

**'AN INQUIRY INTO EARLY VIOLENCE/  
AGGRESSION AND PROSOCIAL  
BEHAVIORS IN PRESCHOOL CHILDREN  
IN SRI LANKA TO IDENTIFY  
APPROPRIATE INTERVENTIONS BY  
PRESCHOOL TEACHERS'**



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## ABSTRACT

### **'An Inquiry into Early Violence/Aggression and Prosocial Behaviors in Preschool Children in Sri Lanka to Identify Appropriate Interventions by Preschool Teachers'**

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The purpose of the study was to explore the prevailing situation of aggressive and prosocial behaviors in preschool children in Sri Lanka, teacher practices, and preschool teacher training needs pertaining to those behaviors. In addition, teacher perceptions of origins of aggression and prosocial behaviors of the preschool children were also explored.

The study employed several methods to collect data

- 1) Survey questionnaire given to 275 preschool teachers in 18 districts of Sri Lanka
- 2) A semi-structured interview schedule used to interview 23 preschool teachers from varied preschool communities (socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds).
- 3) Four varied preschool settings observed to investigate aggressive and prosocial behaviors of preschool children and teacher practices pertaining to those behaviors.

Results revealed that although certain practices perceived and employed by the preschool teachers were consistent with the ones presented by the research studies, (tried out best practices and intervention strategies mentioned in the literature), certain practices were labeled by the preschool teachers as ineffective and negative (use a stick to frighten the children, tell children that teacher does not love bad children, advice or preach). The vast majority of the preschool teachers who responded to the survey questionnaire perceived that preschool children could be oriented to prevent and minimize aggressive behaviors and promote prosocial behaviors within the preschool setting. Of teachers surveyed, 97% and interviewed 90% stated they require training in this area in order to do so. A regression analysis



was carried out to examine the relationship among training, educational qualifications, experience, aggressive and prosocial behaviors in children and preschool teacher practices pertaining to those practices. Analysis of regression revealed that training, experience, and educational qualifications are poor predictors of the intensity of the reported aggression, intensity of the reported prosocial behaviors, intensity of the teacher practices to prevent and minimize aggressive behaviors and intensity of the reported practices to promote prosocial behaviors of the preschool teachers. Therefore, findings indicate that preschool teachers require knowledge, skills and competencies pertaining to preventing and minimizing aggressive behaviors in preschool children.

As an outcome of the study, a preschool teacher training manual comprising of 14 modules to prevent and minimize aggressive behaviors and promote prosocial behaviors in preschool children was developed. The study also makes a number of recommendations to resource personnel and policy makers in the area of early childhood education to enhance the best practices in the Sri Lankan preschool setting.