

Do Parents and Teachers See the Same Behaviors? Comparing Reports of Reactive and Proactive Aggression

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Este trabalho foi desenvolvido com o apoio da Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia – UID/00443/2025, Centro de Investigação Interdisciplinar em Justiça



Abstract

Children's and youth's aggressive behaviors constitute one of the most significant problems and social concerns of the present time, given their detrimental consequences not only for those who engage in such behaviors and for the victims, but also for the family and the surrounding community. In this scope, aggressive behaviors displayed during childhood and adolescence have been considered an important risk factor for the continuity of this type of conduct, as well as for the development of other maladaptive behaviors throughout life (Fite et al., 2013; Pechorro et al., 2017). Regarding the assessment of aggressive behavior, the use of multiple informants to evaluate children's aggressive behavior is considered a best practice, once they observe children from different perspectives, which helps establish a more detailed and holistic understanding of this phenomenon. Nevertheless, studies explicitly within the scope of aggressive behavior functions remain scarce, and discrepancies between informants' reports are common in studies that rely on proximal behaviors. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the agreement between parent and teacher ratings of children's reactive and proactive aggressive behaviors. To achieve this goal, elementary school children ($n = 95$, aged 7-10 years) were assessed using the Reactive and Proactive Aggression Questionnaire (. Results showed that teachers reported higher levels of proactive aggression than parents. Nevertheless, the reports of both informants were moderately to strongly related to reactive and proactive aggression, with stronger agreement for reactive aggression. Sex differences also emerged. For girls, the agreement was significant for both proactive and reactive aggression; for boys, it was significant only for reactive aggression. The results, limitations, and cues for future studies are presented.