

ASSERTIVENESS

Assertiveness is a skill that children and young people can learn

An assertive response helps them to stick up for their rights and avoid being teased or bullied.



Assertiveness involves the use of a firm voice and strong body language, including body positioning and eye contact.

Assertiveness indicates control and implies an expectation of compliance. Aggression, on the other hand, shows lack of control and involves a raised voice, the use of insults and body language which can inflame a situation, inviting further aggression or provocation.

WHEN A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON IS UNDER PROVOCATION, BEING BULLIED OR TEASED HE OR SHE SHOULD:

- Make eye contact; stand in a balanced, comfortable position about a metre from the person provoking the aggression.
- Using a firm voice, ask the other person to stop what he or she is doing. Use the person's name if possible.
- Repeat the response if the behaviour doesn't stop.
- If the provocation continues he or she should walk away, ignoring the aggressor or seeking an adult if they feel in danger.

WHEN A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON NEEDS TO STAND UP FOR HIS OR HER RIGHTS, TO ASK FOR SOMETHING,

TO MAKE A STATEMENT OR BE LISTENED TO RATHER THAN IGNORED HE OR SHE SHOULD:

- Attract the person's full attention;
- Be polite and use the person's name;
- Make good eye contact and use a strong stance; and
- State the request or statement using a firm voice;
- Give the other person an opportunity to respond if appropriate. Ask questions to clarify the other person's position. Be polite but firm and avoid personal insults or using a whining voice.

Encourage your child to practise assertiveness in low risk situations – in front of the family or even in front of a mirror.



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MICHAEL GROSE