This paper reports on the social information processes that occur in order for individuals to arrive at a socially competent response. The objectives of this study were to examine the effects of age and aggressive tendency on preschool boys’ abilities to solve social problems, specifically examining differences in each step of Crick & Dodge’s (1994) 6-step social information processing model. Male participants, ages 3 – 5 ½, were shown a videotape of four social conflicts, each containing an aggressive and competent response, and asked a series of questions. Results were analyzed via multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVA), one way analyses of variance (ANOVA) and correlational analyses. Several trends were found between age and children’s abilities to solve social problems, with differences found among the two age groups in the various steps of the social information processing model. This paper also presents limitations with the study and directions for future research.
THE EFFECTS OF AGE AND AGGRESSIVE TENDENCY ON SOCIAL PROBLEM SOLVING

A Thesis

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Chapter One

Introduction

Social competence has been a topic of interest among parents, educators, and school psychologists across the nation. Much of the research on this topic has focused on the social information processes that occur in order for individuals to arrive at a socially competent response (e.g. Crick & Dodge, 1994). More specifically, what goes through a child’s mind when he or she encounters a social conflict? What are the differences in social information processes that lead some children to act in an aggressive manner and some children to act passively? Examining differences among aggressive and passive children in each step of Crick & Dodge’s (1994) 6-step social information processing model may provide more insight into why a child responds to social conflicts in an aggressive or passive manner.

The objectives of this study were to examine the effects of age and aggressive tendency on preschool boys’ ability to solve social problems. Male participants, ages 3 – 5 ½, were rated by their teachers as more aggressive or less aggressive, based on an operational definition of aggression. They were then shown a videotape containing 4 social conflicts. Each conflict had an aggressive and competent response to the conflict. Participants were asked a series of questions to measure their abilities to appropriately solve social conflicts using the social information processing model. Results were analyzed via multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVA), one way analyses of variance (ANOVA) and correlational analyses. Several trends were found between age and children’s abilities to solve social problems, with differences found among the two age groups in the various steps of the social information processing model. Older children were better able to solve social problems than younger children. No significant differences were found between more aggressive and less aggressive participants. A summary of conclusions, as well as limitations with the study and directions for future research, have also been included at the end of this report.
Chapter Two

Review of Literature

Research on social competence in children with relation to social information processing has escalated over the past few decades (e.g. Crick & Dodge, 1994; Goldfried & D’Zurilla, 1971; Spivack & Shure, 1974; Huesmann & Eron, 1989). Studies examining the factors that influence the development of social competence have provided numerous findings relevant to parents and educators nationwide. With an increase in diagnoses of behavior disorders, as well as violence in the schools, parents, teachers, and researchers across the nation have questioned what brings on this violence and social incompetence in our children. Why do some children react with aggression whereas some children are able to control their emotions? In order to examine these questions, one must first understand the basics of aggression and social competence. The following review of literature discusses an overview of social competence, as well as various social information processing models, aggression and social cognition, social information processing models in relation to aggression, and current research on social competence and social problem solving. The purpose and hypotheses of this study are also included in this chapter.

Social Competence

There are numerous definitions of the terms “social skills” and “social competence”. Ladd and Mize (1983) define social skills as children’s abilities to organize cognitions and behaviors into an integrated course of action directed toward culturally acceptable social or interpersonal goals. Campbell and Siperstein (1994) define social skills as consisting of social behaviors and social knowledge, more specifically, knowing what to do and when to do it. King & Kirschenbaum’s (1992) definition states that social skills are social, interpersonal behaviors that tend to evoke positive outcomes. All of these definitions involve interpersonal behaviors of an individual that lead to positive, acceptable social behaviors.

Once an individual has acquired these social skills, how he/she applies them is known as social competence. Goldfried and d’Zurilla (1969) define social competence as an individual’s effective response to specific life situations whereas McFall (1982)
defines social competence as a judgment made by another that an individual has behaved effectively. Social competence has also been defined as “aspects of social behavior that are important with respect to preventing physical illness or psychopathology in children and adults” (Putallaz & Gottman, 1983, p. 7). These definitions not only specify the individual’s influence on his/her social competence but also emphasize the importance of specific situations and others’ perceptions of an individual.

Numerous studies have been conducted examining the development of socialization in infants by studying the attachment and bonding relationships formed with their primary caregivers (Harlow, 1959; Ainsworth, 1967; Schaeffer & Emerson, 1964) as well as individual differences in temperament (Thomas & Chess, 1977). Development of social skills in children has been explained through modeling (Bandura, 1971) and the influence of environmental systems and adverse socioeconomic conditions (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Albee, 1986).

**Social Information Processing Models**

Many researchers have also examined the development of social skills and competence in children as a function of social information processing (i.e. Crick & Dodge, 1994; Dodge, 1986; Shantz, 1983). According to the social information processing approach, when discussing social competence, one must examine the social context in which the behaviors are displayed (e.g. situation specificity). Lemerise and Arsenio (2000) state that “a basic premise of social information processing is that children’s understanding and interpretation of situations influences their related behaviors” (Lemerise & Arsenio, 2000, p.108).

Social information processing theories have been used to explain the factors influencing social competence in individuals and the specific steps in which individuals process how to regulate their social problem-solving and behavior in social situations (Crick & Dodge, 1994; Goldfried & D’Zurilla, 1971; Huesmann & Eron, 1989; Spivack & Shure, 1974). Crick & Dodge (1994) proposed a 6-step model, with the following steps: 1) encoding social cues, 2) interpretation of cues, 3) clarification of goals, 4) response access or construction, 5) response decision, and 6) behavior enactment.

The first step, encoding social cues, involves attention, sensation and perception of cues and may include coding of appropriate or inappropriate cues as well as internal or
external cues. For example, a child who refers to a peer’s facial expression when assessing the peer’s mood would be considered as using an appropriate cue whereas an inappropriate cue may be determining the peer’s mood based on the color of his shoes. Internal cues can include the individual’s heart rate or physiological changes when encountering a social problem whereas external cues are cues presented in the specific situation.

The second step, interpretation of social cues, involves causal analyses of the events (e.g. why particular social events have occurred), intent attributions (e.g. intentional or accidental), and evaluations of their own role. In other words, individuals begin to analyze the social context of the situation. An example of intent attribution is a child who interprets getting hit by a ball on the playground to be intentional and therefore reacts in a manner different than if he were to interpret the incident as accidental. The third step involves evaluating goal attainment and past performances. The function of the goal establishes whether the individual wants to produce particular internal and/or external states or outcomes (Crick & Dodge, 1994). Evaluations of goal attainment would include whether the child wishes to make new friends or wants to gain revenge. Commitment to a particular goal has been found to be an effective motivator for behavior regulation (Cantor, 1990; Showers & Cantor, 1985).

Response access or construction, the fourth step, involves developing possible behavioral strategies to solve the social problem or situation. When developing possible strategies, the child may rely on their long-term memory to provide strategies previously used or to provide information on how to construct new responses (Crick & Dodge, 1994).

Once the child has generated a number of strategies, he/she must select the best strategy to enact. Therefore the fifth step is to decide which strategy is the most beneficial and effective for the situation at hand. The child examines a number of factors when choosing an appropriate response strategy. The first factor is the individual’s internal standards, such as morals, normative beliefs, and values (Crick & Dodge, 1994; Goldfried & D’Zurilla, 1971; Huesmann & Eron, 1989; Huesmann & Guerra, 1997). The second factor includes examining the anticipated outcomes of each possible strategy, such as the advantages and disadvantages (Crick & Dodge, 1994; Huesmann & Eron,
The third factor is the child’s confidence and self-efficacy in performing the response (Crick & Dodge, 1994). For example, if a child is hit by a ball on the playground, he/she may consider retaliating by throwing the ball back but may reject this strategy if he/she recognizes a lack of ability to throw the ball hard enough. This strategy may also be rejected if the child’s goal is to avoid confrontation rather than gain revenge.

The final step in the social-cognitive information-processing model is to enact the behavior or strategy chosen. If problems have arisen during the previous 5 steps as described earlier, the child increases the probability of enacting an inappropriate problem solving strategy (Crick & Dodge, 1994; Huesmann & Eron, 1989). Therefore, there are a number of mistakes a child can make when solving social problems and a number of areas for researchers to examine the factors influencing a child’s behavioral decision.

**Causes and Effects of Aggressive Behavior**

Children who have not developed adequate social skills and competence are often considered to be aggressive or passive when interacting with peers, and often have few and/or poor social relationships because of this. Psychologists have studied aggression and the environmental and biological factors influencing aggressive behavior extensively since the 1920s (Bandura, 1973; Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer, & Sears, 1939; Freud, 1920/1955, 1923/1961; Moyer, 1976). Researchers have examined aggression in an information-processing framework specific to social-cognitive information processes (Crick & Dodge, 1994; Goldfried & D’Zurilla, 1971).

Significant findings regarding aggressive behavior in children have covered a broad spectrum. It has been found that preschool children tend to engage in physically aggressive behaviors such as hitting, grabbing for objects, and pushing (Coie & Dodge, 1997; Hartup, 1993). Studies have also shown that aggressive children tend to communicate less effectively with their peers and demonstrate higher levels of disruptive communication than their nonaggressive peers (Dumas, Blechman, & Prinz, 1994).

Some studies have focused on the influence of hostile home environments on the development of aggressive behavior in children. Researchers have found that aggressive children tend to have exposure to paternal negativism and maternal overprotectedness (Olweus, 1993), inconsistent practice of discipline and monitoring from their parents.
(Bowers, Smith, & Binney, 1992, 1994), parental hostility and lack of warmth (Eron, Walder, & Lefkowitz, 1971; Olweus, 1980; Pettit & Bates, 1989), exposure to aggressive adult role models (Bandura, 1973; Dodge, 1991) and negative father/child relationships (Rigby, 1994). Physical abuse has been shown to be a strong predictor of aggressive behavior and social maladjustment in children as well (e.g. Cicchetti, Lynch, Shonk, & Manly, 1992; Dodge, Bates, & Pettit, 1990; Dodge, Pettit, & Bates, 1994a; Kaufman & Cicchetti, 1989).

Not only have hostile home environments been found to play a role in the development of aggressive behavior but the family’s socioeconomic status has been studied in relation to aggression as well. Children from low socioeconomic status families have been considered at-risk for the development of aggression and other behavior problems (Farrington, 1978; Patterson, Kupersmidt, & Vaden, 1990).

Several researchers have examined the negative effects of aggression in relation to child-teacher relationships and the implications it has for children’s school-related outcomes (Birch & Ladd, 1997; Blankemeyer, Flannery, & Vazsonyi, 2002; Goldstein, Arnold, Rosenberg, Stowe, & Ortiz, 2001; Howes, Matheson, & Hamilton, 1994). Aggressive children were more likely to have poor relationships with their teachers and were more likely to be at-risk for future delinquent behavior. Birch and Ladd (1997) found that children with poor child-teacher relationships were also less likely to like school and display independent, self-directed behavior compared to their peers.

According to Hune and Nelson (2002), there is a strong correlation between children with persistent behavior problems in early childhood settings and future deficits in social skills and interpersonal problem solving, including problems in later school performance, interpersonal relationships, and adult functioning.

Social Information Processing Model and Aggression

Two subtypes of aggression have been identified in recent research: reactive aggression and proactive aggression. Reactive aggression has been defined as “an angry, defensive, retaliatory response to a perceived provocation” whereas proactive aggression is “unprovoked, deliberate, goal-directed behavior used for coercion” (Hubbard, Smithmyer, Ramsden, Parker, Flanagan, Dearing, Relyea, & Simons, 2002, p.1101).
Researchers have found that reactive aggression in children can affect each of the 6 steps in the social information-processing model (i.e. Crick & Dodge, 1994; Dodge, 1986; Shantz, 1983) and is often related to peer rejection (Dodge, Lochman, Harnish, Bates, & Pettit, 1997; Dodge, Price, Bachorowski, & Newman, 1990; Pellegrini, Bartini, & Brooks, 1999; Poulin & Boivin, 2000a; Price & Dodge, 1989). Problems can occur in the first step, encoding cues, when children attend to wrong or inappropriate cues to determine their responses, which may in turn cause problems in later steps. Socially incompetent children may be at-risk if they are deficient in seeking appropriate cues (Pakaslahti, 2000). Aggressive adolescents tend to search for fewer facts in social situations (Dodge & Newman, 1981; Slaby & Guerra, 1987) and pay more attention to aggressive social interactions in their environment as compared with nonaggressive children (Gouze, 1987).

Problems can arise in the second step, interpretation of cues, if children make inappropriate causal analyses or inappropriate inferences about the intent of the situation. Aggressive children tend to base their causal analyses of situations on their past experiences of similar situations rather than relying on the facts presented at hand and tend to make inferences regarding intent of another individual in a hostile, biased way (Dodge, 1980; Dodge & Tomlin, 1987). They are more likely to view a situation as hostile and perceive others as trying to harm them intentionally (Dodge & Coie, 1987; Dodge & Frame, 1982; Dodge & Newman, 1981; Dodge & Tomlin, 1987; Guerra & Slaby, 1989; Lochman & Dodge, 1994; Slaby & Guerra, 1988; Steinberg & Dodge, 1982). According to Crick, Grotpeter, and Bigbee (2002), aggressive children “exhibit hostile attributional biases in response to ambiguous, instrumental provocation situations” (p. 1135).

The third step, clarification of goals, can also be troublesome for aggressive children. Aggressive children are more likely to adopt hostile goals (Slaby & Guerra, 1988) even when they do not perceive attributions of the situation to be hostile (Erdley & Asher, 1996). Aggressive boys are also more likely to place higher importance on goals of dominance and revenge rather than affiliation with peers as compared with nonaggressive boys (Lochman, Wayland, & White, 1993).
Aggressive children tend to have problems in the fourth step, response access or construction, because of the lack of appropriate or effective strategies devised (e.g. compromising) and their tendency to devise more aggressive, impulsive social problem-solving strategies (Gouze, 1987; Lochman & Dodge, 1994; Platt, Spivack, Altman, Altman, & Peizer, 1974; Shure & Spivack, 1972; Slaby & Guerra, 1988). Problems also arise when more than one behavioral response is required (Guerra & Slaby, 1989) because of their lack of generating a variety of strategies and behavior responses (Lochman & Dodge, 1994; Platt et al., 1974; Richard & Dodge, 1982; Shure & Spivack, 1972; Slaby & Guerra, 1988).

Aggressive children may find problems in the fifth step, response decision, when evaluating their morals or examining possible outcomes. It has been found that aggressive children tend to approve aggressive strategies more often than their nonaggressive peers (Huesmann & Eron, 1989) and that aggressive children think their peers do not suffer from the aggression they impose on them and may even deserve the aggressive response (Slaby & Guerra, 1988). Another finding is that aggressive children tend to anticipate fewer consequences of aggression and fewer emotional reactions as compared with nonaggressive peers (Guerra & Slaby, 1989; Slaby & Guerra, 1988). Numerous findings have also shown that aggressive children tend to have higher self-efficacy towards behaving aggressively and lower self-efficacy towards behaving in a prosocial manner (Erdley & Asher, 1996; Quiggle, Garber, Panak, & Dodge, 1992).

The final step, behavior enactment, is influenced by the previous 5 steps and socially incompetent children are more likely to engage in aggressive behaviors to solve social problems. Aggressive children may have skewed perceptions and thought processes during the first 5 steps, increasing their likelihood to respond in an aggressive manner.

Research on Social Competence and Social Problem Solving

Dodge, Pettit, McClaskey, & Brown (1986) studied social competence in children and hypothesized that there was a relation between processing patterns and social behavior in responding to a provocation by a peer. To test this hypothesis, they showed a self-made video containing various social conflicts with 3 types of intentions (hostile, accidental, and prosocial) and 3 types of strategy responses (aggressive, passive, and
Dodge et al. studied 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grade males and females, divided into two groups based on peer sociometric evaluations and teacher nominations. The two groups were classified as low status (highly aggressive children with severe difficulties in peer relations) and high status (average, socially competent children). Each participant was privately interviewed during two ½ hour sessions regarding each of the steps of the social-cognitive information-processing model described earlier.

The findings suggested that high status children were more likely to encode presented cues from the video and endorse competent responses. High status children were also more accurate at detecting prosocial intentions whereas low status children were more accurate at detecting hostile intentions. Low status children were more likely to generate aggressive responses but there was no difference found in the number of responses generated by low and high status children. Dodge et al also examined age differences among the participants and found a positive correlation between age and detection of prosocial intentions.

In previous research, other than that of Dodge et al (1986), examiners have studied social competence by presenting a story or hypothetical-situation instrument consisting of various situations (both intentional and accidental) to assess participants’ reactions (Crick, 1995; Crick, Grotspeter, & Bigbee, 2002). Previously, the author (1999) studied social competence by replicating the study of Dodge et al (1986) but creating a video with different hypothetical situations geared towards the preschool age group. The results indicated that aggressive, passive, and competent children were able to distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate behaviors. Differences were found in types of behaviors enacted by the aggressive, passive, and competent groups of children. However, there were many limitations to the study, including subjective teacher ratings, video scenes containing only female actors, and a lack of counterbalanced video scenes and questions to reduce order effects, which has led to the current study.

Purpose of this study

Although numerous studies have examined social competence in elementary and middle school children, preschool social competence has not been researched as extensively, especially among preschool males. The purpose of this study was to examine social competence by replicating that of Dodge et al (1986) but extending to a
lower age group. Because boys have been found to express more facial, verbal, and nonverbal anger than girls (Hubbard, 2001; Underwood, Hurley, Johanson, & Mosley, 1999), male preschool children were the focus of this study rather than female preschool children.

The hypotheses examined in this study included:

- More aggressive males will be less able to solve social problems appropriately as compared with less aggressive males. More specifically, more aggressive males will:
  - be less able to appropriately identify the intentions of the provocateur than less aggressive males
  - identify fewer cues to the provocateur’s intent from the video than less aggressive males
  - generate fewer responses and behavioral strategies than less aggressive males
  - be less able to select appropriate solutions to solve social problems as compared with less aggressive males

- Younger males will be less able to solve social problems appropriately as compared with older males. More specifically, younger males will:
  - be less able to appropriately identify the intentions of the provocateur as compared with older males
  - identify fewer cues to the provocateur’s intent from the video than older males
  - generate fewer responses and behavioral strategies than older males
  - be less able to select appropriate solutions to solve social problems as compared with older males
Chapter Three
Methodology

Participants

The participants included 44 boys, ages 3-5 ½, from preschools around the Lucas County area. Selection of participants was based on teacher rating scales of social competence. Teachers were provided a list of students whose parents consented to participation in the study. Teachers were then asked to rate those students using the teacher rating scale found in Appendix A. Children with scores in the upper and lower quarters for most aggressive and least aggressive behaviors with interrater agreement by two teachers were selected. Teachers have worked at the preschool for at least 2 months prior to completion of rating scales. Parental consent was obtained for all children participating in the study prior to teacher nominations (see Appendix D for parental consent form). There were 18 participants nominated as more aggressive and 26 participants nominated as less aggressive. The boys ages 3-4 years old were classified as the younger group and the boys ages 4 ½-5 ½ years old were classified as the older group. The participants included 22 younger boys and 22 older boys.

Materials

The materials used in this study were a television, VCR, and a short researcher-made video containing four scenes randomly arranged. Two of the scenes presented accidental social conflicts (taking the remote control and knocking over a tower of blocks) and two of the scenes presented intentional social conflicts (stealing the remote control and hitting a tower of blocks). The video scenes were counterbalanced as shown in Table 1 to reduce any order effects.

Table 1
Counterbalance of Video Scenes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group 1</th>
<th>Group 2</th>
<th>Group 3</th>
<th>Group 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scene 1 (A, C)</td>
<td>Scene 2 (A, C)</td>
<td>Scene 3 (A, C)</td>
<td>Scene 4 (A, C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene 2 (C, A)</td>
<td>Scene 3 (C, A)</td>
<td>Scene 4 (C, A)</td>
<td>Scene 1 (C, A)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene 3 (C, A)</td>
<td>Scene 4 (C, A)</td>
<td>Scene 1 (C, A)</td>
<td>Scene 2 (C, A)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene 4 (A, C)</td>
<td>Scene 1 (A, C)</td>
<td>Scene 2 (A, C)</td>
<td>Scene 3 (A, C)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A: Aggressive Ending  C: Competent Ending

Each scene consisted of a provocateur and a victim, both of whom were played by elementary school-age children. Neighborhood children were used as the actors in the
video and verbal parental consent was obtained prior to taping. Each conflict also presented two types of responses: aggressive (e.g., hitting or yelling) and competent (e.g., inviting provocateur or telling Mom). A script of each scene is included in Appendix B. When the video was completed, it was piloted with approximately 5-10 preschool children to assure understanding of each social conflict and response presented.

Procedures

The participants were escorted into a private room within the preschool by the researcher. The room contained a TV, VCR, and two chairs. The participants were shown the video individually and asked a series of questions. The questions were also counterbalanced to reduce any order effects. Each interview lasted approximately 10-15 minutes. The video was paused after each social conflict and the participants were asked, “What happened? Do you think she did that on purpose or was it an accident?” The number of correct responses was summed for both accidental and intentional conflicts separately to measure the participants’ abilities to differentiate the two types of conflicts. This question assessed the participants’ interpretation of cues, the second step of the social information processing model. A list of correct answers, along with operational definitions for the following interview questions can be found in Appendix C.

The participants were then asked to give reasons as to why they thought a conflict was either accidental or intentional to assess their ability to encode cues (the first step of the social information processing model). They received a 1 for a response that includes specific cues present in the video and a 0 for irrelevant cues (i.e., internally generated cues, no response). These scores were then summed for both accidental and intentional conflicts separately to measure the ability to identify cues.

The participants were also asked to generate responses to what they would do if they were in the situation presented in the video. Competent responses were scored as 1, aggressive and passive responses were scored as 0. These scores were also summed separately for both accidental and intentional conflicts to measure their ability to generate competent solutions (the fifth step of the social information processing model).

Finally, the participants were shown the responses to each conflict and asked to rate each response as a good way (scored as 1) or a bad way (scored as 0) to act, which were counterbalanced to reduce any order effects. These scores were then summed.
separately for accidental and intentional conflicts and by type of response to measure the participants’ opinions of what is right and wrong. Specific examples of what is appropriate and inappropriate can be found in Appendix C as well.
Chapter Four

Results

Three multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVA) were conducted to compare the social information-processing variables with two independent variables: age (younger vs. older) and aggressive tendency (more aggressive vs. less aggressive). The first MANOVA examined all five dependent variables in intentional conflicts, while the second MANOVA examined all five dependent variables in accidental conflicts. Responses from intentional and accidental conflicts were summed to examine all five dependent variables in both types of conflicts, which was the third MANOVA conducted. No significant differences were found. The means and standard deviations for each of the social information-processing variables can be found in Table 2. Several one way analyses of variance (ANOVA) were conducted to compare each of the social information-processing variables with two independent variables: age (younger vs. older) and aggressive tendency (more aggressive vs. less aggressive). The 3-4 year olds were classified as younger children, whereas the 4 ½-5 ½ year olds were classified as older children.

Ability to identify specific cues of intention

The first set of one way ANOVAs was conducted to compare the ability to identify cues in accidental and intentional conflicts among age group and aggressive tendency, the first step of the social information-processing model. There were no significant differences found among age group or aggressive tendency. Differences approaching significance were found between age group and one’s ability to identify specific cues, $F(1, 42) = 1.278, p < 0.104$. The means of cues identified between the two age groups are shown in Figure 1. Although older children’s means of cues identified were greater than younger children’s means, the difference was not great enough to be significant. Differences approaching significance were also found between age group and one’s ability to identify specific cues within accidental conflicts, $F(1, 42) = 3.185, p < 0.082$. Again, older children’s means were greater than younger children’s means, but not enough to be significant, as shown in Figure 2.
Ability to appropriately identify the intentions of the provocateur

The second step of the social information-processing model was examined through another set of one way ANOVAs to compare the ability to judge accidental and intentional conflicts among the two independent variables. There were no significant differences found among age group or aggressive tendency. The third step of the social information-processing model, clarification of goals, was not examined directly in this study.

Ability to generate responses and behavioral strategies

The fourth step of the model, response access or construction, was examined through another set of one way ANOVAs to compare the number of competent responses for accidental and intentional conflicts generated among age group and aggressive tendency. There were no significant differences found among age group or aggressive tendency.

Ability to select appropriate solutions

A fourth set of one way ANOVAs was conducted to compare the approval of the two types of responses (aggressive and competent) among the two independent variables, measuring the fifth step of the model. There were significant differences found between age group and the approval of aggressive responses, F (1, 42) = 4.543, p < 0.040. Figure 3 illustrates the means of aggressive endings approved by younger and older children. It was found that older children were more likely to disapprove of aggressive endings as appropriate responses than younger children, regardless of type of conflict. Differences approaching significance were found between age group and one’s approval of aggressive responses in accidental conflicts as well, F (1, 42) = 3.185, p < 0.082. More older children disapproved of aggressive endings as appropriate responses to accidental social problems than younger children, however the difference was not large enough to be significant. The means can be found in Figure 4. There were no significant differences between aggressive tendency and approval of the two types of responses.

Ability to appropriately solve social problems

Finally, a set of one way ANOVAs was conducted to compare the ability to solve accidental and intentional conflicts (based on the first 5 steps of the social information-processing model) among age group and aggressive tendency. There were no significant
differences found among age group or aggressive tendency. Differences approaching significance were found between age group and one’s ability to solve intentional social problems, \( F(1, 42) = 2.939, p < 0.094 \). The means of intentional conflicts solved appropriately for both younger and older children are illustrated in Figure 5. More older children were able to solve intentional social problems than younger children, however the difference was not large enough to be significant. Differences approaching significance were also found between age group and one’s ability to solve social problems (regardless of intention), \( F(1, 42) = 2.815, p < 0.101 \). The means of social problems solved using all 5 steps of the social information-processing model are illustrated in Figure 6 for both younger and older age groups.

**Correlations between Age and Social Information-Processing Variables**

Although there were no significant differences found among the two age groups and the social information-processing variables, this may have been because of the arbitrary and close age grouping ranges of children. Therefore additional analyses of age trends were examined through several correlational analyses. As shown in Table 3, there were significant positive correlations found between age in months and the following variables for accidental conflicts: the ability to select appropriate solutions, the ability to generate appropriate solutions, and the ability to solve accidental social problems. As shown in Table 4, there were also significant positive correlations found between age in months and the following variables, which were sums of intentional and accidental conflicts: the ability to select appropriate solutions to solve social problems, the ability to generate appropriate solutions, and the ability to solve social problems, both intentional and accidental. As age increased, children were more likely to rate aggressive responses as inappropriate and competent responses as appropriate solutions to both accidental and intentional conflicts. With increased age, children were also able to generate more solutions to accidental and intentional conflicts, and were better able to solve social problems, regardless of intention.

**Correlations among Social Information-Processing Variables**

Several significant post hoc correlations were found among the social information-processing variables, as well. As shown in Table 5, significant positive correlations were found between the ability to solve social problems and the following
variables: ability to identify the intention of the provocateur, ability to identify specific cues from the video, ability to generate appropriate solutions, and the ability to select appropriate solutions. There were also significant positive correlations found between the ability to identify intentional cues and accidental cues, as well as between the ability to identify intentional conflicts and intentional cues. A significant negative correlation was found between the ability to identify intentional conflicts and the ability to identify accidental conflicts. Children who were better able to identify intentional conflicts were not better able to identify accidental conflicts. These correlations can be found in Table 6.
Chapter Five
Discussion and Conclusions

This study provides some support for the six steps of the social information-processing model developed by Crick & Dodge (1994). The social information processing model, as developed by Crick & Dodge (1994), includes the following six steps: 1) encoding social cues, 2) interpretation of cues, 3) clarification of goals, 4) response access or construction, 5) response decision, and 6) behavior enactment. Although in the present study no statistically significant differences were found between more aggressive and less aggressive children, differences were found between younger and older children’s abilities in these six steps. Results suggest that there are differences between the social problem solving abilities of younger preschool males versus older preschool males. More specifically, older males were found to be better social problem solvers overall as compared to younger males. Older males were better able to select appropriate solutions and generate appropriate solutions than younger males, for both accidental conflicts, and social problems in general.

The first step, encoding social cues, involves attention, sensation, and perception of cues and may include coding of appropriate or inappropriate cues as well as internal or external cues. It was hypothesized that older males would be able to identify more cues from the video than younger males. The present correlational results supported this hypothesis. It was also hypothesized that more aggressive males would be able to identify more cues from the video than less aggressive males. The present results did not support this hypothesis and no significant differences were found between more aggressive and less aggressive males. A strong positive correlation was found between children who were able to identify specific cues from the video and children who were able to solve social problems, which supports Pakaslathi’s (2000) findings that socially incompetent children may be at-risk if they are deficient in seeking appropriate cues.

The second step, interpretation of social cues, involves causal analyses of the events, intent attributions, and evaluations of their own role. It was hypothesized that more aggressive males and older males would be better able to identify the intentions of the provocateur than less aggressive males and younger males. No significant differences were found between more aggressive and less aggressive males, or older and younger
males. A strong positive correlation was found, however, between children who were able to identify the intentions of the provocateur and children who were able to solve social problems, regardless of age or aggressive tendency. These results support previous findings by Lemerise and Arsenio (2000) that children’s understanding and interpretation of situations influences their related behaviors.

The third step involves evaluating goal attainment and past performances, and was not examined directly in this study. Response access or construction, the fourth step, involves developing possible behavioral strategies to solve social problems. It was hypothesized that younger males would generate fewer responses and behavioral strategies than older males, which was supported by the correlational findings in this study. It was found that older males generated more responses than younger males. It was also hypothesized that more aggressive males would generate fewer responses and behavioral strategies than less aggressive males. No significant differences were found between more aggressive and less aggressive males, which replicated the findings of Dodge et al (1984) where no differences were found in the number of responses generated by low and high status (more aggressive and less aggressive) children.

The fifth step of the social information processing model involves the selection of the best strategy to enact, based on internal standards, anticipated outcomes, and confidence or self-efficacy in performing the response. It was hypothesized that younger males would be less able to select appropriate solutions than older males. The present results supported this hypothesis and significant differences were found between younger and older males and their ability to select appropriate solutions. It was also hypothesized that more aggressive males would be less able to select appropriate solutions to solve social problems than less aggressive males. This hypothesis was not supported by the present results and no significant differences were found. Furthermore, the present results did not replicate the findings of Huesmann and Eron (1989) that aggressive children tend to approve aggressive strategies more often than their nonaggressive peers.

The final step is to enact the behavior or strategy chosen to solve a social problem. It was hypothesized that younger males would be less able to appropriately solve social problems than older males, which was supported by the current findings. Older males were found to be better able to appropriately solve social problems than
younger males. It was also hypothesized that more aggressive males would be less able to appropriately solve social problems than less aggressive males. No significant differences were found between more aggressive and less aggressive males, and this hypothesis was not supported.

Present findings demonstrate significant positive correlations between the ability to solve social problems and the following variables: ability to identify specific cues from the video (step 1), ability to identify the intention of the provocateur (step 2), ability to generate appropriate solutions (step 4), and the ability to select appropriate solutions (step 5). These findings support previous findings that if problems have arisen during the previous 5 steps, the child increases the probability of inappropriately solving the social problem (Crick & Dodge, 1994; Huesmann & Eron, 1989).

Limitations

The study conclusions need to be viewed within the context of the study’s limitations. The strength and effect size of the findings is limited by the fact that the sample size was smaller than expected. Many of the participants were in the 4 - 5 ½ year old age range. The small number of younger children, especially those who were 3 years old, may have limited the effects found between younger and older children because of the relatively small cognitive differences between 4 and 4 ½ year olds. Further work with a larger sample size including more 3 year old preschool males is necessary to further examine age differences in social problem solving.

A second limitation is that teacher rating forms were used to select the aggressive participants. Although each participant was rated by two separate teachers who knew him for more than two months and the teachers were given operational definitions of aggressiveness, the ratings were probably subjective and varied by school class. That is, teachers may have picked the most and least aggressive students but the range of aggression in each class may have been narrow. Aggressive tendency may also be more variable among preschool children, in that many children engage in aggressive behaviors at that age. Another limitation with the ratings was that teachers rated only those students whose parents had given consent for participation. Parents of children with severe emotional or social skill deficits may not have given consent, which may have limited the number of students who might have been chosen as extremely aggressive. Therefore the
participants may not have been representative of highly aggressive children. Children participants rated as aggressive may not have been rated as aggressive if a wider spectrum of behaviors were found within their class. Further research on aggressive males (i.e. those with possible emotional disturbance, oppositional defiance, or social skill deficits) is critical to examine aggressive tendency differences in social problem solving.

Conclusions and Implications

Despite these limitations, this study demonstrated that as children get older, their abilities to appropriately solve social problems are greater. It is possible that as children are exposed to more complex social situations, they are provided with instruction, whether direct or indirect, on how to behave in and solve social problems. Children's cognitive development may also influence their abilities to solve social problems related to an increased understanding of social situations with age. Research on theory of mind (e.g. Zelazo, 1999) have found that children begin to understand differences between intentional and accidental around the age of four.

The development of social competence in young children is important to facilitate the development of appropriate interpersonal relationships later in life. Social incompetence can lead to future deficits in social skills and interpersonal problem solving, as well as problems in later school performance, interpersonal relationships, and adult functioning (Hune & Nelson, 2002). The development of social competence and the ability to solve social problems may be related to age and maturation, as found in this study. Cognitive development and exposure to more complex social situations may be an important component in the development of social competence. This study also provided further evidence that appropriately engaging in the six steps of the social information processing model may be important in solving social problems. Although social competence and the ability to solve social problems may also be related to aggressive tendency, this study did not show differences among more aggressive or less aggressive children. Further investigation of 3 – 5½ year old children who engage in severe aggressive behaviors is necessary to examine aggressive tendency and age differences in social problem solving.
References


McFall, R. M. (1982).  A review and reformulation of the concept of social skills.  
 _Behavioral Assessment, 4_, 1-35.


Figures and Tables

Figure 1

*Means of Cues Identified*

![Bar chart showing means of cues identified for younger and older age groups.](chart1)

Figure 2

*Means of Cues Identified in Accidental Conflicts*

![Bar chart showing means of cues identified in accidental conflicts for younger and older age groups.](chart2)
Figure 3

Means of Disapproved Aggressive Solutions

Figure 4

Means of Disapproved Aggressive Solutions in Accidental Conflicts
Figure 5

*Means of Intentional Conflicts Solved Appropriately*

Figure 6

*Means of Appropriately Solved Social Problems (based on 6 step model)*
Table 2

*Means and Standard Deviations of Social Information-Processing Variables*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Older</th>
<th>Younger</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More Aggressive</td>
<td>Less Aggressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identified Conflicts</td>
<td>1.556/.527</td>
<td>1.308/.751</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific Cues Identified</td>
<td>1.000/.866</td>
<td>1.000/.817</td>
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<tr>
<td>Generated Appropriate Solutions</td>
<td>1.111/.928</td>
<td>1.462/.776</td>
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<tr>
<td>Approval of Competent Responses</td>
<td>1.667/.500</td>
<td>1.539/.519</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to Solve Problems</td>
<td>1.400/.458</td>
<td>1.446/.348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identified Conflicts</td>
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<tr>
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Table 3

*Correlations between Age and Social Information-Processing Variables of Accidental Conflicts*

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<th>Ability to Solve Accidental Problems</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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<td>.365*</td>
<td>.427**</td>
<td>.400**</td>
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<td>.665**</td>
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<td>.558**</td>
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** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)
### Table 4

**Correlations between Age and Social Information-Processing Variables of Intentional and Accidental Conflicts**

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<th>Ability to Solve Intentional Problems</th>
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<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
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<td>.722**</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Disapproval of Aggressive Responses</strong></td>
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<td>.576**</td>
<td>.669**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Approval of Competent Responses</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>.775**</td>
<td>.514**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Appropriate Selection of Responses</strong></td>
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<td>.784**</td>
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<td>.884**</td>
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**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)**

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)
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<th>Appropriate Selection of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability to Solve Social Problems</td>
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<td>.722**</td>
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<td>.641**</td>
<td>.784**</td>
</tr>
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<td>.307*</td>
<td>.219</td>
<td>.322*</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Specific Cues Identified</td>
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<td>.320*</td>
<td>.295</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.391**</td>
<td>.489**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disapproval of Aggressive Responses</td>
<td>.391**</td>
<td>.884**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approval of Competent Responses</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.775**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)
Table 6

*Post Hoc Correlations*

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<tr>
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<th>Accidental Cues Identified</th>
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<th>Identification of Accidental Conflicts</th>
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<td>Intentional Cues Identified</td>
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<td>.620**</td>
<td>-.245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accidental Cues Identified</td>
<td>.263</td>
<td>.135</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification of Intentional Conflicts</td>
<td></td>
<td>- .335*</td>
<td></td>
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** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)
Appendix A
Teacher Rating Scale

Attached is a list of students whose parents have given consent for participation in this study. Please write down the names and ages of the 6 MOST aggressive male students from this list based on the definition found below. Please try to list 6 students, even if the students only exhibit these behaviors some of the time or infrequently.

Aggression: Deliberate actions that are intended to harm others or gain control over another person. Usually exhibited by physical (i.e. hitting, kicking, shoving, biting, etc.) or verbal (i.e. yelling, name-calling, swearing, etc.) behaviors.

6 MOST Aggressive Students:

1. _______________________________ Age: ________
2. _______________________________ Age: ________
3. _______________________________ Age: ________
4. _______________________________ Age: ________
5. _______________________________ Age: ________
6. _______________________________ Age: ________

Please write down the names of the 6 LEAST aggressive male students from the attached list based on the definition found above.

6 LEAST Aggressive Students:

1. _______________________________ Age: ________
2. _______________________________ Age: ________
3. _______________________________ Age: ________
4. _______________________________ Age: ________
5. _______________________________ Age: ________
6. _______________________________ Age: ________
Appendix B

Script of Video Scenes

The Cast
Tyger: Age 5, African-American male
Maryann: Age 6, Caucasian female
Brian: Age 7, Caucasian male

Scene 1: Pushing over a tower of blocks (Intentional)
(Tyger enters the room, Maryann is building a tall tower of blocks)

Tyger: Hey Maryann, what are you doing?
Brian: I’m trying to build the tallest tower ever.
Tyger: What a dumb idea! (Tyger walks up to the tower and kicks it over) Ha, ha. What do you think of your tower now?
Pause tape, ask participant Question 1, 2 and 3.

Ending 1: Aggressive response from Maryann
Maryann: You’re SO mean!! Get out of here, I don’t want to play with you EVER!!
(Maryann shoves Tyger out of the way)
Pause tape, ask participant Question 4.

Ending 2: Competent response from Maryann
Maryann: Well, looks like I have to start over. Tyger, do you want to help me rebuild this tower?
Pause tape, ask participant Question 4.

Scene 2: Knocking over a tower of blocks (Accidental)
(Tyger enters the room, Maryann is building a tall tower of blocks)

Tyger: Hey Maryann, what are you doing?
Maryann: I’m trying to build the tallest tower ever.
Tyger: Wow, that’s getting really…(Tyger trips on a block and falls into the tower)
Pause tape, ask participant Question 1, 2 and 3.

Ending 1: Aggressive response from Maryann
Maryann: WATCH OUT!!! You just RUINED my tower! Leave me alone!
Pause tape, ask participant Question 4.

Ending 2: Competent response from Maryann
Maryann: Are you okay? Don’t worry about the tower, we can rebuild it together. Do you want to help me rebuild it?
Pause tape, ask participant Question 4.
Scene 3: Stealing the TV remote (Intentional)
(Tyger and Brian are sitting on the couch watching TV, Maryann enters the room)

Maryann: Hey guys. What are you watching?
Tyger: We're watching cartoons!
Maryann: That’s boring! I want to watch something else. My favorite TV show is on right now, give me that remote! (Maryann takes the remote from Brian’s hands)
Pause tape, ask participant Question 1, 2 and 3.

Ending 1: Aggressive response from Brian
Brian: We were here first! (Brian steals the remote back and hits Maryann on the arm)
Pause tape, ask participant Question 4.

Ending 2: Competent response from Brian
Brian: Maryann, what if we watch your favorite show now and then put on cartoons when it is over?
Pause tape, ask participant Question 4.

Scene 4: Maryann picks up the remote (Accidental)
(Tyger and Brian are sitting on the couch watching TV, they get up to get some popcorn. While they are gone, Maryann enters the room and changes the channel before they come back into the room)
Pause tape, ask participant Question 1, 2 and 3.

Ending 1: Aggressive response from Brian
Brian: HEY!! We were watching cartoons! Put it back on or I’ll kick you in the knees!
Pause tape, ask participant Question 4.

Ending 2: Competent response from Brian
Brian: Um, Maryann, we were watching cartoons. We just got up to get some popcorn. Could you put it back on the cartoon channel please?
Pause tape, ask participant Question 4.
## Appendix C

### Interview Questions and Scoring Rubric

#### Scene 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview questions asked</th>
<th>1 point response</th>
<th>0 point response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.</strong> What happened? Do you think he did that on purpose or was it an accident?</td>
<td>On purpose (i.e. “He meant to do that.”)</td>
<td>An accident (i.e. “He didn’t mean to.” “He slipped.”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.</strong> Why do you think it was an accident (or intentional)?</td>
<td>Any cues found in the video (i.e. pushed the tower over, said that was a dumb idea, laughed at Maryann)</td>
<td>Any cues not found in the video (i.e. had a blue shirt on, didn’t watch his step, called Maryann dumb)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.</strong> What would you do if your friend pushed over your tower of blocks?</td>
<td>Competent response (i.e. ask him to help rebuild the tower, ask him to play something else)</td>
<td>Aggressive response (i.e. kick him or hit him, call him names) Passive response (i.e. start crying, run to tell on him)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.</strong> Do you think that was the right thing for Maryann to do?</td>
<td>Yes, for competent response ending</td>
<td>Yes, for aggressive response ending No, for aggressive response ending</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Scene 2:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview questions asked</th>
<th>1 point response</th>
<th>0 point response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.</strong> What happened? Do you think he did that on purpose or was it an accident?</td>
<td>An accident (i.e. “He didn’t mean to.” “He tripped.”)</td>
<td>On purpose (i.e. “He meant to do that.” “He walked up and pushed the tower over.”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.</strong> Why do you think it was an accident (or intentional)?</td>
<td>Any cues found in the video (i.e. slipped on the block)</td>
<td>Any cues not found in the video</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.</strong> What would you do if your friend tripped and knocked over your tower of blocks?</td>
<td>Competent response (i.e. ask him to help rebuild the tower, ask him to play something else)</td>
<td>Aggressive response (i.e. kick him or hit him, call him names) Passive response (i.e. start crying, run to tell on him)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.</strong> Do you think that was the right thing for Maryann to do?</td>
<td>Yes, for competent response ending</td>
<td>Yes, for aggressive response ending No, for aggressive response ending</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Scene 3:

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<th>Interview questions asked</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What happened? Do you think she did that on purpose or was it an accident?</td>
<td>On purpose (i.e. “She meant to do that.”)</td>
<td>An accident (i.e. “She didn’t mean to.” “She thought they were done watching.”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Why do you think it was an accident (or intentional)?</td>
<td>• Any cues found in the video (i.e. grabbed remote out of hands, said ‘Give me that remote!’)</td>
<td>• Any cues not found in the video (i.e.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What would you do if your friend took the TV remote from you?</td>
<td>• Competent response (i.e. ask if she could watch her show later, ask if she wanted to watch cartoons with me)</td>
<td>• Aggressive response (i.e. kick her or hit her, grab the remote back) • Passive response (i.e. start crying, run to tell on her)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Do you think that was the right thing for Brian to do?</td>
<td>• Yes, for competent response ending • No, for aggressive ending</td>
<td>• Yes, for aggressive response ending • No, for competent response ending</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Scene 4:

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<tr>
<td>1. What happened? Do you think she did that on purpose or was it an accident?</td>
<td>An accident (i.e. “He didn’t mean to.” “He tripped.”)</td>
<td>On purpose (i.e. “He meant to do that.” “He walked up and pushed the tower over.”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Why do you think it was an accident (or intentional)?</td>
<td>• Any cues found in the video (i.e. slipped on the block)</td>
<td>• Any cues not found in the video</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What would you do if your friend changed the channel while you were out of the room?</td>
<td>• Competent response (i.e. ask if she could switch the channel back, ask if she wants to watch cartoons)</td>
<td>• Aggressive response (i.e. call her names, grab the remote back) • Passive response (i.e. start crying, let her watch and not say anything)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Do you think that was the right thing for Brian to do?</td>
<td>• Yes, for competent response ending • No, for aggressive ending</td>
<td>• Yes, for aggressive response ending • No, for competent response ending</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D
Parental Consent Form

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian:

Social skills and social competence in children have become hot topics among parents, teachers, and researchers over the years, especially with the increase in school violence. The purpose of this study is to provide insight into the development of social skills and social competence in children. In order to study this, I have developed a researcher-made videotape consisting of 4 hypothetical conflicts (2 accidental conflicts and 2 intentional conflicts). Each conflict is followed by 2 types of responses (aggressive and competent). If your child is selected, I will be asking a series of questions to him/her in a one-on-one interview throughout the viewing of the video. The interview will only take place once for each participant and should last between 10-15 minutes.

There are no risks associated with participating in this study and the participant’s name and answers will be kept confidential. The participants will be assigned ID numbers to ensure confidentiality of each individual.

Please note that participation is voluntary and the participant may discontinue participation at any time or refuse to answer specific questions during the interview. Feel free to contact my faculty advisor (Dr. Doris Bergen, 513-529-6622) or myself if you have any concerns or questions. For questions regarding participants’ rights, you may contact the Office for the Advancement of Scholarship and Teaching at 513-529-3734 or humansubjects@muohio.edu. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Gina Federico, M.S.
School Psychology Program
Miami University
513-523-6635

Please sign below:

I agree, if selected, to permit my child, _____________________ to participate in the study described above. I understand that all information will be kept confidential and that my son/daughter can discontinue participation at any time or refuse to answer questions during the interview.

_____________________________    ___________________
Signature of Parent/Guardian     Date
Dear Teachers:

Social skills and social competence in children have become hot topics among parents, teachers, and researchers over the years, especially with the increase in school violence. The purpose of this study is to provide insight into the development of social skills and social competence in children. In order to study this, I have developed a researcher-made videotape consisting of 4 hypothetical conflicts (2 accidental conflicts and 2 intentional conflicts). Each conflict is followed by 2 types of responses (aggressive and competent). I will be asking a series of questions to each participant in a one-on-one interview throughout the viewing of the video. The interview will only take place once for each participant and should last between 10-15 minutes.

In order to identify participants for this study, I need nominations from teachers of students who are most and least aggressive based on a list of selected students. Parental permission will be obtained for each participant prior to teacher nominations. There are no risks in participating in this study and the participant’s name and answers will be kept confidential. The participants will be assigned ID numbers to ensure confidentiality of each individual.

Please note that participation is voluntary and the participant may discontinue participation at any time or refuse to answer specific questions during the interview. Feel free to contact my faculty advisor (Dr. Doris Bergen, 513-529-6622) or myself if you have any concerns or questions. For questions regarding participants’ rights, you may contact the Office for the Advancement of Scholarship and Teaching at 513-529-3734 or humansubjects@muohio.edu. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Gina Federico, M.S.
School Psychology Program
Miami University
513-523-6635

Please sign below:

I agree to participate in this study by nominating the 6 most and least aggressive children based on a list of selected students. I understand that all information will be kept confidential and that my students can discontinue participation at any time or refuse to answer questions during the interview.

_____________________________    ___________________
Signature of Teacher      Date
Appendix F
Child Assent Form

In order to obtain the participants’ assent, the following script will be used.

Researcher: Hi __Participant's Name__. We’re going to go in this room and watch a video. I’m going to ask you a few questions about it. I think you’ll have fun but you don’t have to do this if you don’t want to. Do you want to come with me and watch a fun video? Also, is it okay if I tape-record what we say while watching the video?