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Editor's Note: The following research will be released at the Society for Prevention Research (www.preventionresearch.org) 2004 annual meeting, May 26-28, 2004.

NEW STUDIES IN CANADA AND UNITED STATES LOOK AT HOW YOUNG CHILDREN BECOME AGGRESSIVE ADULTS

Findings Important to Parents, Teachers and Youth

- Aggressive behavior in childhood leads to problems in adulthood, but how can one tell which children are at most risk?
- Are girls being overlooked because most aggressive behavior involves boys?
- What is the impact of friends and peers on aggressive behavior? Does rejection by peers play a role in aggressive behavior?
- What are some of the predictors of highly aggressive behavior?

Childhood aggressive behavior is widely accepted as a sign for antisocial behavior in adolescents and adults. Several studies have pointed out that conduct problems identified as early as pre-school can predict later delinquent behavior and drug use. But most of this research has focused on boys. Yet, girls comprise 20 percent of youth in the juvenile justice system, and in adulthood, women are responsible for 21 percent of crimes committed by adults 18 and older.

Several researchers who have studied pre-school and elementary school kids in the United States and Canada will present their findings at the Society of Prevention Research's annual meeting in Quebec City, Canada. The research will focus on how some children and their friends progress to become problem adolescents and adults.

One group of researchers has classified elementary school children as either low aggressive, increasingly aggressive or high aggressive. Tracking the lives of these children for a 20-year period reveals how they behave at the end of their elementary school years and how they behave through early adulthood.

Another group of researchers is looking at the ways in which aggressive children tend to associate with other children with similar characteristics. Do normal kids reject these aggressive children, and what effect does this have on the aggressive kids?

Source: Hanno Petras, Ph.D., Johns Hopkins University; Debby Furr-Holden, Ph.D., Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation; Sheppard Kellam, MD, American Institutes of Research; Frank Vitaro, Ph.D. and Brigitte Wanner, Ph.D., University of Montreal; Pol van Lier, Ph.D., Erasmus Medical Center, Netherlands.