

Kurt

Kurt was the most aggressive boy in the childcare center. Some days he would go on a rampage, tearing through the play areas, knocking down other children's block towers, impulsively taking their toys, shaking the aquarium, throwing water at children who passed near the sink, preventing other children from playing by standing in their way, etc. It was one continuous battle to deal with his outrageousness. But then, surprisingly, some days were just fine.

The general policy at the center was to try to avoid punishing children. The director urged the staff to try to positively redirect any troublesome child. So when Kurt was disruptive or aggressive, he would end up on a lap or in the director's office as a teacher tried to distract him with a new interest or a story. He seemed to get more positive individual attention when he was hostile than when he was not. This "love" was given insincerely, however, since the teachers had grown to dislike Kurt.

Whenever teachers tried to directly confront him, Kurt would argue that his actions were justified responses to the actions of other children, protest teachers were being unfair to him, or sullenly admit that he was just a "bad" boy. "When you talk to me that way, you make me meaner."

Kurt's behavior progressed from bad to worse. After he spent one afternoon knocking others off tricycles, the teachers decided they needed help to manage Kurt. They asked for assistance.

If you were the one called in to help in this situation, what would you recommend?