

The Theory Behind Play Nicely

Can a brief intervention interrupt the cycle of violence?

The theory behind the Play Nicely intervention

Two of the root causes of violence are ineffective parenting(1,2) and early childhood aggression(3,4). Some children, including five to 10 percent of boys(4), will resort to persistent aggression and violence as a solution to their problems. When these children become parents, they may view their child's misbehavior as yet another problem that can be solved with physical force.

A report by the World Health Organization states that parenting programs are among the most promising interventions to prevent violence(5,6). Interventions that target parenting skills may help children respond in socially acceptable ways to the many challenges and frustrations that they will meet throughout life. In theory, parenting interventions could interrupt the intergenerational cycle of violence.

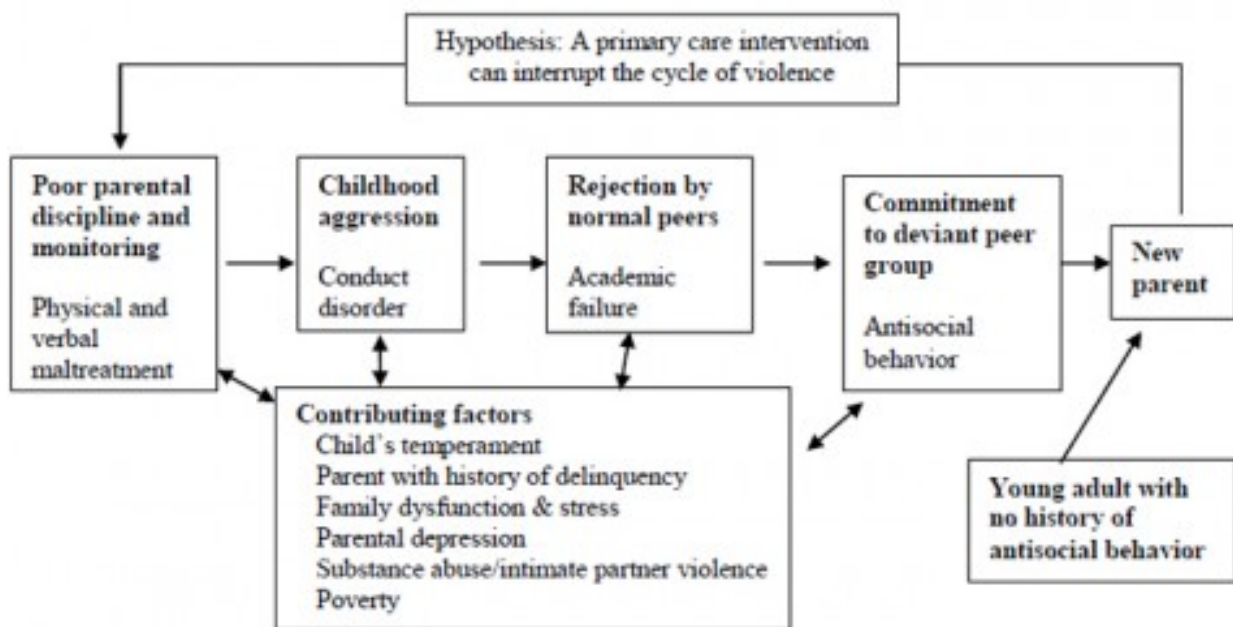


Figure: This developmental framework, modified from work by Patterson(2), describes the intergenerational cycle that links parenting skills, childhood aggression, child maltreatment, academic failure, and violence.

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3. Tremblay RE, Boivin M, Zoccolillo M, Montplaisir J. The search for the age of 'onset' of physical aggression: Rousseau and Bandura revisited. *Crim Behav Ment Health*. 1999;9:8-23.
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