

# **Does early aggression predict whether a child will go on to be antisocial?**

**By Jana Trajkovska**

## **Abstract**

The following socio-criminological study seeks to discover how modern society perceives early childhood aggression as a predictor of future antisocial behaviour. This report investigates links of causal factors of aggression and antisocial criminality, through the collection of published literature, public surveys and professional interview analysis.

Theorists have linked antisocial personality traits to violent criminality since the 1930's (Moeller 2001, p.2000). The current interest however lies with the causes of antisocial behaviour- much established research being dedicated to the causal factors of violent offending. Early aggression is on the other hand sparsely investigated within published research; however authors that have made the link and covered this topic show that it is an important area to consider further research into, to satisfy the ultimate aim of adequate crime prevention. The goal of this report is to uncover what modern society's views are on early childhood aggression as a predictor of future antisocial behaviour. This report investigates links of causal factors of aggression and antisocial criminality through the collection and critique of published literature, public surveys and professional interview analysis. Within this paper you will find a literature review, a research proposal and a final report- consisting of analyses of the data collected.



## **Acknowledgments**

I would like to thank my lecturer and supervisor Mirian Meade, for all of her support and encouragement in putting this paper together. I would also like to show my appreciation to my fellow researchers Melissa Atieh and Lisa Walsh for being an absolute pleasure to work with and always being dedicated, organised and on top of their work- it has helped me stay motivated. I would like to thank Dr. Robyn Clifford and Anthea Bonucci, for all of the effort they put into assisting the research class and for always doing it with a smile. Thank you mum, for doing your best to help me stay focused. Thank you to all who partook in the survey your opinion and time spent is greatly appreciated. Finally, to our youth justice professionals- thank you for your valuable input. This report would not have been possible without you.

Sincerely,

Jana Trajkovska

## **Executive Summary**

The goal of this research paper was to establish the public perception on early aggression and its link to future antisocial behaviour, to present this opinion using adequate and unbiased measures and contrast these findings to published socio-criminological literature, theories of crime and professional opinion.

Both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies were employed in this study, as the investigators saw necessary- for maximum coverage of the topic. Qualitative research was adopted to examine the three youth justice professionals' opinions of the questions being asked in the face-to face interview. This allowed for detailed responses, which added to the overall quality of the investigation. Quantitative research was employed via the surveys of public's perception- this process allowed for the mass examination and for the researcher to comfortably make generalisations about the opinions of the participating group of 75 members of the public.

The researcher found that 66.7% of participants link early aggression to future antisocial behaviour. 73.3% of participants believe that gender and aggression are not linked. 60% of participants believe that poor parent-child relationships are the causal factor of antisocial behaviour. In general terms, the public surveyed attributes problem behaviours with poor environment and unsatisfactory parental modelling, a shift from the biological explanations of crime, such as genetics and hormonal effects.

The recommendations by the writer which have been established as a result of this report- are that more long term studies should be dedicated to this area, especially on a local level- more studies should be conducted in Australia. More female based studies should be conducted, to establish the differences in gendered aggression and to examine the biological and sociological causes of the difference. The most prominent idea to come out of this research is the importance of early development- parents/ caregivers need to have access to adequate resources and supports to raise children. There needs to be better development of services for children living in abusive and neglectful households.

Literature reviewed and the theories of major contribution collaborated well with the public and professional opinion, regarding early aggression and future antisocial behaviour. Showing concern in the areas of socio-demographics and modelling behaviour.

"I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up,  
live out the true meaning of its creed -  
we hold these truths to be self-evident,  
that all men are created equal." Martin Luther King, Jr

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

	<i>Page No.</i>
<b><u>1.0 Introduction</u></b>	<b><u>5</u></b>
<b><u>2.0 Background</u></b>	<b><u>5</u></b>
<b><u>3.0 Research Design</u></b>	<b><u>5</u></b>
<b><u>4.0 Literature Review</u></b>	<b><u>6</u></b>
<b><u>5.0 Findings</u></b>	<b><u>12</u></b>
<b><u>6.0 Analysis</u></b>	<b><u>19</u></b>
<b><u>7.0 Strengths and Limitations</u></b>	<b><u>21</u></b>
<b><u>8.0 Recommendations</u></b>	<b><u>21</u></b>
<b><u>9.0 Conclusion</u></b>	<b><u>22</u></b>
<b><u>10.0 Bibliography</u></b>	<b><u>23</u></b>

**TABLE OF FIGURES**

	<i>Page No.</i>
<b>Figure One:</b> Gender of Participants	23
<b>Figure Two:</b> Age of Participants	24
<b>Figure Three:</b> Geographical Location of Participants	24
<b>Figure Four:</b> Education of Participants	25
<b>Figure Five:</b> Employment of Participants	25
<b>Figure Six:</b> Linking Early Aggression to future Antisocial Behaviour	26
<b>Figure Seven:</b> Gender linked to Aggression	27
<b>Figure Eight:</b> Cross Tabulation of Gendered Aggression Results	27
<b>Figure Nine:</b> Parenting Factor linked to Antisocial Behaviour	28

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

To conduct research is to form an inquiry into an area of little or no present knowledge, in order to answer a question according to the Collins Dictionary (2005). There is not much debate regarding the definition of the term, the majority of writers concur with the former (Best 1970, Verma & Mallick 1999). It is an area of such importance, as only through the collection and analyses of data can new ideas be formed and questions answered. The following research report has been put together answer the question of “Does early aggression predict whether a child will go on to be antisocial?” It aims to achieve this answer through the collection and analyses of surveys of the public, in conjunction with interviews of professionals to uncover the overriding opinion on the proposed question. The following report will consist of a literature review, a research design and final report; in order to give the reader a greater sense of the overall issue at hand.

## **2.0 BACKGROUND**

The research and readings found that many theorists followed the structure of the early work of Moffitt (1993), in which proposed two main ideas regarding early aggression and later antisocial behaviour; Adolescent limited and Life-course-persistent. Circulating these main theories, the understanding of the onset of early aggression was stable across the research by the work of Moffitt (1993), Burt & Donnellan (2009), White & Widom (2003), Sampson & Laub(1995).

Much of the predicament and opposing views derived from the research surrounded the notion of, does the individual who suffers from early aggression in fact go on to commit antisocial behaviour, and if so what contextual and causational factors alongside early aggression further influences and intensifies aggression into leading an individual to commit antisocial behaviours or acts (Brotman & 2008, Clark et al 2002, Downing et al 2000, Lake 2004, Moffitt 1993, Moeller 2001).

## **3.0 RESEARCH DESIGN**

The methodology of conducting research requires planning and more importantly justification for the use of chosen methods. Methods vary, dependent on the type of research and the aims of the researcher.

### **3.1 Survey**

A quantitative approach to survey collection means that our data is measurable and responses can be given a numeric value (Walter 2006, p.86-100). This form of research makes analysis both simpler and more transparent as well as unbiased. Considering that most of the questions in this study were to do with children- it is an area that the public are already aware of and have formed opinion on. The research was conducted using 75 participants randomly selected to answer survey questions, these participants' were members of the public who were between the ages of 18 to 55 and over. The researchers targeted different locations throughout Victoria to get a truly random sample. The questions within the survey were under broad headings of aggression, antisocial behaviour and what the public thinks about these issues in contrast to literature and expert opinion and whether there is a disparity. The survey questions were finalized after being approved by all group members, supervisor and a few acquaintances - to ensure that they were completely understandable to the lay person.

The researcher then selected random locations around the state of Victoria to recruit and survey participants. (See Appendix II & III)

### **3.2 Interview**

This study employed the qualitative method of interviewing professionals in the field. The interviews were recorded both electronically and via note form. The questions were pre-determined, so all participants received the same set of 35 questions. The professionals interviewed were two youth workers and one youth justice lecturer with youth justice experience. This methodology seeks to derive more in depth explanations for professional opinion and further explore recommendations given by professionals, for areas in need of reform or attention (Walter 2006, p.189-222). Professional opinion on c practice is important as it is current and can be used to implicate policy changes (See Appendix II & III).

### **3.3 Ethical Considerations**

There were only slight amendments to the ethical application- mainly due to the editing and some wording errors. Overall nothing significant and approval shortly followed. This report abides by the ethical standards of Navitas College of Public Safety and the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research.

Participants were all given plain language statements and were required to sign a consent form prior to taking part in the survey- all procedures were explained and all participants were offered access to a copy of the final report. The surveys were completely de-identifiable and kept in separate folders from the signed consent forms. All data collected is stored securely at the Navitas College of Public Safety for five years before being destroyed. The interviewee's names were also extracted from the final report due to confidentiality concerns. There is more information on the complete ethical considerations in the appendix at the end of this report as well as a copy of the official ethical clearance. (See Appendix I & II)

## **4.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Introduction**

The reasons into youth antisocial behaviour have been examined and debated by different theorists and researchers since the 1930's (Moeller 2009, p.200). Youth offending has also been a major issue in the media and has sparked public interest, due to the violent nature of crimes being committed that have been brought to light, both domestically and internationally. In particular, gang violence in Australia and mass homicide in the United States of America. This is a significant area of research because youth offending has been on the rise and considering that most violent offences are committed by youth, it is understandably an area of concern for criminal justice professionals as well as the public. Finding ways to reduce offending at a young age is of primary interest to the Australian government, having dedicated funding into research into the area (Kelly 2009, p.220).

The literature reviewed was selected according to relevance and expertise on the issue, and its applicability in the Australian setting. Studies that were included are from the United Kingdom and Canada, due to their system similarities. American research was used, though critiqued greatly, due to its inability to be transferred fully on to the Australian criminal justice system.

The following literature review is a part of a final research report, which will include 75 surveys to the general public and three in depth interviews conducted with youth justice professionals and experts. The focus will be on texts addressing early aggression and why this problem behaviour develops. Followed by the development of antisocial behaviour and whether literature supports a link between the two: in order better understand the question of proposed research by the writer “Does early aggression predict whether a child will go on to be antisocial?”

#### **4.1 Early Aggression**

Commencing with the exploration of the overriding theme of early aggression; as an area which is well-established and thoroughly researched throughout the literature it is unusual to note that a clear definition is lacking. This leaves the reader questioning whether aggression as a term includes physical violence, intimidation, verbal abuse or a combination.

Psychologically influenced literature links aggression directly to personality disorders, especially Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and Conduct Disorder (Bor 2004, p.374). It is wise to note that, this research was conducted by professionals in the field of mental health, so it does not look at other causal factors of aggression, and whether the personality disorders were a result of other environmental issues. Additionally, whether the personality disorders characterised by aggression were not in fact related to outside factors and were a result of some cognitive imbalance or defect in the individual diagnosed (White 2003, p.340).

Literature is in support of the claim that neglectful and abusive parenting is the source of aggression problem for many young people (White 2003, p.340) (Narusyte et al 2007, p.132) (Prior 2000). Additionally, parents that do not provide positive role modelling and that do not supervise their children adequately are more likely to raise aggressive and delinquent youth (Knutson, DeGarmo & Reid 2004, p.198) (Narusyte et al 2007, p.132) (White 2003, p.340) (Bor 2004, p.374) (Newman & Nolas 2008, p. 145) (Moeller 2001, p.19,61,98,109,111) (Herrenkohl et al. 2003, p180). This is supportive of the Trait Theory, developed by Lonnie Athens who stated that the process of victimisation that parents put their children through sets them up for aggression and violence in the future (Athens 1980).

Low self-esteem was found to be a factor contributing to displays of aggression in youth, via small scale studies conducted (Donnellan et al. 2005, p.330). Although this was not an area that great volumes of research were dedicated to, and therefore cannot be given as much credibility

Studies conducted by Knutson, DeGarmo, Reid Wilkinson and Carr 2008 found that it was more sociological factors which contribute to the onset of aggression, these include social disadvantage, coming from a low socio-economic background, poor education quality and violent neighbourhoods (Knutson, DeGarmo & Reid 2004, p.198) (Wilkinson & Carr 2008, p.1032). These studies were conducted in America; it is important to note that the Australian system is very similar to the American, aside from the issue of heightened violence. America has a lot more youth risk factors, due to their legalisation of gun carrying, poverty stricken ghettos and established and violent gang behaviour: which Australia does not have. Though suburbs of Australia vary in economic standing they are not comparable to the risks facing

American's in low socio-economic communities. So social theories of offending, even those supported by evidence are not as applicable, though not entirely dismissible due to the broad body of research that suggests that environmental influence shapes young people's behaviour. Similar Australian research was conducted, though not as wide scale; which showed similar results to the United States findings (Grunseit, Weatherburn & Donnelly 2008, p.367). Both of these environmentally based studies are reflective of the Chicago School of Thought, Social Disorganisation Theory, in the manner in which it links specific demographic areas to crime rates (Jacob 2006, p. 57).

## 4.2 Predictors

Continuing on from the aggression theme, it is important to literature states in regards to the trajectories and predictors of further problem behaviours. There is strong agreement between authors that predictors of future antisocial behaviour are linked to poor family upbringing (White 2003, p.340) (Narusyte et al 2007, p.132). Particularly it has been found that individuals who are born to teenage mothers, who have left their education early and are unmarried, which have a delinquent background are at more of a risk of being attracted to antisocial males; therefore these relationships experience major conflict, which is observed by the child (Moeller 2001, p.98). The conflict tends to be a result of financial strain and a lack of support from the male parent (Moeller 2001, p.98). A child raised in this environment facing abuse, neglect, poverty and a lack of education is more at risk to turn to crime according to studies (Moeller 2009, p.99).

Moffitt's Adolescent Limited and Life Course Persistent Typologies, have stated that the majority of youth that go through a delinquent phase in their early years, grow out of it due to trajectories that give them a positive position, for example getting into a relationship, starting work, graduating (Knutson, DeGarmo & Reid 2004, p.198) (Donnellan et al. 2005, p.330). This minimum risk group is only being delinquent to attain a social status of power, and their crimes are not malicious or violent, typically (Knutson, DeGarmo & Reid 2004, p.198) (Donnellan et al. 2005, p.330). However Life Course Persistent individuals are more likely to start offending younger and continue on to through their adult life, due to poor background and many risk factors (Knutson, DeGarmo & Reid 2004, p.198) (Donnellan et al. 2005, p.330). Their offending styles are more malicious and violent and what would be described as antisocial'. His theory directly correlates with the research conducted in young offenders, and is supported by many of the literature reviewed (Herrenkohl et al. 2003, p180) (Lake 2004, p.527) (Penney & Moretti 2007, p.39) .Therefore holding significant credibility.

Similar, to Moffitt's Typologies the Reactive and Proactive Aggression styles as looked at by Raine, 2006 which state that life factors predict what type of aggressor an individual is likely to become (Raine 2006, p.160). The study found that Proactive Aggression, which is closely linked to Moffitt's Life Course Persistent, is when an individual provokes physical violence and likes getting physically involved in hurting others, they generally have poor parental as well as peer relationships, parents are negative role models and the individual is typically hyperactive or has some psychological disorder (Bor 2004, p.374). The Reactive Aggression individual was typically found to be 16 years of age and was very socially reserved and did not have close friends, they are more likely to act upon their urges and impulses and their

perceptions tend to be skewed, according to (Raine 2006, p.160). This ties in well with Moffitt's Adolescent Limited typology and is reflective of the risk factor research results presented (Raine 2006, p.160).

### **4.3 Antisocial Behaviour**

The theme of antisocial behaviour is very much where the interest lies within the body of literature, however, within the literature reviewed it was not very well defined. Sociological texts skimmed through this process entirely, and used the word more liberally in describing violent young offenders who had no regard for themselves or others (Porter, Ten Brinke & Wilson 2009, p. 116). Psychological studies and texts gave a more structured definition, according to DSM classifications on Antisocial Personality Disorder. (See Appendix V) (Kring et al. 2010, p.367). The issue is that according to the DSM an individual must be over 18 years of age to be considered to have Antisocial Personality Disorder, prior to this age similar behaviour is classified as Conduct Disorder. This is a major conflict, because the sociological research as mentioned previously uses the word 'antisocial' when referring to underage youth. Though, it can be assumed they are describing a personality trait as opposed to a psychological disorder. The overall issue is that it can cause confusion as it is not always easy to recognise what the writer is implying when stating that they are discussing the term "Antisocial".

In the majority of the research, there was an observed link between the development of antisocial traits and childhood displays of aggression (Narusyte et al 2007, p.132). Though aggression was never said to be a phenomena which occurs independently, it was always linked to psychological, parental or sociological factors. If the young person displayed aggression due to these factors and additionally later on in life was disadvantaged through poverty, low IQ or lack of community involvement. Factors such as this put them at a much greater risk of becoming offenders and becoming antisocial, according to both theories and modern research (Knutson, DeGarmo & Reid 2004, p.198). Researchers Clifford Shaw and Henry McKay found that antisocial behaviour in youth varied greatly between suburban and city areas, where there was more prominent conformity and a more established value system crime rates in juveniles were significantly lower (Grunseit, Weatherburn & Donnelly 2008, p.367) (Jacob 2006, p. 57)

The development of Social Disorganization Theory, has allowed researchers to study the rates of crime in connection to the socio-economic status of a community (Jacob 2006, p. 57) (Grunseit, Weatherburn & Donnelly 2008, p.367) Research conducted under this framework was proven to be successful both domestically and internationally. Because it recognizes inequality as a risk factor, this is an important tool in research as it can identify demographic areas in need of support.

Similarly, psychologically based literature links early aggression as an early warning sign of future antisocial behaviour, which in juveniles is diagnosed as conduct disorder (Corrado et al. 2004, p. 21) (Fougere, Potter & Boutilier 2009, p.252). However, as previously mentioned psychological research does not include relevant sociological data to give a more whole view of the issue at hand.

More modern literature indicates that there are major differences in the way that females and males display antisocial behaviour and aggression; males have been found to be more physically violent whereas females use emotional and indirect aggression (Jacob 2006, p. 57) (Sevecke, Lehmkuhl & Krischer 2009, p. 90). Males are typically more likely to physically harm their peers, whereas females are more likely to harm their partners and mothers (Jacob 2006, p. 57). There seems to be consensus that females are more likely to exploit themselves sexually whereas males are more physical in their conflict (Jacob 2006, p. 57) (Sevecke, Lehmkuhl & Krischer 2009, p. 90). The literature is based on the feminist research style, and critiques past research and traditional criminological theories as invalid in their application of principles to females, as modern research indicates a significant difference in the sexes. There is validity in their claims due to the strong male based research in traditional theories of youth crime. It was discovered by this same study that there was no gender difference between the onset of early aggression and the trajectory into offending (Jacob 2006, p. 57).

#### **4.4 Recommendation**

Throughout the literature reviewed the writer noticed that a large portion of the authors dedicated time to explaining what their recommendations were for prevention and treatment of antisocial youth. Recommendations showed a variety of opinion, unlike the three previous themes discussed. The most prominent difference was the division of recommendation for parenting styles. Newman & Nolas 2008 as well as Lake 2004 claimed successful results in parents adopting the Ghandi style approach to parenting, which is characterised by a non-violent and less authoritarian approach to dealing with aggressive or violent youth (Newman & Nolas 2008, p. 145) (Lake 2004, p.527).

This was only a small study, and although provided positive results the writings were bias and did not adequately compare other styles of parenting for effectiveness.

The majority of research however stated that parenting styles are too lax and need to be supportive and positive but more restrictive and authoritarian, as they stated that children lack discipline and boundaries as well as moral development (Moeller 2001 p. 19).

Kelly 2009, was in full support of fostering youth living in problem households to families with training in how to deal with young people who might be difficult and aggressive, they provided research results to show the effectiveness of this program, which was outstanding in reducing crime. The researcher contrasted their results with another study by them looking at the effectiveness of group therapy and found the results to not be as strong as the fostering program (Kelly 2009, p. 250). However, Moeller 2001 suggests that group therapy is very effective though its claims are not supported through evidence related to the claim, as their actual data collection was in an unrelated area, their opinion is based on professional experience and does not hold a great deal of validity (Moeller 2001 p.297).

However studies are available that show great results in reducing recidivism through group therapy (Taylor et al. 2009, p.396). However this same study, found that although the recidivism rate for the particular offence the individual was in therapy for was lowered significantly, recidivism for other more minor offences was still relatively high. This offence specific style of therapy is also supported by Sewell & Mendelsohn 2000 as well as Newman & Nolas 2008, however it has only been found to reduce recidivism for the particular offence being treated, and no other more general offences Sewell & Mendelsohn 2000, p. 150) (Newman & Nolas 2008, p. 145).

Imprisonment was not supported in any of the literature observed, due to the lack of evidential support in recidivism (Porter, Ten Brinke & Wilson 2009, p. 116) (Vito, Tewkbury & Higgins 2010, p. 25) (Spratt & Doob 2008, p. 623) (Kelly 2009, p. 250)

Bor 2004, suggested that treatment should be provided to aggressive youth, who display high risk factors dependent on their age group, the study suggested during the pre-school years; a better quality education and regular parental meetings was necessary- the results showed great improvement with offending rate being 7% as opposed to the 17% in young people not exposed to this program (Bor 2004, p.374). During the primary school years, it is suggested that there needs to be more of a focus on socio-ecological factors, including after school activities, community involvement and better facilities (Grunseit, Weatherburn & Donnelly 2008, p.367) (Jacob 2006, p. 57) (Wilkinson & Carr 2008, p.1032)

Finally during adolescence, it was highly recommended that family therapy is useful in strengthening family ties in this normally turbulent time (White 2003, p.340). This study was conducted with a large number of participants during a long period of time, and showed great success, though this style of intervention would be very costly and time consuming to adopt on a larger scale.

#### **4.5 Limitations**

The limitations in the area of youth aggression and antisocial behaviour are that there is not much research based in Australia, most of the relevant research conducted was in Canada and the United Kingdom, this research is relevant because of the similarities of the justice systems in each of these locations to the Australian criminal justice system. The writer did include research from the United States of America, because the majority of research into antisocial behaviour was conducted there, there was a more detailed and wide scale approach adopted. These studies were looked at with caution, and only aspects that were applicable to the Australian criminal justice system were selected to be discussed and compared. A limitation which also became apparent within the literature is the focus on male aggression and offending, there was very limited literature that focused on the female sex. It was also presumed that males and females displayed aggression in the same way; one study found this to be completely incorrect, but since there is not much room for debate as it is not an area that is widely researched as stated throughout this paper.

#### **Conclusion**

The literature addresses the key concerns in regards to the question of “Does early aggression predict whether a child will go on to be antisocial?”, there was very little text which was dedicated to answering this question in its entirety and even so a lot of the literature concentrated on one cause of concern. Having read through and evaluated the literature the writer is convinced that there has to be a broader scope of investigation to the issues of aggression and its connection to antisocial behaviour, no one factor is solely responsible for the trajectory into offending. For their own research the writer intends to examine and collect data from areas of sociological, psychological and criminological interest to form a better idea of what influences the shift from aggression to offending in youth and whether that link

can be made. Through qualitative and quantitative research into public opinion and expert knowledge the writer intends to uncover the answer to the question “Does early aggression predicts whether a child will go on to be antisocial?” by contrasting links provided by literature to own data findings. It is the aim of the final report to product quality information and an educated set of recommendations that support the practices that work to those that do not in preventing antisocial behaviour and reducing crime and victimisation.

## **Final Report**

The following final report aims to examine the data collected through public surveys and professional interviews. Comparing the findings to reviewed literature and theories. It also will determine the strengths and limitations of this study, in the process. This report also seeks to make a recommendation to future researchers and youth justice professionals, based on the findings of this report.

## **5.0 FINDINGS**

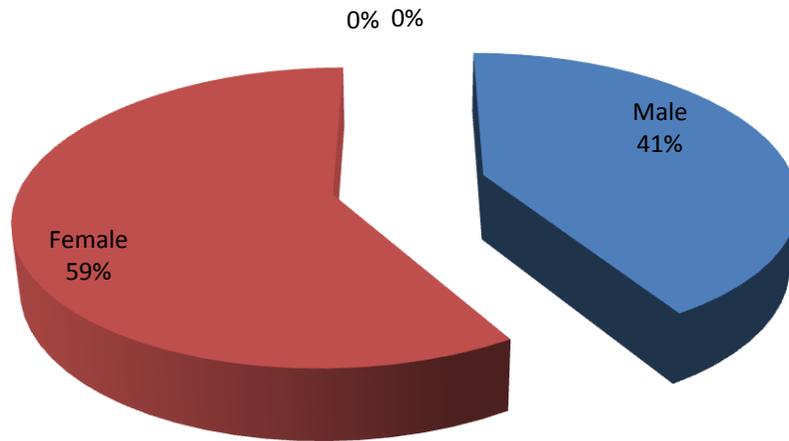
### **Survey Findings**

The following section is dedicated to stating the survey results, containing the public opinion on the research question “Does early aggression predict whether a child will go on to be Antisocial?” Only areas of major significance will be discussed, however a full set of all the data collected will be available in the ‘ Appendix IV’ section of this report. The major findings discussed in this section will be; Demographic Information, Aggression and its link to Antisocial Behaviour, Gendered Aggression and Sociological Influence of Early Aggression.

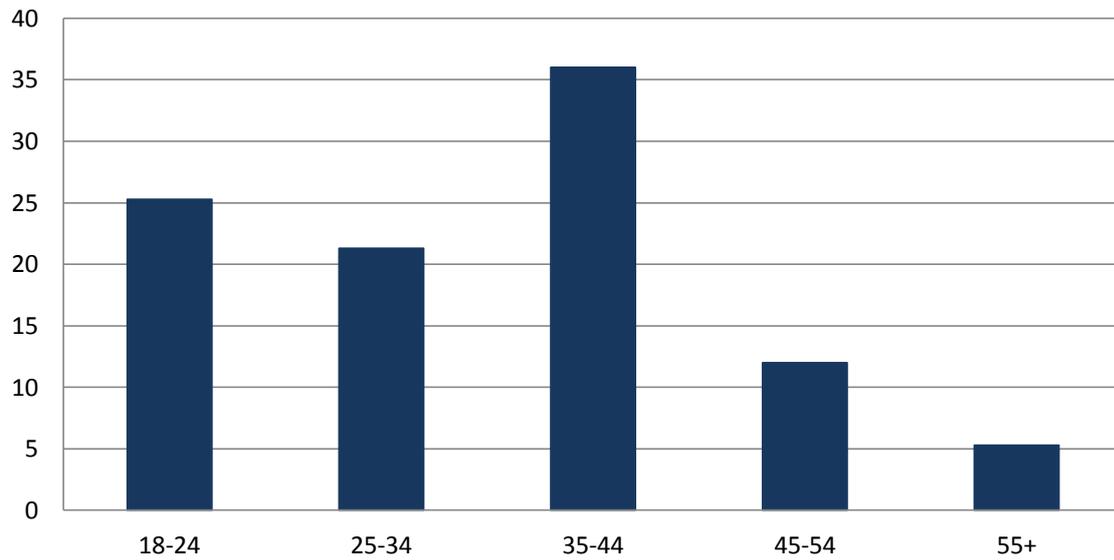
### **5.1 Demographic Information**

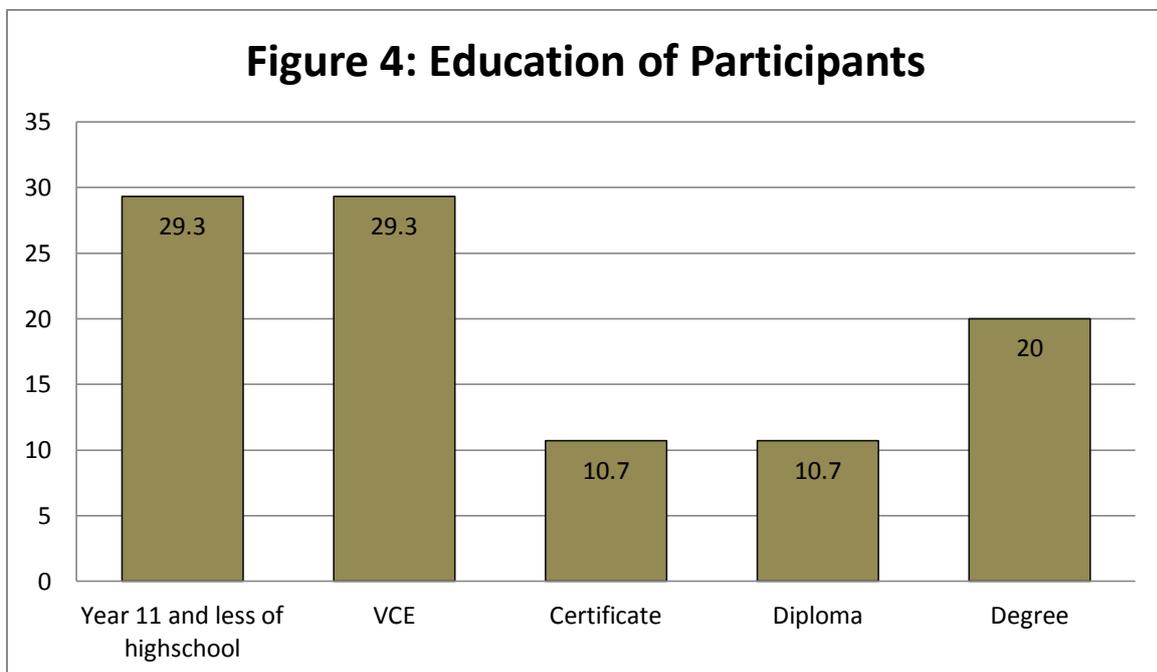
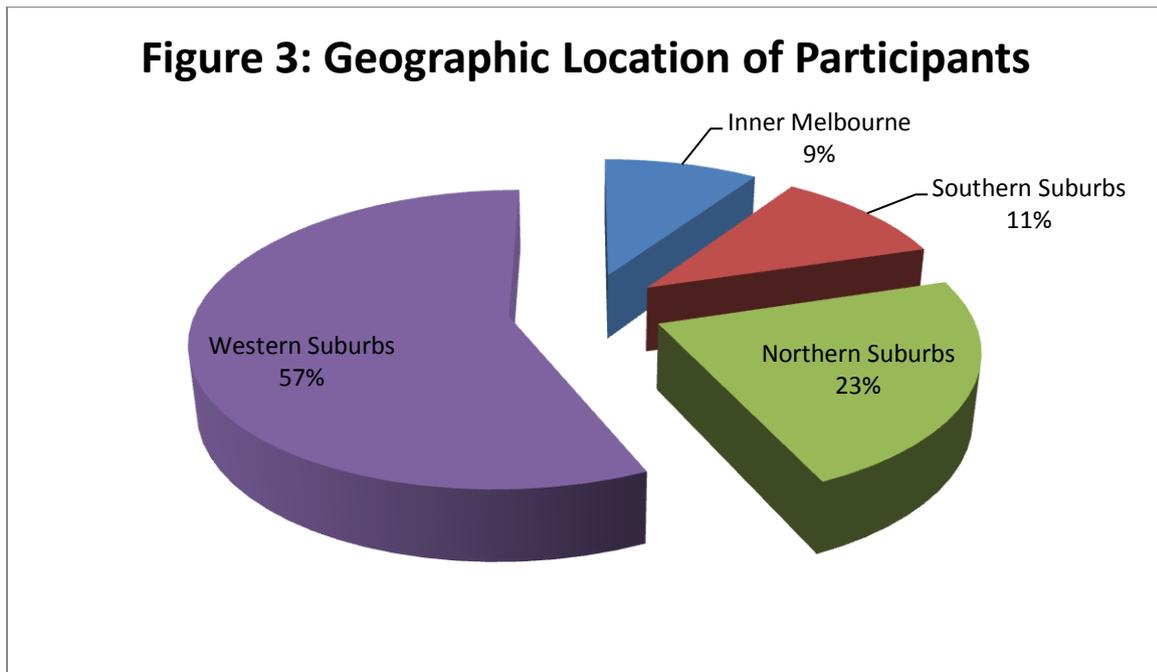
The statistical data of the participants was collected and analysed, revealing that 41.3% were male and 58.7% were female (Figure 1 “Gender of Participants”). The average age group being surveyed was between 35 to 44 years of age (36%) followed by 25.3% of participants being between the ages of 18 to 24 (Figure 2 “Age of Participants”). With 56% of the participants residing in the Western Suburbs, followed by 22.7% residing in the Northern Suburbs, 10.7% Southern Suburbs and 9.3% in Inner Melbourne (Figure 3 “Geographical location of Participants”). The average level of completed education was 'Year 11 or less of high school' and 'VCE' both amounting to 29.3% each (Figure 4 “Education of Participants”). The majority of participants held a full time position (45.3%) followed by 14.7% being in part-time employment (Figure 5 “Employment of Participants”).

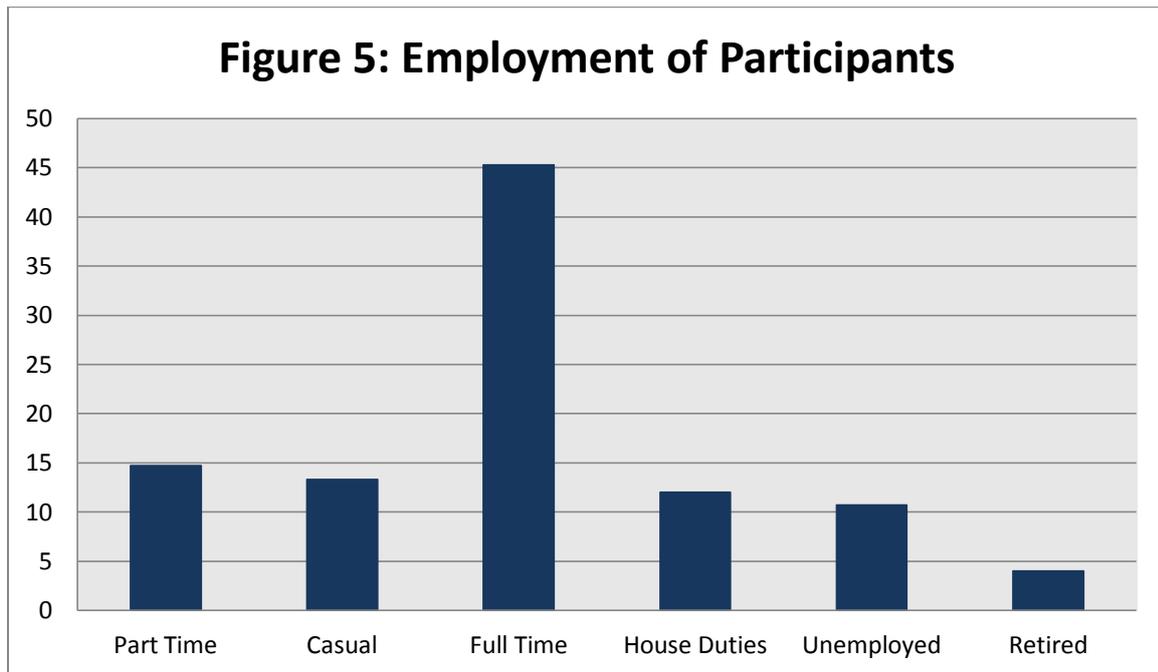
**Figure 1: Gender of Participants**



**Figure 2: Age of Participants**



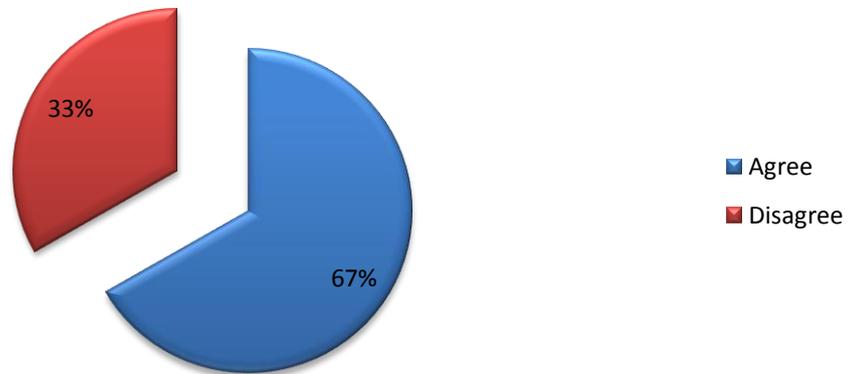




### 5.2 Aggression and its link to Antisocial Behaviour

66.7% of participants link early aggression to future antisocial behaviour (Figure 6 “Linking Early Aggression to future Antisocial behaviour”). However when requested to scale their response- this certainty waivered. 26.7% agreeing: 32.0 % claiming to be unsure and 32% disagreeing. 30.7% of participants believed that aggression as a characteristic was linked to antisocial behaviour. The majority of participants 42.7% however thought 'inattention' was a stronger characteristic to link to future antisocial behaviour.

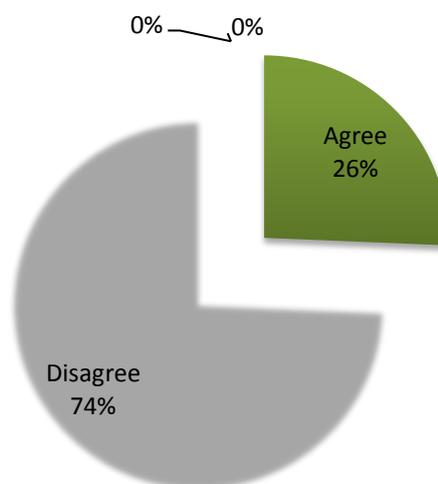
**Figure 6: Linking Early Aggression to future Antisocial behaviour**



### 5.3 Gendered Aggression

73.3% of participants believe that aggression has no link to gender (Figure 7 “Gender linked to Aggression”). Upon cross tabulation it was discovered that of those remaining 25.3% of participants that agreed- that one sex is more likely to be aggressive, 57% were male and 22% female (Figure 8 “Cross Tabulation of Gendered Aggression Results”).

**Figure 7: Gender linked to Aggression**



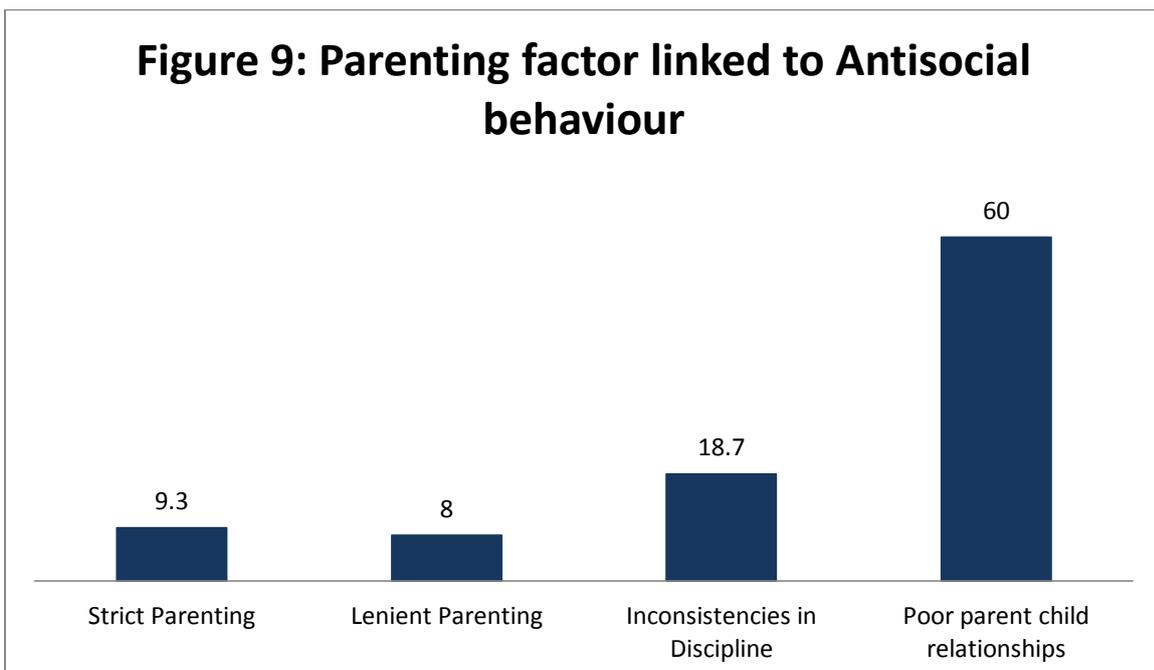
**Figure 8: Cross Tabulation of Gendered Aggression Results**

Count		eight		Total
		Agree	Disagree	
Gender	Male	11	19	30
	Female	8	36	44
Total		19	55	74

#### 5.4 Sociological Influence of Early Aggression

62.7% of participants believe that physical discipline can produce aggression. 29.3% of participants believe that parenting is the least important factor in early childhood aggression. 65.3% of participants believe that abused individuals are more likely to be aggressive. 56.0% of participants agree that untreated childhood aggression persists into adolescence. 60% of participants blame poor parent child relationships as the causal factor to antisocial behaviour; followed by 18.7% which attributed inconsistencies in discipline (Figure 9: Parenting factor linked to Antisocial behaviour”).

**Figure 9: Parenting factor linked to Antisocial behaviour**



#### Interview Findings

The following section will state the major findings from the three interviews with the youth justice professionals. Demographic information and any identifiers will not be made available, due to confidentiality reasons. From this point on the interviewees will be referred to as “Interviewee one” “Interviewee two” and “Interviewee three” for the purpose of this report. Full transcripts of the interviews will be made available in the Appendix IV section of this paper. The main findings from the interviews which will be discussed are Aggression and its link to Antisocial Behaviour, Gendered Aggression and Sociological Influence of Early Aggression.

### **5.5 Aggression and its link to Antisocial Behaviour**

There was agreement between the three professionals that, aggression was a predictor of future antisocial behaviour. However, all three were quick to point out that the degree, severity and social appropriateness of the aggressive behaviour has to be taken into consideration. All three concur that aggression, is rarely an independent behaviour and that it is usually linked to other causal factors which contribute negatively. Learning difficulties, poor parenting, modelling behaviour and abuse were among the risk factors mentioned.

### **5.6 Gendered Aggression**

In terms of gendered forms of aggression, interviewee one and three agreed that they have observed differences in the way females display aggression. Female aggression was described by interviewee one to take form in more psychological and verbal abuse rather than physical.

*“I think it’s less impulsive more planned and more long lasting perhaps in aggression towards others”- Interviewee One*

Interviewee three, drew on a biological explanation for the gender differences in aggression. He explained that males are more likely to be aggressive due to testosterone levels, though did go on to explain that females can be equally aggressive- but it is not ‘typical aggression’ as modern society would put it.

### **5.7 Sociological Influence of Early Aggression**

The professionals interviewed collectively attributed early aggression as a by-product of societal factors. Poor parent- child relationships, a lack of supervision and a problem history of abuse and neglect were among the main stated causal factors of aggression in youth.

*“I think it’s a sociological influence. In my experience, I believe it is a learned behaviour, i.e. How to be angry, how to deal with your emotions”-Interviewee Two*

Interviewee three stated that upbringing in some circumstances does not produce aggression. She found that learning difficulties caused many of the youth she worked with to act out aggressively due to frustration and when their educational needs were met the behaviour subsided.

The interviewees agreed that, the environment that an individual is raised in can spawn aggression. Lower socio-economic status was mentioned as well as violent communities. There was concern from interviewee one and two that there are not adequate services provided to people who live in more rural communities by both government and private organisations, which they attribute to further societal problems in these areas.

## 6.0 ANALYSIS

Through the analysis of the data collected the researcher aims to answer the question of “Does early aggression predict whether a child will go on to be antisocial?” Using the survey data collected, the information gathered during the professional interviews and their understanding of the revised literature and theory. The following analysis consisted of three major findings; Aggression and its link to Antisocial Behaviour, Gendered Aggression and Sociological Influence of Aggression. In the following sections results will be discussed taking all of the necessary factors into context, to answer the research question.

### 6.1 Aggression and its link to Antisocial behaviour

The survey results indicated that 66.7% of participants, linked early aggression to future antisocial behaviour. However when asked to rate the degree of risk between the two, numbers waived significantly 26.7% agreeing: 32.0 % claiming to be unsure and 32% disagreeing. These results indicate the difficulty the public had in generalising a response. This outcome was expected by the researcher, and was reflective of the findings by Bor (2004) which indicated the same result; young aggressive children are more likely to become aggressive adults, with violent and antisocial tendencies. Bor (2004) then went on to indicate that aggression was a result of poor parental modelling and negative influences by the parental figure and not an independent factor which is why the researcher believe the public’s answer dispersed in the second finding.

The interviewees also reflected this trend, all three stating that aggression is linked to further antisocial behaviour. However they all indicated that there are many other issues to consider and aggression is not a factor on its own; it is likely there are other issues which contribute to the aggression which can lead into antisocial behaviour, such as risk factors (Moeller 2009, p.99).

This was the main area of interest for the researcher in answering the proposed question, as it would directly give the opinion of the Australian public on the issue of early aggression and future antisocial behaviour. The results, as stated earlier were anticipated due to the literature reviewed by the researcher. The overall outcome indicates that as a society, participants and professionals had good knowledge of the topic and understood the difficulties of a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ response due to the many contributing factors. As stated previously, many large scale studies were also supportive of this result (Moeller 2009, p.99) (Jacob 2006, p. 57) (Grunseit, Weatherburn & Donnelly 2008, p.367).

### 6.2 Gendered Aggression

Results derived from the public survey indicate that 73.3% of participants do not believe that gender is linked to aggression. To elaborate, neither males nor females are more likely than the other to be aggressive is what this result implies. The researcher then performed a cross tabulation, to compare the male and female responses. It was found that of the male participants 57% believed that gender can influence aggression; females who shared this response were fewer in numbers (22%).

In contrast to the first finding, two of the professionals interviewed, stated that in their observations there is a gendered difference in displays of aggression. Interviewee one stating that female aggression is more emotional, indirect and less physical. This view is supported by two feminist research reports, which found that there is a major difference between the

sexes- females were found to be more emotionally and socially aggressive especially towards their mothers and partners (Jacob 2006, p.57) (Sevecke, Lehmkuhl & Krischer 2009, p.90). In contrast to male aggression which was found to be more physical and directed towards peers (Jacob 2006, p.57) (Sevecke, Lehmkuhl & Krischer 2009, p.90).

The researcher was intrigued by the survey finding very much, on face value it would appear that the majority of society views that being a certain gender is not associated with aggression. However, when examined closely the majority of the participants who did not think there was a link were female, with a large majority of the male population still being of the opinion that a specific sex is more likely to be aggressive. Interviewee three pointed out that females are just as aggressive as males, but because the aggression is not 'typical' by societal standards it is not given the same credibility of male physical aggression.

Overall though it can be seen that attitudes are changing and the gendered stereotypes of aggression are slowly evolving.

### **6.3 Sociological Influence of Early Aggression**

Public survey results indicate that 65.3% of participants believe that abuse is a major cause of aggression in youth. Other results discussed in section 5.4 of this report also reflect the opinions of the public on the importance of healthy parental relationships in preventing early aggression (for instance 62.7% of the participants surveyed believed that physical discipline can result in aggression, 60% believe poor parent- child relationships are to blame for antisocial youth). The public opinion was greatly supported by research into the area by White (2003) and Narusyte (2007). The 'Trait Theory' also supports the above finding and provides a good theoretical background for these results and gives context to further findings (Athens 1980).

This concept was analysed in more detail with the interviewed professionals, it was the aim of the researcher to gather as much information on the causal factors of aggression from professionals who have had first-hand experience in the treatment of young people.

*"I've been in communities where the aggressive behaviors are very normalized, so they might be being modeled by adults, so they think that that's okay because the role models are showing that that behavior is something that's occurring a lot. I think that if there is no intervention with an aggressive youth, especially in a community that might have quite a bit of dysfunction within it - lots of drinking, lots of domestic violence, not such support for that young person - there is a high likelihood of them getting engaged in criminal activities if they don't see anything else for themselves, other options for themselves." –Interviewee one*

As the above quote suggests, the professionals had strong opinions on the causal factors of early aggression. Sociological factors, where prominent in the discussion these included: Upbringing, parental factors, poverty, violent neighbourhoods, issues with neglect and abuse and an inadequate educational system.

From the data analysis, it is apparent the majority of the participants and the youth justice professionals concur the early aggression has an environmental and sociological basis and there is less emphasis on the more traditional biological factors. This finding is supported by a significant body of literature (Knutson, DeGarmo, Reid Wilkinson & Carr 2008) (Burt 2009) (Conroy 2006) (Brotman 2008) as well as the social disorganisation theory (Jacob 2006, p.57).

## **7.0 STRENGTHS & LIMITATIONS**

Research conducted always has its strengths and limitations; this can be due to human error, prejudices, ethical dilemmas, conflict of interest and the slightest errors which could affect the quality, integrity and reliability of the results. This report is no different; the researcher did come across both strengths and weaknesses and will state both in detail- so that the reliability of this study is transparent.

### **7.1 Strengths**

The strengths of this research were the ability of the researchers to collect all 75 surveys in a timely manner and prepare them for analysis. The data collected was quantitative and accurate. The researchers also were able to get all three youth justice professionals to agree to an interview, which was conducted successfully. There were no issues regarding ethical clearance, this made the process much faster and simpler.

The data analysis process was successful and easy as the questions were given a majority answer- which makes it easier to form conclusions on the overall public opinion. This is a strength because it narrows down the need for researchers to 'look into' statistics and derive own explanations. Considering this was an undergraduate research paper- having 78 participants in total is a fair amount and can be seen as a good portion of the general public.

### **7.2 Limitations**

The major limitation of this research was the difficulty the researcher had in interviewing a child psychologist, although a willing participant was available; the process of obtaining clearance from the minister would take months and out strict time schedule did not allow for this, it would have provided a different perspective and valuable input however. To counteract this, the researcher strongly relied on the literature of psychologists. It was also found that the professionals interviewed did not have an understanding of the theoretical aspects of youth justice, this was anticipated- but it meant that there was little verification between theory and practice. In terms of the public survey questions there were issues a couple of participants had- in understanding the questions posed. These could have been worded better, and simplified. In analysing the data results- it was discovered that there was uneven distribution of demographics- most participants residing in the Western Suburbs area even though researchers targeted several different locations within Victoria to get a varied sample.

## **8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The writer would like to extend a recommendation to guide future research into the early aggression and antisocial behaviour area. There is a need for long term studies, studies such as these are rare and but have provided richer information and validity when conducted (Prior 2000). More research based in Australia needs to be promoted, the researcher found that much of the literature was based in the United States and various other countries. The current research conducted into aggression is very much male- based and commonly assumes that females display aggression in the same way. The researcher found that studies into female aggression and criminality were poor, and literature which was available was very strongly based on feminist theory and broader knowledge is required for proper analysis. Due to the undergraduate nature of this research paper, the writer focused strongly on the public and professional opinion of the topic- however it is recommended that further studies should be completed on a case study basis to gain more substantial evidence and provide system reform

recommendations, if required. It is advisable to researchers that intend on developing on this same topic, to obtain a large sample of members of the public as well as professionals to survey and interview- and to also, interview academics with experience in youth justice. It was found that most of the professionals in this study did not have knowledge of the theoretical background of youth justice and criminology. Having the opinion of an individual who has studied the subject extensively and has had experience within the system allowed for analysis of the major theories which surround offending and antisocial behaviour. Which in turn, allow the writer to make direct recommendations to future researchers.

## **9.0 CONCLUSION**

As established throughout this report it is the ultimate aim of the researcher to answer the question of “Does early aggression predict future antisocial behaviour?”

Through the surveying process of the general public and the interviews of the youth justice professionals it was discovered that the overarching opinion was that early aggression is a precursor of future antisocial behaviour, however results show that there is awareness that this statement cannot be applied to all members of society and it is context based. It was also discovered that the opinion of the participants was that early aggression is a result of other causal factors which contribute to it; this was also confirmed by the youth justice professionals. This report also focused on the gendered form of aggression, and found that as a whole; perceived differences in male and female aggression are diminishing- however male opinion is still reflective of more traditional forms of aggression- the majority of male participants still holding the belief that aggression is linked to an individual’s sex. The significance of the in depth professional interviews gave the researcher a more detailed collection of information, which gave this report the substance it needed to link statistics and literature.

This report contains a literature review which provides a theoretical basis for the research which was conducted. The literature, gives the reader context regarding the research topic and an outline of the research achievements already established. It was found that the literature reviewed was reflective of the results found in this study, and gave the results stronger meaning- upon interpretation.

The researcher has included recommendations for further research into the topic, to help further enrich the quality of studies being performed in the area. These recommendations are based on the research findings of this report and the observed issues with the current literature. The strengths and limitations of this report are also discussed in detail, to further give this paper transparency and to aid further studies in the process.

## 10.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Articles/Books/Reports

- Athens, L (1980), *Violent criminal acts and actors: a symbolic interactionist study*: Routledge & Kegan Paul LTD.
- Bor, W (2004) 'Prevention and treatment of childhood and adolescent aggression and antisocial behaviour: a selective review', *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*. 38(5): pp. 373-380.
- Brotman, L M, Gouley, K K, Huang, K, Rosendelt, A, O'Neal, C & Klein, R G, (2008) 'Preventative Intervention for Preschoolers at High Risk for Antisocial Behaviour: Long-Term Effects on Children Physical Aggression and Parenting Practices'. *Journal of clinical child & adolescent psychology*, 37 (2) pp. 386-396.
- Burt, A, & Donnellan, B (2009) 'Development and Validation of the Subtypes of Antisocial Behaviour Questions'. *Aggressive behaviour*, (35) pp. 376-398.
- Conroy, M (2006) 'Risk management of sex offenders: a model for community intervention', *Journal of Psychiatry & Law*, 34(1):pp. 5-23.
- Corrado, R, Vincent, G, Hart, S, & Cohen, I (2004) 'Predictive validity of the Psychopathy Checklist: Youth Version for general and violent recidivism'. *Behavioural Sciences & the Law*, 22(1) pp. 5-22.
- Clark, D M, Vanyukov, M & Cornelius, J (2002) 'Childhood Antisocial Behaviour and Adolescent Alcohol Use Disorders'. *Alcohol research and health*, 26(2) pp.109-115.
- Downing, K, Stepney, P, & Jordan, B (2000) 'Violent Youth Crime: rhetoric, research and the responsibilities of government'. *Educational Studies (03055698)*, 26(1) pp. 67-82.
- Downing, K, Stepney, P, & Jordan, B (2000) 'Violent Youth Crime: rhetoric, research and the responsibilities of government'. *Educational Studies (03055698)*, 26(1) pp. 67-82.
- Donnellan, M, Trzesniewski, K, Robins, R, Moffitt, T, & Caspi, A(2005) 'Low Self-Esteem Is Related to Aggression, Antisocial Behaviour, and Delinquency'. *Psychological Science*, 16(4) pp. 328-335.
- Fougere, A, Potter, S, & Boutilier, J (2009) 'Psychopathy and offence severity in sexually aggressive and violent youth'. *Criminal Behaviour & Mental Health*, 19(4) pp. 247-252.
- Grunseit, A, Weatherburn, D, & Donnelly, N (2008) 'Correlates of physical violence at school: A multilevel analysis of Australian high school students'. *Australian Journal of Social Issues*: 43(4): pp. 527-545.
- Herrenkohl, T, Hill, K, Ick-Joang Chung, J, Guo, R, Abbott, J, & Hawkins (2003) 'Protective factors against serious violent behaviour in adolescence: A prospective study of aggressive children', *Social Work Research*, 27(3) pp. 179-191.
- Jacob, JC (2006) 'Male and Female Youth Crime in Canadian Communities: Assessing the Applicability of Social Disorganization Theory'. *Canadian Journal of Criminology & Criminal Justice*. 48(1): pp. 31-60.
- Kelly, P (2008, October). 'Treating the juvenile offender. Review of Treating the Juvenile Offender' *Choice*, pp.1-397.

- Kring, AM, Johnson, SL, Davidson, GC & Neale, JM (2010), *Abnormal Psychology*. (11<sup>th</sup> ed.), Melbourne: John Wiley & Sons Inc.
- Knutson, J, DeGarmo, D, & Reid, J (2004) 'Social disadvantage and neglectful parenting as precursors to the development of antisocial and aggressive child behaviour: Testing a theoretical model'. *Aggressive Behaviour*, 30(3):pp. 187-205.
- Långström, N, & Grann, M (2002) 'Psychopathy and violent recidivism among young criminal offenders', *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica. Supplementum*, 106: pp. 86-92.
- Lake, VE (2004) 'Profile of an aggressor: childhood bullies evolve into violent youths', *Early Child Development & Care*, 174(6) pp. 527-537.
- Lake, VE (2004) 'Profile of an aggressor: childhood bullies evolve into violent youths', *Early Child Development & Care*, 174(6) pp. 527-537.
- Moeller, GT (2001), *Youth Aggression and Violence*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.
- Moffitt, T E (1993) 'Adolescence-Limited and Life-Course-Persistent Antisocial Behaviour: A Developmental Taxonomy'. *American Psychological Association*, 100(4) pp. 674-701.
- Myers, W, Heng Choon, C, VO, E, & Lazarou, E (2010) 'Sexual sadism, psychopathy, and recidivism in juvenile sexual murderers', *Journal of Investigative Psychology & Offender Profiling*, 7(1): pp. 49-58.
- Moeller, GT (2001), *Youth Aggression and Violence*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.
- Murrie, D, Cornell, D, Kaplan, S, McConville, D, & Levy-Elkon, A (2004) 'Psychopathy scores and violence among juvenile offenders: a multi-measure study', *Behavioral Sciences & the Law*, 22(1) pp. 49-67.
- Newman, M, & Nolas, S (2008) 'Innovation in therapeutic practice with 'violent youth': A discourse analysis of the non-violent resistance approach', *Counselling & Psychotherapy Research*, 8(3) pp. 141-150.
- Narusyte, J Andershed, AK Neiderhiser, JM & Lichtenstein P (2007) 'Aggression as a mediator of genetic contributions to the association between negative partner- child relationships and adolescent antisocial behaviour' *European Child Adolescent Psychiatry*, 16:pp. 128-137.
- Ono, Y, & Pumariega, A (2008) 'Violence in youth', *International Review of Psychiatry*, 20(3) pp. 305-316.
- Porter, S, Ten Brinke, L, & Wilson, K (2009) 'Crime profiles and conditional release performance of psychopathic and non-psychopathic sexual offenders', *Legal & Criminological Psychology*, 14(1) pp. 109-118.
- Piquero, AR Fagan, J Mulvey, 'EP Steinberg, L & Odgers, C. (2005) Developmental Trajectories Of Legal Socialization Among Serious Adolescent Offenders'. *Journal of Criminal Law & Criminology*, 96(1): pp.267-298.
- Penney, S, & Moretti, M (2007) 'The relation of psychopathy to concurrent aggression and antisocial behaviour in high-risk adolescent girls and boys', *Behavioural Sciences & the Law*. 25(1): pp. 21-41.

Prior, M, Sanson, A, Smart, P & Oberklaid, F(2000) 'Pathways from infancy to adolescence: Australian Temperament Project 1983-2000'. *Australian Institute of Family Studies*, 1447-1469.

Raine, A, Dodge, K, Loeber, R, Gatzke-Kopp, L, Lynam, D, Reynolds, C, Stouthamer-Loeber, M, & Jianghong, L (2006) 'The reactive–proactive aggression questionnaire: differential correlates of reactive and proactive aggression in adolescent boys', *Aggressive Behaviour*. 32(2): pp. 159-171.

Sevecke, K, Lehmkuhl, G, & Krischer, M (2009) 'Examining relations between psychopathology and psychopathy dimensions among adolescent female and male offenders', *European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 18(2) pp. 85-95.

Sprott, J, & Doob, A (2008) 'Youth Crime Rates and the Youth Justice System'. *Canadian Journal of Criminology & Criminal Justice*, 50(5) pp. 621-639.

Sewell, K, & Mendelsohn, M (2000) 'Profiling Potentially Violent Youth: Statistical and Conceptual Problems'. *Children's Services: Social Policy, Research & Practice*, 3(3) pp. 147-169.

Sampson, R J, & Laub J H (1995), ' Understanding Variability in Lives through Time: Contributions of Life-Course Criminology'. *Studies on crime and crime prevention*, 4(2) pp. 143-158.

Taylor, J, Kemper, T, Loney, B, & Kistner, J (2009) 'Recidivism in subgroups of severe male juvenile offenders', *Psychology, Crime & Law*, 15(5) pp. 395-408.

Vito, G Tewksbury, R & Higgins, G (2010) 'Evaluation of Kentucky's Early Inmate Release Initiative: Sentence Commutations', *Public Safety and Recidivism1*, 1: pp.22-26.

Van Outsem, R, Beckett, R, Bullens, R, Vermeiren, R, van Horn, J, & Doreleijers, T (2006) 'The Adolescent Sexual Abuser Project (ASAP) Assessment Measures—Dutch Revised Version: A comparison of personality characteristics between juvenile sex offenders, juvenile perpetrators of non-sexual violent offences and non-delinquent youth in t..', *Journal of Sexual Aggression*, 12(2): pp. 127-141.

Wilkinson, D, & Carr, P (2008) 'Violent youths' responses to high levels of exposure to community violence: what violent events reveal about youth violence'. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 36(8): pp. 1026-1051.

White, H, & Widom, C (2003) 'Intimate partner violence among abused and neglected children in young adulthood: The mediating effects of early aggression, antisocial personality, hostility and alcohol problems'. *Aggressive Behaviour*, 29(4) pp. 332-345.

Walter, M (2006) '*Social research methods: an Australian perspective*'. Oxford university press. Australia, pp 80-222.

White, H, & Widom, C (2003) 'Intimate partner violence among abused and neglected children in young adulthood: The mediating effects of early aggression, antisocial personality, hostility and alcohol problems'. *Aggressive Behaviour*, 29(4) pp. 332-345.

**APPENDIX I**  
**Ethical Application & Clearance**

Higher Education Division  
Application Form for Ethical Clearance for Research Involving Human Participants

**ALL QUESTIONS MUST BE ANSWERED**

<b>Name of Researcher:</b> Jana Trajkovska
<b>Project Title:</b> Does early aggression predict whether a child will go on to be antisocial?

<b>Supervisor/Lecturer</b>	Mirian Meade
----------------------------	--------------

	Telephone	Fax	Email
<b>Contact details of student researcher</b>	██████	-	██████
<b>Contact details of Supervisor/Lecturer</b>	██████	-	██████

<b>Degree Enrolled:</b> Bachelor of Social Science (Criminal Justice)
---

<b>Project Location:</b>	Navitas College of Public Safety 400 Queen Street Melbourne, 3000	<b>Project Duration:</b>	13 Weeks
--------------------------	--	--------------------------	----------

<b>A. Is this submission identical or very similar to a previously approved protocol?</b>	<b>YES/NO</b>
If <b>YES</b> , please provide clearance number <b>and</b> indicate whether identical or very similar:	

**PLEASE ANSWER ALL OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:**

<b>1) Who are the participants or informants?:</b> eg, university students, or other persons. <b>Note:</b> Details of approximate number, age range, and male/female ratios are required.
I will be interviewing three professionals that have had professional experience with antisocial youth.
I will also be interviewing 75 members of the general public, these will be selected at random in various
locations around Victoria. I will only survey members of the public who are over 18 years of age and I will
not be setting maximum age limit. It will be the aim of the data collection to get approximately 50% male
and 50% female participants, to better reflect the public opinion.

<b>2) Participant recruitment details:</b> Please provide exact details of contact.
██████████
██████████
██████████

<b>3) In <u>EVERY-DAY</u> or <u>LAY LANGUAGE</u> please provide a summary of the project – including aims and benefit: This section <u>MUST</u> be completed in <u>LAY LANGUAGE</u> and attach Plain Language Statement.</b>
The aim of this data collection, via surveys and interviews is to better understand the link between early
aggression in children and whether it is a predictor into future anti-social behaviour.
I have studied the theoretical background of youth offending and current research into the area, via
academic literature, however I would like to form a direct answer to the question proposed through

Current societal and professional opinion.

I anticipate that this report will benefit the field of youth justice and corrections as aggression as an early

predictor is not well established in literature.

**4) Give details of the research plan and attach proposal with this information:**

Note: The committee needs sufficient information to put into context the ethical considerations listed in later questions.

Note: This section should be completed in LAY LANGUAGE *as much as possible* so that it can be understood and appreciated by all Committee Members.

I intent to commence data collection on the 21<sup>st</sup> of March 2011 (week 7) and complete data collection by

the 3<sup>rd</sup> of April 2011 (week 8). My research group and I will be conducting surveys in public spaces, that

are safe and well lit. The participants will be given a plain language statement and a consent form to

Sign, which will be collected. Followed by the survey questions, which will be collected upon completion.

The professionals being interviewed will also be given a plain language statement and consent form.

The interview will then commence which will be recorded on paper and recorded via a tape recorder.

**5) Give details of the ethical considerations attached to the proposed project:**

e.g. consent, conflict of interest, cultural considerations, confidentiality, level of risk.

All participants will be given information on the research being conducted, through verbal communication

and plain language statements, they will then be required to sign a consent form to participate in the

study. This procedure will allow the participants to be fully informed of the details of their involvement.
Participants confidentiality is key in the data collection process, in no way are the survey answers going
to be linked to the participants identifying details, these forms will be kept separately in order to de-identify
the participant's responses. There is no level of risk associated with this study, the questions proposed are
not controversial or in any way culturally or otherwise offensive. Pregnant women will not be interviewed
as a general precaution, and to avoid any risk.

<b>6) How will informed consent be obtained from participants or informants?</b>
Participants will be informed verbally of what the study involves and if they wish to proceed that they are
required to take a look at the plain language statement and sign the consent form, in order to proceed.
Participants will also be informed that they can withdraw at any time and are not obligated to proceed with
The survey.

<b>7) Provide details of procedures for establishing confidentiality and protecting privacy of participants or informants:</b>
Data collected will be de-identified via the separation of consent form and survey, which will be kept in
<b>different</b> folders. There will be no way to link the participants response to their personal data.

--

<b>8) Provide details of data security, storage and disposal:</b>
Data whilst being analysed for the final report will be kept on password protected
Computers and laptops. Data will be stored at the Navitas College of Public Safety for 5 years before being destroyed.

<b>9) In what form will the data be collected:</b> Note: Tick the most appropriate box:
(i) Identified <input type="checkbox"/> (ii) Potentially Identifiable <input type="checkbox"/> (iii) De-Identified <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

<b>10) In what form will the data be stored and/or accessed:</b> Note: Tick the most appropriate box:
(i) Identified <input type="checkbox"/> (ii) Potentially Identifiable <input type="checkbox"/> (iii) De-Identified <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

<b>11) Give details of how feedback will be available to participants or informants:</b>
General public participants will be given the research groups contact email, on the plain language statement. If they wish to view the final report, they will be sent a copy upon request.
In regards to the professionals being interviewed they will automatically receive a copy of the report, as courtesy for giving their time to participate.

**12) Does the project involve any of the following possibilities? Answer YES or NO. If YES, give details.**

a) The possibility of physical stress/distress, or discomfort

1. to the participants:

No, there is no reason why participants will be physically discomforted by the survey/ interviewing experience. It involves no physical activity, and the participant's personal space will not be interfered with. Only participants willing to give up their time to participate will be engaged and there will be no coaxing of members of the public or professions to participate.

2. to the researchers/data collectors:

No, as researchers we will not be physically involved in any activity which will bring risk or discomfort to Ourselves. We will merely be asking questions and handing out surveys.

b) The possibility of psychological/mental stress/distress, or discomfort

1. to the participants:

No, the questions neutral and non- emotive. There is no perceivable reason that a participant man be distressed.

2. to the researchers/data collectors:

No, the researchers are not emotionally linked to the research question. It is a professional interest and it will be conducted professionally.

c) Deception of/or withholding information from, participant at **ANY** stage of the project

No, there is no reason to be withholding any information from the participants, this study is transparent and only seeks the opinion of the participants.

d) Access to data held by a Commonwealth Department or Agency (Please also specify the number of records to be accessed)

[www.internetjournalofcriminology.com](http://www.internetjournalofcriminology.com)

No, data will not be collected that is not sourced from surveys or interviews conducted by us, the researchers. No data from any government agency will be accepted as it is problematic and does not aid in answering our research question.

e) Access to data by bodies or people other than the investigators (eg, Medical Records)

No, data will not be collected that is not sourced by from surveys or interviews conducted by us, the researchers. No data from any organisation will be collected as it is problematic to the investigation and does not answer our research question.

f) Use of questionnaires, interviews, or focus groups with questions or topics which are sensitive, have potential to cause distress, or may reveal illegal activity

No, the questions are specifically non-emotive. The aim of this was to not produce skewed results, due to 'shock inducing language'.

**13)** Please Indicate What You Think Is The Level Of Risk For Prospective Participants Against The Scale Below: *Tick the most appropriate box.*

- Extreme Risk
- High Risk
- Some Risk
- Minimal Risk
- No Foreseeable Added Risk Above the Risks of Everyday Living

**14)** Please provide details to assist the committee as to why you indicated the level of risk to prospective participants or informants in the question above (Question 13):

There is no foreseeable risk, all we will be doing is conducting voluntary surveys and interviews about a

topic which is not controversial or in any way upsetting. This will be done in a public well lit area

during the day time, in order to remain safe. The group will also be working together with a minimum

of two researchers collecting data at a time.

**15) In undertaking this research do any “conflict of interest” issues arise?**

If YES, please provide details.

Note: Conflict of Interest may arise, for example, because a researcher, or someone close to the researcher, stands to benefit financially from the research or the carrying out of the project or because inconsistent or incompatible obligations exist.

No, there is no identified conflict of interest. If the researchers suspect that a participant is somehow

bias, they will be excluded from the study.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- 1) Participant Consent Form
- 2) Plain Language Statement
- 3) Research Tools/Instruments (eg. questionnaire)
- 4) Proposal
- 5) Other - please specify \_\_\_\_\_

Yes/No  
Yes/No  
Yes/No  
Yes/No

**DECLARATION**

I / we, the undersigned, declare the following:

I / we accept responsibility for the conduct of the research detailed above in accordance with the principles outlined in the *National Statement* and the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*.

I / we undertake to conduct this research project in accordance with the protocols and procedures as approved by the Navitas College of Public Safety’s Ethics Committee.

I/we undertake to conduct this research in accordance with relevant legislation and regulations.

**Signature of Researcher:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** / /

**Signature of Supervisor (if applicable):** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** / /

**Submission of Research Protocols for Ethical Clearance  
APPLICATION CHECKLIST**

This checklist is supplied for use as an additional means of ensuring all aspects of the proposed study have been considered and adequately detailed before submission to the reviewing Ethics Committee. A copy may be attached to the original application form for the reviewing Committee to support your submission.

Project Title: Does early aggression predict whether a child will go on to be antisocial?

Researcher: Jana Trajkovska

**Participant Information Sheet (PIS)**

	YES	NO	IF NO, WHY?
1. Version for each participant group ( <i>if applicable</i> )	X		
2. On letter-headed paper ( <i>if applicable</i> )	X		
3. Full title of project	X		
4. Lay title of project ( <i>if applicable</i> )			
5. Names, positions & affiliations of all investigators	X		
6. Clear purpose of study	X		
7. Non-technical language	X		
8. Details of participation/ procedures	X		
9. Duration of participation	X		
10. Location for participation	X		
11. Risks outlined	X		

(% explanation needed?)			
12 Benefits to participants	X		
13 What support if something goes wrong		X	
14. Freedom to withdraw without penalty	X		
15. Assurance of confidentiality	X		
16. Access to results	X		
17. Debriefing	X		
18. Reimbursement to participants		X	Not necessary
19. Need for Witnesses	X		
20. Contact details for further questions	X		
21. Ethical clearance statement	X		

**Participant Consent Form (PCF)**

	YES	NO	IF NO, WHY?
1. Version for each participant group (if applicable)	X		
2. Full title of project	X		
3. Lay title of project (if applicable)	X		
4. Names, positions & affiliations of all investigators	X		
5. Provision of space for full name of participant	X		
6. Written declaration of informed consent, eg, "I have read/"I understand..."	X		
7. Freedom to withdraw without penalty	X		
8. Assurance of confidentiality	X		
9. No benefit for participation	X		
10. Provision for signature of participant	X		

11. Provision for signature of witness and date	X		
12 Provision for signature of guardian, relationship to participant and date		X	No, under 18 participants allowed. Therefore no need for guardian signature.

**APPENDIX II  
Research Proposal**

**Research Proposal**

Student Name: Jana Trajkovska  
Student Number: ██████████  
Date: Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> March, 2010

Group Names	Student Numbers
<u>Lisa Walsh</u>	
<u>Melissa Atieh</u>	
<u> </u>	
<u> </u>	

**1. Research Area (Please tick)**  
 Treatment    Legal and Judicial    Law Enforcement    Corrections/Youth Justice

Corrections/Youth Justice

**2. Research Question - In this section students need to state the research QUESTION**  
Does early aggression predict whether a child will go on to be antisocial?

**3. Evidence to Establish a Problem Exists**

---

**In this section students need to demonstrate that the proposed area of research is perceived as a problem by others as well as the students. This can be done by providing readings that concur (agree). (readings can be attached and/or a reference list)**

The research and readings found that many theorists followed the structure of the early work by Moffitt (1993), in which proposed two main ideas regarding early aggression and later antisocial behavior; Adolescent limited and Life-course-persistent. Circulating these main theories, the understanding of the onset of early aggression was stable across the research by the work of (Moffitt 1993, Burt & Donnellan 2009, White & Widom 2003, Sampson & Laub 1995).

Much of the predicament & opposing views derived from the research surrounded the notion of, does the individual who suffers from early aggression in fact go on to commit antisocial behavior, and if so what contextual & causational factors alongside early aggression further influences and intensifies aggression into leading a individual to commit antisocial behavior/acts (Brotman & 2008, Clark et al 2002, Downing et al 2000, Lake 2004, Moffitt 1993, Moeller 2001).

#### **4. Research Design (Please tick)**

**In this section students need to articulate what they intend to do. Keep in mind that this is a request for approval of this method and any changes need to be approved via amendments forms.**

Choice of Methodology

- Case Study (List the number of surveys and interviews and/ or other methods)
- Action Research (List the number of surveys and interviews and/ or other methods)

- Interviews 3 Number
- Survey 75 Number

- Other comments;

Three individual 1 hour Interviews to be conducted with professionals. Interviews will be made up of 35 open and closed questions.

Seventy-five surveys, which will consist of 20 questions that will include a variety of multiple choice questions, scaling questions for the general public to fill in.

---

#### **5. Rationale for Method**

**In this section students need to demonstrate an understanding of the difference between qualitative and quantitative research. Students MUST quote from Research literature to build a strong rationale and explanation of the choice of design. (readings and/or reference list can be attached.**

Our qualitative research will surround the examination of the information derived from the interviewees (Walter 2006, p 189-222). This will provide us, the researches with expert information and opinion regarding firsthand experience and knowledge in the field of working with young juveniles who have come in contact with the juvenile justice system at an early age, (or juveniles in general) influences of what contextual factors either caused their behaviour or influenced it, their perspective on early aggressive behaviour, its time frame and any other information regarding establishing whether there is an correlation between early aggressive behaviour and later antisocial offending.

Quantitative data will be derived from the figures and statistics from the surveys (Walter 2006, p 86-100). This will give the researches an insight into the public's perspective on why they early aggression begins (whether it be genetic, method of upbringing and so on), whether they believe certain contextual factors play a major role in continuing aggressive behaviour and if or if not early aggressive behaviour leads to any form of antisocial behaviour/ later offending. In hindsight questions for both surveys will be structured to focus on determining various perspectives on the issue, which is deterring if there is a correlation between the contextual factor of early aggression and later offending, being antisocial behaviour.

(Refer to attached reference list)

## 6. Group Management Plan

In this section group members should write **as much information as possible** regarding agreements that are made between students. This relates particularly to tasks like data collection and processing, management of literature and analysis. Be as clear as possible and remember this plan is a group management plan which can be used to assist the lecturer in establishing where and with whom projects have encountered difficulties.

Group Member	Role	Responsibilities
Jana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collecting research</li> <li>Brainstorming ideas for further research, survey questions, interviewee questions, ethics, proposal, consent form &amp; plain statement</li> <li>Group work- write up a rough copy of proposal, ethics, consent form, surveys and interview questions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assemble and type up interviewee questions with Melissa and Lisa</li> <li>Assist in formulating survey questions</li> <li>Type up good copy of ethical</li> <li>Interview professional 1 (with other team member)</li> <li>Assist typing up interview</li> <li>Hand out 25 surveys across district</li> <li>Type up own transcript and findings</li> </ul>

<p>Lisa</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collecting research</li> <li>• Brainstorming ideas for further research, survey questions, interviewee questions, ethics, proposal, consent form &amp; plain statement</li> <li>• Group work- write up a rough copy of proposal, ethics, consent form, surveys and interview questions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formulate and type up survey questions</li> <li>• Formulate and type up of consent form and plain statement</li> <li>• Assemble and type up interviewee questions with Melissa and Jana</li> <li>• Interview professional 2 (with other team member)</li> <li>• Assist in typing up Interviews</li> <li>• Hand out 25 surveys</li> <li>• Type up own transcript</li> </ul>
<p>Melissa</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collecting research</li> <li>• Brainstorming ideas for further research, survey questions, interviewee questions, ethics, proposal, consent form &amp; plain statement</li> <li>• Group work- write up a rough copy of proposal, ethics, consent form, surveys and interview questions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assemble and type up interviewee questions with Jana and Lisa</li> <li>• Assist in assembling survey questions</li> <li>• Type up good copy of proposal</li> <li>• Interview professional 3(with other team member)</li> <li>• Hand out 25 surveys</li> <li>• Assist with typing up interviews</li> <li>• Type up own transcript</li> </ul>

## 7. Timeframes

Please complete a very, very detailed time management plan for each of the following weeks. This should be based on the syllabus include a break down of days, times, hours including days put aside for SPSS and interviews.

Week	Tasks
4	
TUESDAY	10am meeting: research and performance discussion. CLASS Lit review work
THURSDAY	10am meeting: research and performance discussion. CLASS Hand in lit review
SUNDAY	9pm meeting: research and performance discussion Draft proposal, ethics, survey questions, interviewee questions & plain statement
5	
MONDAY	Write up good copy of the proposal, ethics, survey questions, interviewee questions & consent/ plain statement.
TUESDAY	10am meeting: research and performance discussion. CLASS Hand in final copy of the above.
WEDNESDAY	Each group member to contact an interviewee and arrange a time and place for the interview to take place.
THURSDAY	10am meeting: research and performance discussion. CLASS Organize strategies towards distributing surveys, i.e. who, where (Location), time. Organize a date when to bring together all survey forms.
6	
TUESDAY	10am meeting: research and performance discussion. CLASS Receive acceptance of question.

THURSDAY	10am meeting: research and performance discussion. CLASS Begin the distribution of surveys once consent has been given.
7 TUESDAY & THURSDAY  MONDAY, WEDNESDA & FRIDAY	10am meeting: research and performance discussion. CLASS  Interviews and survey distribution Start typing interview transcripts
8 Monday TUESDAY   THURSDAY  FRIDAY	Typing up of transcripts of interviews 10am meeting: research and performance discussion. CLASS END DATE FOR ANY INTERVIEWS AND SURVEYS.  10 am meeting: research and performance assessment. CLASS Collection of all data today.  1pm meeting: entering in data
9 TUESDAY THURSDAY  FRIDAY	10 am meeting: performance assessment. CLASS Entering in all data Entering in all data 1pm meeting: FINAL DAY to enter in all data
10 MONDAY TUESDAY  WEDNESDAY THURSDAY	Start writing final report. CLASS.  Writing up final report CLASS.

**References:**

Brotman, L M, Gouley, K K, Huang, K, Rosendelt, A, O’Neal, C & Klein, R G, (2008)  
‘Preventative Intervention for Preschoolers at High Risk for Antisocial Behaviour: Long-

- Term Effects on Children Physical Aggression and Parenting Practices'. *Journal of clinical child & adolescent psychology*, 37 (2) pp. 386-396.
- Burt, A, & Donnellan, B (2009) 'Development and Validation of the Subtypes of Antisocial Behaviour Questions'. *Aggressive behaviour*, (35) pp. 376-398.
- Clark, D M, Vanyukov, M & Cornelius, J (2002) 'Childhood Antisocial Behaviour and Adolescent Alcohol Use Disorders'. *Alcohol research and health*, 26(2) pp.109-115.
- Downing, K, Stepney, P, & Jordan, B (2000) 'Violent Youth Crime: rhetoric, research and the responsibilities of government'. *Educational Studies (03055698)*, 26(1) pp. 67-82.
- Lake, VE (2004) 'Profile of an aggressor: childhood bullies evolve into violent youths', *Early Child Development & Care*, 174(6) pp. 527-537.
- Moeller, GT (2001), *Youth Aggression and Violence*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.
- Moffitt, T E (1993) 'Adolescence-Limited and Life-Course-Persistent Antisocial Behaviour: A Developmental Taxonomy'. *American Psychological Association*, 100(4) pp. 674-701.
- Sampson, R J, & Laub J H (1995), ' Understanding Variability in Lives through Time: Contributions of Life-Course Criminology'. *Studies on crime and crime prevention*, 4(2) pp. 143-158.
- Walter, M (2006) '*Social research methods: an Australian perspective*'. Oxford university press. Australia, pp 80-222.
- White, H, & Widom, C (2003) 'Intimate partner violence among abused and neglected children in young adulthood: The mediating effects of early aggression, antisocial personality, hostility and alcohol problems'. *Aggressive Behaviour*, 29(4) pp. 332-345.

## APPENDIX III

### Documents

#### Plain Language Statement

##### *Does early aggression predict whether a child will go on to be antisocial?*

You are invited to participate in a research project, which is being conducted by students of Navitas College of Public Safety. This research forms a part of the degree in Social Science (Criminal Justice), undertaken by the researchers Jana Trajkovska, Lisa Walsh and Melissa Atieh as a core subject of the course. The project was overseen by the lecturer Mirian Meade.

The purpose of this study is to investigate early aggression as a prediction to antisocial behaviour later in life.

If you agree to participate, you will be required to either partake in an interview or to fill in a survey. Interview will approximately be one hour and the survey will take approximately ten minutes of your time and no further participation is needed once interview or survey is completed. Please take note interviews will be voiced recorded.

Please note all data collected as a part of the research will be analysed and collated for the final report and any information gathered will be stored securely by Navitas College of Public Safety, for a period of five years. All personal information will be used in a confidential manner and at no time will any information be disclosed unless explicit consent is given by the participant.

If interested in receiving a copy of the final report, this will be available once the final report is completed and the appropriate section on the consent form has been completed.

Your participation is completely voluntary and no time will any reimbursement for time be provided, also all participants are able to withdraw at any point of time without discrimination.

Any complaints are to be directed at Mirian Meade on (03) 8327 2600. All other inquires can be directed to Lisa Walsh on 0408959080 or email: [lisa\\_2walsh@yahoo.com.au](mailto:lisa_2walsh@yahoo.com.au)

Thank you for your time and participation,

Lisa Walsh; Jana Trajkovska and Melissa Atieh.

## **CONSENT FORM**

### ***Does early aggression predict whether a child will go on to be antisocial?***

You are invited to participate in a research project, which is being conducted by students of Navitas College of Public Safety. This research forms a part of the degree in Social Science (Criminal Justice), undertaken by the researchers Jana Trajkovska, Lisa Walsh and Melissa Atieh as a core subject of the course. The project was overseen by the lecturer Mirian Meade.

The purpose of this study is to investigate early aggression as a prediction to antisocial behaviour later in life.

If you agree to participate, you will be required to either partake in an interview or to fill in a survey. Interview will approximately be one hour and the survey will take approximately ten minutes of your time and no further participation is needed once interview or survey is completed. Please take note interviews will be voiced recorded.

Please note all data collected as a part of the research will be analysed and collated for the final report and any information gathered will be stored securely by Navitas College of Public Safety, for a period of five years. All personal information will be used in a confidential manner and at no time will any information be disclosed unless explicit consent is given by the participant.

If interested in receiving a copy of the final report, please provide your email address below and we will be happy to provide it to you.

Email

Address:

Your participation is completely voluntary and there will be no reimbursement for time being provided, also all participants are able to withdraw at any point of time without discrimination. Any complaints are to be directed at Mirian Meade on (03) 8327 2600. All other inquires can be directed to Lisa Walsh on 0408959080 or email: [lisa\\_2walsh@yahoo.com.au](mailto:lisa_2walsh@yahoo.com.au)

I \_\_\_\_\_ consent to volunteer my time to participate in this research project and understand all information will be handled confidentially. I also am aware of the grievance process whereby if i wish to withdraw all participation am able to do so.

Thank you for your time and participation,

Lisa Walsh; Jana Trajkovska and Melissa Atieh.

## Survey Questionnaire

**Please Note:** Antisocial behaviour refers to actions that deviate from the norms of society which infringe on the rights of others and violate laws.

### General information

1. What is your gender?  M  F
2. Please circle your age group?  
 18-24  25-34  35-44  45-54  55+
3. What is the area you reside in?  
 Inner Melbourne  Northern Suburbs  
 Southern Suburbs  Western Suburbs
4. What is your highest level of completed education?  
 Year 11 or less of High School  VCE  
 Certificate  Diploma  
 Degree  Masters
5. What is your employment status?  
 Part-Time  Casual  Full-Time  
 House Duties  Unemployed  Retired

### Aggression

6. Is aggression between the ages 1 year to 8 years linked to future antisocial behaviour in a child?  
 Agree  Disagree
7. Can physical discipline produce aggression in children?  
 Agree  Disagree
8. Do you believe gender of the child plays a part whether they will be aggressive?  
 Agree  Disagree
9. Which of the following has the least impact in the development of early childhood aggression?  
 Family Upbringing  Biological factors  
 Community influence  Psychological problems

**10. If a child is aggressive at a young age will they become antisocial later in life?**

<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree	

**11. Is showing aggression at a young age seen to be a general part of development?**

<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree	

**12. Is untreated early childhood aggression seen to carry on throughout the adolescent period?**

<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree	

**Antisocial**

**13. Do you think antisocial behaviour is a phase some adolescence go through in their life?**

<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree
--------------------------------	-----------------------------------

**14. What do you think contributes to the development of antisocial behaviour?**

<input type="checkbox"/> Aggression	<input type="checkbox"/> Hyperactivity	<input type="checkbox"/> Inattention	<input type="checkbox"/> Impulsivity
-------------------------------------	--	--------------------------------------	--------------------------------------

**15. Which parenting factor do you believe to have major impact in a child becoming antisocial?**

<input type="checkbox"/> Strict parenting	<input type="checkbox"/> Lenient parenting
<input type="checkbox"/> Inconsistency in discipline	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor parent child relationship

**16. Which do you believe to be the most significant reason a child commits antisocial acts?**

<input type="checkbox"/> Abuse	<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of community involvement
<input type="checkbox"/> Environment/Neglect (absence of food/water)	

**17. Is peer influence the reason for others to commit antisocial acts?**

<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree	

**18. Does a combination of factors, such as family, environment, biological, psychological all play a role in a child being antisocial?**

Strongly Agree                      Agr                       Uns   
 Disagree                                       Strongly Disagree

**19. Does being involved in the community prevent antisocial behaviour?**

Strongly Agree                      Agr                       Uns   
 Disagree                                       Strongly Disagree

**End of Survey**

## **Research Interview Questions**

Date: / /

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Researchers: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Interviewee Details**

1. What is your name?
2. Could you please state your age & gender?
3. Could you please state your post code?
4. What made you pursue a career with young people?
5. What is your position and how long have you been employed in that position?
6. What is your professional experience?
7. What are your qualifications?

### **Aggression**

8. What are your thoughts on the reasons why children develop aggression?
9. Do you think that aggression in youth is a predictor of future criminal behaviour? What do you base your opinion on?
10. Is aggression early in life the only precursor for future antisocial behaviour? Please explain your answer.
11. Would you say that females show aggression in different ways to males?
12. In your opinion do you believe aggression in early childhood desists or persists? Please explain your answer.
13. Do you believe early aggression involves early antisocial behaviour? Explain your answer.
14. I will read out a set of factors that could influence youth aggression, for each please state what degree of input they have in fuelling aggression.

- High family stress
- Peers
- Learning difficulties
- Genetics
- Parenting style
- Low social skills

15. Do you believe early aggression is a genetic factor or a sociological influence?  
Explain your answer.

*The following questions 16 to 18 will be asked to professionals with experience in psychological issues.*

16. Hyperactivity and Inattention psychopathological disorders have been linked to aggression and antisocial behaviour. Do you agree with this? If so why, it not why not?

17. Do you believe there is a relationship between conduct disorder and early aggression?  
Please explain your answer.

18. Do you believe there is a correlation between early aggression and Psychopathy?  
Explain your answer.

### **Predictors & Antisocial Behaviour**

19. What style of parenting do you believe is more associated with young offenders, strict authoritarian parents or more lenient parent?

20. Do you believe the level of supervision plays a role in a child's future antisocial behaviour? If so what level of supervision is appropriate to lower the risk?

21. Do you consider peer influences to be a factor in a child being antisocial?

22. What do you believe influences young people to be antisocial?

23. In your opinion do you believe age of onset plays a role in future antisocial behaviour?

24. Do you believe there is a correlation between early childhood aggression and violent neighbourhood? Please explain your answer.

25. Would you agree that communities with lower socio-economic status are at more risk of offending? What do you base your opinion on?

26. Are you familiar with Moffitt's Typologies? *(if yes, proceed with question)*

Life-course persistent antisocial behaviour has been linked to have more family risks compared to adolescent- limited. What is your point of view of this?

27. In your opinion do you believe that protective factors lower the risk of future antisocial behaviour?

28. What is your opinion on the following statement:  
'Juvenile delinquency does not typically begin with delinquent acts. Rather, it begins with non-delinquent problem behaviours'

29. Some literature points to low self-control as a major reason why a child commits antisocial acts. What is your view on this?

30. Which of the following do you believe to have a significant impact in regards to the development of delinquency in the adolescent period? Please explain your answer.

- Schooling ( IQ, Learning difficulties)
- Peer networks
- Relationships with parents
- Lack of confidence in-self

31. Some literature suggests that young people only commit antisocial acts in adolescent years because of the 'mature age gap'. What is your opinion of this?

32. Some literature speaks of 'age normative' behaviour, have you heard of this before? If so what is your view?

### **Professional Recommendations/ Practice Analysis**

33. There has been a lot of research conducted on youth risk factors, what in your opinion should new research be concentrating on?

34. What could be done to prevent antisocial behaviour? Is there anything you can recommend?

35. What is your opinion on the adoption of children living in abusive or negative households? Do you recommend this practice or do you believe that children should be kept with their natural parents? Please explain what you base your answer on.

**END OF INTERVIEW**

**APPENDIX IV**  
**SPSS Data Output**  
**Interview Transcripts**

FREQUENCIES VARIABLES=Gender Age Suburb Education Employment six seven eight  
 nine ten eleven twelve thirteen fourteen fifteen sixteen  
 n seventeen eighteen nineteen  
 /STATISTICS=MEAN MEDIAN MODE  
 /BARCHART PERCENT  
 /ORDER=ANALYSIS.

**Frequencies**

**Notes**

Output Created		08-Apr-2011 16:36:58
Comments		
Input	Data	F:\data.sav
	Active Dataset	DataSet1
	Filter	<none>
	Weight	<none>
	Split File	<none>
	N of Rows in Working Data File	75
Missing Value Handling	Definition of Missing	User-defined missing values are treated as missing.
	Cases Used	Statistics are based on all cases with valid data.
Syntax		FREQUENCIES VARIABLES=Gender Age Suburb Education Employment six seven eight nine ten eleven twelve thirteen fourteen fifteen sixteen seventeen eighteen nineteen /STATISTICS=MEAN MEDIAN MODE /BARCHART PERCENT /ORDER=ANALYSIS.
Resources	Processor Time	00:00:07.753
	Elapsed Time	00:00:07.768

[DataSet1] F:\data.sav

**Statistics**

	Gender	Age	Suburb	Education	Employment	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
N	Valid	75	75	74	75	75	74	74	75	74	75	75	75	72	72	71	75	75	75	
	Missing	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	3	3	4	0	0	0	
Mean		1.5867	2.5067	3.2703	2.6267	3.0267	1.3333	1.3649	1.7432	2.1600	2.8919	2.9467	2.0800	1.2133	2.4583	3.3472	1.4648	2.4533	1.6933	2.7200
Median		2.0000	3.0000	4.0000	2.0000	3.0000	1.0000	1.0000	2.0000	2.0000	3.0000	3.0000	2.0000	1.0000	3.0000	4.0000	1.0000	2.0000	2.0000	3.0000
Mode		2.00	3.00	4.00	1.00 <sup>a</sup>	3.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	3.00 <sup>a</sup>	2.00	2.00	1.00	3.00	4.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	2.00

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

**Frequency Table**

**Gender**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Male	31	41.3	41.3	41.3
Female	44	58.7	58.7	100.0
Total	75	100.0	100.0	

**Age**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 18-24	19	25.3	25.3	25.3
25-34	16	21.3	21.3	46.7
35-44	27	36.0	36.0	82.7
45-54	9	12.0	12.0	94.7
55+	4	5.3	5.3	100.0
Total	75	100.0	100.0	

**Suburb**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Inner Melbourne	7	9.3	9.5	9.5
	Southern Suburbs	8	10.7	10.8	20.3
	Northern Suburbs	17	22.7	23.0	43.2
	Western Suburbs	42	56.0	56.8	100.0
	Total	74	98.7	100.0	
Missing	No response	1	1.3		
Total		75	100.0		

**Education**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Year 11 or less of high-school	22	29.3	29.3	29.3
	VCE	22	29.3	29.3	58.7
	Certificate	8	10.7	10.7	69.3
	Diploma	8	10.7	10.7	80.0
	Degree	15	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	75	100.0	100.0	

**Employment**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Part time	11	14.7	14.7	14.7
	Casual	10	13.3	13.3	28.0
	Full time	34	45.3	45.3	73.3
	House duties	9	12.0	12.0	85.3
	Unemployed	8	10.7	10.7	96.0
	Retired	3	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	75	100.0	100.0	

**six**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	50	66.7	66.7	66.7
	Disagree	25	33.3	33.3	100.0
	Total	75	100.0	100.0	

**seven**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	47	62.7	63.5	63.5
	Disagree	27	36.0	36.5	100.0
	Total	74	98.7	100.0	
Missing	No response	1	1.3		
Total		75	100.0		

**eight**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	19	25.3	25.7	25.7
	Disagree	55	73.3	74.3	100.0
	Total	74	98.7	100.0	
Missing	No response	1	1.3		
Total		75	100.0		

**nine**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Family upbringing	22	29.3	29.3	29.3
	Biological factors	25	33.3	33.3	62.7
	Community influence	22	29.3	29.3	92.0
	Psychological problems	6	8.0	8.0	100.0
	Total	75	100.0	100.0	

**ten**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	6	8.0	8.1	8.1
	Agree	20	26.7	27.0	35.1
	Unsure	24	32.0	32.4	67.6
	Disagree	24	32.0	32.4	100.0
	Total	74	98.7	100.0	
Missing	No response	1	1.3		
Total		75	100.0		

**eleven**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly agree	5	6.7	6.7	6.7
Agree	28	37.3	37.3	44.0
Unsure	12	16.0	16.0	60.0
Disagree	26	34.7	34.7	94.7
Strongly Disagree	4	5.3	5.3	100.0
Total	75	100.0	100.0	

**twelve**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Agree	16	21.3	21.3	21.3
Agree	42	56.0	56.0	77.3
Unsure	12	16.0	16.0	93.3
Disagree	5	6.7	6.7	100.0
Total	75	100.0	100.0	

**thirteen**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Agree	59	78.7	78.7	78.7
Disagree	16	21.3	21.3	100.0
Total	75	100.0	100.0	

**fourteen**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Aggression	23	30.7	31.9	31.9
Hyperactivity	5	6.7	6.9	38.9
Inattention	32	42.7	44.4	83.3
Impulsivity	12	16.0	16.7	100.0
Total	72	96.0	100.0	
Missing No response	3	4.0		
Total	75	100.0		

**fifteen**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strict parenting	7	9.3	9.7	9.7
	Lenient parenting	6	8.0	8.3	18.1
	Inconsistencies in discipline	14	18.7	19.4	37.5
	Poor parent child relationships	45	60.0	62.5	100.0
	Total	72	96.0	100.0	
Missing	No response	3	4.0		
Total		75	100.0		

**sixteen**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Abuse	49	65.3	69.0	69.0
	Environment/ neglect	11	14.7	15.5	84.5
	Lack of community involvement	11	14.7	15.5	100.0
	Total	71	94.7	100.0	
Missing	No response	4	5.3		
Total		75	100.0		

**seventeen**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	10	13.3	13.3	13.3
	Agree	37	49.3	49.3	62.7
	Unsure	14	18.7	18.7	81.3
	Disagree	12	16.0	16.0	97.3
	Strongly disagree	2	2.7	2.7	100.0
	Total	75	100.0	100.0	

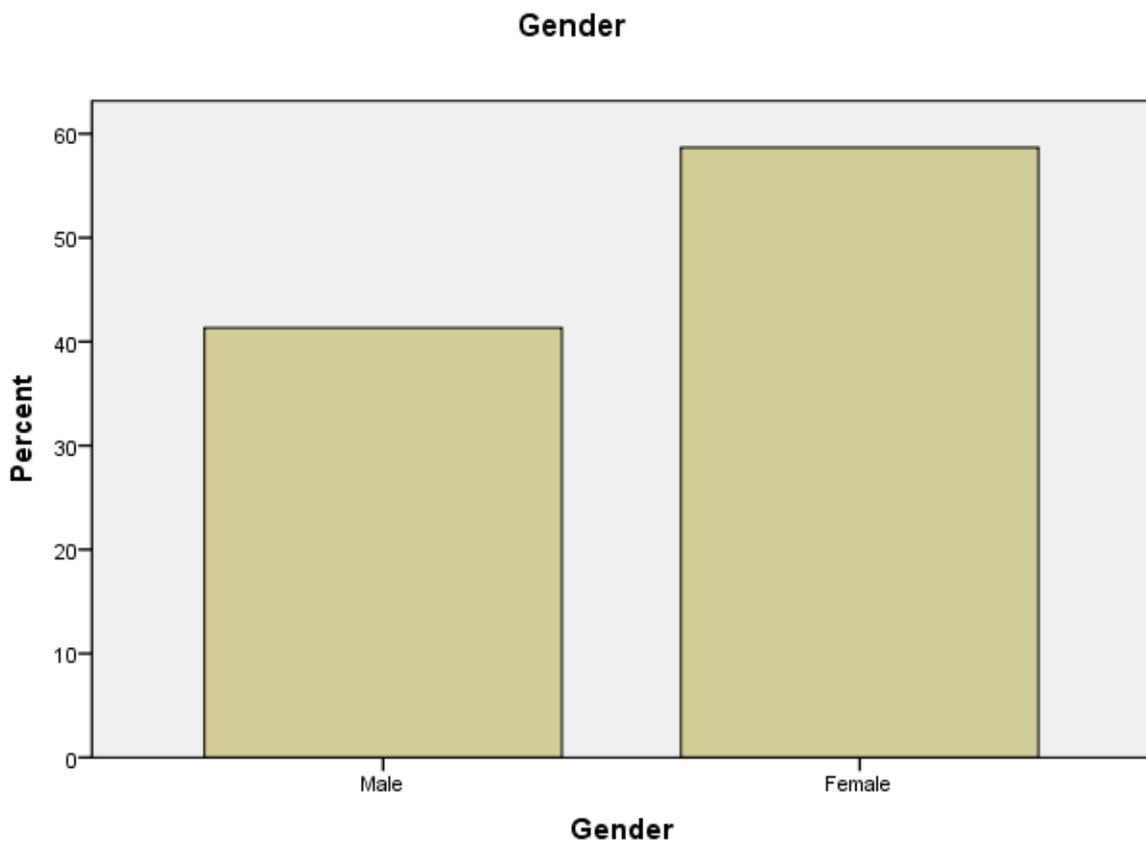
**eighteen**

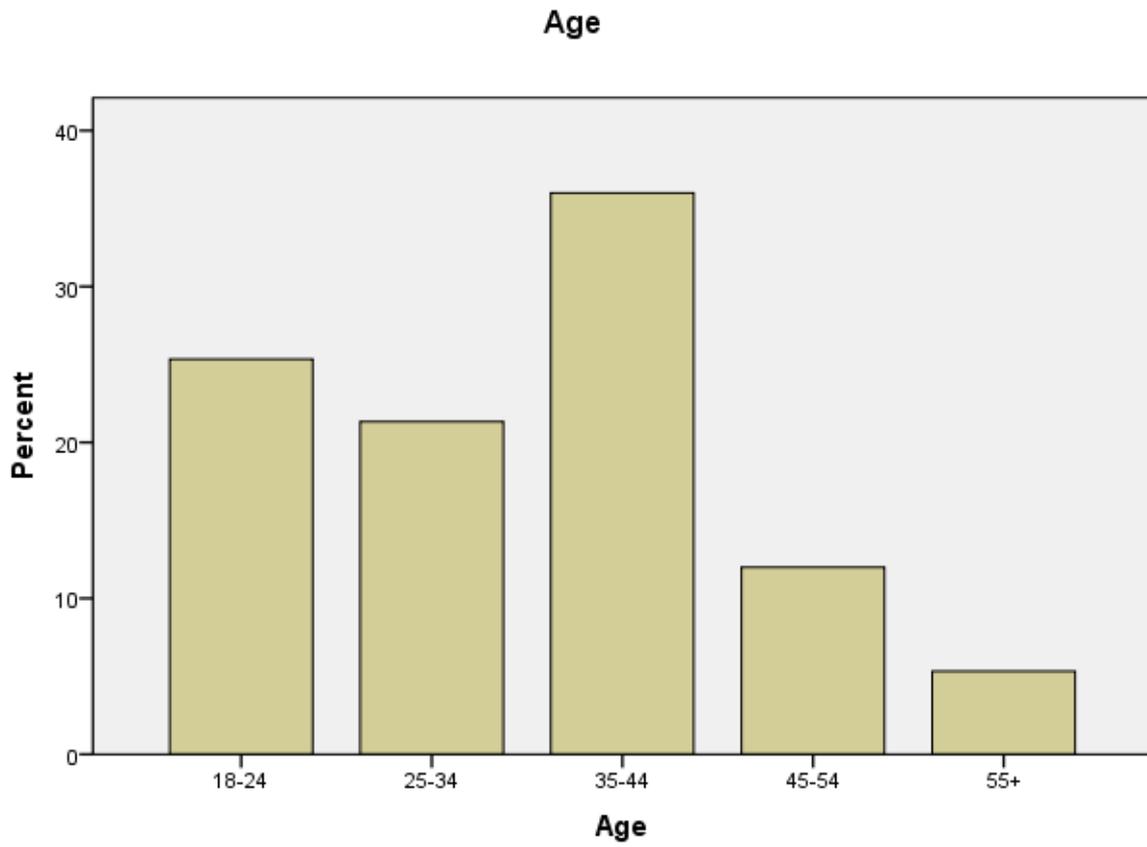
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	31	41.3	41.3	41.3
	Agree	38	50.7	50.7	92.0
	Unsure	5	6.7	6.7	98.7
	Strongly Disagree	1	1.3	1.3	100.0
	Total	75	100.0	100.0	

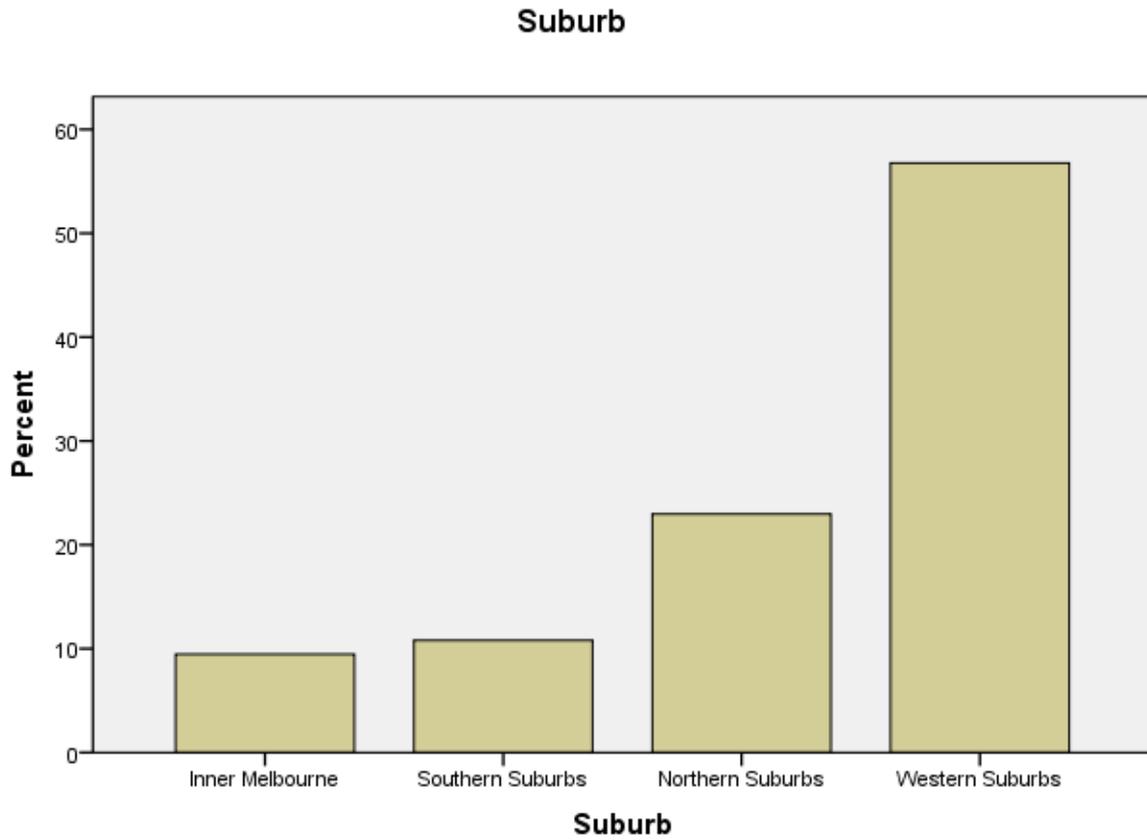
**nineteen**

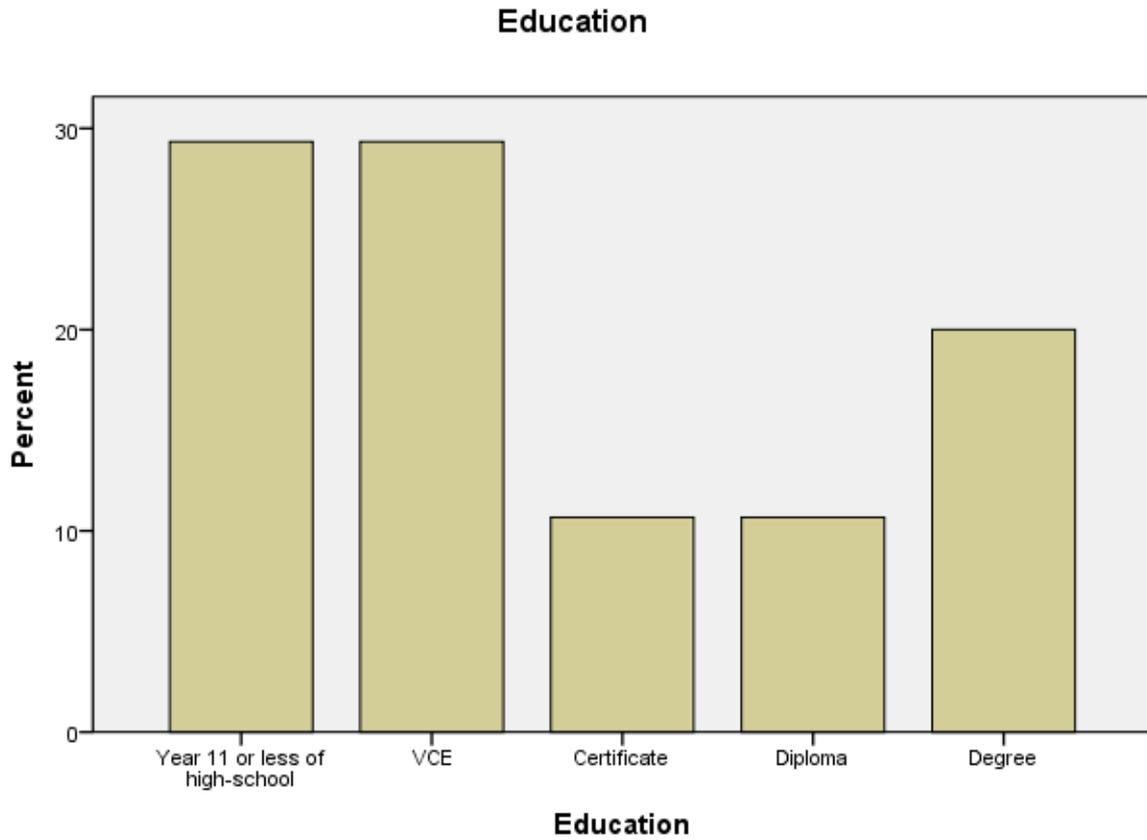
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly agree	13	17.3	17.3	17.3
Agree	23	30.7	30.7	48.0
Unsure	14	18.7	18.7	66.7
Disagree	22	29.3	29.3	96.0
Strongly Disagree	3	4.0	4.0	100.0
Total	75	100.0	100.0	

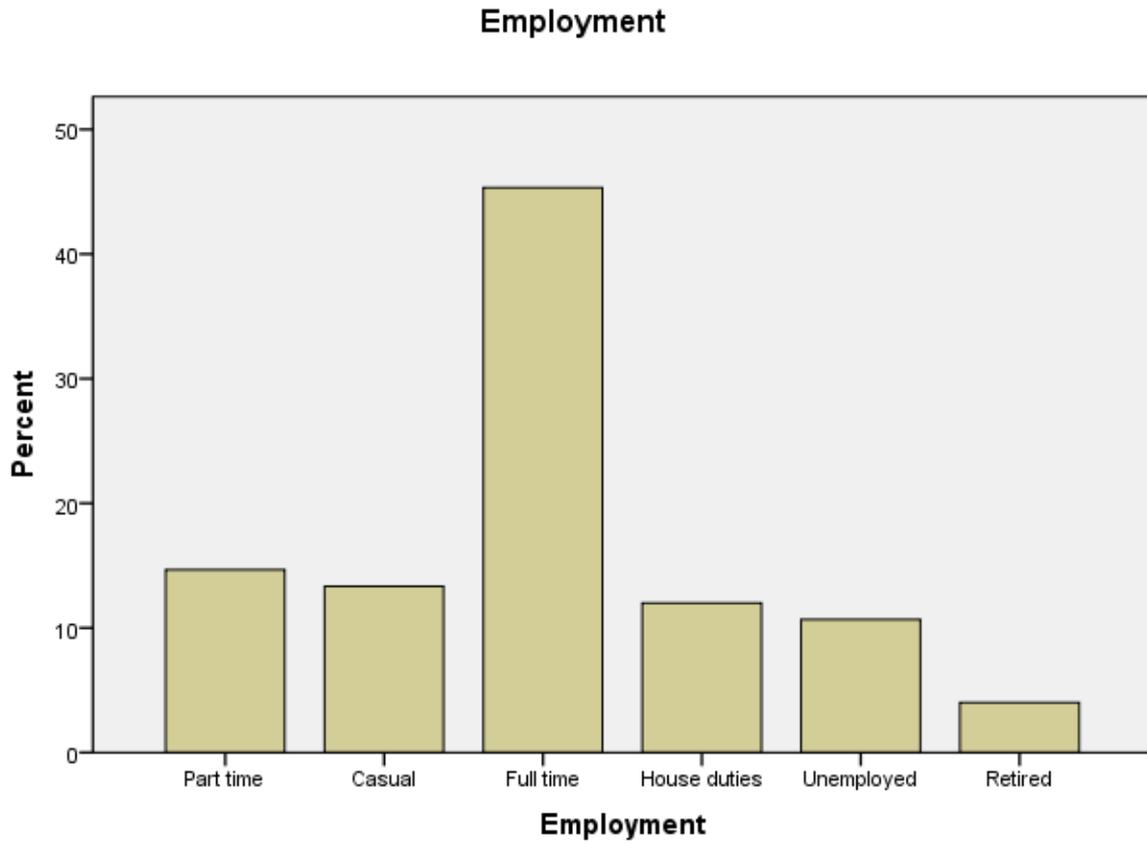
**Bar Chart**

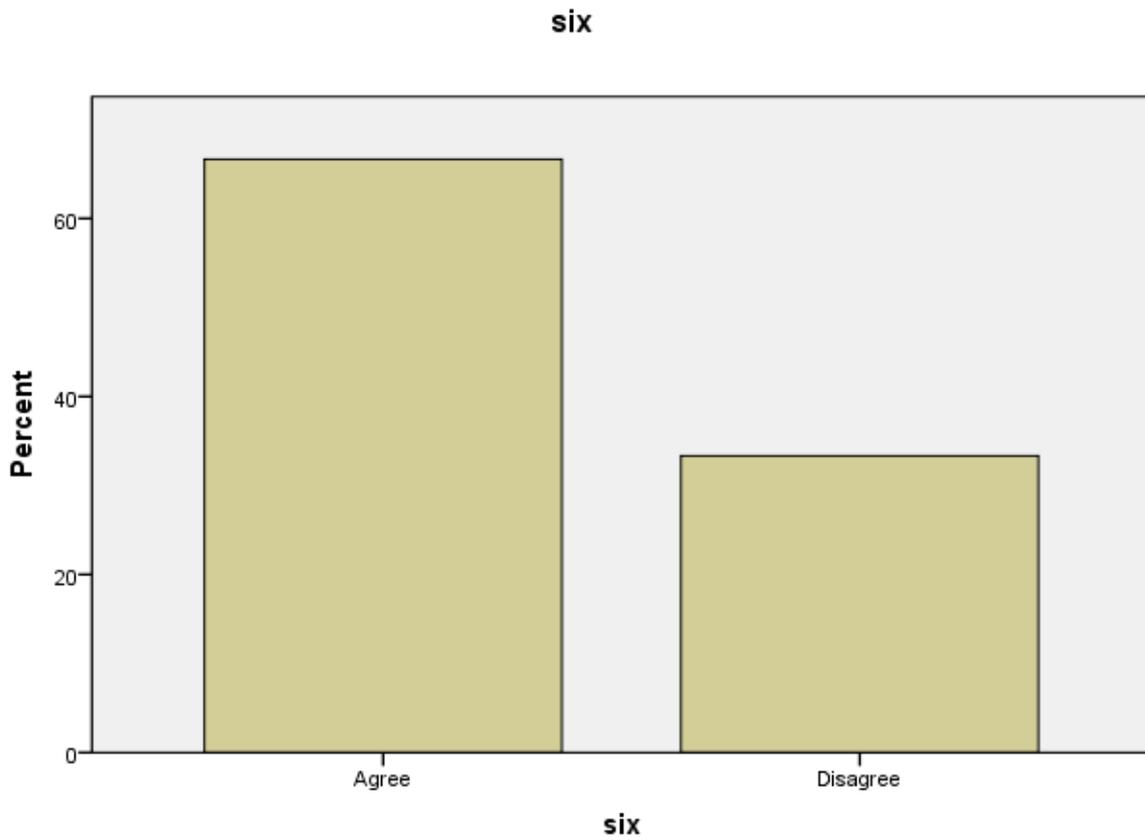




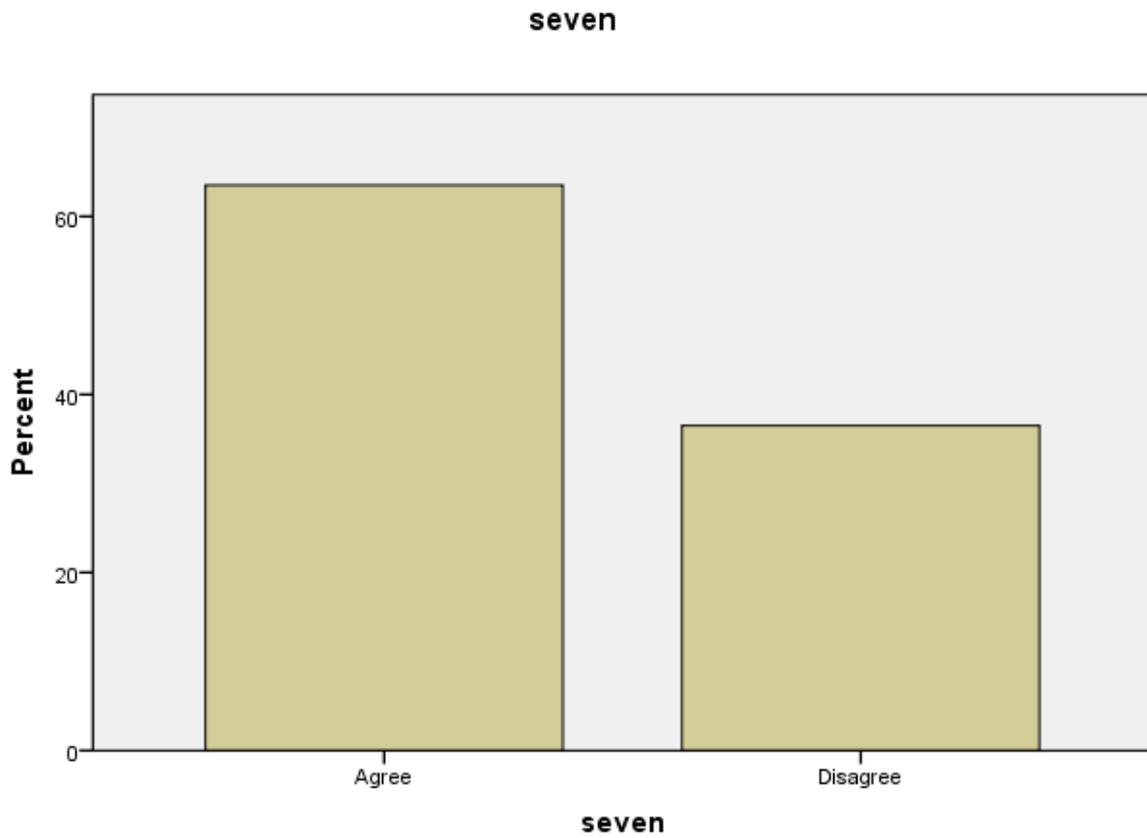




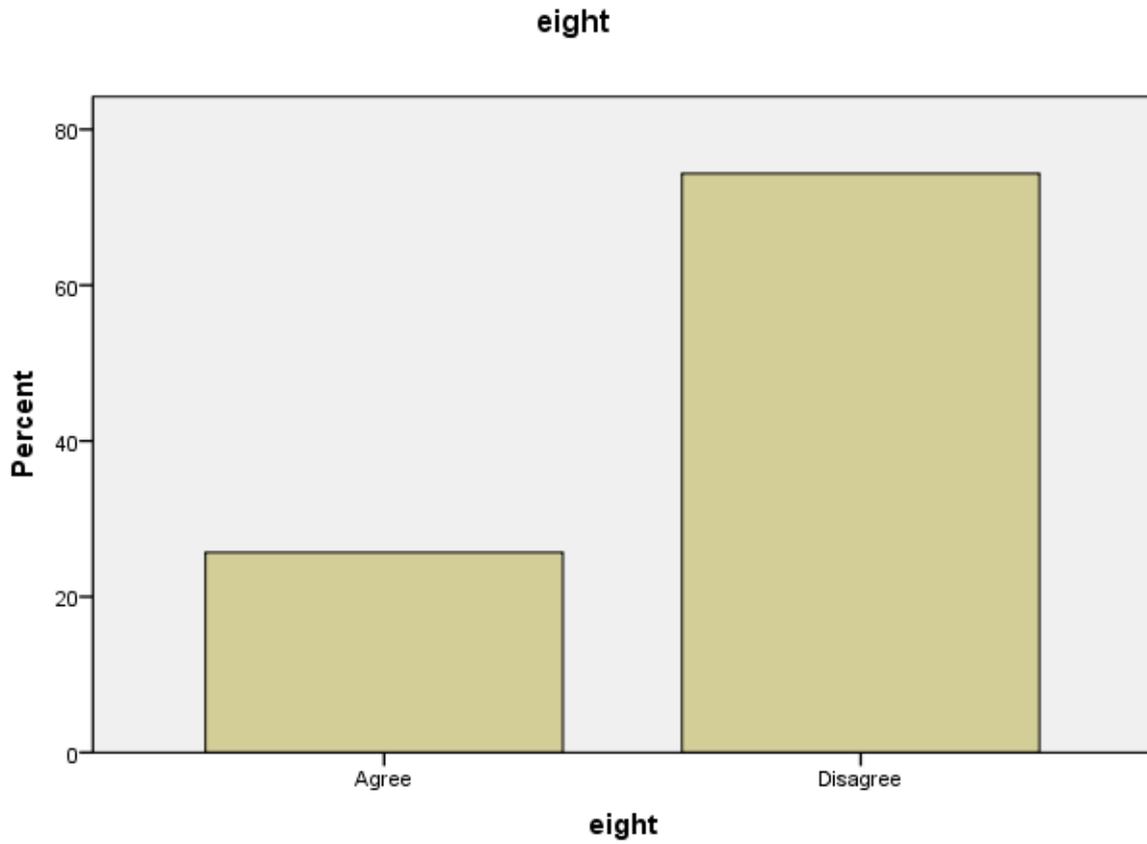




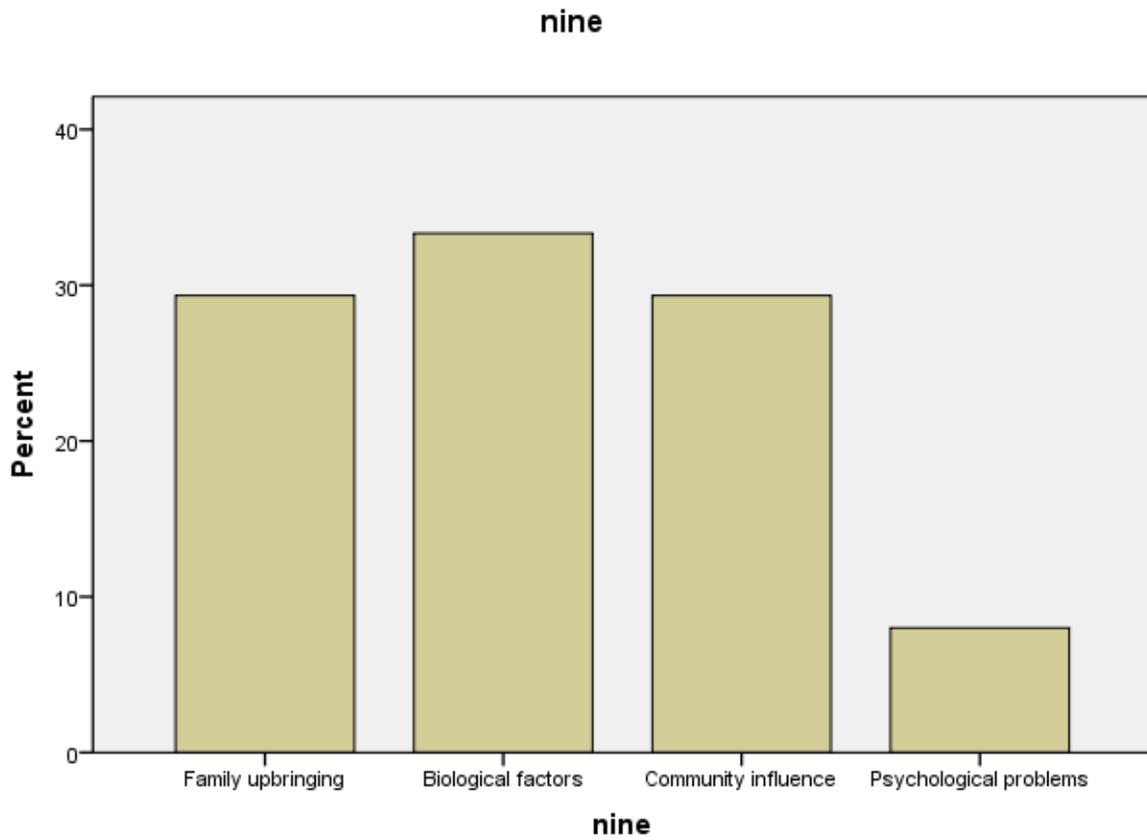
Q: Is aggression between the ages of 1 year to 8 years linked to future antisocial behavior in a child?



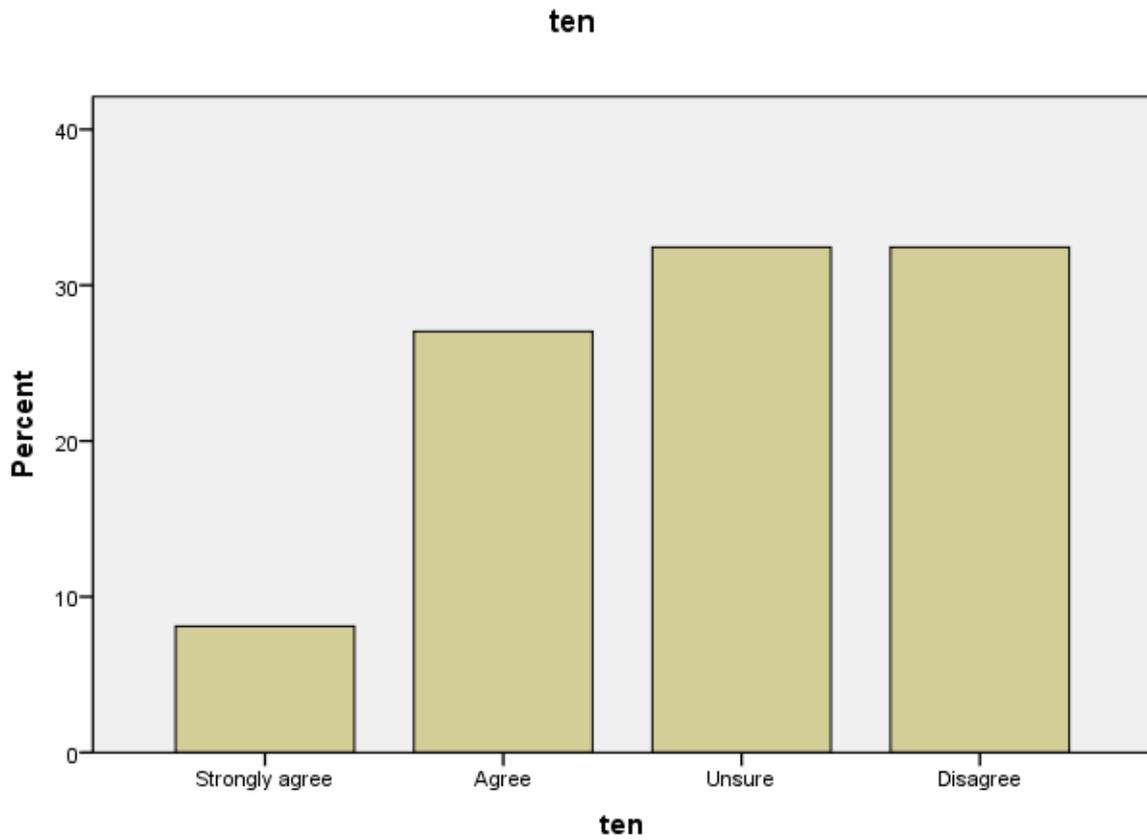
Q: Can physical discipline produce aggression in children?



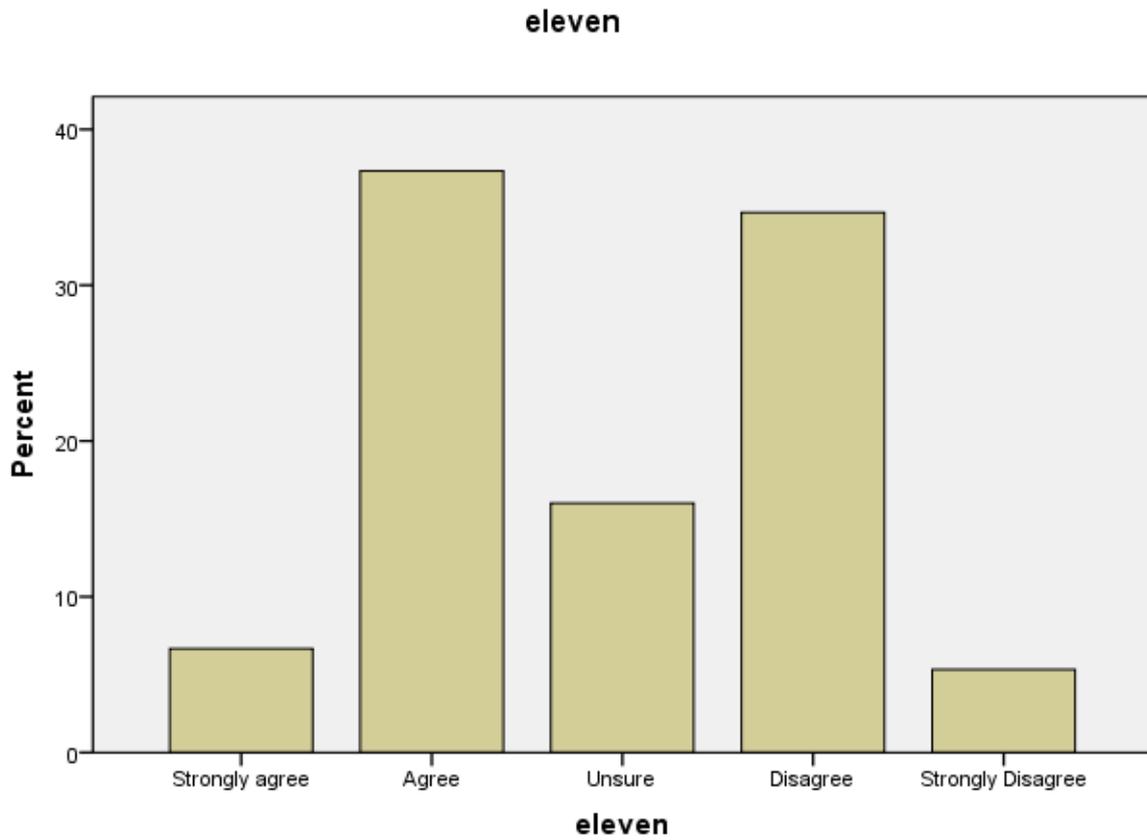
Q: Do you believe gender of a child plays a part whether they will be aggressive?



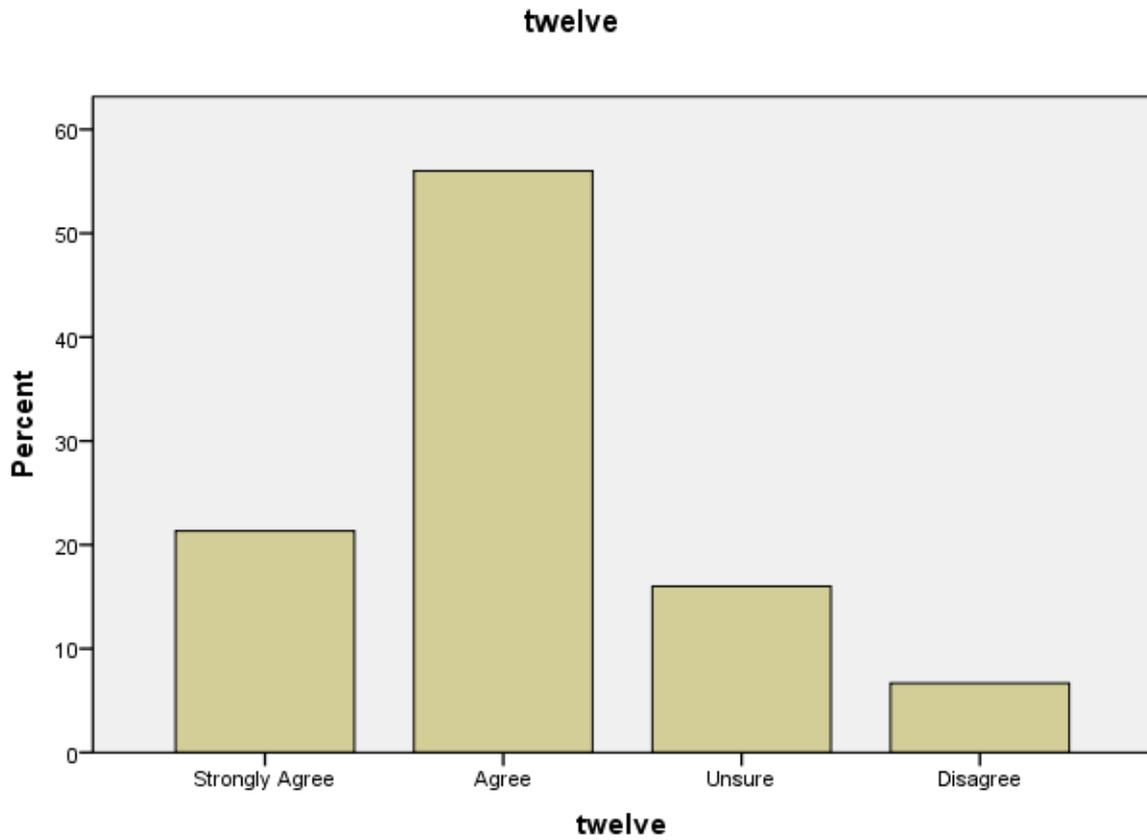
Q: Which of the following has the least impact in the development of early childhood aggression?



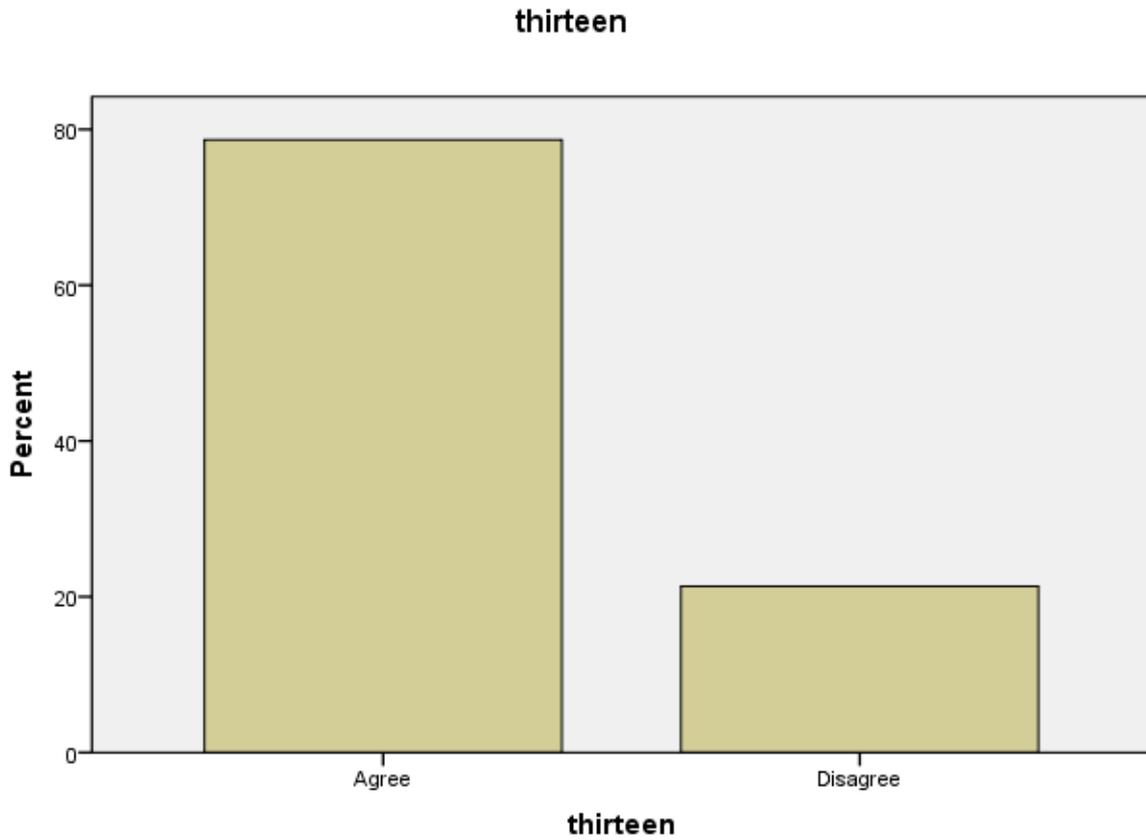
Q: If a child is aggressive at a young age will they become antisocial later on in life?



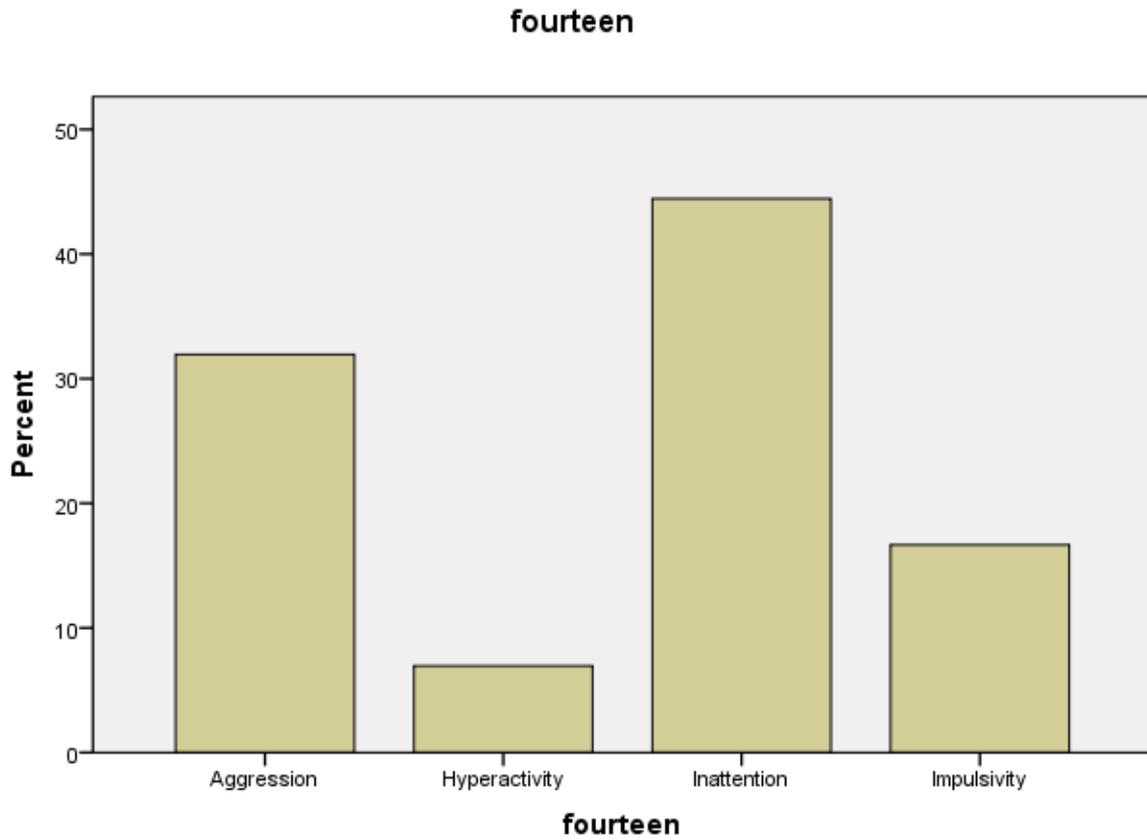
Q: Is showing aggression at a young age seen to be a general part of development?



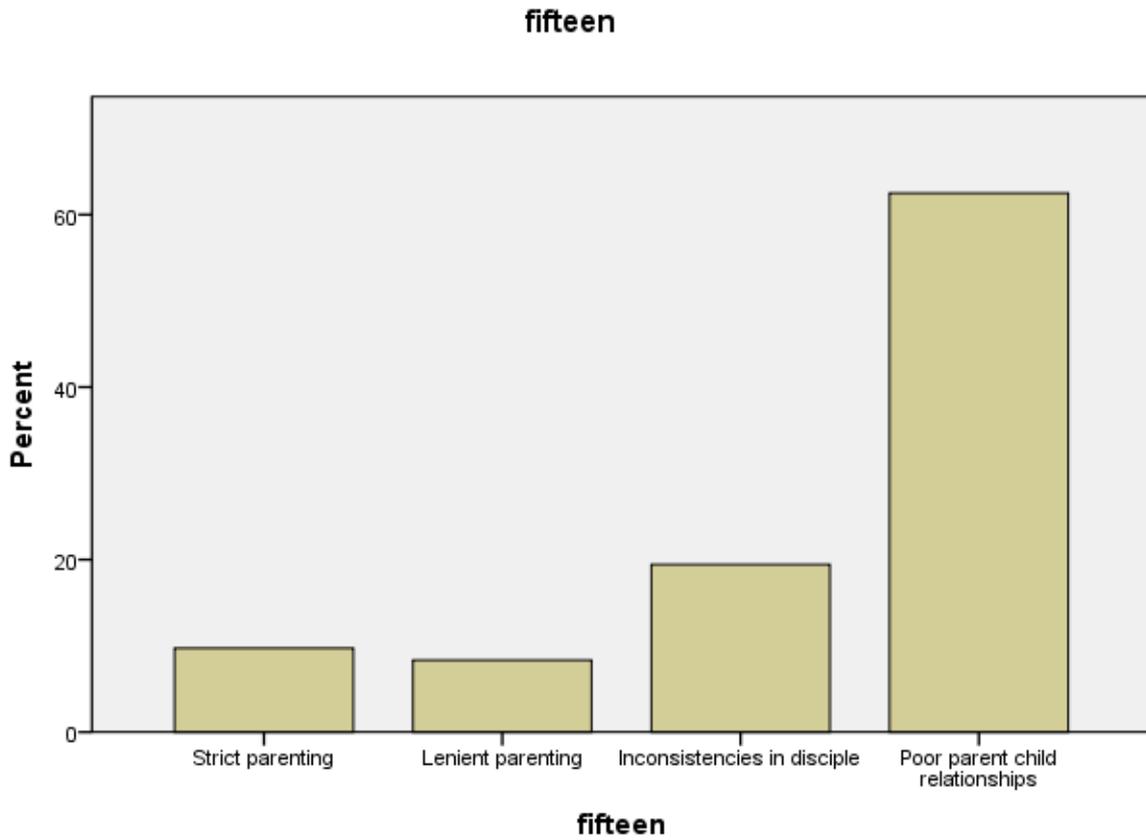
Q: Is untreated early aggression seen to carry on throughout the adolescent period?



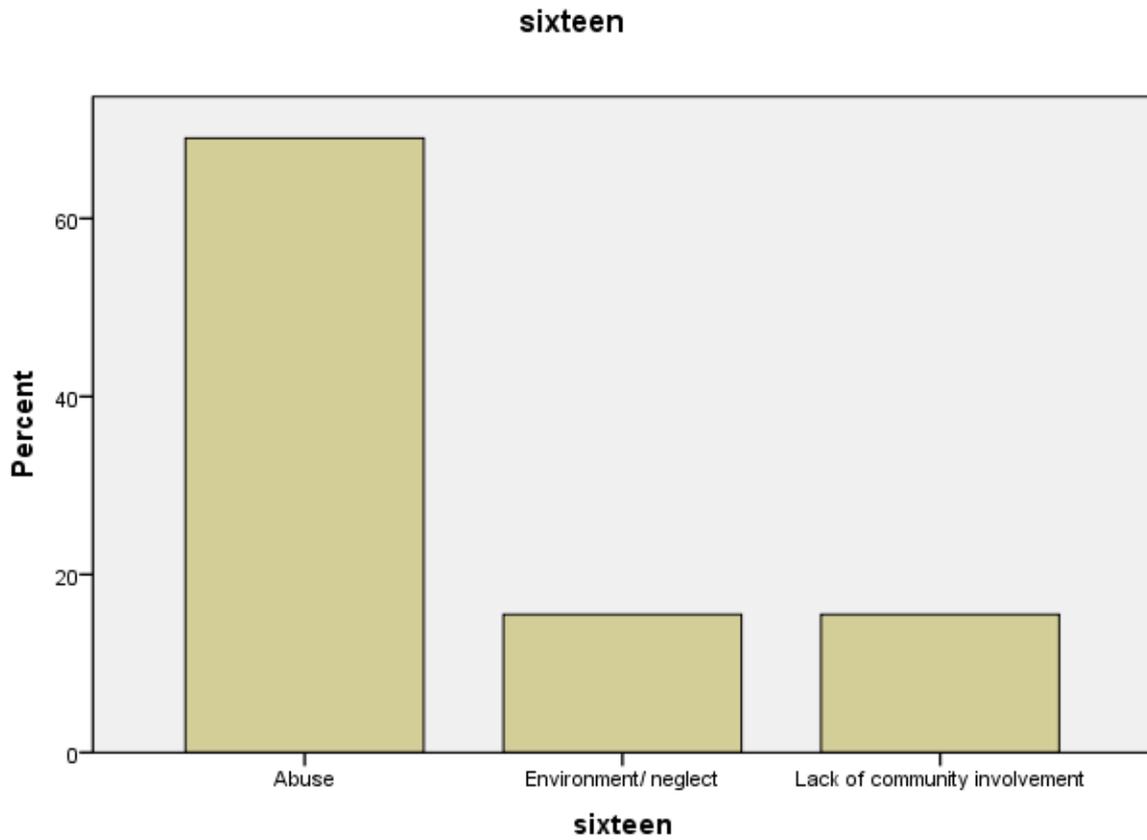
Q: Do you think antisocial behavior is a phase some adolescents go through in their life/



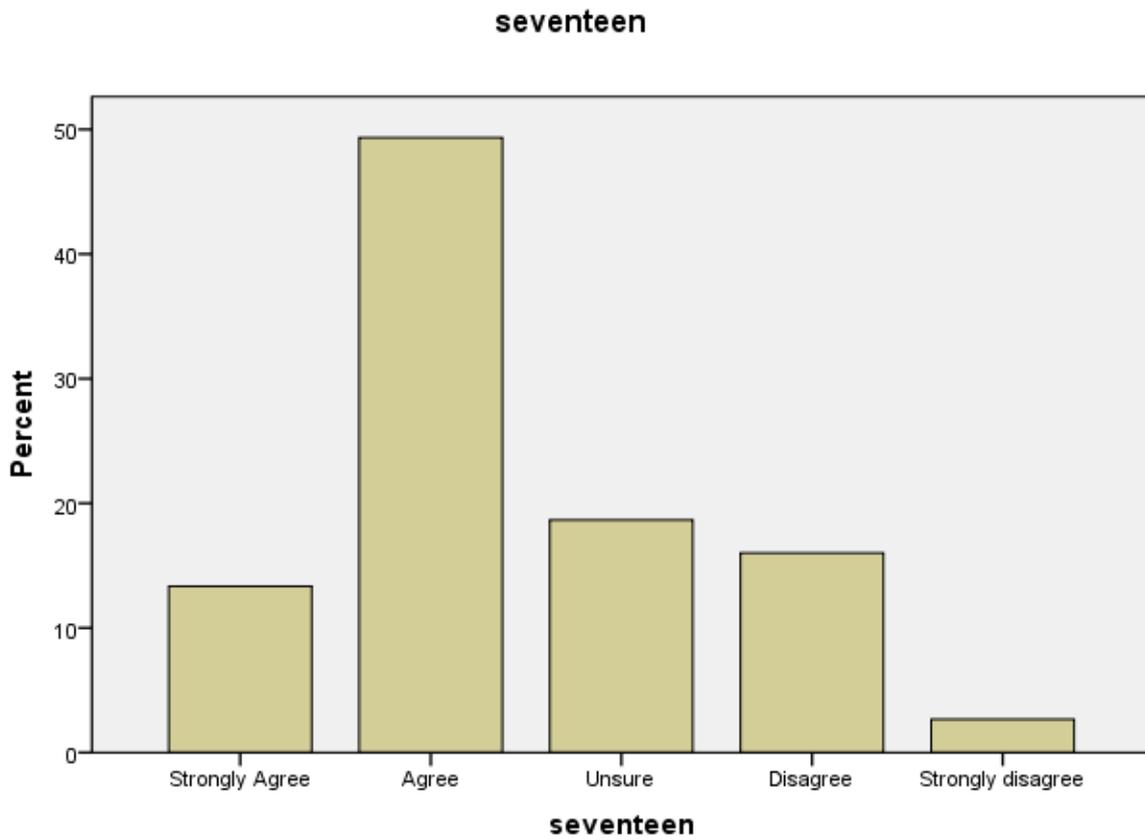
Q: What do you think contributes to the development of antisocial behavior?



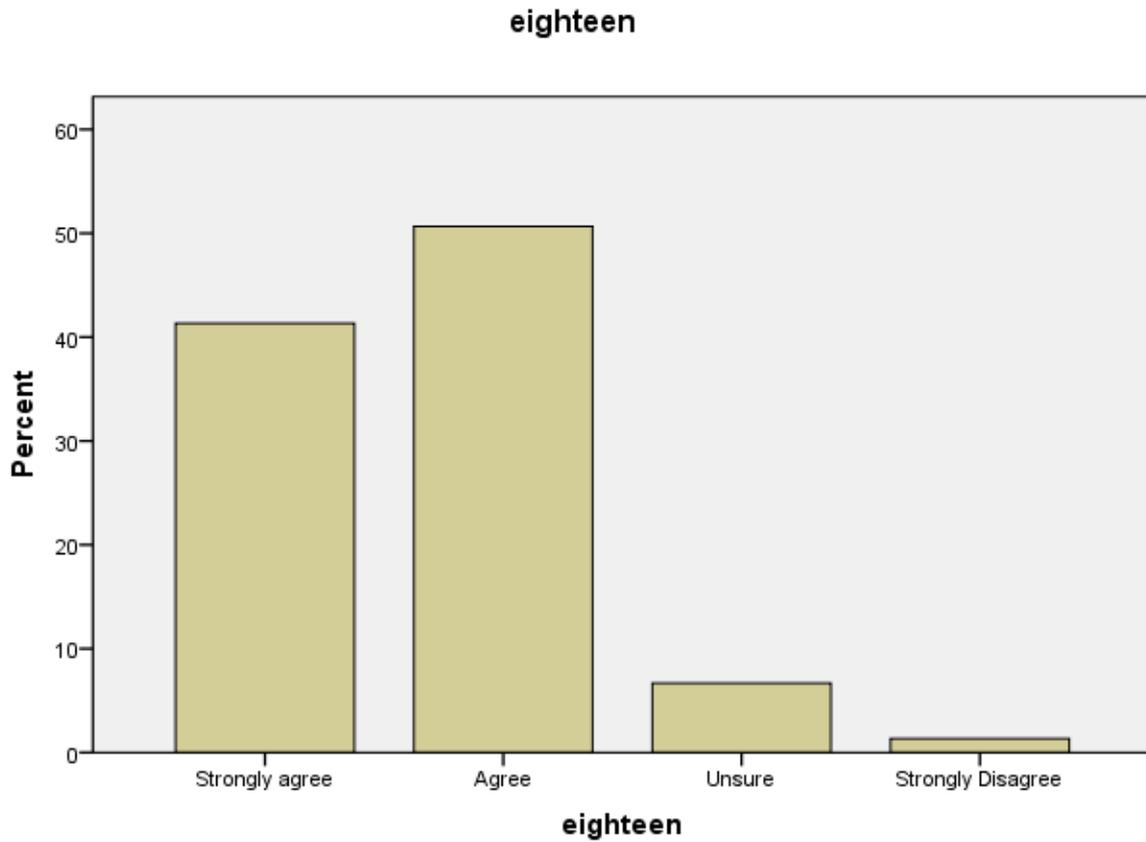
Which parenting factor do you believe to have major impact in a child becoming antisocial?



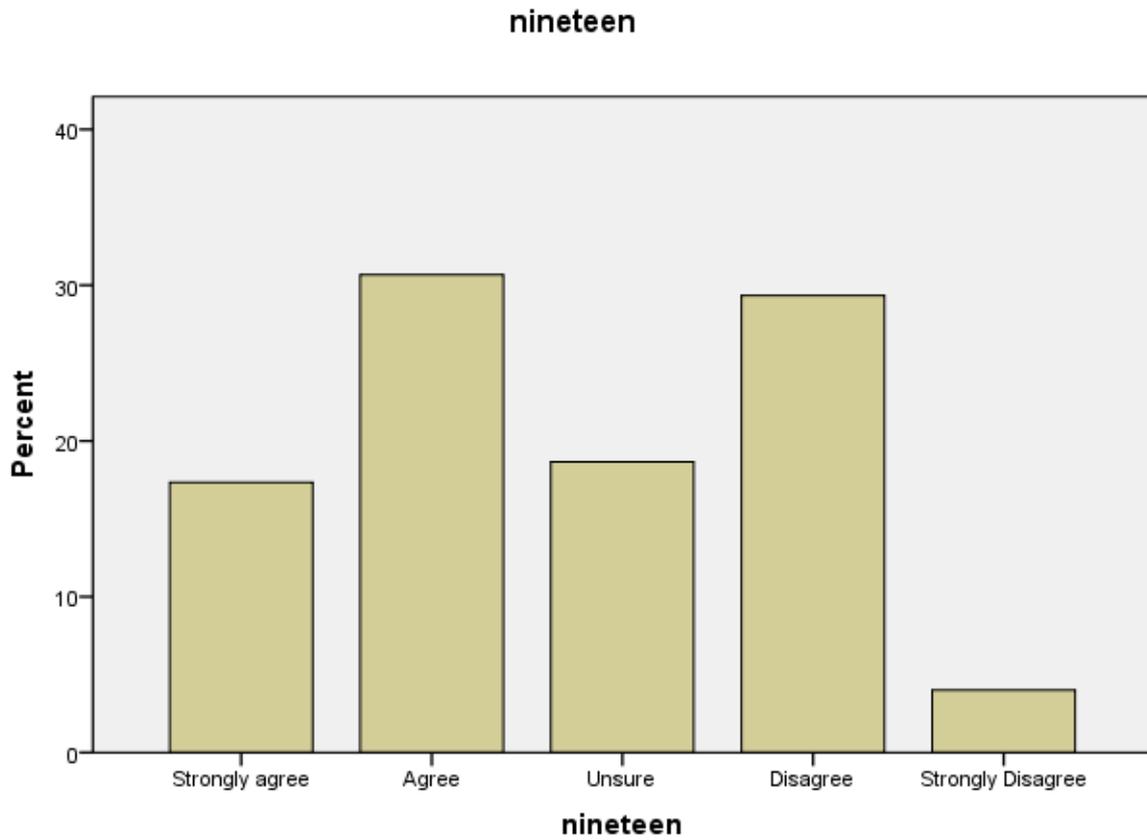
Q: Which do you believe to be the most significant reason a child commits antisocial acts?



Q: Is peer influence the reason for others to commit antisocial acts?



Q: Does a combination of factors such as family, environment, biological, psychological all play a role in a child being antisocial?



Q: Does being involved in the community prevent antisocial behavior?

**“Interview #1”**

Q: What is your full name?

A: [REDACTED]

Q: Could you please state your age and gender?

A: I'm [REDACTED]. Female.

Q: Could you please state your post code?

A: [REDACTED]

Q: What made you pursue a career working with young people?

A: It's an area that I was always interested in and something that I found that I really enjoyed and still get a lot of enjoyment out of after many years.

Q: What is your position and how long have you been employed in this position?

A: I'm a SGA teacher, so that's a Certificate of General Education teacher in mathematics and computers and a Certificate III in Business teacher as well, which we do on-line.

Q: The position that you had prior to this position where you gained all your experience working with young people, what was that?

A: The good thing about education is that you can start somewhere and you end up in many different areas so my first teaching position was in a transition grade, which was like Prep, up in the Northern Territory and then went onto post primary girls, so that's sort of a Year 7 level in Victoria. Then I did further study and I did a teacher librarianship, so then I've been a teacher librarian in large colleges. I've also done learning support - I've worked with all age groups from preschool up to Year 10 level, so that's working with students who have got turning difficulties and special needs. I have done art teaching, which was my major actually, I did that for a little while and that was really good. Then Resource Manager so a lot of curriculum development so supporting teachers in new curriculum that was being introduced in Cape York, and then working with adults, I did a TAA, so then I started working with adults in the Certificate II in business area.

Q: First of all we're going to ask you some aggression based questions. What are your thoughts on the reasons why children develop aggression?

A: I think that sometimes it can be associated with being a toddler and it just might be a behaviour that they think might work to have a positive outcome for them to get what they want; it might be just a behaviour that they're testing and trying out. I think we all have in us a capacity for aggression or an anger and all different sorts of levels of feelings. I think maybe biologically some people might be more predisposed according to their brain development, it could be whether they've got a brain impairment or a physical impairment. I think that sometimes it might be something

they're modeling, that might be a bit later on. Probably lots of different reasons.

Q: Do you think that aggression in youth is a predictor of future criminal behaviour?

A: It could be, yes. Unless it's understood by the person to be a negative - well, if it's a consistent behaviour and if it's a negative behaviour it might lead to them getting involved in some sort of criminal acts.

Q: What do you base your opinion on?

A: So we're talking about teenagers here in particular?

Q: We're starting off at a young age and anything that leads to antisocial behaviour later on in youth and in adolescents.

A: So this question is about teenagers?

Q: Yes.

A: From what I've seen, the students that I've seen involved in aggressive acts, it can be frustration, especially in the education system, they might have a learning problem which they haven't been properly supported or they're having difficulties at school. I have seen students who can't read and write, then because they feel embarrassed or different they will start misbehaving in class. I have seen that change when if they are given some really corrective literacy support, I've seen that behavior change dramatically, so I think it can be to do with how they can engage with the curriculum in schools which can then have positives, their behaviors can become more positive outside of the school system. I've been in communities where the aggressive behaviors are very normalized, so they might be being modeled by adults, so they think that that's okay because the role models are showing that that behavior is something that's occurring a lot. I think that if there is no intervention with an aggressive youth, especially in a community that might have quite a bit of dysfunction within it - lots of drinking, lots of domestic violence, not such support for that young person - there is a high likelihood of them getting engaged in criminal activities if they don't see anything else for themselves, other options for themselves. But I have also seen if there is opportunities for that student to see other things that they can engage in, more positive things then they will if they're given that opportunity.

Q: Is aggression early in life the only precursor for future antisocial behavior?

A: I think sometimes it is a precursor, especially maybe if there's some sort of ADD, any sort of disabilities that haven't been recognized and treated. What was the question again?

Q: Is aggression early in life the only precursor for future antisocial behavior?

A: No, I think there's other ones. Antisocial behavior, you might just have a kid who perhaps is a bit impulsive, who hasn't thought about their behavior, and kids will do that because they don't stop developing until they're 25 so they mightn't be naturally aggressive kids, not even think about their behavior that it is antisocial and in their

mid-30s they do. "I did that, that was really stupid", because they don't have that maturity. Different things happening in their families or environment that might be their way of dealing with their different frustrations they might be going through at different periods in their lives. I guess their mental health as well is a huge indicator as well, if they're not feeling supported; once again they might be acting out, seeking attention.

Q: Would you say that female show aggression in different ways to males?

A: Yes, I would say so. I guess that female aggression might come out in more in terms of it would be more verbal aggression and emotional psychological kind of aggression, bullying, things like that. I think females are also capable of physical aggression whereas males would be more the physical aggression, maybe a bit of verbal abuse, that sort of thing, and perhaps females are a bit more - I don't know if they're more aware of the aggression that they're showing. Perhaps not. I think once again it's about that what that particular female is going through, whether they're suffering from mental health issues, whether they've been abused, and I think that would depend what sort of aggression they show as well; whether they're just trying to dominate a group.

Q: When you say females may be more aware, what did you mean by more aware?

A: I think it's less impulsive, more planned and more long lasting perhaps in aggression towards others.

Q: In your opinion do you believe aggression in early childhood desists or persists?

A: So whether it continues or decreases?

Q: Yes.

A: Depends on the child then with that individual child, depends on their environment, depends on the support network that they've got around them, whether they've got access to all those different levels of support with the health professional. I think with some children it is a stage definitely in that early toddler and depending how well those parents can kind of see the behaviour, address it and nip it in the bud early in life, if they've got really good parenting skills I think their child will understand that that behavior is no longer working and will find other behaviours to use. It really depends on the child and is all the different conditions that that child might either have or be living with as well. Is that clear enough?

Q: Yes. Do you believe early aggression involves early antisocial behavior?

A: It can. And that could just be within the family environment or it could involve in terms of antisocial behaviors like using aggression to either just lash out or get what you want. It can involve other kids. I think humans are very clever from a very young age and whether they understand it or not, aggression is violating, it's meant to control other people or violate other people's rights, and whether they realize it or not, whether it's hurting someone, that is the actual outcome of the behavior.

Q: I will read out a set of factors that could influence youth aggression. For each, please state what degree of input they have in fuelling aggression. So pretty much a ranking. High family stress; peers; learning difficulties; genetics; parenting style and low social skills.

A: I think low social skills, along with parenting style, that is a disaster in terms of if you've got a child who might be displaying aggressive tendencies, and perhaps maybe you throw the genetics in there, perhaps that's the way the parents have been operating so they're not going to recognize something in their child perhaps that they might be displaying themselves. I guess within high family stress, where there's not much parent/child interaction at that time will fuel the aggression or frustration in the child. I think with learning difficulties that's something that I've really seen in schools that if a student has learning difficulties and can often feel frustrated because their needs are not getting met in the classroom, which can then lead to aggression. I think sometimes when you see learning difficulties addressed really well, that aggression can pretty much disappear and you will have a child with a positive self-image and a positive feeling about themselves. Peers, I think later on perhaps. I think it's always an individual decision about the way they conduct themselves in terms of their behavior so if you've got a child with a good concept of self to start with, they will be less likely to engage in a aggressive behaviors because they will decide not to because they know that that's not right for them.

Q: Do you believe early aggression is a genetic factor or a sociological influence?

A: I think in terms of toddlers I'd say it's more a genetic factor because really haven't had that influence yet from society, understanding of seeing aggression displayed amongst other people or on TV, it's just maybe something they're exhibiting.

Q: We're going to go on and talk about predictors and antisocial behaviour. Question 19: What style of parenting do you believe is more associated with young offenders, strict authoritarian parents or more lenient parents. Did you want to skip it?

A: No, that's okay, I'll have a stab.

Q: It doesn't have to just be those two parenting styles. What we're trying to find out about parenting in general was like as an example. As you stated in your answer earlier about relationships and those sorts of things, they come into parents as well.

A: I would say it's more a neglectful parenting style where they're actually got given any clues or been neglectful in what they have been seeing their young child exhibiting and not addressing anything, not being aware of what's going on in that young person's life, not really caring.

Q: Do you believe the level of supervision plays a role in a child's future antisocial behavior? If so, what level of supervision is appropriate to lower the risk?

A: Because I've lived in different cultural communities, I think the lower the risk for any child is the love that they get from the parents. If the child is an easy child, has got easy behaviors to manage, that child usually plods along quite well. But if the child is a more difficult personality to deal with, just the parent, I guess being on task with

that child, loving that child but giving that child boundaries that they are going to be safe within and they will be not engaging in certain things in the community. I think as children get older, the contact we have with our kids is going to become less and less, especially as they become adolescents. It might be the type of parenting that they do with their teenagers, how they keep in contact, keeping that positive relationship going through those adolescent years might help prevent antisocial behavior. It might happen but I guess knowing it's happening and finding ways to help that child stay on track - I think it's more about the quality of the parenting rather than the level of supervision that will help the kid and not just the family. I know in Indigenous communities that the extended family plays a really big role in bringing up a child and they're always there and everyone has got a different role to play in helping bring up that child, and if that's functioning really well then that will help keep your child on track throughout their adolescent years.

Q: Do you consider peer influences to be a factor in a child being antisocial?

A: Yes, I think especially in the adolescent years because, once again, I think sometimes kids will go into something and not even realise it's wrong. I honestly believe that. If it comes to the attention of a teacher or a parent and they find out about it and they say hang on, that's really unsafe. Or that's really made somebody else feel really unsafe or uncomfortable. But I think some kids really don't sometimes understand the consequences of their actions, especially in their adolescent years, they're so important to a young person.

Q: What do you believe influences young people to be antisocial?

A: Impulsivity. I guess sometimes maybe a bit of low self-esteem. I'd rather fit in and do what the group or somebody else is doing than to stand apart from the group. Frustration. Perhaps a frustration in different starts of their lives, they might have anger management issues with something and just feeling frustrated. They might be bored, they might actually be really bored and just be engaging in antisocial behavior because they think there's nothing else to do, or there really might be nothing else to do. I know in some of the communities I've lived in there's not much to do and many of the behaviors were very antisocial, not that the kids might know that they are antisocial. It might be something that everybody is doing and it's being modeled and you think: if I don't engage with this, who am I going to engage with? So it's not having other options perhaps given to them by more positive peers. Once again, if you can maybe get those people into a group with a more positive peer group doing different things can change behavior.

Q: In your opinion, do you believe age of onset plays a role in future antisocial behavior?

A: No. I really believe it's all about the type of support intervention. If a child is displaying at a young age antisocial behavior, if there is an underlying disorder, such as autism ADD, things like that, that's just part of the disorder and sometimes the behavior can be antisocial within that disorder. But I do believe that if a child gets support for learning difficulties, if they've got it, if they've got a good positive peer group and older role models, if they're getting lots of support at school, at home, they've got parents who are interested in their well-being and are consistent in showing care and concern, there's no neglect, I think there can be better life outcomes

for those children and there is less chance of them ending up in prison. Perhaps when antisocial behaviors become normalized in terms of these high levels of dysfunction in our community or a family, I think the likelihood of that decreases for those kids, unfortunately. It's about consistent care, loving care, I really believe, from everyone for these particular kids.

Q: Do you believe there is a correlation between early childhood aggression and a violent neighborhood?

A: Yes, I do and I think it's really sad. From what I've seen sometimes is that some of kids that I've worked with - I worked in Port Keats in the Northern Territory who were at five or six and a large percentage, especially of the males, have been in prison are dead, or alcoholics, or on drugs. I can't say exactly the reasons why but perhaps what they saw when they were younger and what was normalized because they would be living in an environment perhaps where they saw what was happening in a neighbor's house, there was high unemployment. With the schooling, I don't believe the schooling was really suitable in addressing this. The education levels that they were getting weren't suitable for them to get into many jobs or to go into further education so there were limited opportunities there. Plus the remoteness of the communities, there was very little support networks in terms of there was a high level of alcohol abuse, there was no AA in many of these communities, no psychologists living in communities, they might fly in once a month, they've got huge caseloads. So you've got people who might be trying to change their lives but they don't have the support mechanisms there. You've got really poor health. The housing would be enough to stress anyone out. People living on very little money, and also if they've got addiction issues there with gambling and alcohol, that money would go on that, which feeds all these other problems in the community. I think perhaps sometimes they mightn't show that aggression in early childhood but it's something that they think this is what I've seen growing up consistently for a long time. Not everyone was like that but I think when there is no support for people with alcohol addictions and there is a lack of jobs, there's a lack of money, there's a lack of housing, that's going to put stress on anyone and that's where the violence comes out because people are frustrated and that's what the kids see.

Q: We might skip 25 because I believe you've answered that question in question 24. Are you familiar with Moffitt's Typologies?

A: No.

Q: In your opinion, do you believe that protective factors lower the risk of future antisocial behavior?

A: Yes, I do. I think the more we know about ourselves - protective factors, what are you talking about there?

Q: Exactly what you've been saying all through, good family support, great community support, outreach networks and things like that, employment, education, they're all protective factors.

A: Yes, definitely I think it can. In every family there are stresses and in every

community there is stresses but I think in Melbourne like if you're in an urban area and you're well supported by all these different government departments who can offer counseling who, when you come across life's hurdles or you've lost your job, or somebody has died, or somebody has got an addiction issue, they can send you off to these agencies and people can get support, especially the parents. I can see where there is none of those protective factors or they're haphazard, or they're not culturally appropriate, that's where you can see the antisocial behaviors will increase dramatically because it would happen in Melbourne, it would happen in any community where you don't have a support network where if there's no jobs or very limited jobs the only thing to do is to go to Canteen, that's where everyone's going and there is no support for you to actually improve your skills or engage in meaningful things which are going to make you feel good and especially about parents, and especially men, fathers, there's going to be a lot of frustration. You can see in Melbourne if you ever have a problem with any part of your family life there's agencies and there's places that you can go and get over those speed bumps in life to help you through it, but the more remote you go, the less support you get. Perhaps the education isn't as good and you can't just kind of pop down to five different universities or try a course that's going to suit you and go to the next suburb to get the job that you really want.

Q: Going onto question 28. What is your opinion of the following statement: juvenile delinquency does not typically begin with delinquent acts; rather it begins with no delinquent problem behaviors?

A: Yes, I would say so. When we talking about juvenile delinquency we're talking about consistent behaviors that are occurring regularly and they're not changing, they might actually accelerate and get worse. The problems that maybe young kids display up until adolescents, they're flags that something is not quite right for that child, and if it can be worked out, maybe the parents need support, or that child has a particular learning difficulty or has a mental illness, I think once a person gets help in the right area then that person will often feel better about things and will have more meaningful things that they can engage in.

Q: Some literature points to low self-control as a major reason why a child commits antisocial acts. What is your view on this?

A: I really believe that low self-control, if you've got low supportive mechanisms around the child and they're not a toddler anymore that usually it has something to do with - it could be an impairment of some sort, a disability of some sort that hasn't been diagnosed, but usually low self-control I would say would be a flagger to something else happening in that child's life and they're acting out perhaps because that's the only thing that they can control, is by being aggressive and showing: look at me, I'm frustrated. Low self-control I've seen with I had a boy in Year 5 who was referred to me in an Indigenous school and he had been mucking up in class and jumping around the classroom and he couldn't read basic sight words. Once we got some basic English spelling and reading and writing and got him to a Grade 1 standard where he could actually engage with something in the classroom, those behaviors stopped because he felt more in control of himself and he had a better image of himself at school.

Q: Which of the following do you believe to have a significant impact in regards to the development of delinquency in the adolescent period? We've got schooling, peer networks, relationships with parents and lack of confidence in self.

A: I would put on perhaps the same level, your schooling, your relationships with your parents and your lack of confidence in self because I believe if you've got a good concept of self concept you're less likely to develop delinquency with your peers. You might engage with it for a little while, might do a few antisocial things, some stupid stuff, but eventually you will go: I'm not going to keep going down this path. Not unless maybe you get involved in drugs and that takes you on another path. I think if the students have learning difficulties, and I've seen this with kids, and they're struggling with their parents, relationship with their parents, they might not have that support, or they mightn't be seeing them because they might only have contact with one parent, they mightn't have any parents who are making contact with them, they're out of home, and the lack of confidence in self I think the learning difficulties is the big precursor for that as well for students doubting the abilities that they have in themselves and the gifts that they have in themselves, and that can lead onto making some really bad decisions consistently.

Q: Some literature suggests that young people only commit antisocial acts in adolescent years because of the mature age gap. What is your opinion of this?

A: It's true, I think they can do that. I think kids as well, younger than adolescents. I think any kids even younger than in their primary school years can engage in antisocial acts because they don't have that maturity, that foresight, that knowledge of other people, that impulsivity. Yeah, definitely.

Q: Have you heard of the term age normative behavior?

A: I guess is that sort of saying what behaviors you could predict is going to happen in a certain age group?

Q: Yes.

A: I haven't heard the term age normative but I can kind of have a bit of a stab in the dark about what it means.

Q: There has been a lot of research conducted on youth risk factors. What, in your opinion, should new research be concentrating on?

A: I really believe if you can get a child to engage at school and feel successful in their schooling, even if there is lots of other stuff happening in their lives, in the family, in the community, even if all that is dysfunctional or not working well for that child, if you can get a child to see that they can engage at school and that they've got a place at school and they've got a future ahead of them, and you keep a child at school and feel good at being at school and feel worthwhile, no matter what their abilities, whether they've got learning problems, to feel supported and to feel that they're well-liked by the teachers, that if they have a problem it's going to be addressed, that they don't have to know everything at the age of 15, if they've had gaps in their schooling, so really supporting their literacy and their numeracy, so they got lots of support if

they've got reading and writing issues, which I think kids who come out with learning difficulties in reading and writing, if they get lots of support in that especially in the adolescent years, they will feel much better about themselves and much more positive about themselves in terms of going onto future studies and thinking about careers later on and thinking about their future, rather than thinking about: I can't do this, the teacher thinks I'm a pain in the neck, the teacher doesn't like me because I don't know what I should know in Year 9 and so now I'm going to muck up in class. I reckon that happens all the time. We really need to focus on good teacher/student relationships. That support is, I reckon, fundamental. And you can turn a kid around and a child can then decide: I'm not going to engage with this peer group because I'm too important because I know in a couple of years I'm going to be at Uni studying law. Or: I'm going to be going to TAFE and studying building. I've got plans for myself; I don't want to stuff them up. I think that's really critical.

Q: I think you've answered our next question. Because you focused your answer then on school and literacy and things like that, do you believe that we should have more research conducted on why children have learning difficulties and things like that?

A: Yes, I think so. I think there's gaps in the schooling system between - I'm making a bit of an assumption here - the primary school where there is a lot to support literacy development. I think when kids get to high school I think kids can go off the radar there. I have seen secondary English teachers say: it's not my job to teach primary literacy if that's where a kid's still at. I think we need to take ownership of every kid that comes through the school and address each kid where they're at, whether it's at a Grade 4 standard, and I think we have to be really carefully how we do that because you will find those kids who have literacy and numeracy issues they start dropping out at Year 9 and they're the ones - I don't know if your study shows - a large percentage that will start engaging in the antisocial behaviors, that are in and out of the different courses and who end up unemployed. They will say later on in life: I just had problems, I felt no one helped me with my reading and writing. If I felt better about that, I would have had more options for myself later on. So, yeah, I think it's a really big problem.

Q: Quickly going back to 32, it's kind of early aggression in ages 1-8. Is that considered a normal thing and the child will eventually grow out of it or is that something that should be taken a bit more seriously like in regards to obviously it's something to do with their environments and what they're exposed to and will carry and on manifest?

A: I think if a kid is displaying aggression as a toddler, say maybe up to the age of three, and you've got parents there who are aware of it, who are addressing it and are aware of it and are able to bring out more positive behaviors in that child, I think after the age of three to four if that child is still displaying aggressive behaviors, I don't think that's normative; I think that's an indicator of something else happening over that child's brain or that child's life. I wouldn't say ongoing aggression is normal. Sometimes a bit of aggression but not consistently.

Q: What is your opinion on the adoption of children living in abusive or negative households? Do you recommend this practice or do you believe that children should be kept with their natural parents?

A: I think before you get to that point you get back to that support network and those parents, what have those parents grown up in? What's the situation for those parents? What are their living conditions? What's their education level? Are there addiction issues? Are there mental health issues? I think with support with parents sometimes they can make their parenting style a more positive parenting style, which will make life for their kids a much more pleasant experience. I think that sometimes if their child is being abused to the point that their life and their brains are going to be affected, it's going to impact on them for the rest of their lives what they are experiencing, I think sometimes you do need to remove them but I would put them with a family that culturally - whether it's another family member, so same cultural group, same understanding. Understanding the parents what they're going through, so they might still have a bit of contact with their parents as well so they don't feel like they're not - - - Depending on what's happening, I guess, it's all dependent on what the abuse is, what the neglect is, what the levels of abuse and neglect are. Ideally I think a kid should be with their natural parents but depending on those levels of abuse and neglect. I really believe if in our society every person has the opportunity to get the support that they need, and to be living in good, healthy conditions, have good access to food, access to a job if they want it, then usually those normal behaviors will happen for a family. That's an ideal world, isn't it?

Q: I think that's it. Thank you very much.

## “Interview #2”

**Q:** What is your name?

**A:** [REDACTED]

**Q:** Could you please state your age and gender.

**A:** [REDACTED] years of age. Male.

**Q:** Could you please state your postcode.

**A:** [REDACTED]

**Q:** What made you pursue a career with young people?

**A:** Well, I did a fair bit of work as a carpenter, as a butcher, a store manager, and I really didn't like what I was doing. I wanted to further my career. I started working in Skills Share, and discovered my passion for working with young people.

**Q:** What is your position and how long have you been employed in that position?

**A:** I'm a youth worker at a school, and I have been employed there for just over 10 years.

**Q:** What is your professional experience?

**A:** (refer to question 4).

**Q:** What are your qualifications?

**A:** I have a Bachelor of Arts (Youth Work).

## Aggression

**Q:** What are your thoughts on the reasons why children develop aggression?

**A:** Umm, I guess a lot of it stems from upbringing, and I believe that it is learnt. There may be some elements where it may be modelled as well.

**Q:** Do you think that aggression in youth is a predictor of future criminal behaviour? What do you base your opinion on?

**A:** In my experience I have found that when we try and modify behaviour in young people, their behaviour may not be modified straight away, but we find it modifies once they leave school.

**Q:** Is aggression early in life the only precursor for future antisocial behaviour? Please explain your answer.

**A:** No, aggression is not the only precursor for future antisocial behaviour. And I say that because you don't have to be aggressive to be antisocial. You can be suffering from an mental illness. In my opinion, there is no particular precursor which determines future antisocial behaviour.

**Q:** Would you say that females show aggression in different ways to males?

**A:** No, in my experience, no.

**Q:** In your opinion do you believe aggression in early childhood desists or persists? Please explain your answer.

**A:** I can't elaborate on that. I don't work with children from early childhood.

**Q:** Do you believe early aggression involves early antisocial behaviour? Explain your answer.

**A:** In some cases, umm some kids grow out of it.

**Q:** I will read out a set of factors that could influence youth aggression, for each please state what degree of input they have in fuelling aggression.

**Answer (in bold):**

- High family stress (**YES**)
- Peers (**Not necessarily**)
- Learning difficulties (**YES**)
- Genetics (**YES/NO**)
- Parenting style (**YES**)
- Low social skills (**YES, tends to be**)

**Q:** Do you believe early aggression is a genetic factor or a sociological influence? Explain your answer.

**A:** I think it's a sociological influence. In my experience, I believe it's a learnt behaviour, i.e. how to be angry, how to deal with your emotions. Patterns in their life, parents, their learning difficulties, most of which these factors you have motioned above. I would imagine more sociological factors, rather than genetic.

### **Predictors & Antisocial Behaviour**

**Q:** What style of parenting do you believe is more associated with young offenders, strict authoritarian parents or more lenient parent?

**A:** Strict authoritarian parents. I guess it's about rebelling against that authoritarian figure. There's an in-between you need to be. If you're too lenient, the kids will want to do what they want, and if you do not allow them one day, they will not deal with.

**Q:** Do you believe the level of supervision plays a role in a child's future antisocial behaviour? If so what level of supervision is appropriate to lower the risk?

**A:** I believe children should have some level of supervision, but I don't think you should over supervise kids where they feel over controlled with everything they do, which in turn can cause them to become antisocial.

**Q:** Do you consider peer influences to be a factor in a child being antisocial?

**A:** They have a somewhat influence, in the case of a child being bullied.

**Q:** What do you believe influences young people to be antisocial?

**A:** I do believe it stems from family upbringing, that's the main factor.

**Q:** In your opinion do you believe age of onset plays a role in future antisocial behaviour?

**A:** Yeah with anything, if you start at an early age, you learn to become better at it.

**Q:** Do you believe there is a correlation between early childhood aggression and violent neighbourhood? Please explain your answer.

**A:** (no answer)

**Q:** Would you agree that communities with lower socio-economic status are at more risk of offending? What do you base your opinion on.

**A:** I do agree that communities with lower socio economic statuses are more at risk of offending. I base my opinion on the fact that people in low socio environment and have a low socio economic status don't have the resources than somebody coming from a higher socio status or a more wealthier background. They have the opportunities to seek heal from a psychologist, go to the poos, or join the gym ... all in all activities which can intact release the aggression. Need to offend isn't as high, because they can get what they want.

**Q:** Are you familiar with Moffitt's Typologies?

**A:** No.

**Q:** In your opinion do you believe that protective factors lower the risk of future antisocial behaviour?

**A:** Yeah I do believe having a positive role model and peer influences lower the risks of future antisocial behaviour.

**Q:** What is your opinion on the following statement?  
'Juvenile delinquency does not typically begin with delinquent acts. Rather, it begins with non-delinquent problem behaviours'

**A:** I agree with that statement because some young people actually have problems at a younger age which in fact are not picked up by their parents, like ADHD, and it's not addressed, and become delinquent behaviour later on.

**Q:** Some literature points to low self-control as a major reason why a child commits antisocial acts. What is your view on this?

**A:** I think with aggression, comes low self-control. That inability to control your emotions and actions. Generally when you have lower self-control, you are more susceptible to be involved with delinquent behaviours and acts. You are also more flamboyant, and can be easily shaped by society. And if your society is a negative influence, then your chances of being involved in positive behaviour / pro-social behaviour is somewhat diminished/extinct.

**Q:** Which of the following do you believe to have a significant impact in regards to the development of delinquency in the adolescent period? Please explain your answer.

- Schooling ( IQ, Learning difficulties)
- Peer networks
- Relationships with parents
- Lack of confidence in-self

**A:** I think they're all interrelated. I believe schooling, peer networks. I don't think you can disassociate any of them. I think one goes with the other.

**Q:** Some literature suggests that young people only commit antisocial acts in adolescent years because of the ‘mature age gap’. What is your opinion of this?

**A:** (no answer)

**Q:** Some literature speaks of ‘age normative’ behaviour, have you heard of this before? If so what is your view?

**A:** I don’t believe in age normative behaviour. Everyone is an individual, with different genetics, experience and social surroundings. What may be considered normal for one person, may not be considered normal for another. There may be average behaviour, but not normative.

### **Professional Recommendations/ Practice Analysis**

**Q** There has been a lot of research conducted on youth risk factors, what in your opinion should new research be concentrating on?

**A:** (no answer)

**Q:** What could be done to prevent antisocial behaviour? Is there anything you can recommend?

**A:** (no answer)

**Q:** What is your opinion on the adoption of children living in abusive or negative households? Do you recommend this practice or do you believe that children should be kept with their natural parents? Please explain what you base your answer on.

**A:** Pro-adoption. In specific circumstances. Educate parents first, learn positive parenting skills, teach about aggression and violence. Then if unsuccessful, take child away from them. Case management from the family.

### **“Interview #3”**

**Q:** What is your name?

**A:** [REDACTED]

**Q:** Could you please state your age and gender?

**A:** [REDACTED] and male

Q: Could you please state your post code?

A: [REDACTED]

Q: What made you pursue a career with young people?

A: Life experience

Q: What is your position and how long have you been employed in that position?

A: My position was youth worker and I was in that field for 12 years.

Q: What is your professional experience?

A: I think that's covered

Q: What are your qualifications?

A: Youth worker part 1 and part 2. Part 1, 1981. Part 2, 1982

Q: What are your thoughts on the reasons why children develop aggression?

A: Environmental and partly genetic

Q: Do you think that aggression in youth is a predictor of future criminal behaviour?  
What do you base your opinion on?

A: Possibly, yes and no too. So that's a bit of an oxymoron- again it can be genetic, some of it can be genetic. But in my opinion probably not because as teenagers and as young children too- i.e. a 5 year old takes another 5 year olds toy and then they go and smack them. If the carer or the parent doesn't do something about it- they see it as being reasonable, so again it's environmental.

Q: Is aggression early on in life the only precursor for future antisocial behaviour? Please explain your answer.

A: No I don't think so, because there's a whole lot more to look at other than that

Q: Would you say that females show aggression in different ways to males?

A: Yes, more so- less so as we get on to the 2000's, the late 90's. Boys are naturally aggressive- it's partly genetics too- testosterone and everything else. Girls tend to scream allot I suppose that's a type of aggression- but it's not typical aggression.

Q: In your opinion do you believe aggression in childhood desists or persists? Please explain your answer?

A: My answer to that would be yes, aggression again is environmental. If their parents or carers are stepping in and sayinging not good enough u can't do that then definitely.

Q: Do you believe that early aggression involves early antisocial behaviour? Please explain your answer.

A: Yes, and as I said before if a young child is displaying aggression and nobody is doing anything about it. They think it's acceptable and that's how they operate. Absolutely a learned behaviour.

Q: I will read out a set of factors that could influence aggression, for each please state what degree of input they have in fuelling aggression.

Q: High family stress?

- A: Yeah obviously it would have some impact. Absolutely-in fact more impact than most.
- Q: Learning difficulties?
- A: Yea, again in the school environment definitely then again with peers
- Q: Genetics?
- A: Yeah I think, for me that's a yes and how much of that is involved I dont know
- Q: Parenting style?
- A: Absolutely
- Q: Low social skills?
- A: Again because of peers
- Q: Do you believe that early aggression is a genetic factor or a sociological influence? Please explain your answer.
- A: Sociological with a genetic influence
- Q: What style of parenting do you believe is more associated with young offenders, strict authoritarian parents or more lenient parents?
- A: \*laughs\* both depending on circumstances and the person involved. Umm lenience can breed a temper and antisocial behaviour and authoritarians can do the same thing I've been involved with kids who ran away from home and got into trouble only because they had to sweep the front pathway every morning at 6 o'clock because dad was in the army, so it was regimented.
- Q: Do you believe the level of supervision plays a role in a child's future antisocial behaviour? If so what level of supervision is appropriate to lower the risk?
- A: My suggestion would be yes and supervision is paramount- much to the disgust of teenagers
- Q: Do you consider peer influence to be a factor in a child being antisocial?
- A: Absolutely
- Q: What do you believe influences young people to be antisocial?
- A: Again peers, probably TV too- I mean all of that games and stuff plays a part in it. But at some point kids start to realize the difference between what is real and what is not real. So that sort of peters of whose going to be aggressive and antisocial, and if they still can't be helped- they can't.
- Q: In your opinion do you believe age of onset plays a role in future antisocial behaviour?
- A: Yes I do, again that's a peer thing a family thing what happens around the house. What happens out on the street.
- Q: Do you believe there is a correlation between early childhood aggression and violent neighbourhoods? Please explain your answer.
- A: Early on maybe but later on, no
- Q: Would you agree that communities with lower socio- economic status are at more risk of offending? What do you base your opinion on?
- A: \*Laughs\* absolutely, um socio economic area- Back in my time that was a proven fact, kids from ██████████ commission flats- a lot of offenders came from low socio

economic areas that's the haves and the haves not- if they can have it and I can't- ill steal it.

Q: Are you familiar with Moffitt's Typologies?

A: No

Q: In your opinion do you believe that protective factors lower the risk of future antisocial behaviour?

A: Again, I'd have to say yes. I've been involved with children whose parents were drunks, who grew up and hated that behaviour. But that's a minor percentage, then yes I would have to say yes.

Q: What is your opinion on the following statement?

"Juvenile delinquency does not begin with delinquent acts, but rather with non-delinquent problem behaviours"

A: \*Gestures, to skip question\*

Q: Some literature points to low self-control as a major reason why a child commits anti-social acts. What is your view on this?

A: Low self-control, I'd have to say absolutely I would agree with that statement.

Q: Which of the following do you believe to have a significant in regards to the development of delinquency in the adolescent period? Please explain your answer. Schooling, peer networks, relationships with parents and lack of self-confidence.

A: I think learning difficulties covers the lack of confidence and I think family and peer networks are two in the same question, in my opinion.

Q: Some literature suggests that young people only commit antisocial acts in adolescent years because of the mature age gap. What is your opinion of this?

A: \*Gestures, to skip question\*

Q: Some literature speaks of 'age normative' behaviour, have you heard of this before? If so what is your view?

A: \*Gestures, to skip question\*

Q: There has been a lot of research conducted on youth risk factors, what in your opinion should new research be concentrating on?

A: I think that research should keep concentrating on risk factor, that's the most important area.

Q: What could be done to prevent antisocial behaviour? Is there anything you can recommend?

A: It's a combination of things that need to be looked at so that it can be addressed, and like I said it depends on the individual case.

Q: What is your opinion on the adoption of children living in abusive or negative households? Do you recommend this practice or do you believe that children should

A: be kept with their natural parents? Please explain what you base your answer on  
Children should be kept with natural parents where possible; if that's not possible  
then I definitely support fostering.

**APPENDIX V**  
**Recommended Readings**

Source: Kring, AM, Johnson, SL, Davidson, GC & Neale, JM (2010), *Abnormal Psychology*. (11<sup>th</sup> ed.), Melbourne: John Wiley & Sons Inc.

**Appendix 1 - DSM Criteria for Anti-Social Personality Disorder**

1. Must be at least 18 years of age.
2. Show evidence of conduct disorder before 15 years of age.
3. Show patters of disregard for the rights of others since the age of 15 as shown by the following:
  - a) Repeated law breaking
  - b) Deceitfulness, lying
  - c) Impulsivity
  - d) Irritability & aggressiveness
  - e) Reckless disregard for own safety and safety of others
  - f) Irresponsibility as seen in unreliable employment or financial history
  - g) Lack of remorse

Source: Prior, M, Sanson, A, Smart, P & Oberklaid, F(2000) 'Pathways from infancy to adolescence: Australian Temperament Project 1983-2000'. Australian Institute of Family Studies, 1447-1469.

**Gender differences**

In infancy there were very few differences between boys and girls on any of our measures. However, with each year of development, more and more differences began to emerge, most of them in the direction of girls being advantaged. It is important to remember that when we talk about gender differences, we are talking about average figures across a very large group of children, and our conclusions will not hold for each and every child. Looking at averages does not tell us much about any individual child; hence when we say, for example, that boys are more aggressive on average, this does not mean that every boy is more aggressive than every girl. But, for example, looking across the scores on aggression for the whole sample, boys as a group tend to have more problems than do girls as a group.

On average, girls tended to be more socially mature at younger ages than boys, that is, they were more skilled (or practised) at taking responsibility, such as doing small chores. This may be because parents expect and encourage their little girls to be responsible more than they do with their little boys, although we had no measures of this possible source of difference. There were no cognitive and learning ability differences between

the sexes on the tests that we gave to 300 children from the project who completed full assessments during home visits between 3 and 7 years. But teachers reported that the boys had more difficulties adjusting to school. They showed poorer task orientation, were less socially competent, were more prone to hyperactivity and aggression, and some seemed less 'ready' for the demands of the classroom in the early years of school. Their ability to control or regulate their own behaviour was seen as somewhat behind that of girls. In comparing the pathways across time which related to adjustment difficulties at age 8, we found that temperamental inflexibility was the best predictor for both boys and girls. In other ways the pathways were very different. Throughout development, temperamental inflexibility and poor persistence predicted behaviour problems for boys. However for girls, a more complex mix of factors was predictive, with child-rearing factors such as punishment and lower child-centeredness being important. This suggested greater sensitivity to family variables for girls in their psycho-social development. The study of pathways to different types of disorders in middle childhood, which is described below, also found that boys with adjustment problems tended to have a greater number of risk factors in their developmental histories, than had girls with adjustment problems. This indicated somewhat greater vulnerability to difficulties for boys.

Differences between boys and girls have persisted over the late-childhood period and into adolescence. Parents, teachers, and the children themselves have rated boys as having higher levels of aggression and hyperactivity. In terms of temperament characteristics, boys as a group have consistently been reported to be less persistent and more active than girls. We have found no differences between boys and girls on anxiety, but from 13–14 years onwards, girls have reported higher levels of depression than boys, and this difference appears to be increasing as the teenagers move through the adolescent years. Ratings from parents, teachers and children show that girls tend to have closer friendships and to be more cooperative, responsible and empathic than boys. Boys and girls were reported to participate equally as often in organised peer group activities such as sports clubs or community groups.

### **The development of aggressive and anti-social behaviour**

One group of children who are at considerable risk for maladjustment, continuing on into adolescence and adult life, are those who show serious levels of aggressive and antisocial behaviour such as destructiveness, fighting, lying, and defiance when they are young. Of course, most children will show some of these behaviours at some time. For example, we are familiar with the problems of the 'terrible twos' when children are especially likely to have tantrums, and to test out their parents' patience about rules, and acceptable behaviour. They may also try hitting parents, siblings, and other children just to see what sort of a reaction they get. This is part of learning what is permitted and what is not. There are some children who are rather aggressive in the early stages but who improve as they mature. But there are also those children who are notably aggressive and uncooperative from early in life who do not grow out of it and who may become worse. There is abundant evidence in the developmental literature that this group is at risk for difficulties at school age and in later life.

At 9-10 years of age (usually Grade 4 stage), we followed up some of the children who had been reported to have aggression problems in toddlerhood and during pre-school and Preparatory Grade. Those children whose patterns of aggressive, anti-social behaviour had persisted were:

- more likely to be boys;
- likely to have histories of difficult temperament and difficult mother-child relationships;
- likely to show more hostile interactions with brothers and sisters;
- subject to more severe parental disciplinary practices than comparison children. (The latter, of course, should not be surprising, since they are difficult to manage);
- more likely to get into trouble at school and to have difficulties with learning and with getting along with other children. A few of the boys in the study were reporting some pre-delinquent behaviours by the time they were in Grade 4, and their problem-solving and verbal abilities were below average.

In a further investigation of this particular problem, we looked again at a group of children who had shown high levels of aggression in Grade 6 (usually 11-12 years), and also in the first year of secondary school (about age 12–13). We measured anti-social behaviour, including fighting, destructiveness, lack of respect and rudeness, bullying other children, and lying. Looking back across development we found that:

- these children had early patterns of aggression which were very predictive of persistent anti-social behaviour at the early adolescent stage. These findings were true according to reports from all informants: parents, teachers, and the children themselves;
- most of the children with anti-social problems were boys;
- in general, aggression was not the only problem for these children, as they often had a combination of behavioural difficulties, and many had learning difficulties as well. They did not get on well with other children and their problems had been evident for many years;
- temperament differences were also evident on the Activity, Reactivity, Persistence, and Sociability dimensions;
- these children were less socially competent according to all three raters (parent, teacher and child); and also differed from non-aggressive children on mother's overall rating of child difficulty. Mothers and teachers reported them to have school problems and difficulties with peer relationships.

The early onset and persistence of anti-social behaviours which we have demonstrated so clearly in this project is consistent with findings from international research. It is clear that we should be attempting to intervene with the children and families early in development, before these kinds of problems become entrenched and difficult to modify.

### **Attention deficit hyperactivity problems**

Hyperactive, impulsive, distractible behaviour along with difficulties in focusing and sustaining attention combine in a syndrome known as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). This set of problems attracts a good deal of attention in the community and is seen as a rather common problem in school-aged children in Australia. We have carried out a number of studies looking at various facets of the

development of children in the project who developed symptoms of ADHD. As is commonly reported in international studies, many of these children also have learning difficulties and sometimes aggression and/or anxiety problems as well. In a study of the early signs or precursors to hyperactivity and aggression at the age of 7–8 years, we looked at the earlier histories of children who scored high on either our hyperactivity scale or our aggression scale, or on both scales, at several time points in the study. We compared these groups with children who were problem free.

Looking back at the histories of the children who had aggression problems (with or without co-occurring hyperactivity) indicated that in infancy and toddlerhood they had shown difficult temperament characteristics such as low cooperation-manageability, high activity-reactivity, and irritability. At 3–4 and 5–6 years mothers had rated them as more inflexible and less persistent in their temperament. The group with the most negative temperament attributes early in development was the one where the children had both hyperactivity and aggressive behaviours.

In addition to these temperamental differences, we identified other risk variables which appeared to contribute to their poor adjustment. These included parental perceptions of difficulty in the child from infancy onwards, greater socio-economic disadvantages in the family, more negative life events, and poorer self-perceived coping skills in the parents. The combination of difficult temperamental characteristics and adverse family factors seemed to produce children with problems in regulating their behaviour, that is, hyperactivity and aggression problems. Non-compliant behaviour was a strong feature of the histories of these children.

For the children with hyperactivity only, there was a trend for them to have suffered from some pre and peri-natal disadvantage in early life. They had been less problematic in behaviour in the early years of development by comparison with those children who were also aggressive.

Teacher data tended to confirm the reports by parents, although they reported an overall lower level of problem behaviour than did parents. They too found the children with both sets of difficulties much more problematic, illustrating the cross-situational nature of their difficulties. In general, this study showed that it was the aggressive behaviour of the children which distinguished them from other children from early in life, rather than hyperactive behaviour. All three problem groups however, were reported to have academic difficulties.

Cheryl Clarke, in her PhD research at LaTrobe University, assessed a number of children from our study who had histories of aggressive and/or hyperactive behaviour, when they were 13–14 years of age. She used some neuropsychological tests, which tap into different brain functions and attention processes. She found that adolescents with both current and previous ADHD problems, whether they had additional anti-social behaviour or not, had many difficulties with planning and organising their approaches to the cognitive tasks and problems she asked them to complete. They were poorer than non-problem children in developing strategies for goal setting and problem solving, and in monitoring their performance. These cognitive tests showed in a more formal way some of the everyday problems children with ADHD have in managing their daily life, their school work and their homework, and we know this leads to great frustration for the children, their parents and their teachers.

In our most recent study of the series focusing on attention deficit hyperactivity problems, we were able to combine our data with that from the Dunedin Multidisciplinary Study of Health and Development which has been going on in New Zealand now for more than 25 years. This group has followed almost 1000 children from the age of 3 years, and the members of their sample are now adults and establishing their own

families. This research group too has measured behavioural and learning problems throughout childhood. We used data from both studies to investigate outcome in adolescence for children who had hyperactive behaviour and reading problems at 5–8 years of age. We found that early hyperactivity was associated with later behaviour problems of the anti-social type, and with persisting literacy difficulties and attention deficits, as well as with lower socio-economic status. If these children also showed antisocial behaviour and reading problems, they fared worse in adolescence than did those with just hyperactivity. This suggests that it is the reading problems and anti-social behaviour which frequently co-exist with hyperactivity, which most strongly predict a poor social and academic outcome.