; a person who is seen to be reliable and will always be there in times of need.

**6. How have you managed your child's aggression at home?**

Soft and gentle guidance using a calming voice. Brushing, verbal and physical stimulation and repetition of tasks and chores.

**7. Is your child's aggression hereditary? Please elaborate.**

No. But his frustration may be as both father and grandfather have a tendency to be perfectionists by setting high goals and not settling for second best.

**8. Is there sibling rivalry? Please elaborate.**

Between stepsister and stepson. There appears to be a constant battle for affection and to establish their role in the household.

**9. Has your child's aggression had an impact on your family life? Please elaborate.**

No, none whatsoever. As it most always happens when alone, in isolation. It never occurs when kept busy and amongst other children. The norm is teasing between siblings, which get louder and more physical as the stepsister is used to her elder brothers (step) bullying her.

**10. Has your child's aggression had an impact on your marriage? Please elaborate.**

No. Again, it happens mainly in isolation and I calm the situation if I am around, or loss of interest in that is causing the frustration and we move onto something else.

**11. What measures have you taken to assist your child in managing his/her aggression?**

Therapeutic listening, sensory stuff – brushing and play therapy and keeping a close eye on it from a home perspective.

## **PARENT 2**

### **1. What are your parenting methods?**

Mum:

Disciplinarian.

Dad:

Permissive – more of a friend.

### **2. What discipline measures do you have in place?**

Taking things away such as the radio and keeping it for a week. It gets returned if behaviour is improved.

### **3. Are decisions regarding discipline made together?**

Not always as dad works a lot and mum decides. If together, we work as a team more that before.

### **4. Elaborate on the impact aggression has on the social skills, confidence and self-concept of your child.**

Aggression has not impacted on her social skills or confidence. With regards to her self-concept it is difficult to tell what she feels about herself deep down. She is not able verbalise her feelings.

### **5. In your opinion, what is the role of you as parents?**

To guide her and show her right and wrong. To educate her and for her to be the best she can be.

### **6. How have you managed your child's aggression at home?**

She is sent to the 'Thinking Chair' or bathroom (which is bare and bland) with door closed and she is isolated. But sending her to the bathroom does not happen often. Thereafter, she apologies by saying "I am sorry" too quickly, only to get back item (radio). When item is given back she has to understand the action and consequence and see it through.

**7. Is your child's aggression hereditary? Please elaborate.**

Possibly yes! But, not enough time spent with the person.

**8. Is there sibling rivalry? Please elaborate.**

Yes! It is a norm. There are three children and she is the odd one out. She is boisterous and there is something about her that attracts it. She loves to play and teases (which annoys siblings). She is strong verbally. Whenever there is a dispute between siblings, she is in the middle.

**9. Has your child's aggression had an impact on your family life? Please elaborate.**

Yes, only because parents do not agree on discipline.

**10. Has your child's aggression had an impact on your marriage? Please elaborate.**

Yes, as our discipline strategies differs.

**11. What measures have you taken to assist your child to manage his/her aggression?**

Every morning before school talk to her and explain that she must talk to her educator. Encourage her to verbalise emotions instead of having an emotional meltdown. I have explained to her not to be egotistical and she seems to understand.

**PARENT 3**

**1. What are your parenting methods?**

Mum:

Depending on physical engagement roles are swopped. Stricter than husband and depends on the situation.

Dad:

Gets home late and is the disciplinarian on the weekend.

**2. What discipline measures do you have in place?**

Depending on how often he receives a verbal warning. When he gets out of hand he receives a smack. He is given a time out in his bedroom and only allowed to come out for supper.

**3. Are decisions regarding discipline made together?**

Mum makes decision and is supported. If we do not agree, it is discussed in private or in Afrikaans.

**4. Elaborate on the impact aggression has on the social skills, confidence and self-concept of your child.**

It has no impact. Based on experience children still gravitate towards him.

**5. In your opinion, what is the role of you as parents?**

I am responsible for his behaviour and at times feel incompetent as parents as I am working full time. As parent I need to instil proper behaviour.

**6. How have you managed your child's aggression at home?**

I ask him open-ended questions and use scale of 1-5 to measure his how his behaviour was at school. Five being excellent and one physical aggression. He can explain what he has done and answers from his frame of mind to explain his actions. He gives his own consequences and acknowledges his actions. It is also difficult to ascertain as behaviour occurs behind parents back and sister is manipulative. Both will get a smack. His sister will work him up and then he retaliates. He gets provoked based on previous experiences. My assumption is that he reacts before thinking.

**7. Is your child's aggression hereditary? Please elaborate.**

No.

**8. Is there sibling rivalry? Please elaborate.**

No, there is a balance.

**9. Has your child's aggression had an impact on your family life? Please elaborate.**

No.

**10. Has your child's aggression had an impact on your marriage? Please elaborate.**

No.

**11. What measures have you taken to assist your child in managing his/her aggression?**

To encourage him to verbalise his behaviour and address it immediately and discipline has to be immediate. If it is left longer, the action is forgotten. I will never leave it longer. I use the journey in the car as a calming method to discuss behaviour for the day.

ADDENDUM D:  
RESPONSES FROM THE LEARNERS

**Learner 1**

**Draw a Person Test (DAPT)**



**INDICATORS OF AGGRESSION PRESENT IN THE DRAWING**

- Short arms
  - Teeth
  - Shading
  - Shading of arms
- (Refer to Tables 4.5, 4.6 – Indicators of Aggression).

## Learner 2

### Draw A Person Test



### INDICATORS OF AGGRESSION PRESENT IN THE DRAWING

- Poor integration of parts in a figure
  - Shading of face
  - Short arms
  - Big hands
- (Refer to Tables 4.5, 4.6 – Indicators of Aggression)

**Learner 3**

**Draw A Person Test**



**INDICATORS OF AGGRESSION PRESENT IN THE DRAWING**

- Short arms
- Hands cut off

(Refer to Tables 4.5, 4.6 – Indicators of Aggression)

## **Learner 4**

### **Draw A Person Test**



### **INDICATORS OF AGGRESSION PRESENT IN THE DRAWING**

- Big hands
  - Sharp angles and jagged lines
  - Straight lines
- (Refer to Tables 4.5, 4.6 – Indicators of Aggression)