

MASSAGE HAS A BENEFICIAL IMPACT

ON AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR IN CHILDREN

This is the conclusion of a Brazilian study carried out in a São Paulo primary school on children aged 6 to 8 years old. Children's aggressive behaviour can be expressed physically or verbally and can be linked - among other things - to anxiety, attention deficit, competition between pupils, relational or family problems. Touching and being touched are key actions in human development that increase body awareness, relax muscles, and promote physical, motor, neurological and intellectual development. Touch enables the generation of mental images, emotions and feelings and produces metabolic and physiological changes, particularly in the immune, endocrine, neuromuscular, and cardiac systems.

Massage promotes confidence, relaxation, well-being, empowerment, and socialisation. It can also improve attention and concentration and optimise respect, caring, affection and perception. Based on these facts, the aim of this study was to evaluate the effect of massage in the aggressive behaviour of primary school children.





MESSAGE POSITIVELY AFFECTS THE BEHAVIOUR OF CHILDREN AGED 6 TO 8 YEARS

Duo massage classes were organized in a class of 35 students. The children were then asked to practice 10 massage sessions in pairs every day for 10 minutes (5 minutes to give and 5 minutes to receive). Aggressive behaviour was recorded before and after the massage sessions. Here are some examples of verbal and physical aggression:

- | | |
|---------------|-------------------------|
| ■ Gossiping | ■ Kicking |
| ■ Mimicking | ■ Hitting |
| ■ Teasing | ■ Pulling one's hair |
| ■ Threatening | ■ Pushing |
| ■ Yelling | ■ Spitting |
| ■ Biting | ■ Breaking one's object |

The results show a significant decrease in the number of aggressive behaviours registered by the teacher after the massage sessions (1.5

registers per student before the intervention to 0.5 registers per student after the intervention corresponding to a 66% decrease).

The authors conclude that massage affects positively the behaviour of children aged 6 to 8 years in a public elementary school in São Paulo, Brazil. Massage seems to facilitate interpersonal connection. This approach seems to improve not only self-caring and self-regulation, but also affection, empathy, and respect. Such changes positively impact in social behaviour and academic performance at school. This strategy should be explored as an educational and health promotion approach. Future studies should assess larger samples and interview parents about possible beneficial effects of massage outside school environment.

SOURCE:

Massage and Storytelling Reduce Aggression and Improve Academic Performance in Children Attending Elementary School. Gonçalves LL, Voos MC, de Almeida MHM, Caromano FA. Occup Ther Int. 2017 Jan 19;2017:5087145. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29097967/>



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