

INTRODUCTION

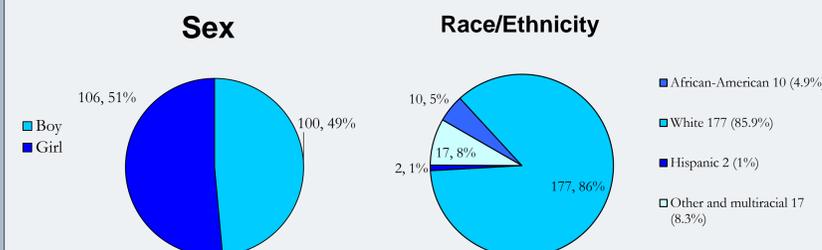
- Previous research indicated a strong association between early language skills and later reading abilities (Catts, Fey, Zhang, & Tomblin, 1999).
- Head Start preschoolers with language delays were found to make fewer social initiations than typically developing preschoolers (Qi, & Kaiser, 2004).
- Lower levels of language skills were found to be more strongly associated with disruptive behavior and peer relationships for preschool boys than girls (Stowe, Arnold, & Ortiz, 1999).
- We would like to know if social skills and self-regulation are positively related to language skills and if these associations are stronger for boys than girls.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- **RQ1:** Are social competence and social regulation positively related to language skills in preschool?
- **RQ2:** Is the association between social competence and language stronger for boys than girls?
- **RQ3:** Is the association between self-regulation and language stronger for boys than girls?

PARTICIPANTS

- 206 4-year-old (M=4.5 years, SD=.27) children from Appalachian areas
- Maternal Education attainment::**
- Some high school/high school diploma or GED 77 (37.4%)
- Some college but no degree 50 (24.3%)
- Technical degree/technical training post high school 49 (23.8%)
- Bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree 30 (14.6%)



MEASURES

- **Language:** raw scores from expressive vocabulary, sentence structure and word structure subtests from Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals-2: Preschool (CELF:P2; Wiig, Secord, & Semal, 2004)
- **Social Competence:** standardized composite of 30 items across dimensions of cooperation, assertion, and self-control from Social Skills Rating Scale: Teacher Form Preschool Level (SSRS; Gresham & Elliot, 1990),
- **Self-Regulation:** raw score of observed behavioral self-regulation from Head to Toes Task (Cameron Ponitz, C.E, McClland, M.M, Connor, C.M., Jewkes, A.M., Farris, C.L., Morrison, F.J, 2008)

RESULTS

Analyses excluded children with missing data using list-wise deletion and controlled for differences in mother's education, age, gender, and race/ethnicity.

Regression Analysis

	CELF Language Score	
	B	SE
Child Characteristics		
Girl (1)/Boy(0)	-.342	1.556
White(1)/Non-White(0)	.560	.249
Mother's Education	.128	.478
Social Competence	.371***	.065
Interactions		
Girl x Social Competence	.273*	.083

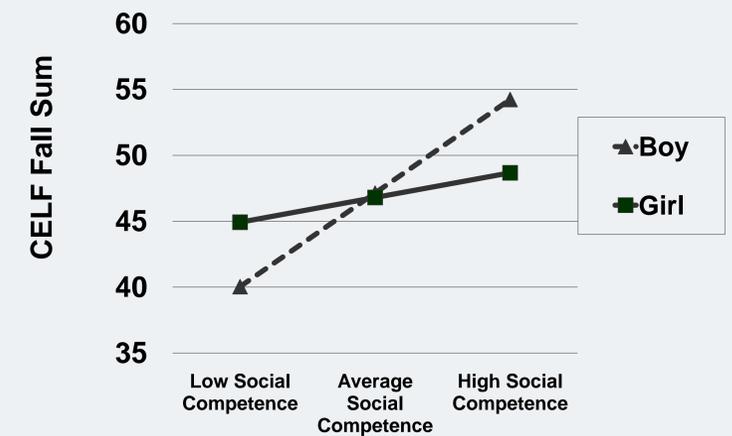
*p≤.05. **p≤.01. ***p≤.001.

	CELF Language Score	
	B	SE
Child Characteristics		
Girl (1)/Boy(0)	.075	1.545
White(1)/Non-White(0)	.267	2.223
Mother's Education	.770	.467
Self-Regulation	.422***	.068
Interactions		
Girl x Self-Regulation	-.075	.137

*p≤.05. **p≤.01. ***p≤.001.

RESULTS

CELF Language Scores by Gender and Social Competence



CONCLUSIONS

- Social competence and self-regulation were both related to language skills.
- Social competence was more strongly associated with language skills for boys than girls. The association between self-regulation and language skills was not different for boys and girls.
- Interventions that aim to strengthen social competence and self-regulation may bolster language skills as well, particularly among boys.

REFERENCES

- Catts, H. W., Fey, M. E., Zhang, X., & Tomblin, J. B. (1999). Language basis of reading and reading disabilities: Evidence from a longitudinal investigation. *Scientific Studies of Reading, 3*, 331-361.
- Qi, C.H., & Kaiser, A.P. (2004). Problem behaviors of low-income children with language delays: an observation study. *Speech, Language, and Hearing Research, 47*, 595-609.
- Stowe, R.M., Arnold, D.H., & Ortiz, C. (1999). Gender differences in the relationship of language development to disruptive behavior and peer relationships in preschoolers. *Applied Developmental Psychology, 20*(4), 521-536.