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YOUTH VIOLENCE AND AGGRESSION: FACTORS THAT PROMOTE VIOLENCE IN CHILDREN

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Research has shown that violence levels in adolescents has increased (e.g., Blumstein, 1995; Kunkel et al., 1995; Toch & Silver, 1993). My hypothesis was that children feel fearful because of the aggressive nature of today’s world, a fear that causes them to react with aggression in threatening situations. Seventy-two adolescents were assessed through questionnaires on levels of aggression, attitudes toward aggression, and feelings of safety in their environments. The results did not show a significant difference in aggression levels between those who expressed fear for their safety and those who did not; however, the results showed that adolescents who fall into one of the following three categories displayed higher levels of aggression and more negative attitudes concerning aggression: those that belong to a gang, those that watch a lot of television violence, and those who have been struck by an adult in anger. The results also showed that most participants expressed fear for their safety in their environments. Community leaders and educators need to be aware of this and further studies need to be conducted to determine how fear motivates children’s aggressive tendencies.