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## Behavioral Inhibition as a Precursor of Peer Social Competence in Early School Age: The Interplay With Attachment and Nonparental Care

Gunilla Bohlin, Berit Hagekull, and Kerstin Andersson,  
*Uppsala University, Sweden*

A sample of 81 children was followed longitudinally to assess the contributions of behavioral inhibition, early attachment security, and experience of nonparental care to individual differences in social competence. Additive, mediational, and moderator models were tried. Attachment security was assessed in the Strange Situation at 15 months of age. Behavioral inhibition at 13–15 months and 4 years, and social competence at 8 years, were captured through aggregates of ratings and observations. Social competence was predicted by all three predictor variables, but for behavioral inhibition this was true only for the 4-year measure. The effects of attachment, nonparental care, and 4-year behavioral inhibition were found to be additive, supporting a view of social competence as multiply determined. There was also support for a moderating effect of attachment, meaning that a secure attachment relationship was particularly important for infants who started out as highly inhibited.

## Talking Yourself Out of Being Shy: Shyness, Expressive Vocabulary, and Socioemotional Adjustment in Preschool

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Robert J. Coplan and Mandana Armer, *Carleton University*

The goal of the present study was to explore the role of expressive vocabulary as a moderator in the relation between shyness and maladjustment in early childhood. Participants were 82 preschool children (39 males, 43 females). Mothers rated children's shyness at the start of the preschool year. Children were interviewed individually to assess expressive vocabulary and self-perceptions. Near the end of the school year, teachers completed ratings of child adjustment. No significant relation was found between shyness and expressive vocabulary. However, shyness and expressive vocabulary were found to interact in the prediction of indices of maladjustment. Specifically, increased expressive vocabulary appeared to act as a buffer against certain negative outcomes related to shyness. Implications are discussed in terms of the possible effect of social context on shy children's performance on formal language assessments, as well as the potential role of verbal abilities in the coping skills of shy children.

## If-Then Contingencies in Children's Sibling Conflicts

Michal Perlman, *Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto*

Hildy S. Ross, *University of Waterloo*

Two-step (*if-then*) behavioral contingencies in the naturally occurring conflicts of 2- and 4-year-old siblings were identified and described. Children's crying, compliance, ignoring, opposition, power, and reasoning strategies were examined to determine how they were used immediately following opposition, power, and reasoning from siblings and power and reasoning from mothers. Children responded to their opponents' behaviors in a highly consistent manner across the different strategies observed. The behavioral patterns children used showed more extensive reciprocity of reasoning than of power. In addition, children were sensitive to the status of their opponent (e.g., they complied after their mothers used power strategies but were less likely to do so after their siblings used such strategies; also, younger children ignored sibling opposition, while older children responded to it with power). The utility of considering the sequential nature of behavior, not simply the average occurrence of different strategies, is highlighted.

## Moral Judgment, Self-Understanding, and Moral Actions: The Role of Multiple Constructs

W. Pitt Derryberry, *Western Kentucky University*

Stephen J. Thoma, *University of Alabama*

Current models of moral functioning such as those of Rest (1983) and Damon and Hart (1988) have maintained that optimal moral development and consistent moral action require the presence of multiple constructs. In order to examine the importance of the presence of multiple variables relevant to moral functioning, structural equation modeling was used in addressing relationships among measurements of moral judgment development, self-understanding, and three distinct forms of moral action. A sample of 167 college students responded to measures of moral judgment, self-understanding, and moral action in three data-collection sessions. Models generated of these data revealed that three different forms of moral action were statistically distinct and were differentially related to moral judgment development and self-understanding. The results are discussed in terms of the importance and contributions of multiple moral developmental constructs in the production of moral action.

## Imaginary Companions and Impersonated Characters: Sex Differences in Children's Fantasy Play

Stephanie M. Carlson, *University of Washington*

Marjorie Taylor, *University of Oregon*

We compared the incidence of imaginary companions and impersonated characters in 152 three- and four-year-old children (75 males and 77 females). Children and their parents were interviewed about role play in two sessions. Although there were no sex differences in verbal ability or fantasy predisposition, there was a significant difference in the form of children's imaginary characters: girls were more likely to create imaginary companions, whereas boys were more likely than girls to actively impersonate their characters. There were no significant sex differences in the competence ratings of imaginary companions or impersonated characters. These results suggest that it is important to examine the form and function of children's pretense to understand sex differences in fantasy play.