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Investigating the optimal amount of interactive reading for improved mental and behavioural self-control

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Abstract

Abstract presented at The Inaugural Early Start Conference, 28-30 September 2015, Wollongong, Australia

Keywords

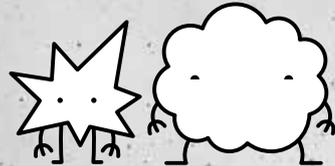
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Presenter: Cara Swit

Organisation: Macquarie University

Stream: Stream D: Cognitive Development

Format: Oral

Title: "Preschool Children's Use of Aggression and Socio-Psychological Outcomes"

Abstract: Objectives: Physical aggression peaks between the age of two and four years and is often replaced with relational aggression. It is well documented that aggression, regardless of its form, is associated with maladaptive socio-psychological outcomes during middle childhood and adolescence. However, there is limited evidence reporting the socio-psychological outcomes associated with aggression during early childhood, especially in young Australian children. Methods: Participants included 18 teachers (18 females; Mage = 34 years) and 68 children (36 girls; Mage = 51.6 months) from 10 early childhood settings located in Sydney. Teachers completed the Preschool Social Behaviour Scale "" Teacher Form (Crick et al., 1997) as an assessment of each child's aggression and socio-psychological outcomes. Results Children's use of relational and physical aggression were both associated with lower levels of prosocial behaviour and higher levels of relational and physical victimisation. However, when gender effects were explored, the association between relational aggression and physical victimisation only remained significant for girls. There were significant gender effects for physical aggression and each of the social-psychological outcomes. Key Conclusions: This is the first known empirical study to reveal that associations between subtypes of aggression and socio-psychological outcomes may be uniquely different for boys and girls during early childhood. Given that early childhood is a crucial period for young children to develop positive peer relationships, teachers and parents need to recognise that relational and physical aggression are significant predictors of victimisation and the socio-psychological effects of this outcome can be identified in children as young as three.

Presenter: Elena Vasseleu

Organisation: University of Wollongong

Co-authors: Steven Howard

Stream: Stream D: Cognitive Development

Format: Interactive Poster

Title: "Investigating the optimal amount of interactive reading for improved mental and behavioural self-control."

Abstract: Central to childhood cognitive development is the ability to utilise developing executive functions (EFs) and the emerging ability to engage in processes of self-regulation (SR). Despite their past separation in early literature, recent studies have proposed an intricate link between these two cognitive concepts, suggesting that EFs may subservise the capacity to successfully SR. While past studies investigating the trainability of EFs have had notable success, there remains limited knowledge regarding optimal intervention periods. The current study aims to investigate whether cognitive activities embedded in a storybook for young children has positive effects on their executive functioning (EF) (i.e. working memory, shifting and inhibition) and SR. During a 13 week period participating children engaged in 4 weeks of assessments each separated by a 3 week period of reading once a week. In each assessment week, children were individually assessed on measures of EF while self-regulating abilities were assessed via educator response questionnaires at pre and post test phases. While results will be obtained by the conference date, there are currently no results available to report as data collection phases are still in progress. The implementation of four testing-phases will allow for the examination of potential trends in the rate of improvement on EF measures at different intervals of the intervention. Based on past findings, it is hypothesised that reading a story with cognitive activities will lead to significant improvements in EF and SR compared to reading the same story without cognitive activities. Although past research is yet to extensively examine potential trends in improvement rate over the intervention period, the observation of a linear trend is hypothesised.