Peer Interactions

• We are not alone!
• This section looks at when and how young children interact with each other.
• Who were your friends?
• What did you do with them?

Different Types of Activities

Peers as Equal Status Interactions

• Emotional security
• Growth promoting conflicts of viewpoint.
• Practice in compromise.
• Feedback and practice in role taking skills.
• Training for later intimate relationships.

Time for Playtime!

6mo: Nonsocial (Onlooker) play.
12mo: Parallel play.
15mo: Simple social (Associative) play.
24mo: Cooperative play.
School: Rough and Tumble Play

Parents play too!

• Playmate!
  – Attachment
  – Scaffolded
• Mediator
  – Cooperative Kids.
  – Sharing and Playing.
• Social Coach
  – More social
  – Less aggressive

Why can’t we just be Friends?

• Friendship: A voluntary relationship between two people involving a mutual liking.

Ok, Einstein, Tell me something I didn’t know.
Friendship

• Based on common interests and liking in children; intimacy is more important in adolescents (esp. girls).
• Friends usually alike in age, gender, and race (unless small class size or popular).
• Only opposite-sex friendships often indicative of rejection.

Consequences of friendship

• Children with good friends have higher self-esteem, are more cooperative, and deal better with life stresses.
• Of course, this could be the effect, not the cause.
• But friends can make us nicer/meaner.

Romantic Relationships

• Sooner or later, adolescents find a special someone.
• Individuals with high self-esteem are likely to think that their significant other likes them—positive feedback loop.
• Those with low self-esteem, not so lucky, and often avoid intimacy for fear of rejection or poison the well—negative feedback loop.
• Moral of the story: be nice and optimistic!

Teen Sexuality

• Most have sex before end of teens (culture determined).
• Sexually transmitted diseases
  – 1 in 4 will contract an STD!
• Teenage pregnancy and childbirth
  – 1 in 10 will become pregnant (40% abort).
  – This is generally not (the sex, the pregnancy).
  – Neither teen moms nor babies do well.
  – So why did they do it?

Teen pregnancy

• Caused by total lack of birth-control. Why?
  • Irresponsible
  • Ignorance (total lack of knowledge about getting pregnant)
  • Teenage girls not the first priority, and I drink milk...
  • No access to contraceptives
  • Want to have a child
• Dealing with the problems of teenage sexuality:
  • Abraham H. Maslow’s hierarchy of needs (especially self-esteem needs). 
  • Preventive strategy: Planned discussions concerning sexual matters
  • Teen Volunteers: Volunteer service activities

POWER OF GROUPS

• Groups are amazing!
• They are more powerful than one alone.
• And more dangerous.
Characteristics of Groups

- **Clique**: 4-6 friends; **Crowd**: larger group who have similar values and attitudes.
  - Some crowds have higher status (jocks) and their members have higher self-esteem.
- Groups have a dominance hierarchy.
  - Boys it’s power, Girls it’s skills.
- Groups exert pressure primarily where social standards are fuzzy.

Popularity: Social Skill

5 common categories:
- **Popular**: liked (Julia Roberts).
- **Rejected**: disliked (Kato).
- **Controversial**: both (Jim Carey).
- **Average**: tolerated (Ed Norton).
- **Neglected**: ignored (Ed Beagley).

Popularity*

- popular children tend to be attractive, smart, and socially skilled (the world over).
- rejected children are more likely to drop out of school, commit juvenile offenses and are socially unskilled (as are their parents).

Television Habits

- 3-4 hours a day!
- 25 hours a week!
- 20,000 hours by age 15!
- Two years straight!
- More time than on any other activity, except sleeping.
- So does TV make us couch potatoes?
- Does it make us lazy thinkers?
- Are we sacrificing our lives to the square god?

Television: The good side

- TV is not, by itself, evil.
- Like any of our creations, it has potential for great good and great evil.
- Can encourage prosocial behavior, & vocabulary.
  - Children who watch PBS are smarter, and more creative.
Television Myths

• No significant correlation between hours watched and
  – Creativity
  – Attention span
• TV is a diversion
  – If kids didn’t watch they would go to movies, read comic books, listen to music, and otherwise waste time. So what’s new?

Blame Canada!

• Once upon a time, isolated town called Notel, that ironically had NO Television.
• Children there were smarter than kids in surrounding towns served by TV.
• Then came TV. Reading skills and creativity went down. There was less community involvement, and increases in aggression and gender stereotyping.

Some Potentially Undesirable Effects of Television

• Correlations of televised violence (very frequent)
  – 98% of programs contain violence without remorse
  – TV violence strongly correlated with aggression
  • Found the world over in Australia, Canada, Finland, Great Britain, Israel, and Poland
  – Mean world beliefs and Desensitization.
  • Reciprocal Relation. Strongest effects are those that identify with the violent characters.
• Television is a source of social stereotypes.

Commercials

• 20,000 television commercials each year.
• 18 or more minutes an hour!
• Fast food, toys, treats.
• Children are easily persuaded by commercial messages. (not until 8 or 9 years do kids get that commercials are trying to persuade.)

Computers like TV

• Again, the emphasis is on content not medium.
• Video games–exposure to violent video games makes kids less sensitive to violence and associated with lower grades and aggression.
• Computers used in education for tutoring, to provide experiential learning, and as a multipurpose tool for traditional academic goals
• Word processing, programming, and having a computer are all good.
Day Care

- Day care is harmful to children only when the care is of low quality and combined with ineffective parenting.
- Some children can safely care for themselves after school, but many factors must be considered (e.g., child’s maturity, neighborhood safety) and parents must monitor their children’s behavior.

Neighborhoods

- Socioeconomic status - income and education of the residents.
- Children growing up in a wealthy neighborhood have access to more resources than children living in poverty.
- But sense of community is still important.

Schools

- Some misconceptions about effective schooling:
  - Monetary support makes no difference in effectiveness.
  - School size: Large schools may discourage participation in extracurricular activities.
  - Class size: No differences found when classes hold 20 to 40 students.
  - Ability tracking is still being debated.

- Factors that contribute to effective schooling:
  - The scholastic atmosphere of successful schools
  - Academic emphasis
  - Classroom management
  - Discipline
  - Teamwork
  - Parental Involvement
  - Safety

  - The “goodness-of-fit” between students and schools.
  - Those with high-abilities like being pushed to do better.
  - Those struggling students like warm and encouraging.

  - Classroom composition.

Cross Cultural School Performance

- Different cultures place the burden of instruction differently:
  - Asian students spend more time being educated than American students do.
  - Asian parents are strongly committed to the educational process and hold higher achievement expectations.
  - Asian students are assigned more homework.
  - Asian students in high school spend much less time working, dating, or socializing with friends.

- A strong emphasis on effort for Asian students.

- Vastly higher average grades. Are we complacent?

Part-Time Employment

- When students work more than 15-20 hours per week, their school performance suffers and they experience mental health problems and misleading affluence.
- Part-time work is okay when students limit their hours at work and learn new skills.
- Summer jobs are not harmful.