Parental involvement in sport: A mechanism in family satisfaction and life satisfaction for adolescents
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Organised sports are contexts which provide opportunities for autonomy for adolescents, yet are also environments where positive parental involvement and support may be beneficial (Fredricks & Eccles, 2005). Both social support and sports participation have been linked to life satisfaction for youth (Edwards & Lopez, 2006; Gilman, 2001), however, the mechanism through which sports participation contributes toward life satisfaction remains largely un-researched. This study tests the association between parent interactions through sports participation and life satisfaction; with family satisfaction examined as a mediator. 1152 (54% female) Western Australian students in years 10 and 12 were surveyed. Sports participants reported on positive and negative parental involvement in the sport they spent the most time in (e.g. “My parents get upset with me when I don’t do well in this sport”; or “My parents support me or help me with this sport”; from 1 = not at all true, to 5 = very true). Family satisfaction was measured using an abridged version of the Family domain of the Multidimensional Student Life Satisfaction Scale (Huebner, 1994) (sample item: “I enjoy being at home with my family”), and life satisfaction was measured using an abridged version of the Students’ Life Satisfaction Scale (Huebner, 1991) (sample: “I like the way things are going for me”). Regression analyses demonstrated that positive parental interactions were significantly and positively related to life satisfaction $F(3, 1136) = 73.00, p < .000$ and family satisfaction $F(3, 1132) = 134.25, p < .000$. Similarly, negative parent interactions were significantly linked to life satisfaction $F(3, 1136) = 6.08, p < .000$ and family satisfaction $F(3, 1132) = 5.46, p < .05$. In addition, family satisfaction was significantly linked to life satisfaction $F(3, 1128) = 119.29, p < .000$ (gender and school year were controlled) (Baron & Kenny, 1986). To test for mediation life satisfaction was regressed on both family satisfaction and parent interactions. Results for positive parents showed the direct effect ($\beta = .203, p < .000$) was lower than the total effect ($\beta = .399, p < .000$). Application of the Sobel test revealed this difference was significant ($z = 11.08, p < .000$), indicating partial mediation. Similarly for negative parents, the direct effect ($\beta = -.066, p < .000$) was weaker than the total effect ($\beta = -.108, p < .05$), and Sobel test results indicated a significant difference ($z = -3.32, p < .001$), and thus partial mediation. Results support previous research linking involvement in sports and life satisfaction for adolescents. The functional role of family satisfaction, which acted as a mediator in the relationship between parental interactions and global life satisfaction, was also confirmed. Findings also advocate the continuing influence of parents in the wellbeing of adolescents.
Family transitions and early memory. A study with young adults from separated and non-separated families
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Our earliest memories are affected by many factors, such as culture and parental reminiscing style. For instance, young adults from European cultures have an earlier age of first memory compared to young adults from Asian cultures. Young adults whose mothers reminisced with them in an elaborative fashion during early childhood have earlier memories than young adults whose mothers adopted a more repetitive style of reminiscing. In one study with Italian young adults, those who came from an extended family household had early memories that were closer together, or denser, than Italian young adults who did not grow up in an extended family setting. In New Zealand, the rate of separation and divorce is quite high. The objective of the current research was to assess if young adults from separated and divorced families differed in their early memories from young adults growing up in non-separated families. We interviewed 80 young adults about their earliest memories and also asked them to fill out a family grid, noting all of the household members during their early childhood. We noted the age of their early memories before age 3 (if present) and the first memory in the 3-6 age period. We also coded the coherence of these early memories. We found that young adults whose parents separated after the age of 6 had later memories than young adults whose parents separated before age 6 or had never separated. The coherence of earliest memory was also correlated with coping strategies in our sample. We are currently exploring reasons for which the young adults from later-separating families had later first memories. In a follow-up study, we are assessing the role of rumination and avoidant coping in early memories of young adults from separated and non-separated families.
The transition to school for children with a developmental disability: What makes a difference?
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The transition from early intervention programs to inclusive school settings presents children with developmental disabilities with a range of social and academic challenges. While inclusion of young children with disabilities in regular classrooms has been an important direction in Australian educational policy for the last two decades, research on child outcomes for successful inclusion in mainstream classrooms is limited. The research question addressed in this paper is: What factors are predictive of a successful transition to school? The Transition to School Project is a longitudinal project which began in 2008. The study is tracking cohorts of children from Early Childhood Developmental Programs through the early years of school from the year in which they begin attendance in a Preparatory program and across the next two years. Data collection in the project involves direct assessment of children in the first year, parent phone interviews across three years, and questionnaires completed by the children's teachers in each year of the study. Quantitative and qualitative data are collected. Data from parents and teachers for 136 children in their first year of participation in the study are analysed for this paper. Mean age of the children was 5.6 years and 74% were boys. The most common diagnostic category as identified by parents was Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) including Asperger's Syndrome. From the qualitative data, benefits for the child's attendance in the Prep program noted by the teachers included the availability of positive peer models. Child-related concerns related to the management of children's aggressive and non-compliant behaviours. Major challenges for teachers related to planning to ensure appropriate activities across the curriculum. Parent satisfaction with the school placement was related to the extent that they felt the school provided support to the child. Quantitative analysis using logistic regression to identify child characteristics, family and school factors that explained teacher-reported ease of transition indicated that teacher-reported ease of transition was related to the children's learning related social skills (e.g., attentiveness and task persistence) and the child's level of competency from parent reported data, as well as the extent to which the teacher believed that the child was appropriately placed in the Prep program. Findings from this project will inform the development of transition-to-school programs to promote adjustment and achievement in the early school years for children with developmental disabilities.
The transition from adolescence to adulthood comes with expectations that one will take responsibility for oneself, make independent decisions, and become self-sufficient. Importantly, these features of adolescents’ autonomy and self-reliance are promoted by positive relationships with parents that include providing opportunities for age-appropriate decision-making and responsibilities. Youth in the foster care system, who generally lack positive relations with biological parents, are more likely to experience difficulties in their transition to adulthood. Few studies have directly investigated the factors associated with foster youth’s plans and readiness for independence and adulthood. This mixed methods study examined: 1) youths’ future plans after leaving care, and 2) readiness for life after care in terms of life skills and autonomy – granting experiences including decision making and responsibilities.

Participants were 188 youth (85 males and 103 females), in protective custody in Los Angeles County, who resided in non-kin foster homes (61%), kin foster homes (11%), group homes (20%), and other types of placements (7%). Forty percent were African American, 36% Latino, 11% European American, and 13% other. Youth were at least 17 years old (M = 17.8 years (.78)) and had been in care for at least one year. Youth completed a questionnaire and participated in an individual interview where participants were asked about their future plans, life skills (questionnaire), responsibilities, and decision-making opportunities (interview). When asked about their future plans, most youth reported on more than one: education 81%, employment 74%, marriage 17%, parenthood 14%, military service 12%). Of note, 34% indicated having no definite future plans. When asked about how able they felt about the life skills they possessed (scale ranged from 1=not able to 3=very able), many youth were very able confident: food storage (m=2.73), clothes washing (m=2.79), and using kitchen appliances (m=2.84). Skills participants felt least able include: getting car insurance (m=1.95), interpret pay stub information (m=1.98), and establishing good credit rating (m=2.06). For decision making, 29% reported autonomous decision making regarding their own activities in the foster home, while 34% indicated that all decisions were made by the foster parents. Interestingly, thematic analysis suggested that youth had greater decision-making power in terms of whether or not to contact their biological parents than responsibilities in the home. Although youths appear to have opportunities to prepare for readiness for life after care, more than one third did not have future plans suggesting that the preparation is not translating into planning.
Proposed dynamic theory of spiritual development
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There has been increasing interest in the concept of children’s spirituality but this has not been associated with systematic efforts to develop a coherent theory of how spirituality develops in childhood. Using elements of Dynamic Systems Theory I propose a model for how children’s spirituality develops which identifies dynamic developmental processes and a sequential series of progressively more mature spiritual functioning. Most of what is said about ‘spirits’ holds for ‘Integrative Dynamic Systems’ (aka ‘magician systems’) which allows them to serve as a powerful explanatory metaphor. Key concepts of ‘agency’, ‘top-down causality’, ‘emergence’, ‘self-organisation’ and ‘attractors’ transcend the limitations of reductionist science yet retain the rigour of scientific investigation. Through a DST lens, spiritual development exhibits sudden phase transitions from less functional to more functional organisation of the whole person driven by ‘system parameters’, organised by attractors, and responsive to the child’s free choices. Along the way recognisable phases of spiritual responsiveness are identifiable: Prenatal - the symbiotic phase; Infancy - the trust period; Pre-critical symbolic - the period of beliefs; Dependent critical symbolic - the period of discernment; Independent constrained - the period of exploration; and Spiritual maturity. Each child’s trajectory through these phases is unique with their experience in each phase shaping, but never determining, their path through subsequent phases. Initially, children can be described as spiritually ‘open’, responsive to whatever passing spiritual wind affects them. Greater maturity indicates increasing abilities to maintain a consistent spirituality regardless of context. Consequently, early phases exhibit great flexibility with the child readily shifting from the spirituality of one environment to another; with later phases this flexibility is reduced and the mature person is able to choose to retain or change their basic spiritual orientation.
Optimal challenge is theorised to be central in stimulating interest. Silvia (2005) proposed that interest in a task maximises where uncertainty about the outcome is greatest: if success or failure is certain, interest is low. This theory predicts that people will experience most interest when they have a 50% chance of success. Nevertheless, this assumes that people’s metacognition is adequate to evaluate accurately their own performance. Metacognition improves with development, with young children greatly overestimating their own performance. From this, it would be predicted that, relative to adults, children will experience optimal interest in cognitive tasks where their actual chance of success on a task is low. The present study evaluated the hypotheses that adults would be maximally interested when their chance of success was 50%, and that children’s maximum interest would occur when their chance of success was significantly lower than adults’. Sixty-nine children (age M = 10.54 years) and 220 adults (age M = 25 years) completed Raven’s Progressive Matrices, also rating each item’s interest, enjoyableness, and subjective difficulty. Rasch modelling was used to estimate likelihood of success on items, given difficulty and ability. In both children and adults, interest was quadratically related to subjective difficulty. Objective difficulty was less predictive of interest, but the curves of best fit showed interest maximising at a 63% chance of success for adults and 1% chance of success for children. For adults, enjoyment showed a linear decline with increasing difficulty ($r = -0.72$). In contrast, children’s enjoyment showed the same quadratic relation that characterised interest. Adults’ item difficulty perceptions were highly correlated with objective difficulty ($r = 0.92$) although they significantly overestimated their chances of success by approximately 7%. Subjective item difficulty for children correlated 0.86 with objective difficulty, however, despite their near-zero chance of success at point of maximum interest, they rated items of this difficulty only 2.5 on a 7-point difficulty scale (compared to 4 for adults), indicating a dramatic underestimation of task difficulty. Thus, maximum interest occurs with a greater than 50% chance of success in adults, but a much lower chance of success in children. Despite sensitivity to variation in difficulty among items, both children and adults tend to overestimate their performance, children greatly so. Unexpectedly, 10-year-olds do not appear to differentiate between enjoyment and interest in the way that adults do, and do not find easy items enjoyable. The implications of these developmental differences are discussed.
It has become evident that extracurricular activities play a role in the development of real-world skills and aid in the connection of young people to the society in which they live. The concurrent changes in the individual and their social environment, along with the transitional nature of adolescence, make adolescence ideal for studying developmental experiences. Sports have been identified as contexts that offer opportunities for adolescents to develop initiative, form an identity, and learn new skills as well as emotional competencies. The current study examined associations between attainment value (the importance attached to a task) and experiences in adolescent sport, and explored whether gender and year level moderated this association. The sample consisted of 994 students; 690 year ten students (380 female, 310 male); and 304 year twelve students (154 female, 150 male) drawn from 34 schools across Western Australia (mean age 15.8 years; SD = .98). Participants were asked to report the developmental experiences in adolescent sport in 4 domains: identity (exploration, reflection), initiative (goals, effort, and time management), teamwork and social skills and the negative experience of stress (Hansen, Larson, & Dworkin, 2003). Moderated multiple regression analysis revealed that higher levels of attainment value in sport predicted more experiences of identity, initiative, teamwork and social skills, and stress. In addition, both gender and year level moderated the attainment value and identity reflection link. The interaction was further probed, revealing that year 12 boys significantly differed from all other groups in the strength of the link between attainment value and identity reflection, which was strongest for year 12 boys. Although the capacity to self-reflect is developing throughout adolescence, it is possible that for adolescent males identity remains quite an abstract concept until the final year of high school, when they begin to make life changing decisions about employment, higher education, relationships, sexuality and morality. An increased capacity for identity reflection, and ultimately identity formation, becomes necessary rather than optional. The current findings indicate that the value or importance that an adolescent attaches to their sport may facilitate the psychological benefits experienced, especially for year 12 adolescent males in relation to reflecting on their identity.
Young adult romantic relationships can be a source of much satisfaction. However, relationships can also bring challenges when two people have competing desires or motivations. One factor that is likely to determine which partner most often experiences their desired outcome at times of disagreement is power. Power is conceptualised as arising from the romantic views that young adults hold about their partners’ desires for intimacy and commitment. It is argued that emotional intimacy power is of central concern to young adults, based on the notion that young adult romantic relationships are emotionally intense and yet, due to the delay of marriage, are often relatively uncommitted. The current study examines the link between emotional intimacy power and sexual experiences, including condom use and pressured sex. It is expected that the links between power, and sexual experiences, will be different for men and women. This is based on the old-fashioned societal perceptions that men value sex more than women, and women value condom use more than men. Young adults (18–25 years) responded to an online survey at one Western Australian University. This study examines data from young adults with opposite-sex partners who reported their condom use and pressured sex experiences in both romantic (n = 708) and casual (n = 118) relationships. Results showed that greater power in romantic relationships (lower relative emotional investment) predicted more condom use among those wanting to use condoms. In casual relationships, an interaction with gender showed that women in particular used condoms more when they had more power. Power also interacted with gender for pressured sex and unexpectedly, men who had more power experienced more pressured sex. Power did not predict pressured sex for women. Several possible meanings of these findings are explored, guided by a social exchange perspective. The findings highlight the different meanings attached to sex and condom use for men and women.
Father preferences for engagement and involvement in behavioural family interventions
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An increasing body of evidence highlights the importance of fathers’ parenting and involvement for children’s development, pro-social behaviour, problem solving skills, social cognition and focused attention. There is also extensive evidence that behavioural family interventions (BFIs) produce lasting improvements in child conduct problems and family risk factors associated with disruptive behaviour problems in children, however, the majority of BFIs do not include fathers, or when fathers are included programme adherence is often problematic. Reviews of father participation in BFIs have recommended a range of issues that need to be addressed in order to increase father inclusion, engagement, and retention. For example, identifying barriers to participation, tailoring content and delivery methods to meet the needs of fathers’ roles and interests, and using more creative approaches to recruitment of fathers. On the basis of these suggestions an online survey was carried out to collect data that could be used to create a father friendly BFI. This survey involved an anonymous questionnaire completed by 161 New Zealand fathers with at least one child aged between 2-9 years old. The 50 item questionnaire included demographic information, participant experience with BFIs, confidence in dealing with specific behaviour problems, and preferences for BFI content and delivery. The results show that the majority of participants were not aware of the services available to fathers and only 4% had ever attended a BFI. Fathers rated the following topics as the most important to include in BFIs; the importance of father involvement on child development, how to build a positive relationship, and how to increase their child’s confidence, school achievement and social skills. Fathers reported being least confident in dealing with their child when they are misbehaving in public, or when their child is unhappy, anxious or worried, suggesting that these may be additional topics required in a father-tailored BFI. The preferred programme delivery methodologies were father only or couples programme, seminar, television or web-based programmes. Fathers reported they would be more likely to attend a programme that has been proven to be effective, and is held in a convenient location and facilitated by a trained practitioner. These findings highlight a range of programme content and delivery issues that could be incorporated into BFIs to better suit the needs of fathers and the importance of obtaining father preference data to inform programme adaptations.
In recent years, an increasing number of children have been called upon to testify in a range of legal situations, raising psychological questions about their heightened suggestibility and its effect on memory reports. One phenomenon of particular concern is the misinformation effect, which can be defined as the influence of erroneous post-event information on memory for a previously witnessed event. The primary aim of this study was to investigate the effects of retrospective warnings about source credibility on the misinformation effect in young children. While it has been shown that warning children about source credibility prior to exposing them to misinformation affects memory reports, retrospective warnings have not yet been investigated. It was hypothesised that warning children about a low-credibility source would reduce the misinformation effect by encouraging more effective source monitoring. Fifty-four children aged 8-10 years were shown a brief video event, and one week later were given misleading information about it. Children were then given a redundant warning that the information source was either untrustworthy (low-credibility condition), trustworthy (high-credibility condition), or were given no warning at all (control condition). The misinformation effect was then assessed by a forced choice recognition task that required children to choose between the correct detail and the corresponding misleading detail. The misinformation effect was less pronounced in the low-credibility than both the high-credibility and control conditions. It appears that warning children about an untrustworthy source protected them against the influence of misinformation. However, there was no difference between the control and high credibility conditions. Findings suggest that retrospective warnings about source credibility affect the extent to which children will accept misleading information. Children warned about an untrustworthy source appeared to ignore misinformation, while the high-credibility and control conditions accepted many of the misleading suggestions. Results suggest that while an adult’s credibility can be diminished, it cannot be artificially enhanced. Theoretically, the findings shed light on the suggestibility of children’s memory. It appears that while children are easily influenced by misleading information, informative warnings about the credibility of that information can substantially improve memory report. The pattern of results suggests that the low-credibility warning allowed children to more effectively source monitor. In terms of practical relevance, the effectiveness of the low-credibility warning in the current study suggests that legal investigators can reduce eyewitness suggestibility by using informative warnings, even after exposure to potential misinformation.
The impact of children’s ADHD symptom severity and maternal characteristics on mothers’ psychological wellbeing

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Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a prevalent, disruptive and often lifelong, disabling condition. It is one of the most extensively researched mental health disorders. Immense progress has been made in understanding how ADHD affects the individual. However ADHD not only affects the individual, it can also affect the family. Relatively few studies have researched how this chronic disorder affects the individual’s family, and specifically their parents. Findings suggest that there is a need for increased assistance for parents over the course of their child’s ADHD as the effects on parents can be potentially deleterious to their psychological health and well-being. The present study aimed firstly, to replicate the finding that the risk of psychopathology is greater in mothers of children with ADHD than mothers of typically developing children. Secondly, the study aimed to test a model of the relationship between child behaviours and maternal characteristics in influencing maternal psychopathology, examining both main and interactive effects. Participants were mothers of children aged 6 to 12 years old who took part in a larger study. Two groups of children were invited to participate. One group consisted of children diagnosed with ADHD and the other group of typically developing children who did not show evidence of ADHD and were invited to participate in the study as controls. Mothers were asked to complete the NEO-FFI, APQ, PSI-SF, Brief COPE, and the DASS. The data for this study are currently still being collected but a data set consisting of approximately 50 children (25 children diagnosed with ADHD and 25 control children) will have been obtained and analyzed in time for the conference. Hierarchical Linear Regression analyses will be conducted to examine the pattern of relationships between variables. The results aim to elucidate child and individual factors associated with the higher rates of maternal psychopathology seen in mothers of children with ADHD, in order to identify additional targets that may supplement current ADHD treatment regimes.
Heart rate variability as a physiological index of emotion regulation in children with and without ADHD
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Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a prevalent, disruptive and often lifelong, disabling condition. As well as being associated with difficulties in academic and work functioning, individuals with ADHD often struggle in day-to-day social interactions. Emotion regulation plays a role in social interactions. Children with ADHD tend to show emotionally dysregulated behaviours such as aggression, and low frustration tolerance. High Frequency Heart Rate Variability (HF-HRV) is a physiological component of emotional regulation. In particular HF-HRV represents parasympathetic functioning associated with emotional regulation with lower HF-HRV representing poorer emotional regulation. While a number of studies using parent and teacher rating scales, or behavior observations in laboratory-based paradigms, have demonstrated that children with ADHD have difficulties regulating emotions, no studies have tested whether children with ADHD differ from typically developing counterparts on HF-HRV. First, the present study aims to test whether children with ADHD have lower HF-HRV compared to a typically developing control group. Second, the study aims to examine whether HF-HRV is associated with parent and teacher ratings of emotional functioning. Participants include children aged 6 to 12 years-old, their parents and their teachers. The children made up two groups. One group consisted of children diagnosed with ADHD and the other a group of typically developing children, matched on age and gender, with no elevations in hyperactivity, impulsivity or inattention. Parents and teachers completed the BASC-2 questionnaire, which provided their ratings of child emotional functioning. Children viewed film-clips designed to elicit happy, sad, fearful, or neutral emotions while their heart rate was measured. The data for this study is currently still being collected but a data set consisting of approximately 50 children (25 with and 25 without ADHD) will have been obtained and analysed in time for the conference. ANOVA will be conducted to examine differences in HF-HRV between children with and without ADHD over different emotion eliciting conditions, and Linear Regression analysis will be conducted to examine the relationship between HF-HRV and measures of emotional functioning (BASC-2). Results will shed light on the underlying psychophysiology of emotion regulation and the relation this has to ADHD and social functioning.
Some studies failed to find a relationship between the time adolescents spent on-line and academic performance (Hunley et al., 2005; Southwick, 2002). However, Young (2004) found that excessive internet use was related to academic performance in college students, and Windham (2008) found that the time spent on social interactive technologies was negatively related to grade point average in high school students. We extended on this work by examining the relationships between academic achievement and specific internet uses and motivations. Preliminary results show that overall time on the internet is not related to average grades in either Australian high school or university students (N = 262). However, among high school students (n = 155), there were significant positive relationships between average grades achieved and motives for using the internet to seek information as well as reported time spent online searching for information related to schoolwork. There were significant negative relationships with motives for using the internet for interpersonal communication and reported time spent online for other purposes (instant messaging, social network sites, emailing, non-school related information searches). SES and gender effects on these relationships were also examined. It was concluded that the uses and motivations an individual has when on-line need to be examined in order to fully understand the impact on academic achievement.
The influence of beliefs and goals on academic help seeking in undergraduate students
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The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between epistemological beliefs, achievement goals, and help-seeking behaviour in undergraduate students. Specifically, the aim was to test a mediation model in which the relationship between epistemological beliefs and academic help-seeking was mediated by achievement goals. We recruited 101 undergraduate students (mean age 21.6 years, 84% female) who were enrolled in a first-year psychology course at an Australian university. They completed a questionnaire containing scales that measured adaptive, non-adaptive, and avoidant help-seeking (based on items from Karabenick & Knapp, 1991, and Pajares, Cheong & Oberman, 2004); achievement goal orientation (based on Elliot & Church, 1997, and Meece & Miller, 2001); and epistemological beliefs (Schommer, 1990, 1998), plus demographic questions (age, gender, program enrolled in, semesters already completed, main language and tertiary entrance or OP score). A preference to seek non-adaptive help (i.e., dependent help, e.g., simply being told the answers) was positively related to simple beliefs about the structure and acquisition of knowledge (e.g., beliefs that knowledge is simple and acquired quickly) and work-avoidant goals (motivated to do minimal work), and negatively related to mastery goals (motivated by desire to learn). Having mastery goals was positively associated with adaptive help-seeking (e.g., help to work out problem for self) and more sophisticated knowledge beliefs (knowledge is complex and integrated). Performance goals were significantly related to a simple view of knowledge, not to help-seeking. Mastery and work-avoidant achievement goal orientation partially mediated the relationship between epistemological beliefs and help-seeking. This study extended Bartholome's and colleagues (2006) findings by demonstrating that academic help seeking is influenced by epistemological beliefs. However, it was concluded that understanding students' achievement goal orientations as well as their beliefs about knowledge acquisition is important in understanding their academic help-seeking behaviours.
During the first year, infants exhibit visual preferences for female relative to male faces (Quinn, Yahr, Kuhn, Slater, & Pascalis, 2002). This visual preference may reflect an adaptive behavior resulting from infants' greater experience with females during social interactions, particularly caregiving (McArthur & Baron, 1983; Rennels & Davis, 2008). As children learn they belong to a particular sex during toddlerhood, they become more active seekers of social knowledge and may begin to seek out members of that sex as models for determining appropriate activities and behaviors (Baldwin & Moses, 1996; Martin, Ruble, & Szkrybalo, 2002). The purpose of this investigation was to determine if 18- to 36-month-old boys' and girls' visual preferences for male and female adults change following infancy to preferences for same-sex adults. Toddlers (16 males, 14 females) participated in a classic visual paired comparison task. The 18- to 36-month-olds (M = 28.02, SD = 5.30) viewed four pairs each of male/female faces, high/low masculine male faces, and high/low feminine female faces in randomized blocks. Each face-pair trial was 10 s long. Percentage of total looking time (PTLT) toward female faces, high feminine female faces, and low masculine male faces were calculated separately for girls and boys. Correlational analyses revealed that girls who looked longer toward female faces when paired with male faces also looked longer toward high feminine female faces when paired with low feminine female faces ($r = .628, p < .05$) and high masculine male faces when paired with low masculine male faces ($r = -.551, p < .05$). No significant patterns emerged when examining boys' PTLT toward the stimuli. Because toddler girls do not change from a preference for females shown during infancy, they likely acquire much knowledge about same-sex models during the first three years. Such expertise might result in their preferring the most sex-prototypical (i.e., high feminine) female faces (e.g., Langlois & Roggman, 1990) and male faces that are clearly distinct from the female face category (i.e., high masculine males). Toddler boys may not show clear patterns of preference because they are transitioning from a familiarity preference for females evidenced during infancy to a preference for same-sex models by early childhood. The added complexity of gender awareness that emerges during toddlerhood may lead to boys showing a lag in face processing expertise as compared to girls.
Informant discrepancies in the assessment of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder
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Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a chronic, prevalent and debilitating disorder of childhood. Characterised by developmentally inappropriate levels of hyperactivity, impulsivity, and/or inattention, ADHD leads to significant impairment across academic, occupational and social functioning. To negate these deleterious outcomes, interventions, support services and funding are available; however they are often contingent on diagnosis. To be given a diagnosis of ADHD, the DSM-IV-TR stipulates that, among other diagnostic criteria, impairment be clearly evidenced across multiple settings, thus requiring information to be collected from multiple informants, typically parents and teachers. Ideally, informants would agree on the presence and severity of symptoms and associated impairment; however, this has become one of the most problematic and controversial areas in diagnosing ADHD. The cumulative result of a myriad of research consistently shows low to moderate agreement rates between parents and teachers; yet the mechanisms underlying these discrepancies remain relatively understudied. Considering this, the present study aimed to replicate previous findings and examine several potential mechanisms for the observed discrepancies; those being environmental influences (ie. different behaviour in different settings) or informant biases (ie. differences in perceptions). Parent, teacher and clinician ratings of child symptomology and impairment were collected, with the aim of elucidating the strength of concordance between informants. Forty children between six and twelve years of age with a formal diagnosis of ADHD, their families and their teachers, were invited to participate. Parents were asked to complete the BASC-2, and ADHD-RS-IV, and participate in the K-SADS-PL. Teachers were requested to complete the BASC-2 and ADHD-RS-IV. Systematic direct observations were conducted by clinical researchers in the classroom using the BOSS coding scheme. This data is presently being collected, however it is anticipated that statistics from 25 to 30 of these children will be presented at the conference. Correlational analyses will be conducted to examine the strength of the relationships between parents, teacher and clinician ratings, and thus shed light on the mechanism underlying the observed discrepancy, with significant implications for the assessment and treatment of ADHD.
Comparison of father-son and mother-son involvement across early to middle childhood
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The current consensus is that father involvement is a multifaceted concept, incorporating elements of both quantity and quality of time in diverse fathering activities. This study addressed some gaps in the literature about father involvement in two-parent family contexts including changes in father-child activities over time, the nature of father-child conversations, and fathers’ perceptions of their involvement in child care activities. Comparisons were made with maternal data. Participants were 92 fathers and mothers recruited as part of a three-year follow-up study of boys’ behavioural development that began when the children were 4 years old. Fathers and mothers were interviewed separately at both time points and were each asked about the amount of time they were accessible to and engaged with their son and their participation in play and learning activities. At Time 2, parents described the content and frequency of parent-child conversations about topics of interest to their son and conversations about school. In addition, fathers and mothers were asked to rate the extent to which 16 child care tasks were their responsibility or shared equally. At each time point, in comparison to mothers, fathers were less accessible and engaged with their son on weekdays. Whereas, on weekend days, the amount of time parents were available to their child was similar for fathers and mothers. However, fathers reported spending more one-on-one time with their son on weekends than mothers did. Compared to mothers, fathers were more likely to play ball games and play on the computer with their sons. At Time 2, fathers also reported higher frequencies, than mothers, of participation in storytelling, construction, pretend, and outdoor play with their sons. For both parents the most commonly mentioned topics of conversations with their sons related to his sport, leisure time, and media watching interests and activities. Conversations about school were most likely to include discussions about activities at school that day and interactions with friends and peers. Several child care tasks, such as bedtime routines and encouraging their son to read, were rated as shared by both parents. While mothers were more likely than fathers to be responsible for arranging resources, like books, games, and clothes, to be available to their child. These findings indicate some age-related increases in father-child engagement and provide new information about the nature of father-son involvement in middle childhood. Potential implications for future father involvement research will be highlighted.
We explored children’s conceptual knowledge of arithmetic principles. Identity \((a + b = a + b)\), Commutativity \((a + b = b + a = c)\), Associativity \(([a + b] + c = a + [b + c] = d)\) and Complementary Operations \((a - b = ? \text{ can be solved by } b + ? = a)\). Conceptual knowledge was assessed using evaluation and justification of procedures techniques. We expected conceptual knowledge to follow a developmental progression, from recognising identity, to commutative, to associative, to complimentary principles. Using an individual differences approach, we investigated the role of executive functions in explaining variance in conceptual knowledge, after controlling for variance attributable to age, and procedural arithmetic skill. Participants were 153 normally developing children aged 6- to 9-years. Conceptual knowledge was assessed using the Judgement task (Canobi et al., 1998). Children were shown 24 pairs of conceptually-related arithmetic problems and were asked to evaluate whether they could solve one problem by referring to the other, and explain their decision. Responses were scored for conceptual knowledge. The Listening span task (Daneman & Carpenter 1980) assessed working memory, and intrusion errors on Listening span and Updating tasks (Swanson, Crystal, & Leilani, 2006) were used to measure inhibitory control. Procedural arithmetic skill (% correct) was quantified with a test containing standard addition problems. Percentages of children who correctly evaluated and explained pairs of related problems, and were thus credited with conceptual knowledge, followed an ordered progression. Friedman tests confirmed significant effects of type of conceptual relation for each age group, \(p < .001\). We used hierarchical linear regression to investigate the role of executive functions in explaining variance in conceptual knowledge. The criterion was the number of conceptually related problem pairs correctly evaluated and explained. Age, procedural skill and executive functions together explained 55.00% variance in conceptual knowledge, multiple \(R = .742, F(4,148) = 10.19, p < .001\). After removing variance attributable to age at step 1 and procedural skill at step 2, both executive functions were significant independent predictors. Individual differences in working memory explained a 1.28% unique variance, and inhibitory control explained 1.19% unique variance, after controlling for age and procedural skill. Few studies have combined multi-faceted knowledge assessments and measures of procedural arithmetic skill in the study of conceptual knowledge (Prather & Alibali, 2009). These findings further our understanding of the developmental trajectory of children’s arithmetic principle knowledge, and illustrate unique roles for executive functions in conceptual knowledge.
POSTER WITHDRAWN

Social, educational and cultural barriers to academic success among East Asian international students
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East Asian international (EAI) students in Western Countries face a number of barriers that can impact their ability to cope such as language and cultural barriers, adjustment to a new academic environment, and financial barriers related to the high cost of tertiary education (Burns, 1991; Lin & Yi, 1997). This research aimed to explore learning experiences of 117 East Asian international students at the University of Auckland and to gain insights into the social, educational and cultural barriers which have affected their academic performance and academic success. A mixed methods design utilizing was used. All participants completed a questionnaire while 21 engaged in a semi-structured interview. Results suggest that EAI students do encounter a number of difficulties in terms of language, academic demands and differences in learning and teaching styles. Interestingly, the content of academic tasks acted as an independent barrier to their learning separate from English language. Thus, contrary to earlier findings where Asian students often experience difficulties in tasks that are particularly related to language proficiency, this was not found in this study. With regard to the issue of academic content as the most difficult academic tasks affecting EAI students’ academic performance, the results show that these problems are significantly related to academic adjustment problems. It could be attributed to students’ previous educational experience, cultural differences in education, and their unfamiliarity with the new educational system. Another interesting finding is that these students rely more on memorization for their learning. The students believe when they use memorization strategies, they will encounter less academic difficulty. In fact, previous research showed that memorisation can contribute to higher-level learning outcomes among Asian students (Chan & Rao, 2009).
Analyses of forensic investigative interviews and experimental analogue studies concur that repeated questioning can often induce inconsistent responding in children, but the psychological mechanisms underlying this inconsistency are not clear. The aim of this study was to investigate children’s moral understanding of the appropriateness of answer shifting in response to question repetition, a hitherto unexplored research domain. In order to find out what children of different ages think is the appropriate way to respond when an adult repeats a question, participants were required to make moral judgments of answer shifting behaviour. Fifty-two children in two age groups (5-6 years, 9-10 years) viewed eight short video scenes in which an adult interviewer repeated questions and a puppet changed his answer. In line with methodology typically used to investigate children’s moral evaluations of other social behaviours, the vignettes varied systematically in terms of the puppet’s motive for shifting (truth motivated or non-truth motivated, conveyed through the puppet’s verbal asides) and the outcome of the behaviour (whether the final answer provided correct information). Children made an evaluative judgment of the puppet’s behaviour using a visual analogue scale, and then justified their evaluations. The results demonstrated developmental differences in the influence of outcome and motive information on children’s judgments. The pattern of evaluations indicated that children from both age groups understood that in an informational context it is “good” to provide adult questioners with correct information, and “bad” to provide incorrect information. However, only the older children differentially evaluated answer shifting on the basis of motive, with the puppet’s shifting evaluated more positively when he believed in the correctness of the second answer, than when he shifted indiscriminately in order to please the interviewer. The findings indicate a developmental progression in children’s moral understanding of the appropriate way to respond to question repetition. Importantly, it appears that 5-6 year old children have only limited understanding of the importance of being motivated to tell the truth in situations where it is vital to provide correct information. Although the nature of the relationship between children’s moral understanding of answer shifting and their performance in actual situations of repeated questioning remains to be determined, the present study has important theoretical implications for how children’s understanding of answer shifting behaviour is conceptualised.
Children’s increasing involvement as eyewitnesses in legal proceedings has instigated a wealth of research into the factors that support the accuracy and credibility of their memory reports. Research has established that when young children are asked the same question more than once, there is a tendency for them to change their response. Yet, there is little research examining the reasons underlying inconsistent responding and the factors that may promote consistency. Additionally, children’s self-reports of the reason for their inconsistencies may be unreliable because of limitations in expressive language. An alternative approach which has not previously been utilised is to compare children’s reported confidence in their initial and final responses. This study sought to explore children’s responses to repeated questioning by examining the effect of providing a rationale for repetition on their consistency and confidence. Fifty-five 6- and 7- year-olds were shown a brief video. Approximately one week later, they were individually asked 26 questions about the video, with 21 repeated twice. Half were given a rationale for repetition (aimed at counteracting any perceived obligation to change their answer, yet encouraging appropriate changes), and half were not. Following recall, all children provided confidence judgements for their answers. For inconsistent response patterns, children gave confidence judgments for both initial and final responses. Averaged over the three responses to each target question, confidence was greater for consistent than inconsistent response patterns. Further, the rationale reduced overall shifting, but did not selectively decrease shifts away from, rather than towards accuracy. Shifts following the first question repetition were more common than shifts following the second, but the rationale was equally effective in reducing both types of shifts. For inconsistent response patterns, children’s reported confidence increased from initial to final response, suggesting that their response changes were predominantly due to a genuine belief that their final answer was more correct, rather than simply a desire to please the adult. Children given a rationale showed a larger mean increase in confidence, suggesting that the rationale encouraged appropriate shifts and may have reduced the tendency to shift to please the adult. These results have theoretical and practical implications. They suggest that, contrary to generally accepted accounts, children’s inconsistencies are not primarily due to perceived adult dissatisfaction with their first response. However, to the extent that this perception does occur, inconsistencies can be reduced by providing a credible explanation for question repetition.
Predictors of treatment outcomes in an internet-based behavioural family intervention
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Behavioural family interventions have been recommended as the treatment of choice for young children displaying early signs of problem behaviour. Extensive research has demonstrated the effectiveness of behavioural family interventions. Less research has examined variables that are associated with favourable outcomes in behavioural family interventions, particularly those interventions that do not involve any therapist support. Some families with children displaying behavioural problems do not benefit from behavioural family interventions to the same extent as other families, hence it is important to understand which factors predict successful outcomes in order to maximise the benefits of behavioural family interventions. Additionally, an examination of predictors can help both practitioners and researchers to identify families who would likely benefit most from a particular treatment and to identify subgroups that may be more suited to a different approach. The current study investigated whether demographic, child, or parental variables predicted key child and parent outcomes in an internet-based behavioural family intervention. In addition, the project also examined whether programme completion predicted favourable treatment outcomes. The sample consisted of 86 mothers with a child aged between 3 and 8 years old who were randomly assigned to receive an internet-delivered Triple P-Positive Parenting Programme. Mothers completed questionnaire measures of child behaviour, parenting style and confidence, parental adjustment, and spousal relationship quality at pre- and post-intervention. Six-month follow-up data is currently being collected and due for completion in April 2011. Hierarchical multivariate regression analyses were conducted controlling for baseline levels of the outcome variable. No demographic variables predicted levels of children’s behavioural difficulties or dysfunctional parenting practices at post-intervention. When controlling for pre-intervention levels of the outcome variable, the only significant independent variable to predict children’s behavioural difficulties and mothers’ dysfunctional parenting practices at post-intervention was the number of modules completed. Greater programme exposure predicted lower levels of child behavioural difficulties and decreased dysfunctional parenting practices at post-intervention. The findings indicate that families with a range of demographic, child and parental characteristics benefit from an internet-delivered behavioural family intervention. In addition, level of programme exposure predicted more positive treatment outcomes for children’s behaviour and mothers’ parenting practices. Strategies to engage families to complete behavioural family interventions, such as motivational interviewing and/or additional telephone support, could be adopted by practitioners to increase engagement and maximise the benefits of internet-based programmes.
The current study aimed to investigate the age-related declines in emotional recognition as an early indicator of cognitive decline. This study extended previous work by Dilanchian (2009) which identified changes in emotion recognition with age. A total of 75 participants were divided into two groups based upon age. The older adults (n=31) ranged from 56-82 years old whilst the younger adults (n=44) were aged 17-48 years. Both groups completed a computerised Test for Emotional Recognition of Faces (TERF) which assessed an individual’s ability to accurately recognise facial emotions. To determine if Dilanchian’s (2009) findings were contaminated by task characteristics the facial stimuli in the TERF were masked for a fixed duration. Consistent with previous findings older adults were impaired at recognising the masked facial expressions for anger and surprised when compared with younger adults. However, no age-related differences were found for the other six emotions. Further, the study found no age-related differences for nonverbal memory, as both younger and older adults did not differ in their ability to remember faces. Overall, these findings suggest that Dilanchian’s (2009) procedure was not influenced by task characteristics and that age-related changes in emotional recognition are robust. The refined methodology improves prior assessment of emotion recognition and confirms the age effect. This is an important finding as it has been argued that declines in emotional recognition may precede declines in non-verbal memory and as yet a standard robust method of assessment for age-related declines has not been established. Based upon the findings and taking into account the limitations of the current study, it is plausible to assume that the TERF may have some value in assessing early cognition decline in adults during their transition to old age.
Male facial masculinity and sex-typed attributes are related to men’s health and related behaviors (e.g., Berger et al., 2005; Mills & Bohanon, 1983; Rhodes et al., 2003). It is less clear, however, whether facial appearance and sex-role stereotype endorsement are related, and how self-perceptions of these characteristics are related to health. The aim of this study was to examine the relationships among men’s self-reported health, sex-typed attitudes and behaviors, and ratings of facial appearance, and compare the findings to women. Adult participants (59 females, 48 males) provided self-ratings in the following order: (1) a physical and psychological measure of health: SF-8 (Turner-Bowker et al., 2003); (2) an assessment of sex-typed personal characteristics and attitudes toward others (Liben & Bigler’s (2002) OAT-PM/AM); and (3) perception of facial masculinity, femininity and attractiveness. For men, self-rated facial attractiveness and masculinity positively correlated with mental health ($r_s=.434$ and $.454$), whereas facial femininity negatively correlated with mental health ($r_s=-.610$). Being attractive and masculine-looking are valued traits (Rennels et al., 2008), so having such qualities may boost men’s mental health. Alternatively, better mental health may elicit males to more highly rate their facial appearance. Women’s self-rated facial masculinity negatively correlated with their physical health ($r_s=-.318$). Facial masculinity measurements correlate with bodily fluctuating asymmetry (a measure of developmental instability) and instances of respiratory infections among women (Thornhill & Gangestad, 2006). Our finding shows women’s self-perceived masculinity also correlates with poorer physical health. Self-rated facial appearance correlated with sex-typedness for women only. Women who rated themselves as higher in facial masculinity were less likely to engage in feminine activities ($r_s=-.274$). Perhaps others’ expectations for masculine-looking women to show less feminine gender-typical behavior led to these behavioral differences (Rogers & Ritter, 2002). Women who rated themselves as higher in facial femininity were more likely to endorse personal masculine traits ($r_s=.312$). Having a feminine facial appearance (Fink & Penton-Voak, 2002) and possessing masculine traits are both socially desirable (Liben & Bigler, 2002), so that desirability may be driving this correlation. Surprisingly, self-rated health and sex-typed attributes were unrelated in both men and women. Our findings suggest different developmental pathways for how self-perceptions of appearance relate to men’s and women’s health and endorsement of gender roles. Developmental research can illuminate whether such differences are inherent in these individuals (e.g., appearance advertises true quality), the result of societal expectations, or some combination of the two.
Learning and memory processes are fundamental to our ability to draw upon past experiences and engage adaptively in our environment. The multiple memory systems theory suggests that within these diverse functions, the hippocampus is critical for declarative memory tasks, whereas non-declarative memory performance is mediated by a broad range of brain systems. Current early childhood memory literature has focused primarily on investigating age-related changes in individual measures of hippocampal function. However, to date, it is unclear whether tasks that tap into spatial, relational, recognition and recall function exhibit similar developmental trajectories. To investigate age-related changes in these processes in 18-, 27- and 36-months’ olds we administered a battery of non-verbal tasks over two testing sessions, one day apart. To assess spatial memory, participants watched the experimenter hide a toy in a toy box and had to search for it after a delay. The Faces/Places task assessed relational memory and involved the participant watching slideshows of different faces, each of which were superimposed on a specific background. At test, participants viewed one previously seen background with three faces superimposed on the slide. Recognition memory was investigated using the visual-paired comparison (VPC) task where participants were familiarised to two identical stimuli and were then shown one familiar and one novel stimulus. Recall memory was measured through a deferred imitation paradigm where the experimenter demonstrated a novel sequence of actions to put together a toy for the participant to later reproduce. To contrast with declarative memory performance, the executive function, A-not-B task was also administered, as well as a statistical learning task in which where participants were familiarized to stimuli whose sequences were in a statistical order and were then presented with a novel sequence of shapes. The TOBII eye-tracker was used to measure eye movements in the Faces/Places, VPC and statistical learning tasks. Preliminary results indicate a general trend for large improvements in recall, spatial memory and executive functioning from 18- to 27-months, with comparable performance across 27- and 36-months. None of the age groups showed preferential viewing for the face that matched the background in the relational memory task. The 27- and 36-month olds showed robust novelty preferences in the recognition memory task and there were similar levels of novelty preferences across age groups in the statistical learning task. These results have important implications for theories of early childhood memory development and will be discussed in further detail.
The uptake and use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) through the course of daily teaching practice differs from school to school, classroom to classroom, subject to subject, and from teacher to teacher. As do teachers’ individual constructions of ICT. These differences can affect daily teaching practice. This poster examines the ‘chicanes’ and ‘straights’ encountered by teachers that affect both their own and their students’ travels along the information highway through an ever changing technological terrain. From a transitions perspective, this is important because education is viewed as providing the foundations upon which to build and develop the skills and competencies of young New Zealanders as they move into the adult world. If ICT is to contribute to the development of critical thinking, self-managing, and adaptable lifelong learners in a globalised society, then it is important for schools and teachers to ensure that ICT is used consistently, progressively, and effectively throughout these educational journeys. This collective case study is situated in a blended constructivist and social constructionist worldview. It examined individual and social constructions of cross-curricular ICT integration of primary, intermediate, and secondary school teachers. Data was collected from a survey (n=62) and through in-depth semi-structured individual interviews (n=24). The amount and type of ICT use was dependent upon individual teachers and their constructions of ICT and how this could fit in with their existing pedagogies, subject content knowledge, and their level of ICT knowledge. The majority of participants constructed ICT as ‘the computer’. It was commonly used to support research or inquiry-based learning activities. The majority of teachers believed that it was easier to integrate ICT into some areas of the curriculum than in others. Opinions were polarised to a degree, with some teachers saying that they would be less effective and dynamic without technology, and others believing that there was little room for ICT in their classroom programme. The result of this was that some students were highly skilled and competent ICT users, capable of carrying out independent or collaborative learning activities, and others had yet to acquire these competencies. In this sense, both students and teachers were affected by disparate ICT skills and constructions, with some able to race ahead (straights) and complete learning activities, while others were slowed down (the chicanes) through a lack of access to technology or having limited skills to use it.
Adolescent extracurricular activity and alcohol use in regional and metropolitan locations: The mediational role of peers
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In Australia, alcohol and sport are intimately linked. Alcohol is used to celebrate a win, to commiserate a loss and to reinforce the camaraderie and mateship amongst teams (Australian Drug Foundation, 2004, pp. 1). Almost two thirds of Australian youth are involved in organised sports (ABS, 2006). Despite the sporting environment providing numerous benefits, there is a strong link between sport and alcohol in Australian culture (Duff, Scealy, & Rowland, 2005). Regional sporting clubs in Australia play an integral role in the formation of social capital (Atherley, 2006). However, there is concern that the regional club environment provides a setting for adolescent drinking (Duff et al., 2005). This study aimed to investigate the association between Australian adolescents’ extracurricular activity participation and levels of alcohol use, and whether this relation was moderated by gender and location. Secondly, if the sport-alcohol association was found to be significant, to explore the mediational role of peers’ alcohol use between adolescents’ sport participation and their alcohol use. A sample of 1,158 year nine and 658 year eleven students from metropolitan and regional schools across Western Australia responded to a self-report survey which examined their sporting and non-sporting activities, their alcohol consumption, as well as perceived peer alcohol use. Activity participation profiles included sports-only, activities-only, sports-plus-activities and non-participation. A 4 (portfolio) x 2 (gender) x 2 (location) ANCOVA, indicated that location significantly moderated the link between participation profile and drinking, controlling for age effects, \( F(3,1767)=3.46, p < .05. \) Regional students participating in sports-only (M=2.23, SD=1.54) or sports-plus-activities (M=2.00, SD=1.26) reported significantly higher levels of drinking compared to students in activities-only (M=1.67, SD=1.00) or non-participants (M=1.68, SD=1.16), whereas metropolitan students, participating in sports-only (M=2.03, SD=1.39), reported significantly higher levels of alcohol use than all other profiles of activities. Peers’ level of alcohol use significantly mediated the positive relation between sport participation and adolescent alcohol use for regional but not for metropolitan adolescents. Our results suggest that peers may play a mediational role to maintain the drinking culture associated with participating in sport among regional students or help to reduce drinking rates among metropolitan students who combine sport with non-sporting activities. The regional environment stood out as a setting for high levels of alcohol use for students if they participated in sport. Examination of locality effects and the underlying mechanism of peer effects on adolescent alcohol use allow policymakers to identify ways to target intervention/prevention programs to reduce adolescent drinking.
Children with special health care needs: Social-emotional and learning competence in the early years
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Due to their health status, Australian children with special health care needs are at risk of poor social-emotional and learning outcomes (e.g., Lightfoot, Mukherjee, & Sloper, 2000; Zehnder, Landolt, Prchal, & Vollrath, 2006). Using data from the Kindergarten Cohort of Growing up in Australia: The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC), this study investigated social-emotional and learning competence for children with special health care needs in the early years. Three research questions were addressed: (1) What are the characteristics of Australian children with special health care needs?; (2) Do differences exist in social-emotional competence and learning competence prior to school between children with special health care needs and their peers?; and (3) What is the relationship between special health care needs prior to school and social-emotional competence and learning competence in the early years of school? Descriptive analyses of data from Wave 1 of LSAC identified the characteristics of Australian children with special health care needs. Six hundred and fifty children were identified as having special health care needs through the special health care needs screener. Results indicated that Australian children with special health care needs were likely to be male, to have been of low birth weight, to be taking prescription medications, to be of poor overall health, to be diagnosed with a specific health condition and to be from families where the mother was less well educated. One-way ANOVAs from Wave 1 data using matched case-control groups examined differences in competencies prior to school. Competencies were measured through Social-Emotional and Learning Domain Scores taken from the Outcome Index. These domains are summary scores composed specifically for the LSAC dataset. Findings indicated that children with special health care needs have lower levels of social-emotional and learning competence prior to school compared to their peers. Multiple regression analyses investigating relationships between special health care needs prior to school and social-emotional and learning competence in the early years of school used Social-Emotional and Learning Domain scores at Wave 2 as outcome variables. Results suggested that special health care needs prior to school significantly predict social-emotional competence and learning competence in the early years of school. These results indicate that having special health care needs prior to school is a risk factor for the social-emotional and learning domains in the early years of school. Theoretical, policy and practical implications exist and will be discussed.
Parental involvement during early childhood is of great developmental significance in that it enhances children’s learning and school success and facilitates children’s transition from home or preschool environment to a more formal school environment. Epstein (1995) classified parental involvement behaviour into six discrete categories of influence including proximal home influences as well as parental involvement in Early Childhood Education (ECE). Research has identified a number of determinants of parental involvement, including parental role construction (parents’ beliefs about their responsibilities relating to their children’s education and care), parental self efficacy (parents’ beliefs about their ability relating to positive influences on their children’s development and learning), and cultural values and beliefs as reflected in specific parenting practices (Yamamoto, Holloway & Suzuki, 2006). Interestingly, traditional Chinese cultural values (e.g. the needs of the group and emphasis on duty and obligation) link to specific Chinese parenting practices (e.g. parental control and training) and could determine the nature of Chinese parental involvement in ECE (Dyson, 2001). In recent years, there has been a significant increase in Chinese immigrant families with children attending New Zealand ECEs. However, little is known about the influence of parenting beliefs on ECE involvement of Chinese immigrant parents who have settled in NZ. This poster presents preliminary findings from an ongoing study that examines the ECE involvement of Chinese immigrant parents. Comparisons will be made between the parenting beliefs of Chinese immigrant parents and New Zealand parents who have children attending Auckland kindergartens. Participant responses will be compared on the Child’s Education Scale: Role Activity Beliefs (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005), the Parental Sense of Competence Scale (PSOC) (Johnston & Mash, 1989), as well as the Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ) (Robinson et al, 2001) which includes scales that tap parenting constructs emphasised in the Chinese culture. The influence of acculturation on Chinese parenting beliefs will also be assessed using the General Ethnicity Questionnaire-Chinese Version (Tsai, 2000). The study findings will add to our understanding of cultural influences on parenting belief systems and possible reasons for the patterns of ECE involvement of immigrant Chinese parents in New Zealand.