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Maternal Emotional Expressiveness and Attachment Security: Links to Representations of Relationships and Social Behavior

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The goal of this study was to examine whether the security of the relationship between mothers and children influenced the relation between maternal emotional expressiveness and aspects of children's social development. Fifty-one preschool children (*M* age = 52.80 months) and their mothers took part in the study. At their homes, mothers completed the Attachment Q-set. At the lab, children completed a measure of their representations of family relationships, while mothers completed measures of maternal emotional expressiveness and reports of the child's social competence. Findings supported the idea that the quality of the attachment relationship moderated the influence of maternal positive expressiveness. For children who were low in attachment security, maternal positive expressiveness was an important predictor of representations of relationships. For those who were high in attachment security, maternal positive expressiveness was unrelated to social development. Overall, the pattern of findings suggests that high levels of maternal positive expressiveness may compensate for a lack of attachment security in promoting social development.

Although researchers have found fairly consistent links between maternal emotional expressiveness and children's social behavior, they have yet to examine how maternal expressiveness relates to children's developing relationship schemes. In addition, researchers also have not yet examined how the quality of the mother-child attachment relationship might moderate the links between maternal emotional expressiveness and children's social development. Therefore, this study was designed to examine the links between

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Behavioral Characteristics Associated with Stable and Fluid Best Friendship Patterns in Middle Childhood

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Five groups of children were identified using friendship nominations from the fall and spring of their fifth-grade year: (1) children with a stable best friendship with the same child (*same-stable*); (2) children with a mutual best friendship at Times 1 and 2, but the best friend was a different child at each time (*different-stable*); (3) children with a best friendship at Time 1 but not at Time 2 (*friendship loss*); (4) children who had no best friendship at Time 1 but did have a best friendship at Time 2 (*friendship gain*); and (5) chronically friendless children. Peer nominations of psychosocial adjustment were gathered at both time points. The *friendship gain* group became *less* victimized and the *friendship loss* group became more victimized by Time 2. The two *stable* groups of children were rated as prosocial and popular, with low levels of aggression and victimization. Findings suggest that the consistency of having *any* best friendship across time may be as important to children's adjustment as same-friendship stability. The results of this study also highlight the importance of best friendship "renewal."

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Perceptions of Friendship Quality and Observed Behaviors with Friends: How do Sociometrically Rejected, Average, and Popular Girls Differ?

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This study examined associations between sociometric status and friendship quality using observational and questionnaire data from 139 fourth-grade girls and their friends. Multivariate analyses of covariance (controlling for ethnicity and socioeconomic status) showed that rejected girls and their friends did not differ in their reported friendship quality compared to average or popular girls. However, coded behavioral observations revealed that compared to other girls, rejected girls displayed more negative affect, bossiness, and deviance but less positive gossip, negative gossip, prosocial behavior, and social competence. Furthermore, as a dyad, compared to other girls, rejected girls and their friends exhibited less behavioral maturity and poorer conflict resolution skills. These results are important in advancing understanding of ways in which rejected girls may perpetuate their problems in peer contexts.

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How Children's Justifications of the "Best Thing to Do" in Peer Conflicts Relate to Their Emotional and Behavioral Problems in Early Elementary School

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In this three-year longitudinal study, children were asked to choose the "best" strategy for dealing with hypothetical peer provocations and to justify "why" that was their choice at the end of first, second, and third grades. Teachers and parents also rated children's emotional and behavioral problems. Children's justifications were subjected to qualitative analyses to identify distinct content categories. These included getting others into trouble or avoiding it, dichotomous reasoning about good (kind) versus bad (mean) strategies, appeals to authorities for help, situation-specific solutions that anticipated consequences of actions, or general rules or solutions that could or should be used in similar conflicts to effect positive outcomes. These justification categories were related to the children's grade levels. Older children were more likely to use more story-specific justifications and to refer to the perspectives of others and to future consequences in their justification responses. Children who used justifications that involved getting others into trouble or avoiding it had higher levels of teacher ratings of concurrent emotional and behavioral problems at second and third grades and to parent ratings of emotional problems at third grade.

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The Relationship of Young Children's Motor Skills to Later Reading and Math Achievement

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This study examined empirical evidence about the relationship between motor skills at the beginning of kindergarten and reading and mathematics achievement at the end of first grade, using the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study—Kindergarten cohort national dataset ($N = 12,583$). Results of hierarchical regression analyses demonstrated that early kindergarten motor skills, especially visual motor skills, add a small but unique amount of variance to achievement in reading and mathematics at the end of first grade even after controlling for initial skills and demographic information. Furthermore, Receiver-Operating-Characteristic curve analyses showed that information from visual motor skills is useful in identifying children at risk for academic underachievement. The results suggest the importance of the role that motor skills can play in designing and implementing an early school achievement battery.

The relationship between motor and cognitive skills has long been the subject of research in several fields. In child development, Piaget accorded sensorimotor skills a central role in children's early cognitive development. According to Piaget's (1952) developmental theory, motor skills contribute to infants' active exploration of the environment, and it is through such actions that infants construct their knowledge of the world. Related studies demonstrated that infants' experiences of self-produced locomotion (e.g., crawling) are related to such cognitive skills as object permanence and the

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Predicting Preschool Cognitive Development from Infant Temperament, Maternal Sensitivity, and Psychosocial Risk

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This longitudinal study investigated the relative contributions of infant temperament, maternal sensitivity, and psychosocial risk to individual differences in preschool children's cognitive development. It also examined specific moderating effects between predictors as well as the specific mediating role of maternal sensitivity in the relation between psychosocial risk and children's cognitive development. A mixed sample comprising 27 low-risk (i.e., adult mothers) and 62 high-risk (i.e., adolescent mothers) mother-child dyads was evaluated at home on five occasions. At 6 and 10 months, infants' cognitive development was assessed using the Bayley Scales of Infant Development (BSID) (Bayley, 1993). At 15 and 18 months, mothers completed Goldsmith's (1996) Toddler Behavior Assessment Questionnaire (TBAQ), and observers completed Pederson and Moran's (1995) Maternal Behavior Q-Sort. At 36 months, preschoolers' cognitive development was reassessed using the BSID. Results showed that controlling for infant mental development scores, all three classes of variables contributed to differences in cognitive functioning. Psychosocial risk moderated the relations between interest persistence and preschooler cognitive development, and the

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