
Abstract:
Hypothetical vignettes were used to examine 384 preadolescents' understanding of gossip in varying circumstances. Children correctly labeled talk about nonpresent others as gossip and considered it inappropriate. Skepticism was higher for gossip than for firsthand information and was greatest in the presence of cues suggesting that speakers were unreliable or harbored ulterior motives. Surprisingly, skepticism of gossip decreased with age. Attributions for speakers' behavior were sensitive to subtle contextual cues, and in the absence of clear motives, children, particularly girls, were likely to assume that gossipers spread false information out of jealousy. Overall, preadolescents appear to have a relatively mature understanding of the limitations of gossip, treat gossip with skepticism, and judge harshly gossipers who spread false gossip.


Abstract:
This study addressed the role of specific parenting practices in children's expression of emotion and social competence. The specific objective was to examine the relations of parents' reactions to children's negative emotions with children's social and emotional competence at school and to explore the moderating role of children's dispositional emotionality in this relation. A diverse sample of first to fourth graders was observed at school; teachers reported on children's social competence and affect, and parents reported on their reactions to their children's negative emotions and the intensity of children's negative emotions. Parental problem-focused reactions were positively related to socioemotional competence for boys but negatively associated for girls. Parental punitive/minimizing reactions were associated with low socioemotional competence. Moderating effects were obtained for emotion-focused (comforting) parental reactions: Children prone to intense negative emotions were especially low in socioemotional competence if their parents reported using high or average levels of these reactions.


Abstract:
White-lie-telling behavior in 3 to 7-years-olds was examined using a Reverse Rouge Task. Before children took a photograph of the experimenter, the experimenter asked, "Do I look okay for the photo?" In the experimental condition, the experimenter's nose had a visible mark; in the control condition, it did not. Most of the children in the experimental condition told white lies. Undergraduates who saw children's videotaped responses could not discriminate the white-lie tellers from the control nonliars. Analysis of the children's expressive behavior revealed that
white-lie tellers only differed from control nonliars on three categories. Results suggest that children are not always candid truth tellers. They are able to use both verbal and nonverbal display rules and tell white lies in politeness situations.


*Abstract:*
Using repeated observational and questionnaire data from 57 infants and their parents, lower parental efficacy perceptions and higher parental negative mood states were evaluated as potential mediators to explain the adverse influence of environmental chaos on parenting. Factor analysis revealed noise- and crowding-chaos dimensions in the home. Higher scores on both chaos dimensions were related to less responsive and stimulating parenting. Home chaos was generally unrelated to parental ratings of distressed mood, but parents reported a lower sense of efficacy as noise level in home increased. However, our data did not support predicted links between measures of parenting and efficacy. The overall pattern of results indicates that neither parental mood nor efficacy appears to mediate relations between home chaos and parenting behavior.


*Abstract:*
Maternal mediation in joint writing was compared to storybook reading in terms of their relations with emergent literacy among kindergartners in a low Socioeconomic Status population. Joint writing was examined by dyadic writing. Story-book reading was assessed by storybook recognition. Children's literacy was measured by word writing and recognition, and phonological and orthographic awareness. Kindergarten teachers ranked the children's verbal, graphic, and mathematical abilities. After partialling out home environment measures and story-book reading, maternal writing mediation explained added variance of word writing/recognition and phonological awareness. Storybook reading explained added variance of verbal ability above home environment and maternal writing mediation. Mediation in joint writing is linked to reading and writing acquisition, and storybook reading is related to verbal abilities.