

Teacher–Student Relationships and Child Problem Behaviors: Comparing Children with and without Disabilities

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Abstract

A number of studies have found that positive teacher–student relationships are associated with better child development, including fewer problem behaviors. However, few of these studies have examined bidirectional longitudinal associations or compared these associations between children with and without disabilities. The present study used Structure Equation Modeling to analyze a longitudinal dataset from the Head Start Impact Study, which followed 3,473 children from pre-kindergarten through first grade, 712 of whom had disabilities. Results showed that children with disabilities consistently exhibited relatively negative teacher–student relationships. Predictive longitudinal associations between teacher–student relationships and child problem behaviors were found. The associations between teacher–student conflicts and the child problem behaviors were stronger for children with disabilities. The associations between teacher–student relationships and problem behaviors also varied across different disability types.

Keywords: teacher–student relationships, disabilities, problem behavior

Summary of State Policies Related to School Readiness Assessment Practices

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Abstract

This study summarizes state-level policies surrounding school readiness assessment. A search was conducted to collect and code school readiness policies in order to document key components of assessment practices in each state, such as whether assessments are mandated or recommended, the timing of assessment, the measures used, the domains of functioning assessed, and the role of school psychologists in assessment. Results indicated that 44 states (86%) use school readiness assessments state-wide, with 34 states fully implementing and 10 states piloting a school readiness measure. Despite this widespread use, only about half of the states included guidance related to how to respond to assessment data or students identified as at-risk in their policy documents. In addition, findings indicate that only four states mentioned involvement of school psychologists or other student support personnel in implementation of these assessments. Implications of this study on early childhood assessment policy and directions for future research are discussed.

Keywords: early childhood, school readiness, and assessment

Effects of Training Pre-Kindergarten Teachers to Use Self-Monitoring Strategies to Increase Opportunities to Respond

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Abstract

Frequent opportunities to respond (OTR) improve student behavior and academic achievement. Unfortunately, research suggests many early childhood educators do not elicit OTR at sufficient levels. The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of training Pre-K teachers to implement a self-monitoring strategy called ACCESS to increase their rate of OTR during whole group instruction. A multiple-baseline design across four teachers was used to evaluate the degree of change in teachers' OTR. We simultaneously measured whether students' response rates changed relative to teachers' OTR rates. Results demonstrated an increase in both teachers' OTR rates as well as student responses, suggesting training with self-monitoring was an effective intervention to increasing OTR and student engagement. Implications for teacher training and future research are discussed.

Keywords: professional development, opportunities to respond, effective instruction, early childhood education

Preschool Parent Training for Traumatic Brain Injury Prevention and Response

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Abstract

This study evaluated a training procedure designed to increase low-income parents' awareness of traumatic brain injury (TBI), knowledge of what to do for a suspected head injury, and confidence related to TBI response. Participants included 40 parents from low-income households who attended one of six identical 1-hour training sessions about preschool injury and TBI. The training utilized direct instruction, videos, discussion of scenarios, and an in-person helmet fitting. Results of a pre- and post-test indicated that the training significantly increased parent awareness, knowledge, and confidence related to TBI. Suggestions are provided for how educators and mental health professionals can structure and implement educational training programs about TBI for parents of preschoolers.

Keywords: traumatic brain injury, concussion, early childhood, preschool, parent training, early intervention

Lasting Promise: Long-Term Effects of a Transition-to-Kindergarten Program

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Abstract

This study examines whether a transition-to-kindergarten program improves literacy test scores and whether such improvements last over a period of 4 years. Transition-to-kindergarten programming is the supplemental effort, inside or outside the school, to prepare schools, children, and their families for kindergarten entry (Schulting, Malone, & Dodge, 2005). Studies of the effectiveness of the programming have typically used behavior and literacy as outcomes, but to our knowledge, no contemporary studies have measured outcomes beyond the fall of first grade, and none have disaggregated their findings to test results for African American children in a rural setting (or all children in the setting of a rural, predominantly African American school). Here, we follow participants and non-participants in an evidence-based transition-to-kindergarten program from kindergarten entry to fall of fourth grade to test whether children who participated in the program had a growth pattern that demonstrated a statistical advantage over non-participants. We discuss our findings and their implications further.

Keywords: early literacy, kindergarten readiness, transition-to-kindergarten

Conceptualizing Perfectionism in Early Childhood Through the Lens of Perfectionism Research with Children and Adolescents: An Introduction

Kathryn L. Fletcher

Abstract

Fear of failure is characterized as an achievement motive based on the desire to avoid failure, leading individuals to ruminate about mistakes and avoid situations when failure might be expected. Individuals with motives based on fear of failure might be at high risk of developing perfectionism. To date, children's fear of failure and how it may manifest as perfectionism has not been examined. This special issue will highlight empirical work with children and review existing research and theory in perfectionism research with adolescents and adults for future research with young children. In this special issue, a wide range of topics that might inform future work on perfectionism in young children such as temperament, attachment, parents, teachers, and eating disorders have been investigated. Moreover, the current issue presents concepts such as perfectionistic climate and mattering that apply across multiple contexts, demonstrating the need to examine more closely the ways in which we interact with children. The nature of those interactions and relationship quality have important consequences for shaping young children's motives and personality.

Keywords: perfectionism, fear of failure, temperament, parenting, attachment, eating disorders, teachers, mattering, children, early childhood, perfectionistic climate

Children's Temperaments Impact Kindergarten Readiness Through Approaches to Learning

Kathryn L. Fletcher and Annie C. Liner

Abstract

Children's successful transition to kindergarten has been found to be important to set the stage for future learning in school. Programs and initiatives that aid children in their transition to kindergarten have become increasingly common in states and local communities. To examine what programs are effective, educators and researchers have devised ways to measure children's kindergarten readiness. In the current paper, we have focused on children's approaches to learning (ATL) as one dimension of children's kindergarten readiness. Approaches to learning includes dispositions and behaviors such as curiosity, task persistence, attention, reflection on learning, creativity, and cognitive strategies for solving problems. However, we argue that children's ATL may be heavily influenced by children's temperaments. In the current paper, connections among different components of ATL and different components of temperament are examined. Implications for understanding children's temperamental characteristics related to effortful control and reactions to novelty within early childhood settings are also discussed.

Keywords: kindergarten readiness, children's temperament, approaches to learning, fear of failure, experiential avoidance, perfectionism

Perfectionism as a Mediator Between Attachment and Depression in Children and Adolescents

Ariel Ko, Paul L. Hewitt, Chang Chen, and Gordon L. Flett

Abstract

Perfectionism is a personality style involving the requirement for the self and/or others to be perfect or to present the self as perfect, and it is a vulnerability factor to many clinical and non-clinical problems in both children and adults. Hewitt, Flett, and Mikail's (2017) Perfectionism Social Disconnection Model (PSDM) posits that perfectionism arises from insecure attachment originated in asynchronous parent-child relationships, and individuals with elevated perfectionism experience objective and/or subjective social disconnection, placing them at risk for psychopathology (e.g., depression). Researchers have found that perfectionism mediated the link between insecure attachment and depression in adults, but this has not yet been examined in children and adolescents. The present study investigated whether the relationship between insecure attachment and depression was mediated by perfectionism in 8- to 15-year-old children and adolescents. In line with the PSDM, we found significant associations among insecure attachment, perfectionism, and depression. Furthermore, mediation analyses showed that socially prescribed perfectionism, nondisplay, and nondisclosure of imperfections mediated the link between insecure attachment and depression. This is the first study to investigate the insecure attachment–perfectionism–depression link in children and adolescents, and our results provide empirical support for the PSDM.

Keywords: perfectionism, insecure attachment, depression, Perfectionism Social Disconnection Model, children, adolescents

Parenting Practices as Precursors of Young Children's Fear of Failure

Xiaopeng Gong and Kathryn L. Fletcher

Abstract

Given the limited research on parenting and young children's fear of failure, in this current paper we will draw from research in related areas such as self-conscious emotions, perfectionistic concerns, parenting practices, and attachment. Children's self-conscious emotions and perfectionistic concerns will first be examined to understand how fear of failure may manifest within children's growing sense of self. Parenting practices such as intrusive and controlling parenting will be highlighted as potential contributors to children's fear of failure, experience of shame, and early signs of perfectionistic concerns. Lastly, quality of attachment with caregivers will be proposed as a possible moderator for the relationship between parenting practices and children's fear of failure. Family, as one of the most important contexts where socialization takes place, may provide answers for why some children develop fear of failure.

Keywords: fear of failure, perfectionistic concerns, controlling parenting, attachment, shame, guilt

Teachers' Role in the Development of Children's Perfectionism

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Abstract

Theory and research have suggested that teachers play an important role in the development of perfectionism in children and adolescents. However, only recently has this relation garnered more research attention. This article reviews major theories and existing research addressing the relation between perfectionism and teacher variables, as well as implications for perfectionism development. Conclusions for the role of teachers in the development of children's perfectionism and implications for future research and practice are presented.

Keywords: perfectionism development, teachers, children, adolescents

Perfectionism and Eating-Related Symptoms in Young Children: A Systematic Review

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Abstract

Perfectionism is a multidimensional personality trait that encompasses two higher-order dimensions: *Perfectionistic Strivings* (i.e., the strive to achieve exceedingly high standards) and *Perfectionistic Concerns* (i.e., negative self-evaluation and fear of failure). Both dimensions are related to eating disorders (EDs) in clinical and community adults. The association between perfectionism and EDs has also been observed in children but, to date, no review has summarized the relevant empirical findings with children under the age of 14. English-language studies published up to 2019 were searched in online databases (PsycINFO, Medline, PsycArticle) by using the pertinent keywords. Eligible publications reported at least one relationship between perfectionism and eating-related symptoms in children. Data were examined using the Quality Assessment Tool for Observational Cohort and Cross-Sectional Studies. For the 14 studies that were included, 11 studies provided evidence supporting the relationship between perfectionism and ED outcomes, with the majority adopting a unidimensional approach for perfectionism assessment. Among the studies that used multidimensional assessment of perfectionism, the majority supported the involvement of perfectionistic strivings. Implications of results for children are discussed.

Keywords: perfectionism, eating symptoms, disordered eating, children, childhood onset

Introducing Perfectionistic Climate

Andrew P. Hill and Michael C. Grugan

Abstract

Perfectionism has historically been conceptualized as a personality characteristic—a personal quality of the individual. In this paper, we propose a new conceptualization of perfectionism that focuses on aspects of the social environment that are perfectionistic. Based upon motivational theory, we consider perfectionistic climate to be informational cues and goal structures aligned with the view that performances must be perfect and less than perfect performances are unacceptable. Perfectionistic climate has five components of expectation, criticism, control, conditional regard, and anxiousness. We define and describe each of these components and highlight the similarities and differences between these and existing concepts. We also draw on research that has examined similar concepts to inform our speculation on the possible consequences of perfectionistic climates for the development of perfectionism and its role in intervention work. We believe that the study of perfectionistic climate has the potential to extend perfectionism research considerably and highlight how people can still suffer the consequences of perfectionism through the environment without ever fully internalizing the personal quality themselves.

Keywords: perfectionism, personality, social, perfectionistic climate

Mattering, Anxiety, and Fear of Failure in Children and Adolescents

Gordon L. Flett

Abstract

The association between feelings of not mattering and depression has been documented extensively, but there has been little consideration of the roles of feelings of mattering and fears of not mattering in anxiety. The current article describes mattering as a core component of self-worth and its role as an interpersonal form of resilience in protecting children and adolescents from anxiety and fear of failure. Research is summarized that illustrates the link between mattering and reduced anxiety in children and adolescents. This analysis includes an emphasis on the role of mattering in general, but also mattering at school, in order to protect students from anxiety surrounding fears of failure and negative evaluation. The article concludes with a series of recommendations that can be implemented to promote a sense of mattering as a form of protection against anxieties, fears, and other forms of distress.

Keywords: mattering, anxiety, fear of failure, attachment styles