

**Journal of  
Early  
Childhood and  
Infant  
Psychology**

---

**Volume 7  
2011**

**PACE UNIVERSITY PRESS      NEW YORK**

# Mothers' and Fathers' Perceptions of Conflict and Closeness in Parent-Child Relationships during Early Childhood

Kate Driscoll, Ph.D., & Robert C. Pianta, Ph.D.  
University of Virginia

The Child-Parent Relationship Scale (CPRS) was used to describe the stability and consistency of parents' perceptions of their relationships with their children ( $N = 563$ ) across 3 years during the preschool to elementary school period for children enrolled in the NICHD Study of Early Child Care and Youth Development. Research questions pertained to stability of ratings and differences in reports for gender of parent and child. Another goal of the study was to further examine the psychometric properties of the CPRS, a 15-item self-report instrument assessing relational conflict and closeness. Maternal and paternal ratings of closeness and conflict were somewhat stable across this period. Mothers reported higher levels of closeness and conflict with both boys and girls at both 54 months and first grade than did fathers. Consistency between mothers' and fathers' reports was moderate and was higher for conflict than for closeness. Levels of parent agreement were dependent upon the gender of the child. Fathers reported more closeness with daughters than with sons, and they experienced an increase in their feelings of closeness with their children during this period, relative to mothers. Results are discussed in light of research on parent-child relationships and parents' perceptions. It is important to note that findings from this study reflect data collected from families with both a mother and father present during this 3-year period.

The quality of the relational bond between parent and child affects children's emotional development, school performance, and social growth. Parents perceive their relationships with their children in a variety of ways and numerous researchers have attempted to assess these connections. This study investigated the stability of mothers' and fathers' perceptions of parent-child relationships with sons and daughters across 3 years during the transition to school. This study describes stability and patterns of parents' perceptions across time, gender, and informant in terms of dimensions of relational conflict and closeness. The results have implications for understanding how parents have different relational experiences with sons and daughters.

---

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to: Kate Driscoll, Ph.D., Children's Hospital Boston, 300 Longwood Avenue, Boston, MA 02115. E-mail: katherine.driscoll@childrens.harvard.edu

### **Parent-Child Relationships and Child Development**

The following section reviews current literature on parent-child relationships as they relate to children's emotional, academic, and social outcomes. The relationship between a child and his or her parents forms a foundation for all other interpersonal relationships. Bowlby (1982) suggested that parents' behavior in parent-child relationships is guided by an underlying system, referred to as the caregiving system, and remarked, "the study of caregiving as a behavioral system, differing somewhat between mothers and fathers, is an enterprise calling for attention" (p. 376). The caregiving behavioral system between parent and child is in part composed of parents' internal representations of relationships of the child and of caregiving. Bowlby's concepts have been developed in recent years by numerous attachment researchers (e.g., Bretherton, Biringen, Ridgeway, Maslin, & Sherman, 1989; George & Solomon, 1991, 1996; Slade & Cohen, 1996; Solomon & George 1996; Solomon, George & De Jong, 1995; Zeanah, Benoit, Hirshberg, Barton, & Regan, 1995) who view the development of parents' representations in relating with the child as intrinsic to the development of the caregiving relationship and key features of their caregiving behavior. Relational representations can affect children's emotional development, school performance, and social growth.

Numerous studies demonstrate the important role that the parent-child relationship plays in predicting academic performance during the early school years (e.g., Barth & Parke, 1993; de Ruiter & van IJzendoorn, 1993; Greenberg & Speltz, 1988; Pianta, 1997, 1999). For example, preschool age measures of mother-child interaction have been shown to be more predictive of special education referrals in school than were standardized tests (Pianta, Erickson, Wagner, Kreutzer, & Egeland, 1990; Wagner, 1993). Accurate measures of parent-child relationships could aid in the identification of children who are at-risk for school adjustment problems (Pianta & Harbers, 1996). Testing a conceptual model of a psychosocial pathway to academic competence in preschool, Wood (2007) found that early secure attachments to parents were associated with decreased anxiety, removing emotional barriers to learning.

Parental sensitivity and stimulation are two specific characteristics of families that are empirically associated with children's abilities upon school entry (Comer & Haynes, 1991; Downer & Pianta, 2006; Estrada, Arsenio, Hess, & Holloway, 1985; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [NICHD] Early Child Care Research Network, 2003; Pianta & Harbers, 1996; Pianta, Smith, & Reeve, 1991; Ramey & Campbell, 1991). Specifically, parents' sensitive caregiving, ample learning materials, opportunities for cognitive stimulation, and predictable routines facilitate children's motivation to learn, self-regulation, language, literacy, and social-emotional development. In another study using this NICHD sample, maternal sensitivity was found to have the strongest associations with social-emotional outcomes (NICHD Early Child Care Research Network). Specifically, mothers'

observed sensitivity with children at 54 months and kindergarten was related to increased social competence, fewer problem behaviors, and less conflict with adults. Increases in maternal sensitivity during the infant, toddler, and preschool years were also positively associated with children's emotional functioning in kindergarten.

The development of competent relationships with peers is viewed as one of the most important tasks of childhood (Asher & Gottman, 1981; Black & Logan, 1995; Kupersmidt, Coie, & Dodge, 1990; Ladd, 1989), and children's daily interactions with their parents, including shared pretend play, humor, negotiation of conflict, enforcement of behavioral standards, and family conversations provide children with a natural context in which to learn about the social world (Hastings & Rubin, 1999; Laible & Thompson, 2000; Thompson, 1998). Attachment theorists have also stressed the importance of parent-child connections in a child's education about self and others (Laible & Thompson, 2000). Wood (2007) found that early secure attachment to parents enhanced positive peer relationships and academic competence. Mothers' perceptions of their children as more or less trusting and secure predict children's peer acceptance in preschool (Wood, Emerson, & Cowan, 2004). Parenting systems of involvement, warmth, and directiveness have been associated with variations in children's social competence (Booth, Rose-Krasnor, McKinnon, & Rubin, 1994; Hastings & Rubin, 1999; McFadyen-Ketchum, Bates, Dodge, & Petit, 1996), while parent-child relationships characterized by hostility have been associated with negative social outcomes. The children of parents who are rejecting, angry, or uninvolved are more likely to be socially rejected by their peers than children of warm, involved parents who consistently enforce rules (Cohn, 1990; McDonald & Parke, 1984; Putallaz, 1987). Insecurely attached boys tend to be less well liked by classmates and teachers and were perceived as more aggressive by their peers (Cohn).

Parent-child relationships frequently serve as assets, moderators, and mediators (Sroufe, Duggal, Weinfield, & Carlson, 2000) when children are faced with specific risks. Protective factors moderate the impact of risk variables (Rutter, 1990), while assets or "promotive" factors are variables that are regularly associated with positive outcomes (Sameroff, 1997). The same factor may be regarded as an asset or protective factor, depending on the context (Sroufe et al.). The most extensively researched assets and protective factors in the parent-child relationship are parental warmth and emotional support, and the security of the attachment between infant and caregiver. Numerous studies have demonstrated the connection between parental warmth and healthy emotional development during childhood (e.g., Campbell, 1997; Hetherington & Clingempeel, 1992; Sroufe, 1997). Attachment security has been linked with later self-esteem, social competence, prosocial behavior, ego resiliency, and overall adjustment (Sroufe, 1997).

### Assessment of Parent-Child Relationships

Parents' representations, or perceptions, of their relationships with their children have been assessed by interviews, coding systems, observations, and questionnaires. Several significant issues arise in the evaluation of parent-child relationships. Before outlining the major issues within the field of early parent-child relationships, it is important to define what is meant by *relationship*. Relationships have been described as a particular form of a system (Hinde, 1987; Pianta, 1997; Sameroff & Emde, 1989). A parent-child relationship is not equal to the sum of the exchanges between them, or their traits as individuals (Pianta, 1997); they possess their own identity aside from the attributes of interactions or individuals (Sroufe, 1989). Of relationships, Pianta (1997) writes: "Relationships have a history, a memory; they are patterns of interactions, expectations, beliefs and affects organized at a level more abstract than observable behaviors" (p. 14). He stresses the importance of assessing relationships over time and across situations in order to more fully describe and understand these qualities (Pianta, 1997).

The major issues to explore within this topic are relationship assessment; stability across time, gender, conflict and closeness in early childhood relationships; and consistency across reporters. Each of these issues affects the assessment of early parent-child relationships and it is necessary to explore these matters and how they influence evaluation. These topics undoubtedly shape current research and theory in the area of early parent-child relationships. Recent findings on each subject will be explored in the following section.

#### Relationship Assessment

In recent years, several research groups have introduced both interviews and coding systems that are designed to assess and rate parental representations of the child (Aber, Slade, Berger, Bresgi, & Kaplan, 1985; George & Solomon, 1989, 1996; Zeanah, Benoit, Hirshberg, Barton, & Regan, 1995). Interviews often ask parents to describe their relationship with their child in detail, and then focus on parents' responses to emotionally charged interactions, their understanding of the child's experience, and their ability to reflect on the nature of their response to their child (Slade, Belsky, Aber, & Phelps, 1999). In the majority of developmental and clinical research, mother-child interaction has been assessed using carefully controlled laboratory assessments, extended analysis of behavior in naturalistic environments, or coding of discrete behaviors (Barth & Parke, 1993; Mash & Terdal, 1988; Pianta & Harbers, 1996).

Research groups have employed different theoretical models when devising their assessment tools. George and Solomon (1989, 1996) put forward two features of the mother's caregiving system that may be reflected in representations. The first is content, and focuses on the mother's view of herself as a caregiver both in

general and for a specific child, and how she recognizes the child as necessitating and receiving her care. The other aspect of the caregiving system is the manner in which the mother processes represented information. Both the content of the information and how it is processed can be used as dimensions for organizing representational constructs (Button, Pianta, & Marvin, 2001).

Slade, Belsky, Aber, and Phelps (1999) identified three dimensions of maternal experience in parenting young children. The first dimension pertains to the manner in which mothers represent joy and pleasure in their relationships with their children, and the second relates to how mothers represent anger. The third dimension concerns the way mothers represent guilt and separation distress in their relationships with their children. This approach allows examination of stability and change in the structure, mean levels, and correlates of these dimensions over time (Connell & Furman, 1984). Structural change occurs when the meaning of a specific behavior changes with development, and can be assessed by examining the number and composition of factors. Changes in centrality suggest that times of transition may produce some variables that become less related to each other, while others become more related to each other.

### **Relationship Stability across Time**

When considering the parent-child relationship during childhood, it is essential to contemplate the stability of this connection over time. At the present time, few empirical studies that might provide insight to this question have been conducted. Research in this area has focused primarily on the general concepts of stability and change in relationships and measurements of parental anger and stress across childhood.

Some researchers suggest that relationships and parental attitudes are characterized by change (Goodnow, 1988; Holden & Edwards, 1989), given that attitudes are learned responses that are shaped through interactions with the environment (Holden & Edwards). Attachment theorists suggest that in addition to prior relationship history, daily interactions form a basis for mental representations of others (Main, Kaplan, & Cassidy, 1985; Slade & Aber, 1992). Early childhood is characterized by dramatic changes in children's functioning (Aber & Baker, 1990; Aber, Belsky, Slade, & Crnic, 1999; Lieberman, 1994; Mahler, Pine, & Bergman, 1975; Shimm & Ballen, 1995) which could potentially impact parents' representations of their relationships with their sons and daughters. Furthermore, changes in levels of parenting stress and quality have been associated with changes in children's attachment classifications (Lieberman & Pawl, 1990; Waters, 1978).

Although the focus was on toddlers and not preschoolers, a study of stability and change in maternal representations of mother-toddler relationships concluded that there are significant increases in mothers' levels of anger from 15 to 28 months, and that while relatively stable, relationships during this period are still open to

change (Aber et al., 1999). One study of maternal conceptions of rules for toddlers determined that children's levels of compliance increase significantly with age and are greater for property, safety, and interpersonal behaviors (Smetana, Kochanska, & Chuang, 2000). Another study of parents' perceptions of daily parenting hassles indicated that reported hassles are significantly greater with increasing child age (Crnic & Booth, 1991). These contradictory findings suggest that it is unclear whether child compliance or parental hassles increase or decrease with child age. The present study addressed this inconsistency by investigating the stability of conflict and closeness in the parent-child relationship throughout early childhood.

In a recent study, Barry and Kochanska (2010) examined the affective environment in families longitudinally at various points between 7 and 67 months. Parents' emotional expressiveness was highest early in children's development and decreased over time. Children's anger was found to be highest at 15 months and decreased over time. Children's positive emotions, particularly with mothers, increased over time.

## **Gender**

Patterns of relational functioning associated with gender can refer to both the gender of the parent and the gender of the child within the parent-child relationship. It is important to consider gender when investigating early childhood relationships because male and female parents may employ different patterns in their interactions with male and female children. The majority of studies examining parent-child relationships have focused on mother-child relationships rather than father-child relationships. Although empirical studies have not been conducted to determine whether mothers or fathers tend to feel more closeness or conflict with their daughters or sons, several studies do offer ideas about behavioral patterns that do and do not emerge for mothers and fathers of preschoolers.

Mothers and children tend to spend more time together than do fathers and children (Parke, 1995; Russell & Russell, 1987). However, when both parents and child are together, mothers and fathers instigate interaction with children with equal frequency (Noller, 1980; Russell & Russell). Fathers are relatively more involved in physical play interactions while mothers report more caregiving interactions; however, mothers and fathers engage in caregiving to a similar degree in observational studies when both parents are present (Collins, Harris, & Susman, 1995). Mothers' and fathers' parenting styles have been found to be moderately correlated within families (Barnett, Deng, Mills-Koonce, Willoughby, & Cox, 2008; Feinberg, Reiss, Neiderhiser, & Hetherington, 2005).

Both positive and negative emotional expressions and interactions characterized by conflict are more common in mother-child than in father-child interactions (Bronstein, 1984; Russell & Russell, 1987). A possible explanation for this is that mothers spend more time with their children in a greater diversity of shared

activities than do fathers (Collins et al., 1995). Although there is some indication that interactions with sons are marked by more affect than those with daughters, whether these emotions are more positive or negative is contradictory across studies (Bronstein; Noller, 1980; Russell & Russell; Salt, 1991).

There is some evidence to support the idea that relationships with daughters involve different emotions than relationships with sons. In a study of gender differences in conversations about emotions, both mothers and fathers used a greater number and variety of emotion words with daughters than with sons and parents mentioned sad aspects of events more with girls than with boys (Kuebli & Fivush, 1992). A study of maternal attitudes determined that protective mothers report that they are more likely to use warmth and involvement to comfort withdrawn daughters than sons (Hastings & Rubin, 1999). Both mothers and fathers perceive similar amounts of hassle in their relationships with their children (Crnic & Booth, 1991). Despite calls for studies of the entire family system (Parke & McDowell, 1998), the majority of research on emotion in parent-child interactions has focused on the mother-child dyad. Studies examining emotions expressed in father-child interactions report both similarities and differences across parents (Bridges & Connell, 1991; McElwain et al., 2007). In sum, mothers and fathers appear to experience both qualitative and quantitative differences in their relationships with their sons and daughters.

### **Conflict and Closeness in Early Childhood Relationships**

The present study focuses on the assessment of conflict and closeness in parent-child relationships, so it is important to consider the patterns of positive and negative emotions that have previously been identified in relationships between parents and children. Several studies have concluded that a mutually responsive parent-child relationship that is characterized by high levels of shared positive affect contributes to a child's readiness to incorporate parental messages and values (Kochanska & Thompson, 1997; Laible & Thompson, 2000; Maccoby, 1984). Strong emotions, both positive and negative, occur daily in the course of parenting (Dix, 1991).

Researchers have speculated that conflict may be an important aspect of children's socialization (Dunn & Slomkowski, 1992; Kuczynski, Kochanska, Radke-Yarrow, & Girmius-Brown, 1987). The increase in parent-child conflict across the toddler and preschool years is well-documented by researchers (e.g. Dunn, 1988; Dunn & Munn, 1985, 1987; Kuczynski et al.; Laible & Thompson, 2002). In a review on the literature on conflict, Dix (1991) suggested that parents with young children are engaged in conflict with them an average of 3.5 to 15 times each hour. Another study reported even higher rates of conflict (Klimes-Dougan & Kopp, 1999). It is important to make the distinction between constructive and destructive conflicts (Hartup & Laursen, 1993; Vandell & Bailey, 1992). Constructive conflict involves high levels of negotiation, justification, and resolution and is



likely to enhance development. Conversely, destructive conflict is often a marker of dysfunctional relationships (Laible & Thompson, 2002).

Closeness is also an important predictive factor in the parent-child relationship. Mothers who engage with their children in a warm and responsive manner have children who are described as socially competent, securely attached, and successful in school (Field, 1987; Fiese, Wilder, Bickham, 2000; Grolinck & Ryan, 1989; Sroufe, 1983). Similar patterns of relation have been identified in relation to father-child interactions (Parke, 1981). The positive relationship between parental warmth and child adjustment extends from the toddler years (Belsky, Woodworth, & Crnic, 1996), to the preschool period (Campbell, 1994), to adolescence (Allen, Hauser, O'Connor, Bell, & Eickholt, 1996).

### **Consistency Across Reporters**

When assessing early parent-child relationships, it is important to consider who is reporting the information that is to be assessed, whether that is a mother or a father. At present, few empirical studies have been conducted to determine the consistency of mother-father reports concerning their relationships with their sons and daughters. The majority of studies in this area focus on parental consistency with adolescents rather than preschoolers. One toddler study reported moderate mother-father agreement in ratings of twins' temperaments (Saudino & Cherny, 2001) at 14, 20, 24, and 36 months. Although several studies have investigated consistency between maternal and paternal reports of *behavior*, few studies have considered the association between mother-father reports of *relationships*. The present study further explores the factors of consistency across reporters for sons and daughters.

### **Present Study**

Parents' perceptions of their relationships with their children can serve as key indicators of the quality of the parent-child relationship, which in turn is a robust predictor of children's emotional development, school performance, and social growth. However, the stability of parents' perceptions of parent-child relationships during early childhood and gender differences in perceptions of conflict and closeness levels among mothers, fathers, daughters, and sons have yet to be analyzed. Using mother and father reports of relationships at 54-months and first grade, the present study analyzes the following questions: Are parent-child relationships between 54-months and first grade characterized by stability or change? Do mothers or fathers report higher degrees of conflict or closeness with their daughters or sons?

Do mothers and fathers differ in their representations? Results of this study may offer new information regarding mothers' and fathers' perceptions of their relationships with their children and may have implications for the assessment of parent-child relationships across the early childhood years.

## Method

### Sample

The participants in the current study were 563 children and their families who were involved in the NICHD Study of Early Child Care, a comprehensive, observational study of key developmental contexts from birth to sixth grade. Families were recruited during postpartum hospital visits to mothers after the birth of a child in 1991 at ten locations in the United States (Little Rock, AR; Irvine, CA; Lawrence, KS; Boston, MA; Philadelphia, PA; Pittsburgh, PA; Charlottesville, VA; Morganton, NC; Seattle, WA; Madison, WI). Recruitment and selection procedures are described in several publications (see NICHD ECCRN, 2002). The present study involved 563 of the original 1,364 participants in the NICHD study. Participants were included in the present study if mothers and fathers completed the CPRS at 54 months and first grade. Participants included 294 boys and 269 girls. Children of color represent 7% of the sample. Mothers had an average of 15.1 years of education and fathers had an average of 15.3 years of education. It is important to note that findings from this study reflect data collected from families with both a mother and father present during this 3-year period.

### Overview of Data Collection

Mothers and fathers were asked to complete questionnaires in the laboratory at 54 months and first grade. Structured interactions between parents and study children were also videotaped in the laboratory at 54 months and first grade visits.

### Measures

**Child Parent Relationship Scale (CPRS).** The CPRS (Pianta, 1998) is a self-report instrument completed by mothers and fathers that assesses parents' perceptions of their relationships with their sons and daughters. The 15 items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale and the ratings can be summed into groups of items corresponding to conflict and closeness subscales.

The 8-item conflict subscale measures the degree to which a parent feels that his or her relationship with a particular child is characterized by negativity. Cronbach *alphas* for maternal conflict were .84 at 54 months and .84 at first grade, while Cronbach *alphas* for paternal conflict were .80 at 54 months and .78 at first

grade. The 7-item closeness scale assesses the extent to which a parent feels that the relationship is characterized by warmth, affection, and open communication. Cronbach *alphas* for maternal closeness were .69 at 54 months and .64 at first grade, while Cronbach *alphas* for paternal closeness were .72 at 54 months and .74 at first grade. The conflict and closeness scales of the CPRS represent two distinct domains of parent-child relationships, as evidenced by a relatively low correlation between the scales ( $r = .16$ ).

The CPRS was adapted from the Student Teacher Relationship Scale (STRS; Pianta, 2001), which is an instrument that assesses teachers' perceptions of their relationships with individual students. Items were derived from attachment theory and the attachment Q-set (Waters & Deane, 1985), as well as a review of the literature on teacher-child interactions. The STRS is easily adapted to enable the parent to report the child's attachment behaviors in the home. A goal of the present study is to further examine the psychometric properties of the CPRS.

**Validity of CPRS.** Structured interactions between parents and study children were videotaped at 54 months and first grade. Videotapes of 499 index children and their mothers or fathers during structured interactions were coded by trained observers. The response categories ranged from 1 to 7 on each of six scales reflecting parent behaviors. Parent ratings included supportive presence, respect for child's autonomy, stimulation of cognitive development, quality of child assistance, hostility of parent toward child, and parent's confidence.

The videotapes of the parent-child interactions were sent to a central collection site for coding. Coders were blind to family information. Inter-coder reliability was determined by assigning two coders 19-20% of the tapes randomly drawn at each assessment period. Coders were unaware of which videotapes were assigned to double coding, and reliability assessments were conducted throughout the period of coding. Inter-coder reliability was calculated as the intra-class correlation coefficient. Reliability for the composite scores exceeded .83 at every age.

The materials for the structured interaction differed for mothers and fathers at both time points. At 54 months, the mother-child interaction was comprised of two challenging tasks (maze, block-building) requiring maternal assistance and one pretend play activity (puppets). The father-child interaction consisted of one challenging task (ramp and marble construction project) and one pretend play activity (jungle animals). At first grade, both parent-child interactions were comprised of three activities incorporating teaching and play (Etch-A-Sketch drawing, pattern block activity, card game).

Correlations among CPRS parental closeness ratings and observer ratings were highest for supportive presence, sensitivity, and positive caregiving. Associations among CPRS parental conflict ratings and observer ratings were highest for hostility. Overall, many statistically significant correlations between parent and observer reports were apparent from analyses; however, the magnitude of the associations were relatively small.

**Correlations with Child Behavior Checklist and Social Skills Rating System.** Additional validity analyses were conducted to determine correlations with two common validators: the Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL) and the Social Skills Rating System (SSRS). The CBCL is a 118-item measure that addresses a broad range of children's behavioral and emotional problems. Parents completed the measure at both 54 months and first grade. The SSRS includes 38 items that provide a broad multi-rater assessment of social skills and problem behaviors. In the NICHD study, both the social skills and problem behavior portions of the SSRS were administered at 54 months, but the measure was modified at first grade to only include the social skills items. Correlations between CPRS scales and the CBCL and SSRS are reported in Table 1.

**CPRS Means and Standard Deviations.** CPRS conflict and closeness means and standard deviations for the overall sample ( $N = 1070$  mothers at 54 months, 1015 at first grade and 715 fathers at 54 months, 664 at first grade) are reported in this section. Maternal closeness means were 37.28 ( $SD = 2.71$ ) at 54 months and 37.98 ( $SD = 2.50$ ) at first grade. Mothers' ratings of conflict averaged 16.52 ( $SD = 5.19$ ) at 54 months and 15.21 ( $SD = 5.87$ ) at first grade. Paternal closeness means were 35.74 ( $SD = 3.19$ ) at 54 months and 36.93 ( $SD = 2.74$ ) at first grade. Fathers' ratings of conflict averaged 15.46 ( $SD = 4.59$ ) at 54 months and 14.23 ( $SD = 4.90$ ) at first grade.

Table 1

*Parental Correlations for CPRS Closeness and Conflict Ratings at 54 Months and First Grade with CBCL and SSRS ratings ( $N = 563$ )*

	54 months		1 <sup>st</sup> grade	
	Close	Conflict	Close	Conflict
<u>Mothers</u>				
SSRS Competence	.348**	-.450**		
SSRS Prob Behavior	-.180**	.509**		
CBCL Externalizing	-.181**	.583**	-.263**	.686**
CBCL Total Probs	-.230**	.526**	-.292**	.615**
<u>Fathers</u>				
SSRS Competence	.410**	-.449**		
SSRS Prob Behavior	-.197**	.436**		
CBCL Externalizing	-.153**	.515**	-.194**	.594**
CBCL Total Probs	-.199**	.479**	-.250**	.549**

\*\* $p < .01$

## Data Analysis

The first step in the analysis was to run a series of basic correlations between the CPRS conflict and closeness scores at 54 months and first grade, for mothers and then for fathers. These correlations assessed stability within informants by examining associations of parents' scores across 3 years. Consistency across informants was also assessed by correlating mother's and father's perceptions of their relationships with the study at each occasion. Repeated measures ANOVAs were conducted across time, within informants, and between genders to examine changes or differences in mean levels of conflict and closeness.

## Results

### Descriptive Results by Informant, Time, and Gender

The following section outlines the associations between maternal and paternal closeness and conflict ratings at 54 months and first grade. Cross-time and within-time statistics are presented. In the first step of the analysis, a series of correlations examined cross-time associations between mothers' ratings of closeness to their children at 54 months and first grade, for boys and then for girls. In addition, correlations examined stability/cross-time associations between fathers' ratings of closeness to their children at 54 months and first grade, for boys and then for girls. For mothers, the correlation between closeness at 54 months and closeness at first grade is .44. For boys, the correlation between closeness at 54 months and closeness at first grade is .37. The correlation between closeness at 54 months and closeness for girls at first grade is .50. For fathers, the correlation between closeness at 54 months and closeness at first grade is .52. The correlation between closeness at 54 months and closeness for boys at first grade is .56. The correlation between closeness at 54 months and closeness for girls at first grade is .46. Results indicate that maternal and paternal ratings of closeness with sons and daughters are moderately stable between 54 months and first grade. All reported correlations are statistically significant at the .01 level.

Next, a series of correlations examined within-time associations between both parents' ratings of closeness to their children at 54 months and first grade, for boys and then for girls. The correlation between mothers' and fathers' ratings of closeness with children at 54 months is .14. The correlation between mothers' and fathers' ratings of closeness with children at first grade is .15. The correlation between mothers' and fathers' ratings of closeness for boys at 54 months is .20. The correlation between mothers' and fathers' ratings of closeness for girls at first grade is .23. All reported correlations are statistically significant at the .01 level. Although there is significant consistency in maternal and paternal closeness ratings for sons and daughters at 54 months and first grade, the magnitude

of the association is quite small. Thus, mothers' and fathers' ratings of closeness with the same child do not appear to be strongly related. It is the case, however, that mothers' and fathers' ratings of closeness appear to be more strongly related for sons at 54 months and for daughters at first grade relative to daughters at 54 months and sons at first grade.

The next set of analyses examined associations between mothers' ratings of conflict with their children at 54 months and first grade, for boys and then for girls. In addition, cross-time correlations were run to examine stability of fathers' ratings of conflict with their children at 54 months and first grade, for boys and then for girls. For mothers, the correlation between conflict at 54 months and conflict at first grade is .65. The correlation between conflict at 54 months and conflict for boys at first grade is .67. The correlation between conflict at 54 months and conflict for girls at first grade is .64. For fathers, the correlation between conflict at 54 months and conflict at first grade is .60. The correlation between conflict at 54 months and conflict for boys at first grade is .59. The correlation between conflict at 54 months and conflict for girls at first grade is .61. All reported correlations are statistically significant at the .01 level.

Mothers' ratings of conflict with their sons and daughters are highly stable between 54 months and first grade and are more stable than maternal closeness ratings between 54 months and first grade. Maternal closeness correlations range from .37 to .50, while maternal conflict ratings range from .64 to .67. Results for fathers indicate that paternal ratings of conflict with sons and daughters are moderately to highly stable between 54 months and first grade, and are more stable than paternal closeness ratings between 54 months and first grade. Paternal closeness correlations range from .46 to .56, while paternal conflict ratings range from .59 to .61.

Associations between mothers' and fathers' ratings of conflict with their child at 54 months and first grade, for boys and then for girls, are reported as follows. The correlation between mothers' and fathers' ratings of conflict with children at 54 months is .31. The correlation between mothers' and fathers' ratings of conflict with children at first grade is .30. The correlation between mothers' and fathers' ratings of conflict for boys at 54 months is .28. The correlation between mothers' and fathers' ratings of conflict for girls at 54 months is .36. The correlation between mothers' and fathers' ratings of conflict for boys at first grade is .34. The correlation between mothers' and fathers' ratings of conflict for girls at first grade is .26. All reported correlations are statistically significant at the .01 level.

Results indicate that there is moderate consistency between parents in their perception of conflict with their child. Mothers and fathers show higher levels of agreement among conflict ratings than among closeness ratings. Correlations between maternal and paternal closeness ratings ranged from .14 to .15, while correlations between maternal and paternal conflict ratings ranged from .30 to .31.

Repeated Measures Analyses of Variance (ANOVAs) were conducted to examine change in mean level of closeness and conflict for boys and for girls between

Table 2

*Descriptive Statistics for Closeness and Conflict Ratings at 54 Months and First Grade (N = 563, 294 boys and 269 girls)*

	54 months		1 <sup>st</sup> grade	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
<u>Mothers</u>				
Closeness boys	37.59	2.42	38.16	2.06
Closeness girls	37.44	2.49	38.22	2.27
Conflict boys	15.95	5.00	14.80	5.71
Conflict girls	16.36	5.18	15.12	6.09
<u>Fathers</u>				
Closeness boys	35.57	3.25	36.70	2.88
Closeness girls	36.09	2.90	37.21	2.58
Conflict boys	15.67	4.51	14.34	4.83
Conflict girls	15.06	4.40	14.02	4.88

*Note:* Possible scores range from 8 to 40

54 months and first grade. Time and reporter were within-subjects factors, while gender was a between-subjects factor. Means for maternal and paternal ratings for sons and daughters at 54 months and first grade are presented in Table 2. Results of these analyses for closeness indicate that there were main effects for time,  $F(1, 562) = 116.11, p < .01$ , and reporter,  $F(1, 562) = 137.63, p < .01$ . Mothers and fathers reported higher levels of closeness with their children at first grade than at 54 months. Mothers reported more closeness than fathers did at both times and with both sons and daughters. There were significant interactions between reporter and gender,  $F(1, 562) = 5.13, p < .05$ , and between time and reporter,  $F(1, 562) = 8.74, p < .01$ . Although mothers reported more closeness than fathers with both sons and daughters, fathers reported more closeness with daughters than with sons. Relative to mothers, fathers demonstrated a significant increase in their closeness ratings between 54 months and first grade for both boys and girls.

Results of analyses for conflict indicate that there were main effects for time,  $F(1, 562) = 74.64, p < .01$ , and reporter,  $F(1, 562) = 12.61, p < .01$ . Mothers and fathers reported less conflict with their children at first grade than at 54 months. Mothers reported more conflict than fathers did at both times and with both sons and daughters.

## Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine parents' self-reported perceptions of their relationships with their children during the preschool to elementary school period. Individual differences in mothers' and fathers' ratings of closeness and conflict with their children are somewhat stable during this period, while levels of closeness increase and levels of conflict decrease. Parents' perceptions of their overall relationships with their children appear to become more positive over time during this period. Consistency between maternal and paternal reports is moderate, and is higher for conflict than for closeness. Overall, parents demonstrate more agreement regarding ratings of conflict than ratings of closeness. There are significant differences in the way that mothers and fathers experience closeness in their relationships with their sons and daughters. It is important to note that findings from this study reflect data collected from families with both a mother and father present during this 3-year period.

### Parent-Child Relationship Stability across Early Childhood

Results indicate that maternal and paternal ratings of closeness and conflict with sons and daughters are fairly stable between 54 months and first grade, and ratings of conflict are more stable than ratings of closeness for both mothers and fathers. Mean levels of conflict and closeness showed that mothers and fathers reported higher levels of closeness and lower ratings of conflict between 54 months and first grade for both boys and girls. These results are consistent with the results of Smetana, Kochanska, and Chuang (2000) who concluded that children's levels of compliance increase significantly with age in a study of maternal conceptions of rules for toddlers. Results are also consistent with those of Pianta and Stuhlman (2004) concerning teacher-child relationships during this period.

### Consistency between Maternal and Paternal Reports

Mothers' and fathers' consistency in their ratings of closeness and conflict at 54 months and first grade was significant, although associations were small, even for ratings of the same child. The association between maternal and paternal reports of closeness was stronger for sons at 54 months and for daughters at first grade. Mothers and fathers showed higher levels of agreement for ratings of conflict than ratings of closeness, suggesting that parents demonstrate greater concurrence regarding issues pertaining to conflict than matters of closeness. These results are consistent with those of Crnic and Booth (1991), who concluded that mothers and fathers perceive similar amounts of hassle in their relationships with their children. Results are also consistent with Parke (1995) and Russell and Russell (1987), who concluded that mothers spend more time with their children than do fathers.



Mothers reported higher levels of closeness and conflict for both boys and girls at both 54 months and first grade. These results are consistent with those of Bronstein (1984) and Russell and Russell (1987), who reported that both positive and negative emotional expressions and interactions characterized by conflict occur more frequently in mother-child than in father-child interactions. A possible justification for this is that mothers spend more time with their children in a greater diversity of activities than do fathers (Collins et al., 1995).

Although mothers reported more closeness than fathers with both boys and girls, some significant patterns of differences emerged for paternal ratings. Fathers reported more closeness with girls than with boys at both time periods. This finding suggests that fathers experience more closeness in their relationships with their daughters than with their sons. In addition, relative to mothers, fathers' ratings of closeness showed a greater increase between 54 months and first grade. Although mothers demonstrated an increase in perceptions of closeness, this finding suggests that the transition to school is characterized by an increase in father-child closeness. These results are consistent with previous findings (Hastings & Rubin, 1999; Kuebli & Fivush, 1992) that suggest that mothers and fathers experience differences in their relationships with sons and daughters.

Overall, parents demonstrate greater agreement regarding ratings of conflict than ratings of closeness. On the subject of conflict, parents tend to view the same child in a similar fashion over time, whether that child is male or female. Parents show more signs of disagreement regarding closeness. Levels of parent agreement are dependent on the gender of the child. According to results of this study, fathers experience more closeness with their daughters than with their sons during the preschool to elementary school period. They also experience an increase in their feelings of closeness with their children during this time period, relative to mothers.

## **Conclusion**

Results of this investigation indicate that maternal and paternal ratings of conflict and closeness are somewhat stable during the preschool to elementary school period. Consistency between mothers' and fathers' reports is moderate, and is higher for conflict than for closeness. Mothers report higher levels of closeness and conflict with both sons and daughters at both 54 months and first grade. Mothers and fathers demonstrate more agreement regarding ratings of conflict than ratings of closeness. Levels of parent agreement are dependent upon the gender of the child. Fathers report more closeness with their daughters than with their sons, and, relative to mothers, they experience an increase in their feelings of closeness with their children during this time period. The results of this study have implications for clinical work and research on parent-child relationships. Clinicians working with parents and young children can apply results as they address transition issues with families. A number of research projects are currently using the CPRS

to collect data related to parent-child relationships. The study provides a unique contribution to the literature on parent-child relationships, as fathers' relationships with their children tend to be understudied. In addition, preliminary psychometric data obtained regarding the CPRS support further research with the instrument. It is important to note that findings from this study reflect data collected from families with both a mother and father present during this 3-year period. Additional studies using the instrument with a variety of family compositions will provide valuable information.

### References

- Aber, J. L., & Baker, A. (1990). Security of attachment in toddlerhood: Modifying assessment procedures for joint clinical and research purposes. In M. Greenberg, D. Cicchetti, & M. Cummings (Eds.), *Attachment in the preschool years* (pp. 427-460). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Aber, J. L., Belsky, J., Slade, A., & Crnic, K. (1999). Stability and change in mothers' representations of their relationship with their toddlers. *Developmental Psychology, 35*, 1038-1047.
- Aber, J. L., Slade, A., Berger, B., Bresgi, I., & Kaplan, M. (1985). *The Parent Development Interview*. Unpublished manuscript.
- Allen, J. P., Hauser, S. T., O'Connor, T. G., Bell, K. L., & Eickholt, C. (1996). The connection of observed hostile family conflict to adolescents' developing autonomy and relatedness with parents. *Development and Psychopathology, 8*, 425-442.
- Asher, S. R., & Gottman, J. M. (1981). *The development of children's friendships*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Barnett, M. A., Deng, M., Mills-Koonce, W. R., Willoughby, M., & Cox, M. (2008). Interdependence of parenting of mothers and fathers of infants. *Journal of Family Psychology, 22*, 561-573.
- Barry, R. A., & Kochanska, G. (2010). A longitudinal investigation of the affective environment in families with young children: From infancy to early school age. *Emotion, 10*, 237-249.
- Barth, J. M., & Parke, R. D. (1993). Parent-child relationship influences on children's transition to school. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly, 39*, 173-195.
- Belsky, J., Woodworth, S., & Crnic, K. (1996). Trouble in the second year: Three questions about family interaction. *Child Development, 67*, 556-578.
- Black, B. & Logan, A. (1995). Links between communication patterns in mother-child, father-child, and child-peer interactions and children's social status. *Child Development, 66*, 255-271.
- Booth, C. L., Rose-Krasnor, L., McKinnon, J., & Rubin, K. H. (1994). Predicting social adjustment in middle childhood: The role of preschool attachment security and maternal style. *Social Development, 3*, 189-204.
- Bowlby, J. (1982). *Attachment and loss: Vol. 1. Attachment* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York: Basic Books.
- Bretherton, I., Biringen, Z., Ridgeway, D., & Maslin, C. (1989). Attachment: The parental perspective. *Infant Mental Health Journal, 10*, 203-221.
- Bronstein, P. (1984). Differences in mothers' and fathers' behaviors toward children: A cross-cultural comparison. *Developmental Psychology, 20*, 995-1003.
- Button, S., Pianta, R. C., & Marvin, R.S. (2001). Mothers' representations of relationships with their children: Relations with parenting behavior, mother characteristics, and child disability status. *Social Development, 10*, 455-472.

- Campbell, S. B. (1994). Hard-to-manage preschool boys: Externalizing behavior, social competence, and family context at two-year follow-up. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, *22*, 147-166.
- Campbell, S. B. (1997). Behavior problems in preschool children: Developmental and family issues. *Advances in Clinical Child Psychology*, *19*, 1-26.
- Cohn, D. A. (1990). Child-mother attachment of six-year-olds and social competence at school. *Child Development*, *61*, 152-162.
- Collins, W. A., Harris, M. L., & Susman, A. (1995). Parenting during middle childhood. In M. Bornstein (Ed.), *Handbook of parenting* (pp. 65-89). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Comer, J. P., & Haynes, N. M. (1991). Parent involvement in schools: An ecological approach. *The Elementary School Journal*, *91*, 271-277.
- Connell, J. P., & Furman, W. (1984). The study of transitions: Conceptual and methodological considerations. In R. Emde & R. Harmon (Eds.), *Continuity and discontinuity in development* (pp. 153-173). New York: Plenum Press.
- Crnic, K. A., & Booth, C. L. (1991). Mother and father perceptions of parenting daily hassles across early childhood. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, *53*, 1042-1050.
- de Ruiter, C., & van IJzendoorn, M. H. (1993). Attachment and cognition: A review of the literature. *International Journal of Educational Research*, *19*, 5-20.
- Dix, T. (1991). The affective organization of parenting: Adaptive and maladaptive processes. *Psychological Bulletin*, *110*, 3-25.
- Downer, J. T., & Pianta, R. C. (2006). Academic and cognitive functioning in first grade: Associations with earlier home and child care predictors and with concurrent home and classroom experiences. *School Psychology Review*, *35*, 11-30.
- Dunn, J. (1988). *The beginnings of social understanding*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Dunn, J., & Munn, P. (1985). Becoming a family member: Family conflict and the development of social understanding in the second year. *Child Development*, *56*, 480-492.
- Dunn, J., & Munn, P. (1987). Development of justification in disputes with mother and sibling. *Developmental Psychology*, *23*, 791-798.
- Dunn, J., & Slomkowski, C. (1992). Conflict and the development of social understanding. In C. Shantz & W. Hartup (Eds.), *Conflict in child and adolescent development* (pp. 70-92). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Estrada, P., Arsenio, W. F., Hess, R. D., & Holloway, S. D. (1985). Affective quality of the mother-child relationship: Longitudinal consequences for children's school-relevant cognitive functioning. *Developmental Psychology*, *23*, 210-215.
- Feinberg, M. E., Reiss, D., Neiderhiser, J. M., & Hetherington, E. M. (2005). Differential association of family subsystem negativity on siblings' malad-

- justment: Using behavior genetic methods to test process theory. *Journal of Family Psychology*, *19*, 601-610.
- Field, T. M. (1987). Affective and interactive disturbances in infants. In J. Osofsky (Ed.), *Handbook of infant development* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., pp. 972-1005). New York: Wiley.
- Fiese, B. H., Wilder, J., & Bickham, N. L. (2000). Family context in developmental psychopathology. In A. Sameroff, M. Lewis, & S. Miller (Eds.), *Handbook of developmental psychopathology* (pp. 115-134). New York: Plenum.
- George, C., & Solomon, J. (1989). Internal working models of parenting and security of attachment at age six. *Infant Mental Health Journal*, *17*, 222-237.
- George, C., & Solomon, J. (1991, April). *Children's representations of practicing family using a doll play technique*. Paper presented at the biennial meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Seattle, WA.
- George, C., & Solomon, J. (1996). Representational models of relationships: Links between caregiving and attachment. *Infant Mental Health Journal*, *17*, 198-217.
- Goodnow, J. (1988). Parents' ideas, actions, and feelings: Models and methods from developmental and social psychology. *Child Development*, *59*, 286-320.
- Greenberg, M. T., & Speltz, M. L. (1988). Attachment and the ontogeny of conduct problems. In J. Belsky & T. Nezworski (Eds.), *Clinical implications of attachment* (pp. 177-228). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Grolinck, W. S., & Ryan, R. M. (1989). Parent styles associated with children's self-regulation and competence in school. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *81*, 143-154.
- Hartup, W., & Laursen, B. (1993). Conflict and context in peer relations. In C. Hart (Ed.), *Children on playgrounds: Research perspectives and applications* (pp. 44-84). Ithaca, NY: SUNY Press.
- Hastings, P. D., & Rubin, K. H. (1999). Predicting mothers' beliefs about preschool-aged children's social behavior: Evidence for maternal attitudes moderating child effects. *Child Development*, *70*, 722-741.
- Hetherington, E. M., & Clingempeel, W. S. (1992). Coping with marital transitions: A family systems perspective. *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development*, *57* (2-3, Serial No. 227).
- Hinde, R. (1987). *Individuals, relationships, and culture*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Holden, G. W., & Edwards, L. A. (1989). Parental attitudes toward child rearing: Instruments, issues, and implications. *Psychological Bulletin*, *106*, 29-58.
- Klimes-Dougan, B., & Kopp, C. (1999). Children's conflict tactics with mothers: A longitudinal investigation of the toddler and preschool years. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, *45*, 226-242.
- Kochanska, G., & Thompson, R. (1997). The emergence and development of conscience in toddlerhood and early childhood. In J. El Grusec & L. Kuc-

- zynski (Eds.), *Parenting strategies and children's internalization of values: A handbook of theoretical and research perspectives* (pp. 53-77). New York: Wiley.
- Kuczynski, L., Kochanska, G. Radke-Yarrow, M., & Ginius-Brown, O. (1987). A developmental interpretation of young children's noncompliance. *Developmental Psychology*, *23*, 799-806.
- Kuebli, J., & Fivush, R. (1992). Gender differences in parent-child conversations about past emotions. *Sex Roles*, *27*, 683-698.
- Kupersmidt, J. B., Coie, J. D., & Dodge, K. A. (1990). Predicting disorder from peer social problems. In S. R. Asher & J. D. Coie (Eds.), *Peer rejection in childhood* (pp. 274-338). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Ladd, G. W. (1989). Toward a further understanding of peer relationships and their contributions to child development. In T. L. Bernt & G. W. Ladd (Eds.), *Peer relationships in child development* (pp. 1-11). New York: Wiley.
- Laible, D. J., & Thompson, R. A. (2000). Mother-child discourse, attachment security, shared positive affect, and early conscience development. *Child Development*, *71*, 1424-1440.
- Laible, D. J., & Thompson, R. A. (2002). Mother-child conflict in the toddler years: Lessons in emotion, morality, and relationships. *Child Development*, *73*, 1187-1203.
- Lieberman, A. F. (1994). *The emotional life of the toddler*. New York: Free Press.
- Lieberman, A. F., & Pawl, J. H. (1990). Disorders of attachment and secure base behavior in the second year of life: Conceptual issues and clinical intervention. In M. T. Greenberg, D. Cicchetti, & E. M. Cummings (Eds.), *Attachment in the preschool years* (pp. 375-398). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Maccoby, E. (1984). Socialization and developmental change. *Child Development*, *55*, 317-328.
- Mahler, M., Pine, F., & Bergman, A. (1975). *The psychological birth of the human infant: Symbiosis and individuation*. New York: Basic Books.
- Main, M., Kaplan, N., & Cassidy, J. (1985). Security in infancy, childhood, and adulthood: A move to the level of representation. *Monographs of the society for research in child development*, *50*, 66-104.
- Mash, E., & Terdal, L. (1988). *Behavioral assessment of childhood disorders*. New York: Guilford.
- McDonald, K. B., & Parke, R. D. (1984). Bridging the gap: Parent-child play interaction and interactive competence. *Child Development*, *55*, 1265-1277.
- McFadyen-Ketchum, S. A., Bates, J. E., Dodge, K. A., & Petit, G. S. (1996). Patterns of change in early childhood aggressive-disruptive behavior: Gender differences in predictions from early coercive and affectionate mother-child interactions. *Child Development*, *67*, 2417-2433.

- National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Early Child Care Research Network. (2003). Social functioning in first grade: Prediction from home, child care, and concurrent school experience. *Child Development, 74*, 1639-1662.
- Noller, P. (1980). Cross-gender effects in two-child families. *Developmental Psychology, 16*, 159-160.
- Parke, R. D. (1981). *Fathers*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.
- Parke, R. D. (1995). Fathers and families. In M. Bornstein (Ed.), *Handbook of Parenting* (pp. 27-63). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Pianta, R. C. (1997). Adult-child relationship processes and early schooling. *Early Education and Development, 8*, 11-26.
- Pianta, R. C. (1999). *Enhancing relationships between children and teachers*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Pianta, R. C. (2001). *Student-teacher relationship scale*. Lutz, FL: Psychological Assessment Resources, Inc.
- Pianta, R., Erikson, M. F., Wagner, N., Kreutzer, T., & Egeland, B. (1990). Preschool predictors of referrals for special services: Child-based measures vs. mother-child interaction. *School Psychology Review, 19*, 240-250
- Pianta, R. C., & Harbers, K. L. (1996). Observing mother and child behavior in a problem-solving situation at school entry: Relations with academic achievement. *Journal of School Psychology, 34*, 307-322.
- Pianta, R. C., Smith, N., & Reeve, R. (1991). Observing mother and child behavior in a problem-solving situation at school entry: Relations with classroom adjustment. *School Psychology Quarterly, 6*, 1-16.
- Putallaz, M. (1987). Maternal behavior and children's sociometric status. *Child Development, 58*, 324-340.
- Ramey, C. T., & Campbell, F. A. (1991). Poverty, early childhood education, and academic competence: The Abecedarian experiment. In A. C. Huston (Ed.), *Children in Poverty: Child development in public policy* (pp. 190-221). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Russell, G., & Russell, A. (1987). Mother-child and father-child relationships in middle childhood. *Child Development, 58*, 1573-1585.
- Rutter, M. (1990). Psychosocial resilience and protective mechanisms. In J. Rolf, A.S. Masten, D. Cicchetti, K. H. Nuechterlein, & S. Weintraub (Eds.), *Risk and protective factors in the development of psychopathology* (pp. 181-214). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Salt, R. E. (1991). Affectionate touch between fathers and preadolescent sons. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 53*, 545-554.
- Sameroff, A. (1997, April). *Developmental contributions to the study of psychopathology*. Master lecture presented at the biennial meetings of the Society for Research in Child Development, Washington, DC.

- Sameroff, A. J., & Emde, R. (Eds.) (1989). *Relationship disturbances in early childhood: A developmental approach*. New York: Basic Books.
- Saudino, K. & Cherny, S. (2001). Sources of continuity and change in observed temperament. In R. N. Emde & J. K. Hewitt (Eds.), *Infancy to early childhood: Genetic and environmental influences on developmental change* (pp. 89-110). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Shimm, P. H., & Ballen, K. (1995). *Parenting your toddler*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Slade, A., & Aber, J. L. (1992) Attachments, drives and development: Conflicts and convergences in theory. In J. Barron, M. Eagle, & D. Wolitzky, (Eds.), *Interface of Psychoanalysis and Psychology* (pp.154 – 186) APA Publications.
- Slade, A., Belsky, J, Aber, J. L., & Phelps, J. L. (1999). Mothers' representations of their relationships with their toddlers: Links to adult attachment and observed mothering. *Developmental Psychology*, 35, 611-619.
- Slade, A., & Cohen, L. J. (1996). Processes of parenting and the remembrance of things past. *Infant Mental Health Journal*, 17, 217-238.
- Smetana, J. G., Kochanska, G., & Chuang, S. (2000). Mothers' conceptions of everyday rules for young toddlers: A longitudinal investigation. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, 46, 391-416.
- Solomon, J., & George, C. (1996). Defining the caregiving system: Toward a theory of caregiving. *Infant Mental Health Journal*, 17, 183-97.
- Solomon, J., George, C., & De Jong, A. (1995). Children classified as controlling at age six: Evidence of disorganized representational strategies and aggression at home and at school. *Development and Psychopathology*, 7, 447-464.
- Sroufe, L. A. (1983). Infant-caregiver attachment and patterns of adaptation in preschool: The roots of maladaptation and competence. In M. Perlmutter (Ed.), *Minnesota Symposia in Child Psychology*, 16 (pp. 41-81). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Sroufe, L. A. (1989). Pathways to adaptation and maladaptation: Psychopathology as developmental deviation. In D. Cicchetti (Ed.), *Emergence of a Discipline: Rochester Symposium on Developmental Psychopathology* (pp. 13-40). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Sroufe, L. A. (1997). Psychopathology as an outcome of development. *Development and Psychopathology*, 9, 251-268.
- Sroufe, L. A., Duggal, S., Weinfield, N., & Carlson, E. (2000). Relationships, development, and Psychopathology. In A. Sameroff, M. Lewis, & S. Miller (Eds.), *Handbook of developmental psychopathology* (pp. 75-91). New York: Plenum Publishers.
- Thompson, R. (1998). Early sociopersonality development. In N. Eisenberg (Ed.) & W. Damon (Series Ed.), *Handbook of child psychology: Vol. 3. Social, emotional, and personality development* (pp. 25-104). New York: Wiley.



- Vandell, D., & Baily, M. (1992). Conflict between siblings. In C. Shantz & W. Hartup (Eds.), *Conflict in child and adolescent development* (pp. 186-215). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Wagner, N. (1993). *Early predictors of referrals for special services in a high-risk sample*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota.
- Waters, E. (1978). The reliability and stability of individual differences in infant-mother attachment. *Child Development, 49*, 483-494.
- Waters, E., & Deane, K. E. (1985). Defining and assessing individual differences in attachment relationships: Q-methodology and the organization of behavior in infancy and early childhood. In I. Bretherton & E. Waters (Eds.), *Growing points of attachment theory and research. Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development, 50*(1-2, Serial No. 209), 41-65.
- Wood, J. J. (2007). Academic competence in preschool: Exploring the role of close relationships and anxiety. *Early Education and Development, 18*, 223-242.
- Wood, J. J., Emmerson, N. A., & Cowan, P. A. (2004). Is early attachment security carried forward into relationships with preschool peers? *British Journal of Developmental Psychology, 22*, 245-253.
- Zeanah, C., Benoit, D., Hirshberg, L., Barton, M., & Regan, C. (1995). Mothers' representations of their infants as concordant with infant attachment classifications. *Developmental Issues in Psychiatry and Psychology, 1*, 1-14.

#### Author Note

This study was part of the NICHD Study of Early Child Care and Youth Development which is directed by a Steering Committee and supported by NICHD through a cooperative agreement (U10). The authors and collaborating investigators wish to extend their appreciation to the families and staff who contributed to this research.