



CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE FOR CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING

Early Childhood Development

CCL CCA

CANADIAN COUNCIL ON LEARNING
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EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNING KNOWLEDGE CENTRE

Learning to Live Together

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Social and Emotional Development in Young Children



- What is it?
- Why is it important?
- Origins and developmental sequence
- What can we do?
- Preschool prevention programs and their efficacy
- Questions and comments

Social and Emotional Skills in Young Children: What are They?

Different behaviours, verbal and nonverbal, aiming at developing harmonious relationships with others.

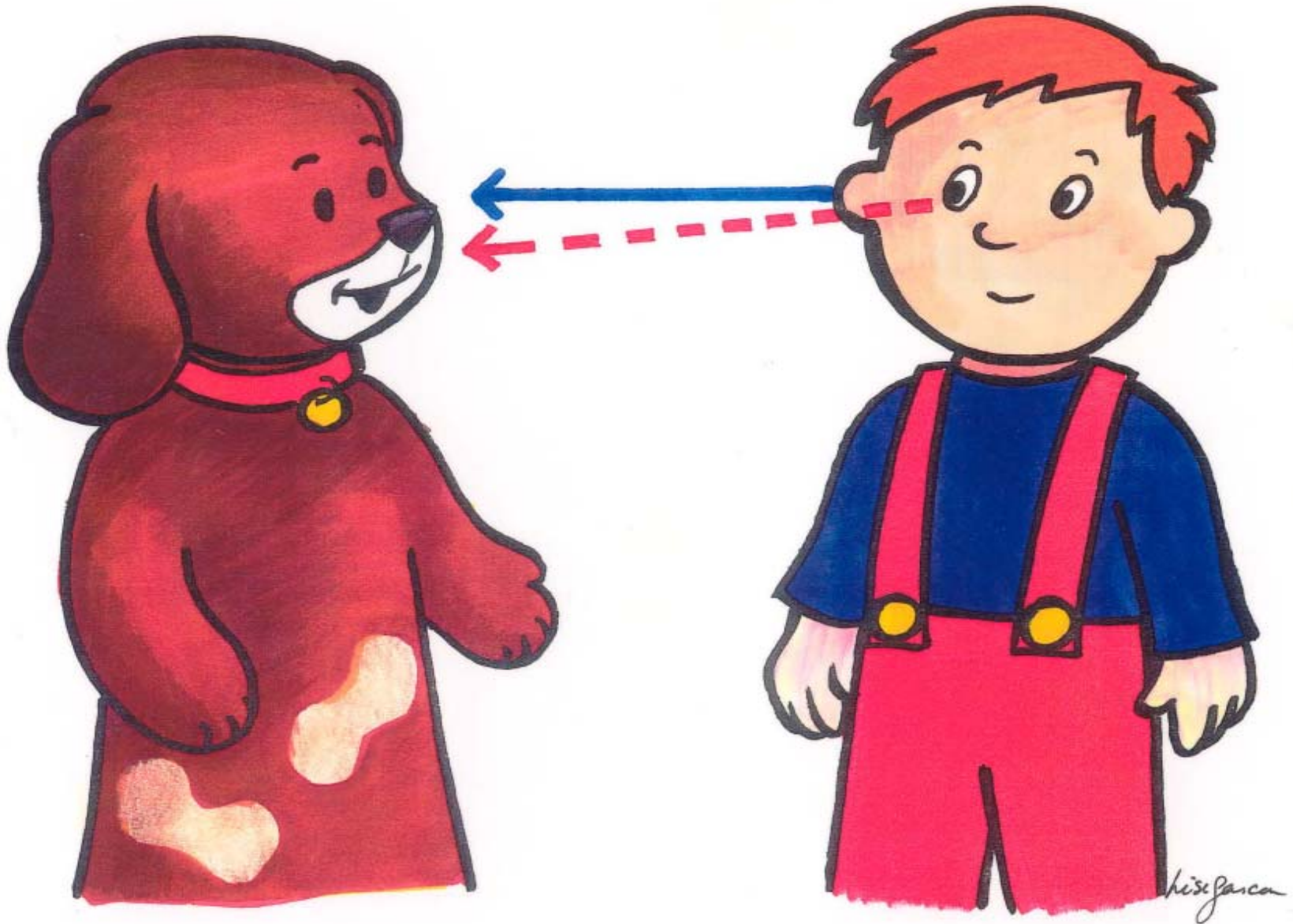
- Prosocial and cooperative play skills
- Language and communication skills
- Emotional understanding
- Self-regulation
- Social problem-solving skills

Prosocial and Cooperative Play Skills

- Smile
- Greet
- Invite
- Accept an invitation
- Share toys
- Propose a game
- Collaborate in pretend play

Language and Communication Skills

- Joint attention
- Talk to other children (peers), adult
- Suggest and elaborate joint play
- Ask questions and respond
- Invite others to play



Emotional Understanding

- Identify one's emotions
- Understand others' emotions



Self-Regulation

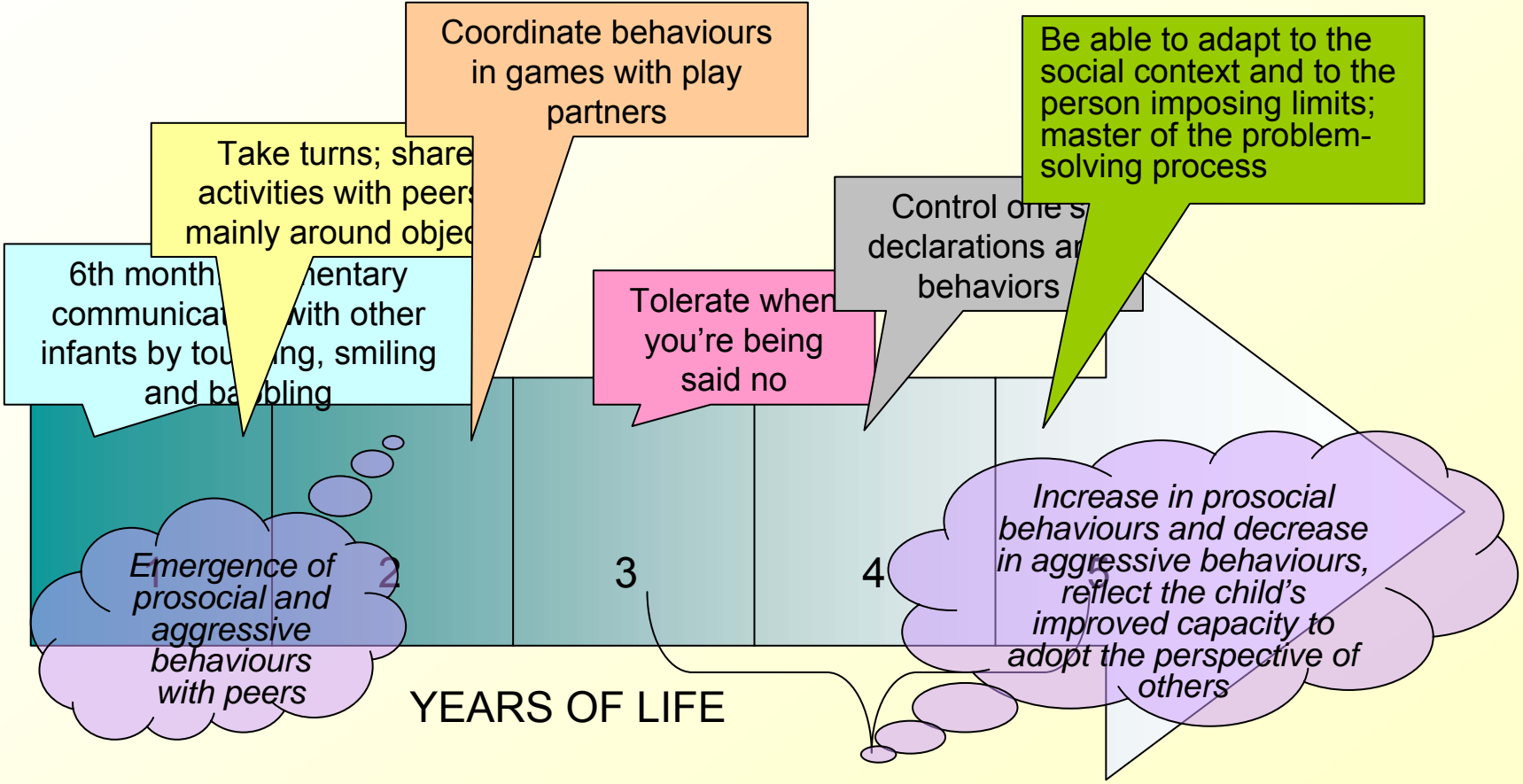
- Wait for one's turn
- Deal with refusals
- Tolerate frustration
- Calm down
- Inhibit reactive aggression
- Be flexible, adapt to context

To acquire greater self control, the child has to be convinced that it is worthy.

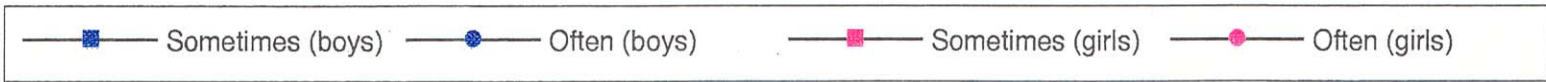
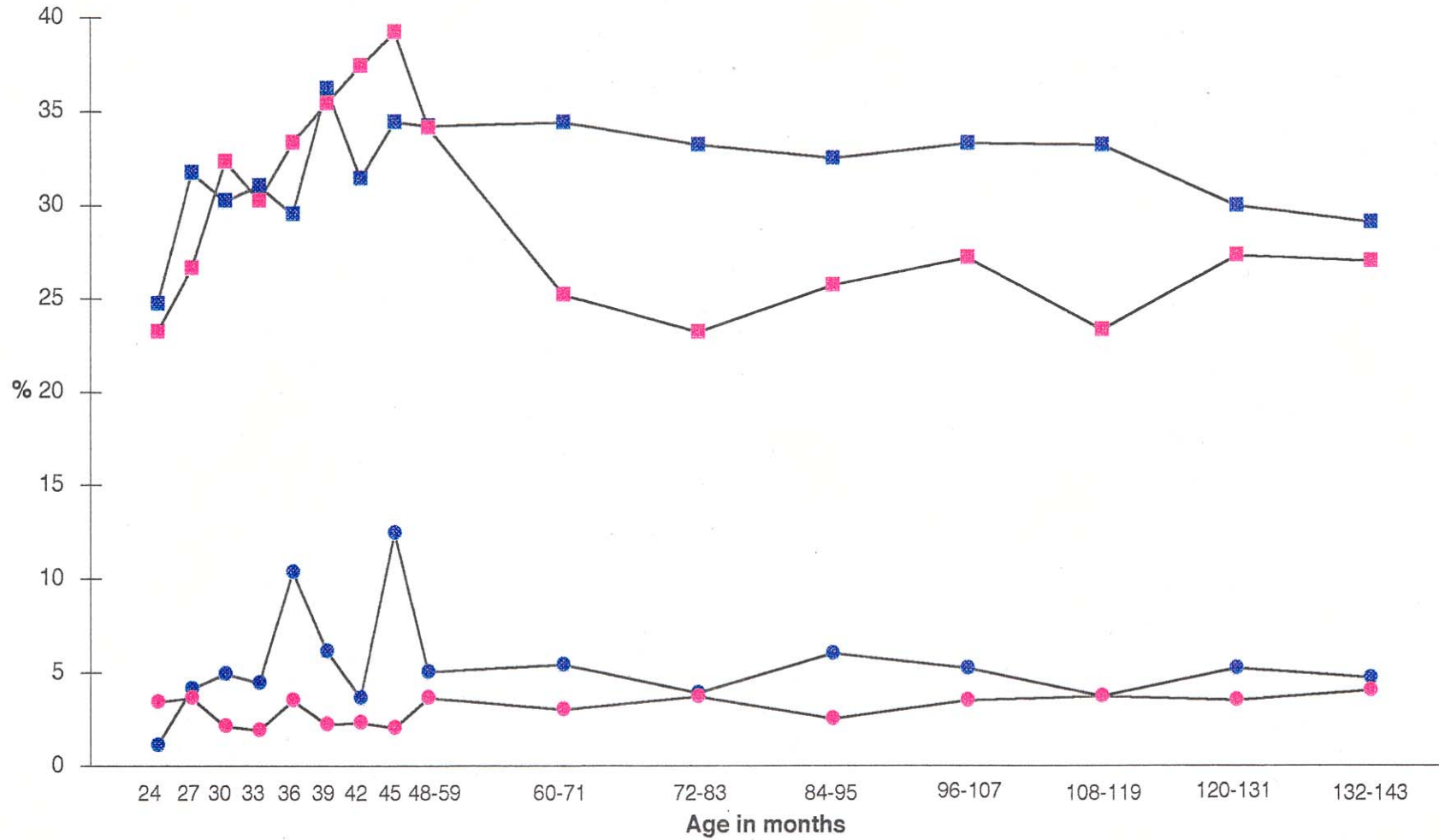
Social Problem-Solving Skills

- Identify problems or conflicts
- Manage conflicts verbally
- Generate alternative solutions to social problems
- Make choices; put the plan into action
- Negotiate with peers
- Evaluate the impacts of one's choices (success, failures)

Normative Developmental Sequence



Hits, bites, kicks (boys & girls)



When Should We Worry?

- Social difficulties typically emerge by age four, when children can identify peers they like and peers they dislike
- Why do some children develop such difficulties?
 - Deviant physical attributes (speech problems, physical clumsiness or disability)
 - Children's behaviours (duration in time):
 - Aggression*, opposition
 - Hyperactivity
 - Shyness, anxiety, social withdrawal

Early Social Skills

- These skills emerge during early childhood and are important throughout lifetime.
- More importantly, these early skills present some moderate stability, extending through adolescence.

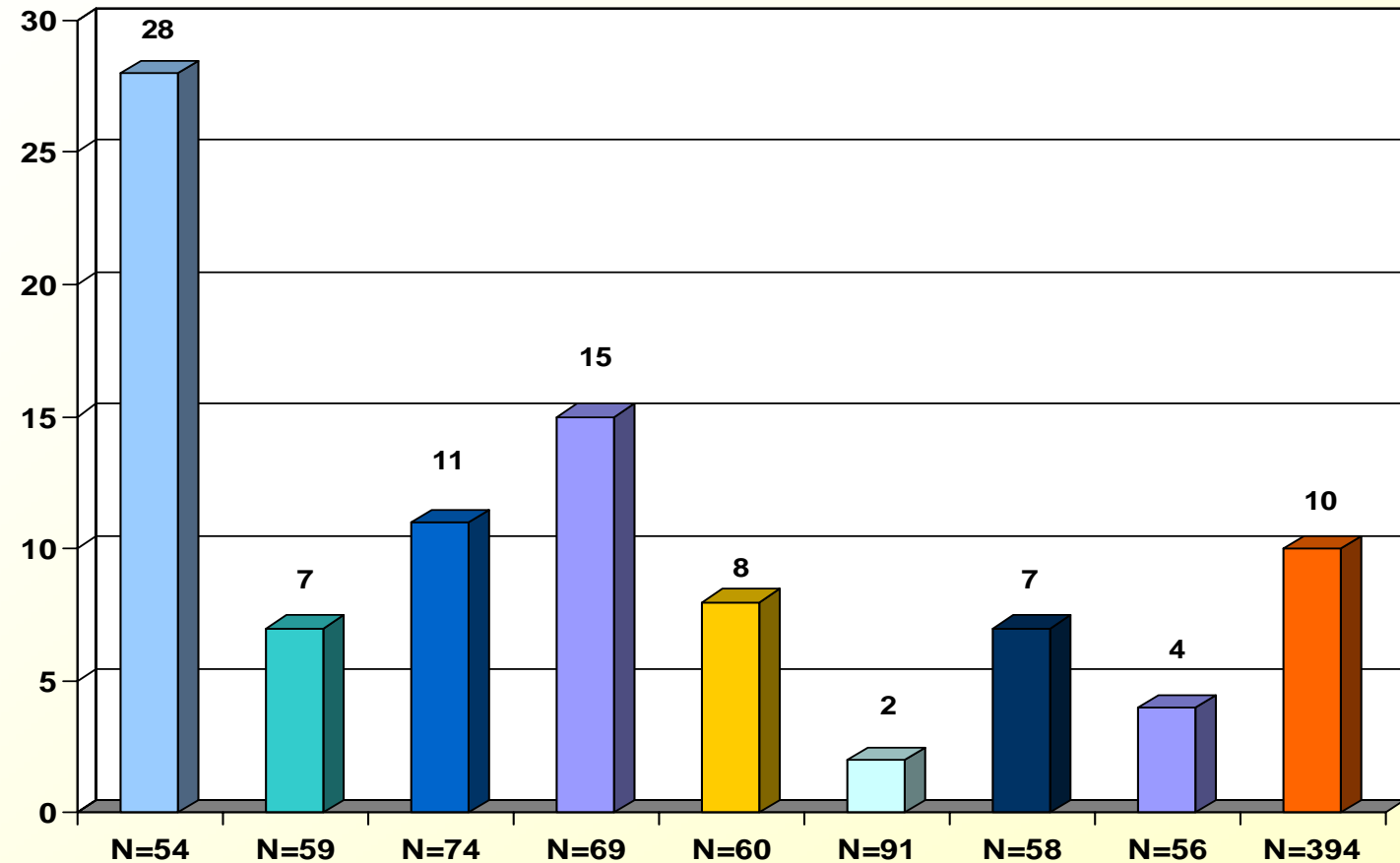


Long Term Outcomes of Early Social Emotional Skills

Why Is It Important:

- Associated risks of early social difficulties:
 - School dropout
 - Delinquency
 - Emotional problems (simultaneously and subsequently)
- Risks associated with lasting social difficulties:
 - Loneliness, depression, anxiety, physical health problems, educational underachievement

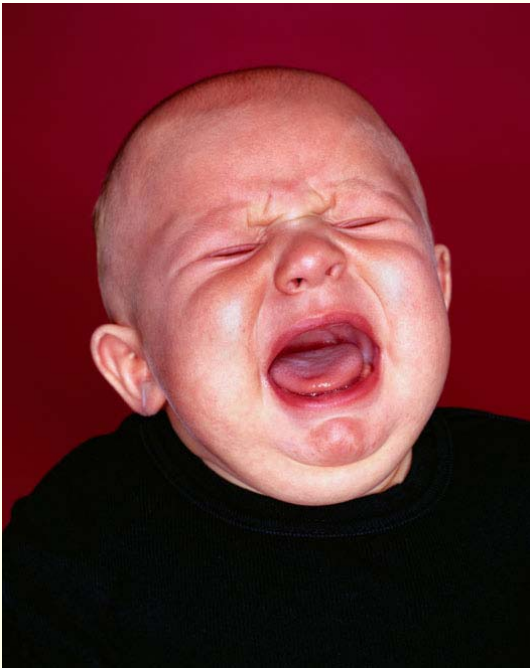
PERCENTAGE OF DELINQUENCY BETWEEN AGE 10 AND 13 AS FUNCTION OF PERSONALITY TYPES IN KINDERGARTEN



HYP + HYP + ANX - PRO - HYP + ANX - PRO + HYP + ANX + PRO - HYP - ANX + PRO + HYP - ANX - PRO - HYP - ANX - PRO + HYP - ANX + PRO - PRO + ANX +

Factors Influencing Social and Emotional Skills in Young Children

Biology: Genetics and prenatal factors



- Temperament
- Other skills associated with socialization (e.g., hyperactivity, language) are also influenced by biological factors

Factors Influencing Social and Emotional Skills in Young Children

Environmental influences:

- Sibling interactions
- Parental conduct
- Peer relations
- Socioeconomical status of the family
- Parents' psychological health status
- Social support from community, friends and family



Factors Influencing Social and Emotional Skills in Young Children

- On one side " social development is a task which is highly vulnerable to disruption " (Gulranick)
 - Developmental domain (cognitive, affective)
 - Difficult family circumstances (e.g., poverty, maternal depression)
- On the other side: " Many models of development suggest that early intervention, compared to intervention at older ages, holds special promise because developmental trajectories are most malleable early in life " (Mize)

What Can We Do?

Foster children's engagement in the rich, naturally occurring learning opportunities that exist in social participation with peers.

- Arrange the social group setting
- Teach the necessary social skills

What Can We Do?

- At home
- In child care and preschool settings



Examples of Social Skills Frequently Taught in Programs

- Identify one's emotions (joy, sadness, anger, fear)
- Make contacts with others
- Identify others' emotions
- Offer help
- Deal with refusals
- Share a toy or materials
- Take care of materials and showing respect for others
- Include someone in my play
- Cooperate
- Deal with anger
- Deal with teasing

Learning Principles

- Modelling, instruction
- Reinforcement
- Guided practice
- Support for generalized use of skills

Modelling and Instruction

- Illustrate the skills with stories, puppets, pictures
- Coach children in learning the skills

Reinforcement

- Praise children when they spontaneously demonstrate one of the skills taught.
- Strategies to make reinforcement more effective:
 - Be specific (name the skill)
 - Be enthusiastic
 - Promote self-praise
 - Be careful about sarcasm
 - Don't forget the shy ones
 - Plan opportunities to praise
 - Use of material and social reinforcement
 - Immediate vs. delayed
 - Have positive expectations for all

Guided Practice

- Role plays and games
- In social situations: Ask children to practice a skill immediately after a situation where they failed to use it; then reinforce when they do

Conditions to use this method: Availability of both the child and the adult

Support for Generalized Use of Skills

When a child uses a skill in another setting:

- Reinforce him

When a child could use a skill in another setting:

- Remind him of the skill

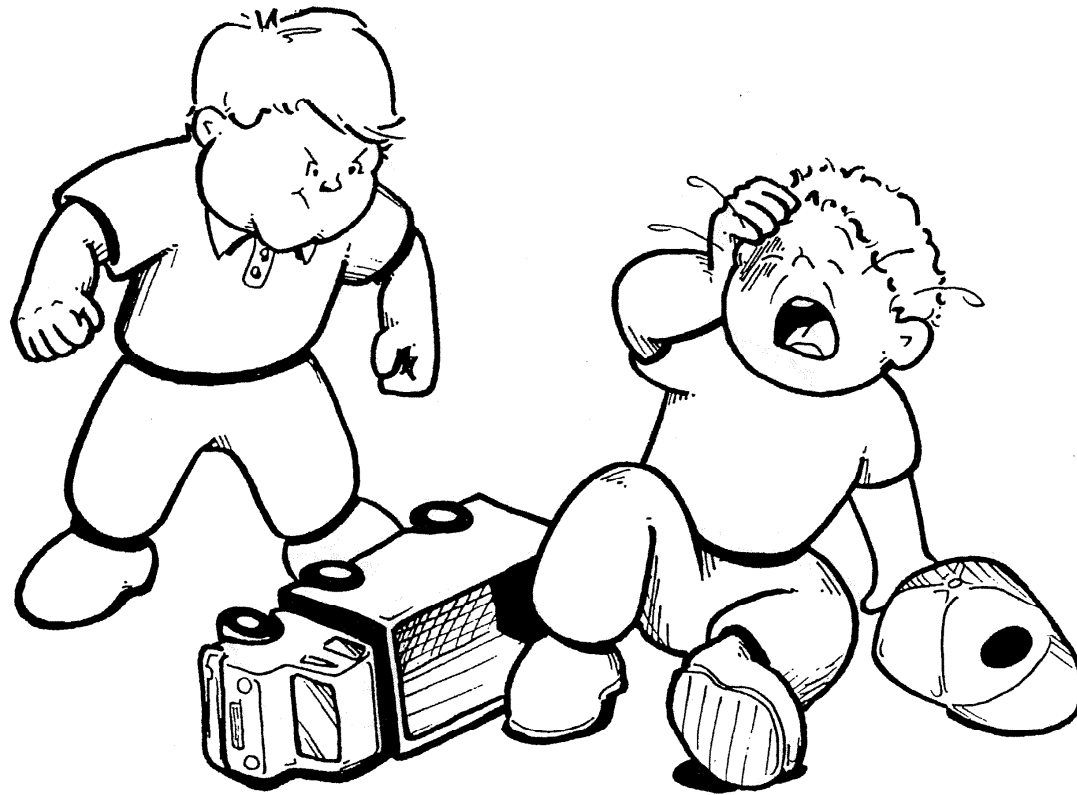
Parental Behaviours Supporting Child Social Skills Development

- Parents' role:
 - Providing security
 - Initiation of activities and learning opportunities
 - Parents as models
 - Mediator in sibling conflicts
- Individual differences (goodness-of-fit approach):
 - Shy children: encouragements
 - Disinhibited children: clear limits, positive reinforcement

Programs with Evidence of Efficacy

- Universal programs
- Indicated programs

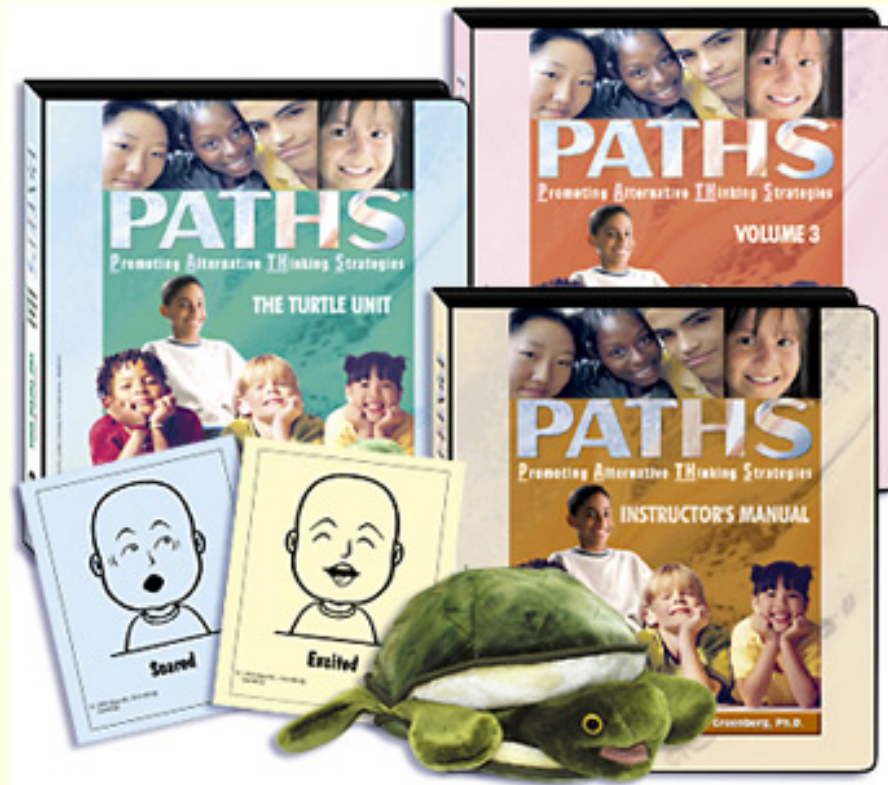
I Can Problem Solve (ICPS)



From "I Can Problem Solve -- ICPS" (Preschool) published by
Research Press -- www.researchpress.com

ILLUSTRATION 23 Lesson 41

Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) preschool version

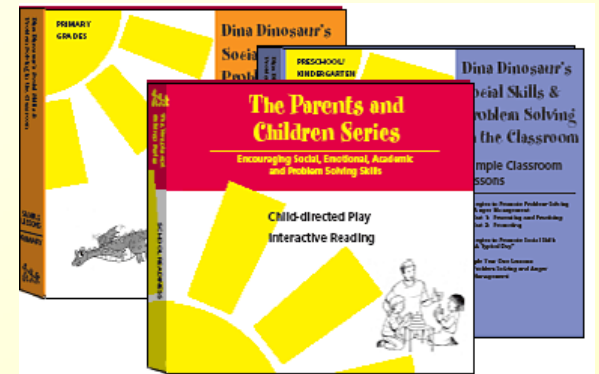


Fluppy

Centre de
PSYCHO
EDUCATION
DU QUÉBEC



- **Incredible Years Dinosaur Social Skills and Problem Solving Curriculum**
(for children with conduct problems and peer problems)



- **Peer Play Interventions**
(e.g., Play Buddy)

Conditions for Successful Programs

- Multimodal intervention
- Use of natural settings
- Partnership between the different players on the ground
- Active involvement of the parents
- Utilization of the peer group (mix of competent and less competent children)
- Alliance in the community

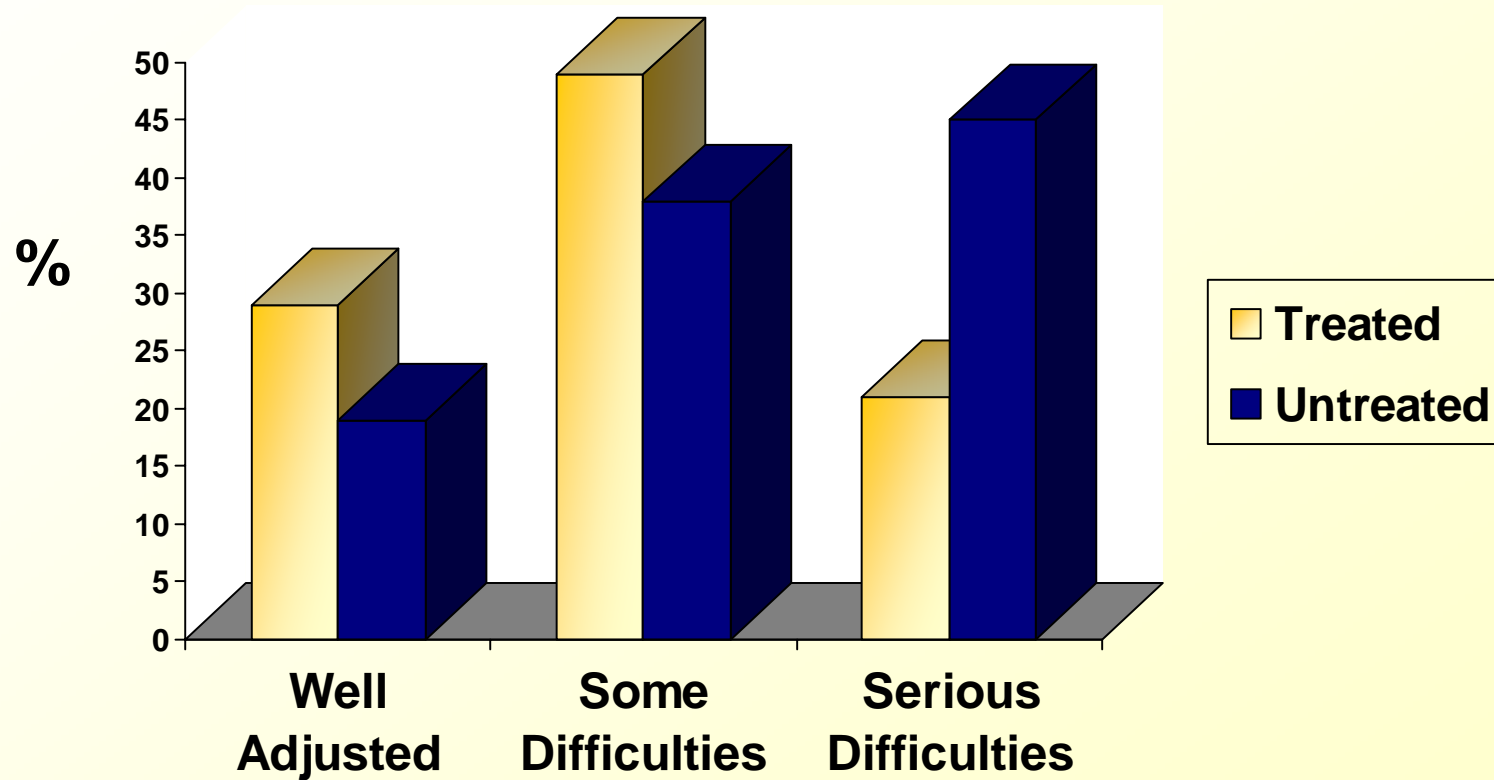
Short-Term Effects of Interventions

- Improvement in ability to think about multiple alternative solutions to social problems
- Improvement in social competence
- Improvement in emotional understanding and coping skills
- Decrease in disruptive behaviour and social withdrawal
- General support for promoting social-emotional competence in preschool programs.

Challenge: The generalization of skills to other settings.

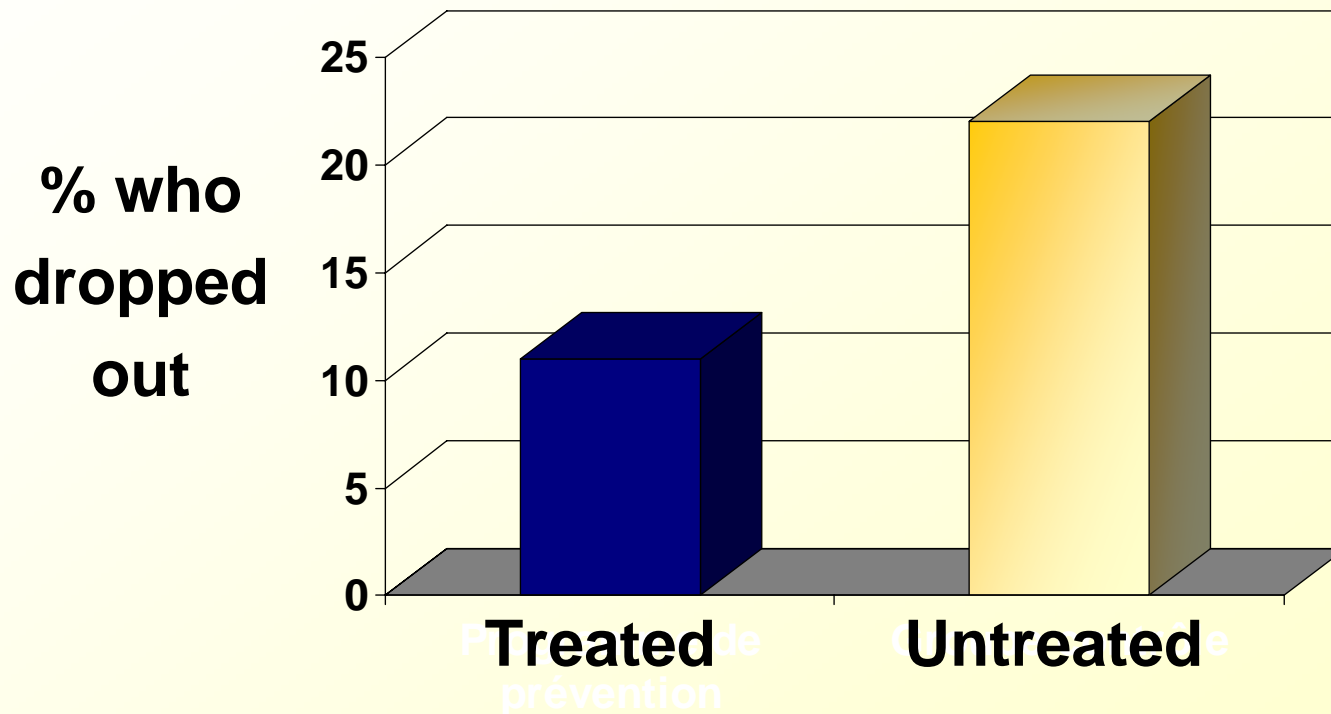
Research Results - ELEM

School Adjustment of Treated vs. Untreated Boys in ELEM



Research Results - ELEM

School Dropout at 17 Years Old in Treated vs. Untreated Boys



Conclusions

- Development of social skills in the early years, importance of them throughout life
- Important timeframe to change the trajectories of development
- Early intervention: supporting parents and ECE, implementing universal programs, facilitating implementation of targeted programs for at-risk children
- Inclusion of children with difficulties with competent children



Thank you

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