Socioemotional Development in Middle Childhood

PSY 356
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Conduct Problems

- Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD): repetitive pattern of defiance, disobedience and hostility
- Conduct Disorder (CD): consistent violation of other people's basic rights or breaking of society's rules.

Resilient Children

- Those who succeed, achieve or otherwise have positive outcomes despite growing up in negative conditions

FRIENDSHIPS AND PEER RELATIONS

- **Friendship**: A close, mutual, and voluntary relationship between peers
- Reciprocal and persist over time
- Functions include support, companionship, affection, and stimulation
- Functions change over time
- Help children learn relationship skills

FRIENDSHIPS AND PEER RELATIONS: The Childhood Years

- Social contacts increase dramatically as children enter school
- Larger peer group, less adult supervision
- Main ingredients in forming friendships are opportunity and similarity
- Number of "best friends" increases until about age 11 when children become more selective

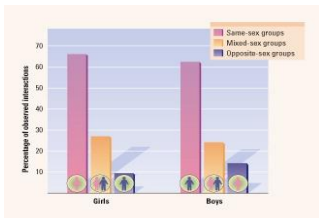## FRIENDSHIPS AND PEER RELATIONS: The Preschool and Childhood Years

- Children's close friendships typically progress through three stages:
1. Play-based friends (ages 3 to 7 years)
2. Loyal and faithful friends (ages 8 to 11 years)
3. Intimate friends (adolescence and beyond)

FRIENDSHIPS AND PEER RELATIONS:
Gender Segregation among Friends

- Prominent feature of children's friendships is **gender segregation** – tendency to associate with same sex peers
- Occurs in every cultural setting
- Clear preference for same-sex play partners evident by 2 to 3 years of age
- Gender segregation very prominent after age 3

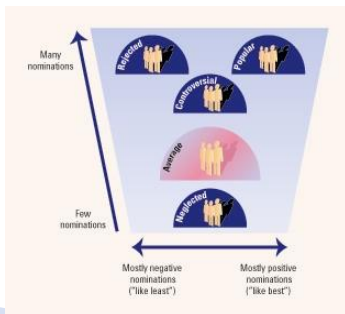## GENDER PREFERENCES IN PLAY PARTNERS

FRIENDSHIPS AND PEER RELATIONS:
Gender Segregation among Friends

- As consequence of gender segregation, boys and girls grow up in different **gender cultures**
- Boys tend to play in larger groups and are more active and physically aggressive
- Girls develop closer ties in smaller groups; emphasize social closeness and sensitivity

SOCIAL STATUS AMONG PEERS:
Categories of Popular/Unpopular Children

- **Peer nomination technique** frequently used to measure social status in childhood
- Five categories typically result from peer nominations: *popular*, *rejected*, *average*, *controversial*, and *neglected*

SOCIAL STATUS AMONG PEERS:
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SOCIAL STATUS AMONG PEERS:
Categories of Popular/Unpopular Children

- Category of rejected children includes two very different subtypes
- About 50% are considered rejected-aggressive, 20% rejected-withdrawn
- Controversial children receive large number of both positive and negative nominations
- Associations between category and characteristics only correlational; don't know cause and effect

SOCIAL STATUS AMONG PEERS:
Social Cognition Model of Peer Relations

- ‣ Ken Dodge and associates have developed a social cognition model to explain differences in social behavior
- ‣ Consists of perceiving information in social setting, interpreting the situation, and then considering responses and enacting one
- ‣ Related to peer popularity
- ‣ Factors such as infant temperament and attachment relationships may lead to positive or negative patterns of social cognition

SOCIAL STATUS AMONG PEERS:
Consequences of Peer Rejection

- ‣ Early negative social experiences may cause continuing problems in later years
- ‣ Peer rejection associated with academic difficulties, higher rates of delinquency, arrest, violence, and substance abuse
- ‣ Often implicated in school violence
- ‣ Withdrawn children are at greater risk for depression, loneliness, negative self-worth
- ‣ Intervention programs helpful