

Little Children and Already Acting Mean

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The Wall Street Journal:

Children still in kindergarten or even younger form cliques and intentionally exclude others, say psychologists and educators who are increasingly noticing the behavior and taking steps to curb it.

Special programs are popping up in elementary schools to teach empathy as a means of stemming relational aggression, a psychological term to describe using the threat of removing friendship as a tactical weapon. Children also are being guided in ways to stand up for themselves, and to help others, in instances of social exclusion. Though both boys and girls exhibit relational aggression, it is thought to be more common among girls because they are generally more socially developed and verbal than boys.

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“It actually works so well because of the child’s limited cognitive abilities,” said Jamie Ostrov, an associate professor of psychology at the University at Buffalo, State University of New York.

Read the whole story: [*The Wall Street Journal*](#)