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Elementary School Children with Behavior Problems: Teacher-Child Relations and Self-Perception. A Prospective Study

Lisbeth Henricsson and Ann-Margret Rydell,
Uppsala University

The teacher relations and self-perception of children with externalizing ($n = 26$) and internalizing behavior problems ($n = 25$) and a nonproblematic group ($n = 44$) were studied prospectively. The children were assessed with the Rutter CBQ in 1st grade. Classroom observations of teacher-child interactions were performed in 2nd grade. The teacher relationship was assessed with the Pianta STRS and with child self-reports, and self-perception was assessed with a Swedish instrument in 3rd grade. Children with externalizing problems had more conflicts with teachers, as well as more negative attitudes in teacher relationships and a less positive self-perception, than did untroubled children. Children with internalizing problems had more dependent and conflictual teacher relationships than did untroubled children. There was little evidence of moderating effects of social competence on the teacher-child relations of children with behavior problems. Observed conflictual teacher interactions to some extent contributed to negative teacher relationships independently of problem status.

Telling Stories: Examining the Effects of Elaborative Style, Reporting Condition, and Social Class in Preschoolers' Narratives

Whitney J. Cain, *Peace College*

This research examined two strategies for encouraging preschoolers' narratives. Thirty-two lower-SES and 31 middle-SES children (mean age = 4.85) participated. Children were assigned randomly to either high or low elaborative narrative style conditions. Afterward, each child participated in two activities and then narrated about them on two occasions, once in a draw-and-tell condition and once in a tell-only condition. Children's narratives were coded for narrative indicators and distracters. MANOVA procedures confirmed that children provided more narrative indicators when narrating in draw-and-tell versus tell-only reporting conditions, and an interaction between reporting condition, elaborative style, and SES indicated that lower-income children's narratives benefited most when they narrated in high elaborative, draw-and-tell conditions. Implications for understanding narrative, SES, and narrative supports are discussed.

Mother-Child Discourse Surrounding a Child's Past Behavior at 30 Months: Links to Emotional Understanding and Early Conscience Development at 36 Months

Deborah J. Laible, *Southern Methodist University*

Recent research supports the idea that both the content and style of mother-child discourse is important in shaping a child's early moral understanding. This study was designed to further this research by examining how the clarity, elaborativeness, and emotional content of conversations about the past related to a child's sociomoral development. Sixty-three mother-child dyads took part in the study. When the child was 30 months, each mother was asked to discuss with her child two past events, one in which her child behaved well and one in which her child misbehaved. These conversations were transcribed and coded for emotional content and for maternal narrative style. At 36 months, children completed measures of early conscience development and emotional understanding. Mother's use of clear, elaborative discourse and emotion-laden discourse in the conversations about child's past behavior at 30 months were related to a child's early conscience development and emotional understanding 6 months later.

It's All in Their Heads: Reflective Abstraction as an Alternative to the Moral Discussion Group

Ty Binfet, *Loyola Marymount University*

This study examined two distinct moral reasoning interventions: an interindividual intervention, in which students discussed moral dilemmas, and an intraindividual intervention, in which students individually reflected on moral dilemmas. Ninety-seven 6th- and 7th-grade students were administered pre- and posttest measures of the Sociomoral Reflection Measure (Gibbs, Basinger, & Fuller, 1992). Participants were randomly assigned to either treatment (moral) or placebo (nonmoral) conditions. The results indicated no difference in moral reasoning was between students in the two experimental groups and indicated that students in both experimental groups made significant gains in moral reasoning compared with students in placebo groups.