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Twelfth Edition

Child Development

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Peers Chapter 15 Outline

Peer Relations

- Peer Group Functions
- The Developmental Course of Peer Relations in Childhood
- The Distinct but Coordinated Worlds of Parent-Child and Peer Relations
- Social Cognition and Emotion
- Peer Statuses
- Bullying

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Peers Chapter 15 Outline (continued)

Play

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- Parten's Classic Study of Play
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Friendship

- Friendship's Function
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- Gender and Friendship
- Mixed-Age Friendships

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Peers

Chapter 15 Outline (continued)

Peer Relations in Adolescence

- Peer Pressure and Conformity
- Cliques and Crowds
- Adolescent Groups Versus Child Groups

Chapter 15

Preview

We begin this chapter by examining children's peer relations, including their functions and variations.

Then we turn to children's play and the roles of friends in children's development.

We conclude by discussing peer and romantic relationships in adolescence.

Peer Relations

Peer Group Functions

Peers:

- children of about the same age or maturity level
- important function of the peer group- to provide a source of information and comparison about the world outside the family
- Children receive feedback about their abilities from their peer group.

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Peer Relations (cont.)

Peer Group Functions (continued)

Are Peers Necessary for Development?

- Social isolation, or the inability to “plug in” to a social network, is linked with many different forms of problems and disorders, ranging from delinquency and problem drinking to depression (Bukowski, Brendgen, & Vitaro, 2007; Lynne & others, 2007).

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Peer Relations (cont.)

Peer Group Functions (continued)

Positive and Negative Peer Relations

- Peer influences can be both positive and negative.
- Children and adolescents explore the principles of fairness and justice by working through disagreements with peers.

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Peer Relations (cont.)

Peer Group Functions (continued)

Positive and Negative Peer Relations (continued)

- positive long-term influence from peer relations in childhood:
 - work success and satisfaction in romantic relationships in early adulthood (Collins & van Dulmen, 2006)
 - Popularity with peers and a low level of aggression at age 8 foreshadowed a higher occupational status at age 48 (Huesmann & others, 2006).

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Peer Relations (cont.)

Peer Group Functions (continued)

Positive and Negative Peer Relations (continued)

- negative influences of peers on adolescents' development.:
 - Time spent hanging out with antisocial peers in adolescence was a stronger predictor of substance abuse than time spent with parents (Nation & Heflinger, 2006).
 - Higher levels of antisocial peer involvement in early adolescence (13-16 years of age) were linked with higher rates of delinquent behavior in late adolescence (17- to 18-years of age (Laird & others, 2005).

Peer Relations (cont.)

Peer Group Functions (continued)

Cross-Cultural Comparisons of Peer Relations

- In some countries, adults restrict adolescents' access to peers:
 - In many areas of rural India and in Arab countries, opportunities for peer relations in adolescence are severely restricted, especially for girls (Brown & Larson, 2002).
- In a cross-cultural analysis, the peer group was more important to U.S. adolescents than to Japanese adolescents (Rothbaum & others, 2000).

Peer Relations (cont.)

Peer Group Functions (continued)

Cross-Cultural Comparisons of Peer Relations (continued)

- A trend is that in societies in which adolescents' access to peers has been restricted, adolescents are engaging in more peer interaction during school and in shared leisure activities, especially in middle-SES contexts (Brown & Larson, 2002).
- In many countries and regions, peers play more prominent roles in adolescents' lives (Brown & Larson, 2002).
 - For example, in sub-Saharan Africa, the peer group is a pervasive aspect of adolescents' lives (Nsamenang, 2002).

Peer Relations (cont.)

The Developmental Course of Peer Relations in Childhood

- The quality of peer interaction in infancy provides valuable information about socioemotional development (Hughes & Dunn, 2007; Vandell, 1985).
- Around the age of 3, children already prefer to spend time with same-sex rather than opposite-sex playmates, and this preference increases in early childhood, with reciprocity becoming important as children enter the elementary school years.

Peer Relations (cont.)

The Developmental Course of Peer Relations in Childhood (continued)

- Children spend an increasing amount of time in peer interaction during middle and late childhood and adolescence.
- Gender influences the composition and size of children's interactions, with girls' groups being smaller and more intimate.
- Boys are more likely to engage in rough-and-tumble play, competition, conflict, ego displays, risk taking, and dominance-seeking, while girls are more likely to engage in collaborative discourse.

Peer Relations (cont.)

The Distinct but Coordinated Worlds of Parent-Child and Peer Relations

- Parents may influence their children's peer relations in many ways, both direct and indirect.
- Parents also influence their children's peer relations by how they manage their children's lives and their opportunities for interacting with peers.
- Basic lifestyle decisions by parents—their choices of neighborhoods, churches, schools, and their own friends—largely determine the pool from which their children select possible friends (Cooper & Ayers-Lopez, 1985).

Peer Relations (cont.)

The Distinct but Coordinated Worlds of Parent-Child and Peer Relations (continued)

- Researchers also have found that children's peer relations are linked to attachment security, parents' marital quality, and parents' mental health (Cummings, Goerke-Morey, & Raymond, 2004).
- Although parent-child relationships influence children's subsequent peer relations, children also learn other modes of relating through their relationships with peers.
- With their peers, children are likely to interact on a much more equal basis and to learn a mode of relating based on mutual influence.

Peer Relations (cont.)

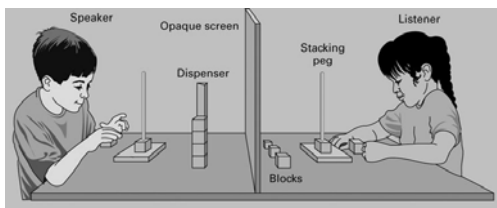
Social Cognition and Emotion

Perspective Taking:

- taking another's point of view
- Perspective-taking skills have been linked with the quality of peer relations, especially in the elementary school years.

Peer Relations (cont.)

The Development of Communication Skills



Peer Relations (cont.)

Social Cognition and Emotion

Social Information-Processing Skills

- Kenneth Dodge (1993)- children go through 5 steps in processing information about their social world:
 - decoding social cues
 - interpreting
 - searching for a response
 - selecting an optimal response
 - enacting it

Peer Relations (cont.)

Social Cognition and Emotion (continued)

Emotion

- The ability to regulate emotion is linked to successful peer relations (Orobio de Castro & others, 2005; Rubin, Bukowski, & Parker, 2006).
- Moody and emotionally negative individuals experience greater rejection by peers, whereas emotionally positive individuals are more popular (Saarni, 1999).
- Children who have effective self-regulatory skills can modulate their emotional expressiveness in contexts that evoke intense emotions, such as when a peer says something negative (Orobio de Castro & others, 2005).

Peer Relations (cont.)

Peer Statuses

Sociometric status:

- term that describes the extent to which children are liked or disliked by their peer group (Cillessen & Mayeux, 2004; Rubin, Bukowski, & Parker, 2006)
- typically assessed by asking children to rate how much they like or dislike each of their classmates

Peer Relations (cont.)

Peer Statuses (continued)

- Popular children
 - frequently nominated as a best friend and are rarely disliked by their peers
- Average children
 - receive an average number of positive and negative nominations from peers
- Neglected children
 - infrequently nominated as a best friend, but are not disliked by their peers
- Rejected children
 - infrequently nominated as a best friend and are actively disliked by their peers
- Controversial children
 - frequently nominated both as someone's best friend and as being disliked

Peer Relations (cont.)

Peer Rejection and Aggression

- John Coie (2004, pp. 252–253)- reasons why aggressive peer-rejected boys have problems in social relationships:
 - more impulsive and have problems sustaining attention
 - As a result, they are more likely to be disruptive of ongoing activities in the classroom and in focused group play.
 - more emotionally reactive
 - They are aroused to anger more easily and probably have more difficulty calming down once aroused.
 - fewer social skills in making friends and maintaining positive relationships with peers

Peer Relations (cont.)

Social Skills Training Programs

- The goal of many training programs is to help them attract attention from their peers in positive ways and to hold their attention by asking questions, by listening in a warm and friendly way, and by saying things about themselves that relate to the peers' interests.
- They also are taught to enter groups more effectively.
- For rejected children, training programs may teach how to more accurately assess whether the intentions of their peers are negative.

Peer Relations (cont.)

Social Skills Training Programs (continued)

- Rejected children also may be asked to engage in role-playing or to discuss hypothetical situations involving negative encounters with peers.
- Researchers have often found it difficult to improve the social skills of adolescents who are actively disliked and rejected.
- Social-skills training programs have generally been more successful with children 10 years of age or younger than with adolescents (Malik & Furman, 1993).
- Peer reputations become more fixed as cliques and peer groups become more salient in adolescence.

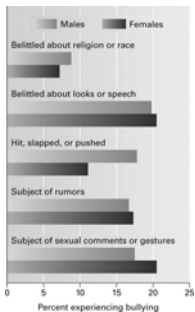
Peer Relations (cont.)

Bullying

- Significant numbers of students are victimized by bullies (Estell, Farmer, & Cairns, 2007; Peskin & others, 2007).
- In a national survey of more than 15,000 sixth- through tenth-grade students, nearly 1 of every 3 students said that they had experienced occasional or frequent involvement as a victim or perpetrator in bullying (Nansel & others, 2001).
 - **Bullying:** verbal or physical behavior intended to disturb someone less powerful

Peer Relations (cont.)

Bullying Behaviors among U.S. Youth



Peer Relations (cont.)

Bullying

Who is likely to be bullied?

- boys and younger middle school students
- Children who said they were bullied reported more loneliness and difficulty in making friends.
- Researchers have found that anxious, socially withdrawn, and aggressive children are often the victims of bullying (Hanish & Guerra, 2004).
- Aggressive children may be the targets of bullying because their behavior is irritating to bullies (Rubin, Bukowski, & Parker, 2006).

Peer Relations (cont.)

Bullying (continued)

What are the outcomes of bullying?

- 9-12 year-old children who were the victims of bullies had a much higher incidence of headaches, sleeping problems, abdominal pain, feeling tired, and depression than children not involved in bullying behavior (Fekkes, Pijpers, & Verloove-Vanhorick, 2004).
- A recent study also indicated that bullies and their victims in adolescence were more likely to experience depression and engage in suicide ideation and attempt suicide than their counterparts who were not involved in bullying (Brunstein & others, 2007).

Peer Relations (cont.)

Bullying (continued)

What are the outcomes of bullying? (continued)

- Another recent study revealed that bullies, victims, or those who were both bullies and victims had more health problems (such as headaches, dizziness, sleep problems, and anxiety) than their counterparts who were not involved in bullying (Srabstein & others, 2006).
- Despite increased conduct problems, bullies enjoyed the highest standing of the three groups among their classmates.

Peer Relations (cont.)

Bullying (continued)

How can bullying be reduced?

- A recent research review revealed mixed results for school-based intervention (Vreeman & Carroll, 2007).
- School-based interventions vary greatly, ranging from involving the whole school in an anti-bullying campaign to individualized social skills training.

Peer Relations (cont.)

Bullying (continued)

Most promising bullying intervention programs

- *Olweus Bullying Prevention*
 - created by Dan Olweus
 - focuses on 6-15 year-olds
 - Goal: decreasing opportunities and rewards for bullying
 - School staff are instructed in ways to improve peer relations and make schools safer. When properly implemented, the program reduces bullying by 30-70% (Ericson, 2001; Olweus, 2003).
 - Information on how to implement the program can be obtained from the Center for the Prevention of Violence at the University of Colorado: www.colorado.edu/espv/blueprints

Peer Relations (cont.)

Bullying (continued)

Bully-Proofing Your School

- tailored for students in K-8th grade
- offers school-wide approach and teacher curriculum for reducing bullying
- Emphasizes:
 - how to recognize bullying behavior
 - how to respond to it quickly
 - how to develop students' communication skills in conflict situations
- Intervention methods are provided, school posters related to bullying are available, and a parent's guide helps involve parents in effective ways to reduce bullying.
- Recent research indicates that this program is effective in reducing bullying (Beran & Tutty, 2002; Plog, Epstein, & Porter, 2004).
- Information about the *Bully-Proofing Your School* program is available at www.sopriswest.com

Peer Relations (cont.)

Bullying (continued)

Steps to Respect

- consists of 3 steps:
 - (1) establishing a school-wide approach, such as creating anti-bullying policies and determining consequences for bullying
 - (2) training staff and parents to deal with bullying
 - (3) teaching students to recognize, not tolerate, and handle bullying
 - teachers provide skills training, such as how to be assertive, and information about bullying to students in grades 3-6.
 - A recent study found that *Steps to Respect* was successful in reducing bullying and argumentativeness in 3-6 grade students (Frey & others, 2005).
- For more information about *Step to Respect* consult this Web site: www.cfchildren.org/

Play

Play:

- pleasurable activity that is engaged in for its own sake; social play is one type of play

Play's Functions

- According to Freud and Erikson, play helps the child master anxieties and conflicts.
- Play permits the child to work off excess physical energy and to release pent-up emotions, which increases the child's ability to cope with problems.
- Play inspired the development of *play therapy*, in which therapists use play to allow children to work off frustrations and to provide an opportunity for analyzing children's conflicts and ways of coping.

Play (cont.)

Play's Functions (continued)

- Children may feel less threatened and be more likely to express their true feelings in the context of play.
- Piaget (1962) saw that play is both an activity constrained by a child's cognitive development and a medium that advances cognitive development.
- Play permits children to practice their competencies and skills in a relaxed, pleasurable way.
- Piaget believed that cognitive structures need to be exercised, and play provides the perfect setting for this exercise.

Play (cont.)

Play's Functions (continued)

- Vygotsky (1962) also believed that play is an excellent setting for cognitive development.
- He was especially interested in the symbolic and make-believe aspects of play, as when a child rides a stick as if it were a horse.
- For young children, the imaginary situation is real.
- Parents should encourage such imaginary play because it advances the child's cognitive development, especially creative thought.

Play (cont.)

Play's Functions (continued)

- Daniel Berlyne (1960) described play as exciting and pleasurable in itself because it satisfies the exploratory drive each of us possesses.
- This drive involves curiosity and a desire for information about something new or unusual.
- Play is a means whereby children can safely explore and seek out new information—something they might not otherwise do.
- Play offers children the possibilities of novelty, complexity, uncertainty, surprise, and incongruity.

Play (cont.)

Play's Functions (continued)

- Play also:
 - teaches children about gender roles
 - is essential to a young child's health
 - releases tension
 - advances cognitive development
 - increases exploration
 - increases affiliation with peers
 - raises the probability that children will interact and converse with each other

Play (cont.)

Parten's Classic Study of Play

- Mildred Parten (1932) developed an elaborate classification of children's play, based on observations of children in free play at nursery school:
 - **Unoccupied play**
 - not play as it is commonly understood.
 - The child may stand in one spot or perform random movements that do not seem to have a goal. In most nursery schools, unoccupied play is less frequent than other forms of play.
 - **Solitary play**
 - happens when the child plays alone and independently of others.
 - The child seems engrossed in the activity and does not care much about anything else that is happening.
 - 2-3 year-olds engage more frequently in solitary play than older preschoolers do.

Play (cont.)

Parten's Classic Study of Play (continued)

- **Onlooker play**
 - takes place when the child watches other children play.
 - The child may talk with other children and ask questions but does not enter into their play behavior.
 - The child's active interest in other children's play distinguishes onlooker play from unoccupied play.
- **Parallel play**
 - occurs when the child plays separately from others but with toys like those the others are using or in a manner that mimics their play.
 - The older the children are, the less frequently they engage in this type of play. However, even older preschool children engage in parallel play quite often.

Play (cont.)

Parten's Classic Study of Play (continued)

- **Associative play**
 - involves social interaction with little or no organization.
 - In this type of play, children seem to be more interested in each other than in the tasks they are performing.
 - Borrowing or lending toys and following or leading one another in line are examples of associative play.
- **Cooperative play**
 - consists of social interaction in a group with a sense of group identity and organized activity.
 - Children's formal games, competitions aimed at winning, and groups formed by a teacher for doing things together are examples of cooperative play.
 - Cooperative play is the prototype for the games of middle childhood. Little cooperative play is seen in the preschool years.

Play (cont.)

Types of Play

- Parten's categories represent one way of thinking about the different types of play.
- The contemporary perspective on play emphasizes both the cognitive and the social aspects of play.
- Among the most widely studied types of children's play today are sensorimotor and practice play, pretense/symbolic play, social play, constructive play, and games (Bergen, 1988).

Play (cont.)

Types of Play (continued)

- **Sensorimotor play**
 - behavior by infants to derive pleasure from exercising their sensorimotor schemas
- **Practice play**
 - play that involves repetition of behavior when new skills are being learned or when physical or mental mastery and coordination of skills are required for games or sports
 - can be engaged in throughout life

Play (cont.)

Types of Play (continued)

- **Pretense/symbolic play**
 - play that occurs when a child transforms the physical environment into a symbol
- **Social play**
 - play that involves social interactions with peers

Play (cont.)

Types of Play (continued)

- **Constructive play**
 - play that combines sensorimotor/practice repetitive activity with symbolic representation of ideas
 - occurs when children engage in self-regulated creation or construction of a product or a problem solution
- **Games**
 - activities engaged in for pleasure that include rules and often competition with one or more individuals

Friendship

Friendship's Function

- Friendships serve 6 functions (Gottman & Parker, 1987):
 - companionship
 - stimulation
 - physical support
 - ego support
 - social comparison
 - intimacy/affection

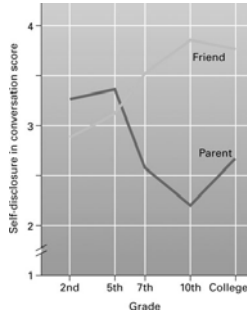
Friendship (cont.)

Friendship's Function (continued)

- Harry Stack Sullivan (1953) contended that in addition to parents' influence on development, friends also play important roles in shaping children's and adolescents' well-being and development.
 - The need for intimacy intensifies during early adolescence, motivating teenagers to seek out close friends who support one another's sense of personal worth.

Friendship (cont.)

Developmental Changes in Self-Disclosing Conversations



Friendship (cont.)

Friendship's Function (continued)

- Willard Hartup (1996, 2000) concluded that children often use friends as cognitive and social resources on a regular basis.
- The quality of friendships is more positive when friends engage in prosocial behavior and more negative when they engage in aggressive behavior.

Friendship (cont.)

Similarity and Intimacy

- Friends often have similar attitudes toward school, similar educational aspirations, and closely aligned achievement orientations.
- Friends like the same music, wear the same kind of clothes, and prefer the same leisure activities (Berndt, 1982).
- Priorities change as the child reaches adolescence (Collins & Steinberg, 2006).
- The most consistent finding in the last 2 decades of research on adolescent friendships is that intimacy is an important feature of friendship (Berndt & Perry, 1990; Bukowski, Newcomb, & Hoza, 1987).

Friendship (cont.)

Similarity and Intimacy (continued)

- **Intimacy in friendship:** self-disclosure or sharing of private thoughts; private or personal knowledge about a friend has been used as an index of intimacy (Selman, 1980; Sullivan, 1953).
- When young adolescents are asked what they want from a friend or how they can tell someone is their best friend, they frequently say that a best friend will share problems with them, understand them, and listen when they talk about their own thoughts or feelings.
- When young children talk about their friendships, they rarely comment about intimate self-disclosure or mutual understanding.

Friendship (cont.)

Gender and Friendship

Are the friendships of girls different than the friendships of boys?

- An increasing number of studies indicate that they are different (Bukowski & Saldarriaga Mesa, 2007).
- Issues of control and intimacy likely play a more powerful role in girls' friendships.
- When asked to describe their best friends, girls refer to intimate conversations and faithfulness more than boys do (Collins & Steinberg, 2006; Ruble, Martin, & Berenbaum, 2006).

Friendship (cont.)

Gender and Friendship (continued)

- When conflict is present, girls place a higher priority on relationship goals such as being patient until the relationship improves, while boys are more likely to seek control over a friend (Rose & Asher, 1999; Ruble, Martin, & Berenbaum, 2006).
- While girls' friendships in adolescence are more likely to focus on intimacy, boys' friendships tend to emphasize power and excitement (Rose, 2002; Ruble, Martin, & Berenbaum, 2006).
- Boys may discourage one another from openly disclosing their problems because self-disclosure is not masculine (Maccoby, 1996).

Friendship (cont.)

Mixed-Age Friendships

- Parents' concerns that adolescents who have older friends will be encouraged to engage in delinquent behavior or early sexual behavior are supported by the research, although it could be that younger adolescents were already prone to deviant behavior before they developed their friendships with older youths.

Peer Relations in Adolescence

Peer Pressure and Conformity

- Conformity to peer pressure in adolescence can be positive or negative.
- Around 8th-9th grades, conformity to peers peaks.

Peer Relations in Adolescence (cont.)

Cliques and Crowds

- Cliques and crowds assume more important roles in the lives of adolescents than children.
 - **Cliques**
 - small groups that range from about 2-12 individuals and average about 5-6 individuals
 - Cliques can form because of friendship or because individuals engage in similar activities, and members usually are of the same sex and about the same age.

Peer Relations in Adolescence (cont.)

Cliques and Crowds (continued)

Crowds

- larger group structures than cliques
- Adolescents usually are members of a crowd based on reputation and may or may not spend much time together.
- Many crowds are defined by the activities adolescents engage in.

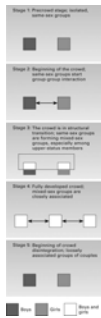
Peer Relations in Adolescence (cont.)

Adolescent Groups versus Child Groups

- The members of child groups often are friends or neighborhood acquaintances, and their groups usually are not as formalized as many adolescent groups; adolescent groups tend to include a broader array of members.
- Rules and regulations are usually defined more precisely in adolescent peer groups.
- During adolescence, mixed-sex participation in groups increases.

Peer Relations in Adolescence (cont.)

Dunphy's Progression of Peer Group Relations in Adolescence



E-LEARNING TOOLS

To help you master the material in this chapter, visit the Online Learning Center for Child Development, twelfth edition at:

<http://www.mhhe.com/santrockcd12>
