with reading disability were subjected to multiple regression analysis. In the total sample, heritability of the group deficit in reading performance was .58 (± .08). However, when the basic regression model was fitted separately to data from twin pairs with average Wechsler (1974, 1981) full scale IQ scores below 100 or 100 and above, resulting estimates of reading performance were .43 and .72, respectively, a significant difference. The results of fitting extended regression models to reading performance and continuous IQ data provide evidence that the genetic etiology of reading disability differs as a linear function of IQ. These results suggest that IQ is relevant for the diagnosis of reading disability and that environmental influences may be more salient as a cause of reading difficulties in children with lower IQ scores.

426. Weiner, Robin K.; Sheridan, Susan M.; & Jenson, William R. (1998). The effects of conjoint behavioral consultation and a structured homework program on math completion accuracy in junior high students. School Psychology Quarterly, 13, 281-309. The effects of conjoint behavioral consultation and a structured homework program on math homework completion accuracy in junior high school students who were at risk for academic failure were investigated. Four of the five students improved their completion rates during treatment. At follow-up, three of the five students maintained or improved gains they made during treatment.

427. Ziegler, Albert; & Heller, Kurt A. (2000). Effects of an attribution retraining with female students gifted in physics. Journal for the Education of the Gifted, 23, 217-243. An attribution retraining program was proposed as a way to help female students. The training was conducted with 164 students who were in the 8th grade and attending physics courses for the first time. Training significantly improved performance in physics and had favorable effects on the motivation sets and self-related cognitions of the girls in the training program.

428. Ammerman, Robert T.; Kolko, David J.; Kirisci, Levent; Blackson, Timothy C.; & Dawes, Michael A. (1999). Child abuse potential in parents with histories of substance use disorder. Child Abuse and Neglect, 23, 1225-1238. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between parental history of substances use disorders (SUDs) and abuse potential. Milner’s (1986) Child Abuse Potential Inventory (CAPI) was administered to fathers and mothers (with and without histories of SUDs) of ten- to 12-year-old boys. Fathers and mothers with lifetime histories of SUDs had higher Abuse Scale scores and were more likely to score in the Elevated range (as determined by clinically significant cutoff scores) than parents without such histories. No differences were found between parents with current diagnoses of SUD and those with past (but not current) histories of SUD. Fathers and mothers with a partner who had a history of SUD were more likely to score in the Elevated range, regardless of their own SUD histories. Separate regression models revealed that, for both fathers and
mothers, emotional dysregulation (positive and negative affectivity) predicted Abuse Scale scores. Additional contributors to Abuse Scale scores were SUD status in fathers, and lack of involvement with the child in mothers. History of SUDs in both fathers and mothers increases abuse potential. Contributors to abuse potential differed in fathers and mothers, underscoring the importance of examining parents separately in child maltreatment research.

429. Barnes, Grace M.; Reifman, Alan S.; Farrell, Michael P; & Dintcheff, Barbara A. (2000). The effects of parenting on the development of adolescent alcohol misuse: A six-wave latent growth model. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 62, 175-186. Alcohol use increases throughout adolescence. Based on family socialization theory, it was hypothesized that family factors, particularly parental support and monitoring, would influence individual trajectories in the development of alcohol misuse. Six waves of data were analyzed, based on interviews with 506 adolescents in the general population of a northeastern metropolitan area. Using growth-curve longitudinal analysis, results show that parenting significantly predicts adolescents’ initial drinking levels as well as their rates of increase in alcohol misuse. This study provides evidence that effective parenting is an important factor in preventing alcohol misuse.

430. Beckwith, Leila; Howard, Judy; Espinosa, Michael; & Tyler, Rachelle. (1999). Psychopathology, mother-child interaction, and infant development: Substance-abusing mothers and their offspring. Development and Psychopathology, 11, 715-725. The course of severe depressive symptoms from pregnancy to six months postpartum, as well as the occurrence of severe paranoid symptoms prenatally, were examined by the Millon Clinical Multiaxial Inventory I and the Beck Depression Inventory, in 78 women who were heavy, chronic cocaine users and who retained custody of their children after birth. Six months postpartum, the quality of caregiving was observed and assessed in the home, and the children were assessed on the Bayley MDI Index in the laboratory. Mothers who were depressed and paranoid prenatally, regardless of whether the depression continued to six months postpartum, were less sensitive in caregiving than women without severe symptoms of paranoia or depression during pregnancy or those who reported only depression that lifted by six months postpartum. Mothers who were depressed prenatally and continued to be depressed by six months postpartum, regardless of the presence of absence of paranoia, had infants who earned lower Bayley MDI scores than the offspring of women without severe psychological symptoms or women whose depression had lifted. Severe depressive symptoms during pregnancy, if they did continue to six months postpartum, did not appear to adversely influence either caregiving or infant functioning.

431. Blanchard, Yvette; Suess, Patricia E.; & Beeghly, Marjorie. (1998). Effects of prenatal drug exposure on neurobehavioral functioning in young infants. Physical and Occupation Therapy in Pediatrics, 18, 19-37. In the newborn period, infants prenatally exposed to cocaine and other drugs show low scores on the Neonatal Behavioral Assessment Scale. Beyond that period, research is
limited on the effects of prenatal drug exposure on neurobehavioral functioning. In this study we compared infants exposed to cocaine and other drugs and control infants from low socioeconomic background on measures of neurobehavioral functioning during neuromotor assessment at one, four, and seven months of life. None of the measures of neurobehavioral functioning showed any significant group differences. This study did not support the hypothesis of disrupted neurobehavioral functioning beyond the neonatal period in infants exposed to drugs prenatally.

432. Brook, Judith S.; Kessler, Ronald C.; & Cohen, Patricia. (1999). The onset of marijuana use from preadolescence and early adolescence to young adulthood. Development and Psychopathology, 11, 901-914. Although it is well documented that intrapersonal and interpersonal risk factors are related to the frequency of marijuana use, much less is known about the initiation of marijuana use. This paper reports on a longitudinal study of the personality, family, peer, and ecological predictors of marijuana onset. Survival analysis was applied to a sample of nonusers of illegal drugs, followed from age nine years to the 20s. The major findings indicate that youngsters who are unconventional are at a higher risk for marijuana initiation; youngsters who associate with peers who use marijuana or who smoke tobacco themselves are at increased risk for marijuana initiation; youngsters who identify with their parents are less likely to begin marijuana use; and the predictors related to marijuana onset emerged during preadolescence, early adolescence, middle adolescence, late adolescence, and the 20s. Results are discussed within the framework of a family interactional perspective of development. Implications for prevention are discussed.

433. Bruns, Eric J.; & Burchard, John D. (2000). Impact of respite care services for families with children experiencing emotional and behavioral problems. Children’s Services: Social Policy, Research, and Practice, 3, 39-61. In this article we discuss the results of a controlled, longitudinal study of the short-term effectiveness of respite care services for families with children experiencing emotional and behavioral disturbance (EBD). Results indicated that 33 families caring for a child with EBD who received respite care experienced significantly better outcomes overall than did 28 families in a wait-list comparison group, including fewer incidents of out-of-home placement, greater optimism about caring for the child at home, reductions in some areas of caregiving stress, and lower incidence of negative behaviors expressed in the community. However, significant between-group differences were not found for several other variables, and regression analyses suggested that more intensive allocation of service hours was necessary to have a more pervasive impact. The results support the hypothesis that moderate amounts of respite plus other individualized services and supports will be necessary to meet the substantial caregiving challenges faced by most of these families.

This study evaluated a sexual abuse prevention program to identify characteristics of children who benefited from the program or became afraid to unwanted touch. Utilizing a pre- and post-test design, 542 2nd through 6th graders completed measures including abuse-related knowledge, locus of control, and anxiety. Knowledge increased; age, lower anxiety, and an internal locus of control were positively associated with higher scores after participating in the program. Prior exposure to the program resulted in higher knowledge scores. Further analyses identified those characteristics associated with children reporting that they benefited from the program or became more afraid after participating in the program. Such findings will enable parents and school personnel to take preventive measures to minimize negative impact and minimize learning.


In order to investigate the possible causal relationships between hyperactivity and educational underachievement that might account for their frequent co-occurrence, four groups of boys, defined the presence of absence of hyperactivity and specific reading retardation, were identified in an epidemiological study of seven- to eight-year-old children. They were examined in detail by means of parental interviews and psychological tests and reassessed nine years later at the age of 16-18 years on a similar range of measures. The findings provided little support for the idea that persistent reading disabilities either lead to the development of hyperactivity de novo or increased the likelihood that hyperactivity, when present, would persist. Similarly, although features of hyperactivity persisted to follow-up, there was little evidence that they either lead to the development of reading disabilities or increased the likelihood that reading disabilities, when present, would persist. Socioeconomic adversity and a history of speech therapy were more common in the group with both hyperactivity and reading disability, but the strength of these associations made it unlikely that these factors could account for the frequent co-occurrence of the two conditions.


We undertook a retrospective etiological study of all children referred for evaluation of pervasive developmental disorder (PDD). We identified 91 children who met the DSM III-R criteria for PDD. Fifty-two were diagnosed with autistic disorder (AD), and 39 with PDD-not otherwise specified (PDD-NOS). Seven families (8.2%) had more than one affected sib. An excess of developmental problems were identified on the maternal side (seven families, vs. two families on the paternal side). Affected children had head circumferences above the mean when compared with standardized growth curves. A recognizable syndrome or genetic disorder was identified in 14 children (15.4%), of which eight children (9%) were thought to be causative of PDD (five children with Rett syndrome, two with fragile X syndrome, and one with velocardiofacial syndrome.
Six others had a recognized genetic, cytogenetic, or metabolic disorder believed to be unrelated to the PDD diagnosis. Given the relatively high yield of genetic diagnoses in this population, we believe that children with PDD-NOS or AD should have a detailed evaluation by a clinical geneticist or pediatrician trained in dysmorphology. Chromosome abnormalities, fragile X, and other recognizable disorders, including VCFS, need to be excluded. The value of general screening for an inborn error of metabolism in all children with PDD is not certain. In light of the relatively high recurrence of PDD in families, genetic counseling is recommended.

The outcome of parent training, using the Behavior Management Flow Chart, on mother behavior and on the disruptive behavior of her monozygotic twin boys with oppositional defiant disorder and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder was evaluated. Direct observation, telephone interviews, and standardized rating scales showed that parent training reduced oppositional and aggressive child behavior, improved parenting behavior, and reduced maternal stress. A six-month follow-up revealed stable outcomes. The results are consistent with prior research on behavioral parent training with the Behavior Management Flow Chart. Analysis of the data reveal how the twin boys individually responded to the parent training program and how the mother interacted with her sons differently.

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between fathers’ alcoholism and the quality of parent-infant interactions during free play. A related goal was to study the potential mediating or moderating role of comorbid parental psychopathology, such as depression and antisocial behavior, difficult infant temperament, and parental aggression. The sample consisted of 204 families with 12-month-old infants (104 alcoholic and 100 control families), recruited from New York State birth records. Results indicated that fathers’ alcoholism was associated with a number of other risk factors. Fathers’ alcoholism was also associated with more negative father-infant interactions as indicated by lower paternal sensitivity, positive affect, verbalizations, higher negative affect, and lower infant responsiveness among alcoholic fathers. As expected, fathers’ depression mediated the relationship between fathers’ alcoholism and sensitivity, while maternal depression mediated the association between maternal alcohol problems and maternal sensitivity. Parents’ psychopathology did not moderate the association between alcoholism and parent-infant interactions. The results from the present study suggest that the origins of risk for later maladjustment among children of alcoholic fathers are apparent as early as infancy and highlight the role of comorbid parental risk factors.

This research seeks to understand why reports involving female victims of sexual abuse are substantiated at a significantly higher rate than reports involving male victims. Both descriptive analyses of the child, case, and investigatory process variables in the Child Protective Services (CPS) reports and a discriminant function analysis (done separately for male and female victims) to identify which variables distinguish between substantiated and unsubstantiated reports find relatively few differences. Female victims are older and these reports are more likely to come from mandated reporters whereas reports involving male victims are more likely to come from an anonymous reporter. Given the greater reliability of reports from mandated reporters and the difficulty of investigating a report from an anonymous source, we suggest that educating mandated reporters about the signs of sexual abuse in male children may result in more reports from mandated reporters and consequently in a higher substantiation rate.


Seventy-six children (five to ten years old), who were referred because of concerns about sexual abuse, were interviewed as part of a larger study testing the efficacy of a computer-assisted interview in sexual abuse evaluations. Data from initial interviews were coded according to the presence of disclosure and the details revealed about sexual abuse. The presence and amount of corroboration were coded through case review. Although 56 children were coded as having disclosed prior to evaluation, only 44 subjects disclosed during the initial interview. Only one child disclosed spontaneously. An additional eight children (11%) disclosed possible sexual abuse in a second or later interview. Although girls disclosed at a higher rate than boys, children did not differ in the amount or types of information they provided about alleged sexual abuse. Findings are discussed in terms of the conceptualization of disclosure as a process. Implications for interviewing strategies are discussed.


The link between interpersonal violence and violence to animals has been suggested, but rarely studied empirically, especially by family scholars. This study of 267 college undergraduates examined the relationship between corporal punishment inflicted by parents and the perpetration of animal abuse. The findings revealed that males who committed animal cruelty in childhood or adolescence were physically punished more frequently by their fathers, both as preteens and teenagers, than males who did not perpetrate animal abuse. This relationship did not hold for males spanked by mothers or for females spanked by either parent. Regression analyses showed that the association between fathers’ corporal punishment and sons’ childhood animal cruelty persisted after controlling for child abuse, father-to-mother violence, and father’s education. The
implications of the association of animal abuse and family violence and its gendered nature are discussed.


Research on the role of parenting styles in the development of disruptive behavior problems has focused primarily on how parents handle conflict once it has occurred. This home observational study examined strategies used by 52 mothers to prevent conflict with three-year-olds. It was predicted that mothers of children with behavior problems would use fewer “positive strategies” to resolve conflict, and would use reactive rather than preemptive strategies. Results showed frequency of positive strategies did not differ between the groups. Mothers of children with behavior problems were less likely to use preemptive, and more likely to use reactive, strategies. Further analysis showed child conduct problems, rather than other characteristics, best discriminated preemptive from reactive strategy users. Follow-up of a subsample found that reactive strategies at age three predicted age five behavior problems, even after controlling for age three behavior problems.


The purpose of the present study was to determine whether individual difference factors of metamemory, intelligence, and temperament can improve ability to predict accuracy of recall and suggestibility in preschoolers. Fifty-six children ranging in age from 43 months to 83 month were recruited from 13 child care centers in a rural southeastern town. Children participated in a “Circus Day” event conducted by two female undergraduate psychology students dressed as clowns. Approximately ten days after the event, children were interviewed regarding their experiences. Bivariate correlations and multiple regression analyses were performed in order to determine which factors were related and unique contributors to accuracy of recall and suggestibility. Of principal importance is the finding that child characteristics such as metamemory ability, intellectual functioning, and temperament may indeed be helpful in determining a child’s capacity to accurately recall information in an interview, although for the most part age is the best predictor. Findings also underscore the importance of considering a child’s SES and race when planning and conducting interviews with young children.


This study was undertaken to assess academic progress of children one to five years after graduating from the C. Henry Kempe Center’s Therapeutic Preschool Day Treatment Program. Information was gathered through chart review; telephone surveys of care
providers, relatives, and social service workers; as well as questionnaires on all children who attended the therapeutic day treatment program between 1984 and 1989, including the 24 children reported on by Oates, Gray, Schweitzer, Kempe, and Harmon, 1995. Classroom placement was determined for 27 of the 44 graduates (61.4%), 14 of whom (51.9%) were in a regular classroom, ten (37.0%) in special education, two (7.4%) in residential treatment, and one (3.7%) was receiving home schooling. Twenty-two of the 27 children (81.5%) improved or remained in the same grade and type of classroom as they had been staffed into at the time of their graduation from the preschool day treatment program. Factors thought to affect significance of classroom placement were studied, of which frequency of family moves was the only significant variable. Its significance was in the direction opposite to that expected. The most effective method of locating families was to contact the Department of Social Services who provided information used to find 60% of them.

This study examines the effects of home-based consultation for parents of young children with behavior problems. Three mothers and four children, ages four to seven years, participated in the program which included in-home training of behavioral child management strategies. Training consisted of written information, discussion, modeling, role-play, and practice with mothers and children. The intervention condition consisted of home visits two to three times per week during which the parents implemented procedures in which they had been specifically trained, including presentation of directions for completing chores, playing with siblings, etc., use of a reinforcement schedule (five to ten minutes) for appropriate behaviors, use of time-out for inappropriate behaviors, and social reinforcement for earning designated compliance and engagement levels (parents and children played a game together as a reward). The experimenters collected parent and child behavior data, provided feedback and additional modeling of procedures as necessary, and consulted regarding any particular issues presented by the parents. Outcomes were monitored using a multiple baseline design (probes) across subjects (families). Results indicate increase praise rates by parents, improved compliance with instructions by children, and decreases in inappropriate child behaviors of parent-child interaction times from baseline to intervention.

Gender differences are evident in the etiology and maintenance of aggressive behavior (which is on the increase for both male and female youths), but the explanatory models that have been proposed, including social learning theory and information processing models, are more appropriate for boys than girls. In an attempt to elucidate processes underlying aggression, particularly for girls, the authors explored locus of control as a cognitive variable related to aggressive behavior. The relationships between teacher-
reported aggression and three types of locus of control for success and failure experiences were investigated. For girls, aggressive behavior was positively related to internal and unknown locus of control. In contrast, boys’ aggressive behavior was unrelated to internal locus of control beliefs and negatively related to external locus of control beliefs. Possible explanatory mechanisms for the relationship between locus of control beliefs and aggression are discussed. The present study contributes to the understanding of aggression in girls and points to different processes underlying girls’ and boys’ aggression.

447. Hay, Dale F.; Pawlby, Susan; Sharp, Deborah; Schmücker, Gesine; Mills, Alice; Allen, Helen; & Kumar, R. (1999). Parents’ judgments about young children’s problems: Why mothers and fathers might disagree yet still predict later outcomes. The Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry and Allied Disciplines, 40, 1249-1258. Correlates of parents’ ratings of behavioral problems were explored in a sample of 93 British families, in which mothers and fathers rated their children at the time of the fourth birthday on the Achenbach Child Behavior Checklist. As in other samples, there was moderate convergence in mothers’ and fathers’ total problems scores, but also signs that they were reporting different sorts of problems linked to different influences. The fathers’ rating was primarily associated with the child’s cognitive ability. The mother’s rating was primarily affected by her own mental state and view of her marriage. The father’s but not the mother’s rating provided unique information that predicted teachers’ reports of the children’s problems seven years later. In general, parents’ rating of preschool children’s problems reflect particular informants’ perspectives on family life.

448. Hershkowitz, Irit; & Elul, Aline. (1999). The effects of investigative utterances on Israeli children’s reports of physical abuse. Applied Developmental Science, 3, 28-33. In investigative interviews concerned with allegations of sexual abuse, open-ended prompts by interviewers elicit more information than focused prompts. We attempted to explore these effects in investigations of physical abuse. Interviews with 50 children from two age groups (five- to six-year-olds, nine- to ten-year-olds) who made subsequently substantiated allegations of physical abuse by their parents, were subjected to detailed psycholinguistic analysis. The overall productivity (number of words spoken) and informativeness (number of details elicited) of these children were remarkably low. The children were also relatively unresponsive to the investigators’ individual utterances, and many of the interviewers’ utterances were nonsubstantive (15%). The interviewers were more likely than those included in studies of sexual abuse investigations to use open-ended as opposed to focused prompts. These open-ended utterances elicited significantly more words but not more details than focused prompts. Older children also provided longer and richer utterances than younger children. The discussion examines the reasons why open-ended utterances appear less fruitful in investigations of physical as opposed to sexual abuse.

449. Hughes, Claire; Plumet, Marie-Hélène; & Leboyer, Marion. (1999). Towards a cognitive phenotype for autism: Increased prevalence of executive dysfunction and

Two studies were conducted to examine executive function skills in siblings of children with autism. In study one, four computerized tasks (three executive tasks: the ID/ED set-shifting task; a spatial working memory task; the Tower of London planning task; and a control spatial span task) from the CANTAB battery were used to compare 31 siblings of children with autism with 32 siblings of children with developmental delay and 32 children from unaffected families. In study two, the two sibling groups were compared on two manually administered executive tasks (verbal fluency and list recall). As a group, autism siblings showed superior spatial and verbal span, but a greater than expected number performed poorly on the set-shifting, planning, and verbal fluency tasks. There were no group differences in working memory performance. The implications of these findings for the broader phenotype of autism is discussed.


Children diagnosed with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) often display deficiencies in communication skills, social competence, and emotional regulation. Many parents report that these difficulties are especially obvious in the context of sports participation. These children are more likely to experience social problems and be less athletically competent than their peers. Thus, sports skills and sportsmanship training may be beneficial to children diagnosed with ADHD. In the present study, a multi-component skills and behavior management program was developed in the context of a sports-skills camp. In the first component of the study, the efficacy of basketball skills training was examined for two boys. Results indicate that the training decreased dribbling errors but had no effect of shooting performance. In a second component, a token system was implemented to increase sportsman-like behaviors and suppress unsportsmanlike-behaviors for three study participants. The contingencies placed on good sportsmanship also appeared to have positive effects on other aspects of game performance. The basketball camp also increased the boys’ interest in basketball and was evaluated positively by their parents. Recommendations for the development of other sports camps are also included.


One variant of substance-use disorder is characterized by behavioral disinhibition. In this report, we martial evidence for a model for the development of this variant. We hypothesize that genetic liability for this variant is reflected in a spectrum of risk indicators linked to the inability or unwillingness to inhibit behavioral impulses. Included in this spectrum are personality traits suggesting low constraint, and externalizing psychopathology, including conduct, oppositional defiant, and attention-deficit disorder
in children and antisocial personality and behavior in adults. We further hypothesize that these individual differences in behavioral disinhibition are manifestations of underlying central nervous system processes associated with various psychophysiological anomalies, some of which may index genetic risk for substance abuse. Support for the model is derived from the analysis of findings from the Minnesota Twin Family Study, an epidemiological investigation of approximately 2,700 adolescent twins and their parents.

This study reports on the results of a randomized controlled trial that evaluated a caregiver-based intervention program for children with autism in community day-care centers. Thirty-five preschool children with DSM III-R diagnosis of autism or pervasive developmental disorder were randomized to an experimental or control group. Children in the experimental group were enrolled in day care and their parents and child care workers received a 12-week intervention consisting of lectures and on-site consultations to day-care centers. In addition, supportive work was undertaken with families. Control subjects received day care alone. In the experimental group, there were greater gains in language abilities, significant increases in caregivers’ knowledge about autism, greater perception of control on the part of mothers, and greater parent satisfaction. We conclude that this research design demonstrated that the intervention was significantly superior to day care alone.

This follow-up investigation studied the extent of bullying among children aged eight (study one) and 12 (study two), and measured the persistence of this behavior. The relationship between bullying and psychological disturbance at these two time points was also studied. Furthermore, the relationships between bullying and some background factors were investigated. 1,268 children were studied at two time points using three different questionnaires. Parents filled out the Rutter A2 Scale, teachers the Rutter B2 Scale and children themselves the Children’s Depression Inventory (CDI). Males outnumbered females at both time points among bullies, bully-victims (children who both bully and are victims) and victims. There was a clear difference between the genders among bullies and bully-victims, but the difference was quite minimal among victims. The number of children involved in bullying declined somewhat during the four-year follow-up period, and a substantial number of children changed status, bullies became bully-victims for example. Nearly half the children involved in bullying in study two had been involved four years earlier. Those children who were bully-victims in study one were most commonly found to be still involved in bullying four years later. At both time points, children involved in bullying were found to have significantly more psychiatric symptoms than other children, and to be psychologically disturbed. Males and children
from low SES families were more prone to continue to be involved in bullying over a four-year period.

The authors examined the relation among different facets of loneliness and depression in a sample of 6,356 Chinese children and adolescents from grades four through nine. Loneliness and depression were closely related among the primary (grades four through six) and secondary (grades seven through nine) students, both boys and girls. Although the different facets of loneliness were predictive of the various facets of depression, peer-related loneliness and aloneness were more predictive of depression in both groups that was a parent-related loneliness. The students in grades five and six scored lower for loneliness but a little higher for depression than did the students in grade four. The students in grades eight and nine scored higher than the students in grade seven for loneliness and depression. The primary boys scored higher than the primary girls for both loneliness and depression. Among the secondary students, there was no difference between the scores of the boys and those of the girls for loneliness, but the boys scored lower than the girls for depression.

Increases in girls’ internalizing symptoms, compared with boys’, were partly explained by greater stability in girls’ interpersonal vulnerabilities and greater magnitude in coefficients linking girls’ relationships with parents and peers and internalizing problems. Boys’ risks for externalizing problems, compared with girls’, were partly explained by the greater stability in boys’ vulnerability to self-criticism. Coefficients for most pathways in the model are similar for boys and girls.

456. Lester, David. (1999). Predicting the suicide rate of children in America. Psychological Reports, 85, 212. The time-series regression for suicide by race and sex for those aged five to 14 years in the U. S. A. from 1933-1980 were predicted by scores on two factors which had high loadings for year and for the marriage rate.

The authors examined the effectiveness of a simplified habit reversal treatment (SHR) consisting of awareness training, competing response training, and social support procedures for a six-year-old girl who exhibited thumb sucking and covarying hair pulling. Initially, the implementation of SHR plus booster sessions for thumb sucking produced minimal reductions in thumb sucking and hair pulling. However, additional treatment phases involving differential reinforcement and response cost resulted in near
zero levels of the behavior when implemented with thumb sucking and then hair pulling. Thereafter, hair pulling was treated with the same procedure, resulting in near-zero levels of behavior. Covariation of thumb sucking and hair pulling, limitations of SHR, and directions for future research involving the use of external contingencies are discussed.

Objectives in this research were to examine contextual differences in correlates of substance use among high school students. The focus was on two broad categories of adjustment indices: personal psychopathology (internalizing and externalizing problems) and behaviors reflecting social competence (academic achievement, teacher-related classroom behaviors and peer acceptance or rejection). Associations between drug use and each of these constructs were examined in two sociodemographically disparate groups: teens from affluent, suburban families (N = 264), and low socioeconomic status adolescents from inner-city settings (N = 224). Results indicated that suburban youth reported significantly higher levels of substance use than inner-city youth. In addition, their substance use was more strongly linked with subjectively perceived maladjustment indices. Comparable negative associations involving grades and teacher-related behaviors were found in both groups, and among suburban males only, substance use showed robust positive associations with acceptance by peers. Results are discussed in terms of developmental perspectives on adolescent deviance, contextual socializing forces, and implications for preventive interventions and treatment.

In this two-year prospective study, psychopathology and competence among drug abusers’ offspring were examined in relation to characteristics of their neighborhood. The sample consisted of 77 children of cocaine and opioid addicts with a mean age of 12.3 years at baseline and 14.2 years at follow-up. Outcomes examined included psychiatric diagnoses, dimensional symptom indices, and aspects of everyday behavioral competence. Links involving neighborhood variables varied by gender, wherein boys reflected greater deterioration than girls when neighborhoods had high crime rates and high proportions of low-income households. Conversely, girls appeared to benefit more than boys from the presence of professional adults in the community. Overall, neighborhood indicators accounted for more variability in changes in child adjustment over time than did indices of maternal psychopathology. Findings are discussed in terms of developmental changes in the salience of exosystematic and familial forces, and implications for interventions are outlined.

Two studies examined the 192 maltreated young children’s competence to take the oath. Study one found that despite serious delays in receptive vocabulary, a majority of five-year-olds correctly identified truthful statements and lies as such and recognized that lying is bad and would make authority figures mad. However, most participants up to seven years of age could not define “truth” and “lie” or explain the difference between the terms. Four-year-olds were above chance in recognizing the immorality of lying but exhibited a tendency to identify all statements as the “truth.” Study two found that four- and five-year-olds performed above chance in identifying which of two story characters was lying or telling the truth and in identifying whether the truth-teller or the liar said something bad or would get in trouble. Children exhibited better understanding of the immorality of lying than the meaning of lying. Maltreated children’s oath-taking competence may be underestimated due to linguistic and motivational difficulties.

Home safety is a particular concern among families referred for abuse or neglect, and may pose significant risks to the health and safety of children. There is an increased risk of accidents of injuries among children living in homes with unsafe conditions. The home safety component provided by Project SafeCare was evaluated with three families reported for child neglect. Home hazards were assessed using the Home Accident Prevention Inventory-Revised. Training was provided by research assistants and involved teaching parents to identify hazardous objects and make them inaccessible to their children. In-home training was effective in reducing hazards in diverse home settings. Further, these reductions were maintained over time. Social validation data indicated that parents provided positive ratings for the home safety program.

A community sample of depressed and well mothers, recruited at two months postpartum and assessed through to 18 months, was followed up at five years. The quality of mother-child interactions was assessed, as was the children’s behavioral and social adjustment, using maternal reports and observations of child behavior during free play at school. Several aspects of child outcome were found to be associated with postnatal depression, even when taking account of current adverse circumstances (maternal depression and parental conflict). These included the child’s behavior with the mother, the presence of behavioral disturbance at home, and the content and social patterning of play at school. These associations with postnatal depression were independent of the child’s gender. The child’s relationship with the mother appeared to be mediated by the quality of infant attachment at 18 months. The mother’s behavior with her child was more affected by current difficulties, in particular by conflict with the child’s father. Together these findings suggest that, while maternal behavior varies with changing circumstances,
exposure to maternal depression in the early postpartum months may have an enduring influence on child psychological adjustment.

A semi-parametric mixture model was used with a sample of boys assessed repeatedly from six to 15 years of age to approximate a continuous distribution of developmental trajectories for three externalizing behaviors. Four trajectories were identified for the physical aggression, opposition, and hyperactivity externalizing dimensions: chronic problem, high level near-desister, moderate level desister, and no problem. Boys who followed a given trajectory for one type of externalizing problem behavior did not necessarily follow the same trajectory for the two other types. Different developmental trajectories of problem behavior also led to different types of juvenile delinquency.

Women and their infants were followed from birth, and maternal reports of depressive symptoms were obtained at one, six, 15, 24, and 36 months. Women with chronic symptoms of depression were the least sensitive when observed playing with their children from infancy through 36 months. Children whose mothers reported feeling depressed performed more poorly on measures of cognitive-linguistic functioning and were rated as less cooperative and more problematic at 36 months. Depression-group differences in school readiness and verbal comprehension were accounted for by material sensitivity. Depression-group differences in expressive language and ratings of cooperation were moderated by maternal sensitivity; maternal sensitivity predicted better outcomes more noticeably among children whose mothers reported feeling depressed.

This study is based on an initial sample of 292 children. Twenty-three were identified as depressed, of whom 16 (11 boys and five girls) were referred to a psychiatric unit for standard treatment. Social withdrawal and anxiety were rated by parents and self-reports as considerably stable phenomena in the depressed group, as compared to the control group. Depressed boys more often than girls rated themselves as being withdrawn and anxious.

A common way of studying developmental disorders is to adopt a static neuropsychological deficit approach, in which the brain is characterized in terms of a
normal brain with some parts of “modules” impaired. In this paper we outline a neuroconstructivist approach in which developmental disorders are viewed as alternative developmental trajectories in the emergence of representations within neural networks. As a concrete instantiation of the assumptions underlying this general approach, we present a number of simulations in an artificial neural network model. The representations that emerge under different architectural, input and developmental timing conditions are then analyzed within a multidimensional space. We explore alternative developmental trajectories in these simulations, demonstrating how initial differences in the same parameter can lead to very different outcomes, and conversely how different starting states can sometimes result in similar end states (phenotypes). We conclude that the assumptions of the neuroconstructivist approach are likely to be more appropriate for analyzing developmental deviations in complex dynamic neural networks, such as the human brain.


The developmental outcomes of prenatal cocaine/polydrug exposure were evaluated using a multivariate research design that controlled for the possible confounding variables of age, sex, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and caregiver status (i.e., biological parent, relative, foster care, and adoptive parent) using an exposed (N = 41) and nonexposed (N = 35) cohort of preschool children. Results indicated that in utero drug exposure had no effect on cognitive, social, language, and behavioral developmental outcomes as measured by the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale: 4th ed., the Social Skills Rating System, the Preschool Language Scale: 3rd ed., the Child Behavior Checklist, and the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scale-Survey Form.


One characteristic of autism is inadequate social skills, including behavioral deficits and excesses. Inadequate social skills have been linked by researchers to a number of negative outcomes such as peer rejection, mental health problems and an increased high school drop-out rate. For individuals with autism, inadequate social skills are one of many factors that can lead to institutionalization. To prevent poor outcomes, appropriate means for increasing the social interaction skills of children with autism are required. This review of the literature investigates reports of empirical research designed to increase the social interactions skills of preschool children with autism. Research to-date has generally involved the training of typically developing children to interact with children with autism; only one study was found that focused training on the child with autism.

A sample of 84 college women retrospectively reporting childhood sexual abuse and 285 women failing to report such a history participated in a study designed to investigate the relationship between victimization history and locus of control and the role of locus of control in predicting the adjustment of adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse. Analyses failed to detect differences in the locus of control of victims and nonvictims, and non relationship was found between a woman’s perception of control over the victimization experience and her later locus of control. Results did reveal that locus of control and victimization status interacted in predicting women’s symptom severity as well as problems such as depression, anxiety, and hostility. Women with a severe abuse history with an internal locus of control reported somewhat lower levels of distress than other women. Women with severe abuse and an external locus of control reported extremely elevated levels of distress, levels of distress greater than women in any other group. Implications of these results and recommendations for future research are discussed.

In phase one of this study, we used a functional analysis to evaluate the thumb sucking of fraternal twin brothers. Results from phase one suggest that Andy’s thumb sucking was maintained by automatic reinforcement, whereas data for Josh were inconclusive. In phase two, independent of phase one results, we sequentially implemented the simplified habit reversal components of awareness training, competing response training, and social support. All three treatment components plus two booster sessions reduced thumb sucking to near-zero levels for Josh. The same sessions reduced thumb sucking for Andy, therefore, a remote detection was implemented. A withdrawal and subsequent re-implementation of remote detection indicated that the intervention was responsible for reducing Andy’s thumb sucking. Results and need for future research are discussed.

This study examined the developmental associations between substance use and violence. We examined the trends in each behavior throughout adolescence, how the behaviors covaried over time, and the symmetry of associations taking into account frequency and severity of each behavior. We also examined whether changes in one behavior affected changes in the other behavior over time. Six years of annual data were analyzed for 506 boys who were in the 7th grade at the first assessment. Concurrent associations between frequency of substance use and violence were relatively strong throughout adolescence and were somewhat stronger for marijuana than alcohol, especially in early adolescence. Type or severity of violence was not related to concurrent alcohol or marijuana frequency, but severity of drug use was related to concurrent violence frequency. Depending, to some degree, on the age of the subjects, the longitudinal relationships between substance use
and violence were reciprocal during adolescence and slightly stronger for alcohol and violence than for marijuana and violence. Further, increases in alcohol use were related to increases in violence; however, when early alcohol use was controlled, increases in marijuana use were not related to increases in violence. Only in early adolescence was the longitudinal relationship between marijuana use and later violence especially strong. The strength of the longitudinal associations between violence and substance use did not change when common risk factors for violence and substance use were controlled. Overall, the data lend support for a reciprocal than for a unidirectional association between substance use and violence. Prevention efforts should be directed at aggressive males who are multiple-substance users in early adolescence.


This paper will explore how a new research tool, the MacArthur Story Stem Battery (MSSB) enables investigations into the interior life of children, its potential usefulness in evaluating effectiveness of interventions geared to prevent dysfunctional parenting, and how the method has been adapted for use with low income African American children in the Memphis New Mothers Study. A literature review provides justification for assessing children’s representations of their parenting experience to evaluate the effectiveness of an early intervention program. Case example are used to illustrate children’s representations of themes in narrative responses that are indicative of behavioral regulation and dysregulation and specific adaptations for use with African American children. Case examples support the method’s application.


Using telephone interview methods, a national probability sample of adult women was screened for a history of completed rape in childhood, and characteristics of child rape incidents were assessed. All respondents were evaluated for a history of major depressive episode, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and substance use problems. Implications of the results for prevention, intervention, and future research are discussed.


The goal of this article is to demonstrate the application of a psychosocial developmental framework—and interpretive method of analysis—to data gathered through in-depth interviews. The article applies this analysis in the context of a case comparative design, drawing on interviews with two 15-year-old Icelandic boys who drank alcohol frequently, but in different ways and with different consequences. This article describes the utility of
a developmental approach to the analysis of the risks adolescents take, especially to their health. It illuminates the parallels between the levels of awareness individuals have of the risks they take, and the quality of the meaning they make of their close social relationships. It demonstrates the role a cultural perspective plays in the developmental interpretation of the data. Finally, the article touches on the implications of this kind of analysis for psychosocial prevention practices and policies.

One hundred and seventy children attending a hospital accident and emergency department following everyday trauma were interviewed and completed the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) screening battery suggested by Yule and Udwin. Diagnostic interviews (CAPS-C) confirmed that 39 (22.9%) fulfilled the DSM-IV criteria for PTSD. There were significant differences between children with and without PTSD on each individual component of the screening battery. Various criteria for caseness were evaluated and at six weeks post trauma the screen identified up to 90% of children diagnosed with PTSD and 73% with borderline conditions. A subset of 36 children were reassessed eight months post trauma and all children with persistent PTSD were correctly identified by initial screen scores. The limitations of the study and the role of screening for PTSD in the absence of proven psychological interventions are discussed.

This study investigated the effects of label, child’s gender and race, child’s educational placement, and availability of definitional information on prognostic judgments for children with behavior problems. Three-hundred-sixty-three undergraduate students enrolled in teacher education courses read a vignette and completed a prognostic outlook questionnaire. White children who had the SED or EBD label were rated to be significantly more likely to be disruptive than children with the BD label. There was also a significant gender X race X definition interaction on the overall adjustment measure. There was a significant main effect of gender on the interpersonal relationships variable. Girls were judged as significantly more likely to develop appropriate interpersonal relationships with others than were boys.

The purpose of the current study was to examine whether types of discourse deficits were associated differentially with psychiatric disorders (PD) and with language impairments (LI) in children. Discourse analyses examining the occurrence of different types of discourse deficits in language structure, information structure, and flow of information...
were performed on the spoken narratives of 111 children aged seven to 12 years who comprised four groups: psychiatrically referred children with LI (PD + LI), psychiatrically referred children with normally developing language (PD), nonreferred children with language impairments (LI), and nonreferred children with normally developing language (controls). Discourse deficits in language and information structure characterized children with LI, whereas disruptions in the flow of discourse characterized children with PD. Children with the comorbid condition exhibited deficits associated with both LI and PD; in addition, they displayed distinct deficits related to pronominal reference and causal cohesion. The findings provide a preliminary understanding of the associations among language, discourse, and psychopathology in children.

This article examines adolescent girls’ weight loss behaviors and possible parent influences related to weight and shape. Questionnaires were completed by 369 10th grade girls and their parents. Findings suggested that parent encouragement to lose weight was a more significant predictor of daughter dietary restraint than parents’ own dietary restraint levels. Mother influence variables added significantly to a regression equation after father influences had been entered, but the reverse was not the case. Parents’ food abstaining behaviors, such as fasting and skipping meals, predicted food abstaining in daughters. Most findings were replicated when daughter body size was controlled for. Implications for models of the transmission of diet and weight-related values from parent to child are discussed.

This study used a community sample of 494 twins with a reading disability (233 girls, 271 boys) and 373 twins without a reading disability (189 girls, 184 boys) to assess the relation between reading disability (RD) and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Symptoms of DSM-III and DSM-IV ADHD were classified into symptoms of inattention and symptoms of hyperactivity-impulsivity (H/I). Results indicated that individuals with RD were more likely than individuals without RD to meet criteria for ADHD and that the association between RD and ADHD was stronger for symptoms of inattention than for symptoms of H/I. Parents and teachers reported similar rates of ADHD, suggesting that ADHD symptoms were pervasive across settings and were not solely attributable to academic frustration. Analyses of possible gender differences revealed that RD was significantly associated with inattention in both girls and boys but associated with H/I only in boys. This difference may provide a partial explanation for the discrepancy between the gender ratio obtained in referred (approximately four boys to one girl) and nonreferred (1.2 to 1.5 boys to one girl) samples of individuals with RD. Specifically, the hyperactive and impulsive behaviors exhibited by boys with RD may be
more disruptive than the inattentive behaviors exhibited by girls and may therefore precipitate more frequent referrals for clinical attention.

This study of over 1,000 adolescents focused on common and distinctive correlates of four subgroups—no problem, depressed only, heavy drinking only, and mixed (depressed and heavy drinking). Correlates were evaluated from the domains of personal dispositions, stressful life events, and other problem behaviors. The no-problem subgroup differed from the other three subgroups in the direction of healthier functioning on almost all measures. The mixed subgroup reported the most pervasive, low levels of functioning, with the highest levels of childhood externalizing problems and stressful life events, the lowest levels of family social support, and high levels of delinquency and substance use. The depressed-only subgroup reported a more internalized pattern characterized by childhood avoidance problems, a difficult temperament (e.g., inflexibility, withdrawal, low task orientation), interpersonal stressors, and poor coping strategies. The heavy-drinking-only subgroup was characterized by higher drinking levels by primary caregivers and lower levels of family cohesion as reported by primary caregivers. The one-year prospective findings were generally consistent with the concurrent findings in that variables that were associated with transitions toward and away from depression and heavy drinking were associated with specific transitions (e.g., childhood externalizing problems were associated with the transition from no problem to heavy drinking).

A group of four- to seven-year-old war orphans were examined for the first time while living in an institution (the Solomuna Orphanage) during a protracted war between Eritrea and Ethiopia. At that time, they were compared to a group of refugee children living in a nearby camp with one or both parents. The orphans exhibited significantly more behavioral symptoms than the refugee children, but performed the cognitive tests at a more advanced level. Five years later, the orphans were re-examined; and they were compared to unaccompanied nine to 12 year-children living in one of two residential settings that differed qualitatively in their social climate, principles of child care, and patterns of staff-child interactions. Although the severity of their behavioral symptoms had diminished, the orphans still exhibited many symptoms of emotional distress. On the other hand, they performed the cognitive measures as well as, or better than, unaccompanied children who had been protected from the terrors of war. The cross-sectional comparisons indicated that a residential setting that respects the individuality of children and promotes their close personal ties with at least one staff member can ameliorate many of the more serious psychological sequelae of having lost both parents and being exposed to the physical dangers of the war. The implications for war orphans in other Third World countries are discussed.