

Dosing Recommendations Regarding the Use of Antipsychotic Medication in Children under 6 Years of Age

The use of antipsychotic medications in preschoolers (children under six years of age) which is generally “off-label”, is not recommended and should only be considered under the most extraordinary circumstances. Disruptive aggression in autism is one such circumstance. Adequately powered studies have not been conducted in preschoolers.

Before considering pharmacological treatment for preschoolers the following guidelines are strongly recommended:

1. Must have developmentally-appropriate, comprehensive psychiatric assessment with diagnoses, impairments, treatment target and treatment plans clearly identified and documented.
2. Assessment must include evaluation of parental psychopathology and treatment needs, as well as family functioning.
3. Psychosocial treatments should precede the use of psychotropic medications and should continue if medications are prescribed.

Antipsychotic Dosing Information for Children Under Age 6 (used under rare circumstances)

The dosing information is based on expert opinion and therefore is Level C evidence

Drug Name	Dose
Risperdal† (risperidone)	Starting dose: 0.125 mg/day Maximum Dose: 1.5 mg/day
Abilify† (aripirazole)	Starting dose: 1 mg/day Maximum dose: 7.5 mg/day

† Oral concentrate commercially available