



Childhood Friendship Development in Children Ages Four to Five

Tackett, Hannah; Naser, Shereen

Psychology, Cleveland State University, Cleveland, OH



Introduction

- Friendships can be described as complex social relationships involving lifelong development and activity between individuals (Crosnoe, 2000).
- In a study conducted by Dunn, Cutting, and Fisher, it was found that children's relationships are correlated to their parents' relationships and friendships (Dunn, Cutting, & Fisher, 2002).
- There is a lack of information on friendship development in elementary and preschool aged children.



Current Study

The current study fills a gap in the literature by investigating friendships in children 4-5 years old.

Methods

- This study consisted of a total of twenty-seven children.
- The age of the children ranged from four to five years old.
- An interviewer asked them questions about how they make friends.

Results

How do you decide who you want to be friends with?	How do you tell someone you want to be their friend?	If I wanted to be friends with someone, what should I do?	Do you have to be friends with someone to play with them?	How do you know you want to invite someone over to play?
Convenience (36.4%)	Self initiated (77.30%)	Self Initiated (50%)	Confined Play (54.50%)	Perceived friendliness (40.90%)
Perceived friendliness (27.30%)	Convenience (9.10%)	Convenience (40.90%)	Social Play (45.50%)	Commonalities (22.70%)
Commonalities (9.10%)	Physical Appearance (4.50%)	Perceived Friendliness (4.50%)		Personal Feelings (18.20%)
Other Initiated (9.10%)	Other initiated (4.50%)	Other initiated (4.50%)		Physical Appearance (4.50%)
Physical Appearance (9.10%)	Personal characteristics (4.50%)			Personality Traits (4.50%)
Self initiated (4.50%)				Convenience (4.50%)
Authoritative suggestion (4.50%)				Setting/Situation (4.50%)

Conclusion

- It can be concluded that the development of long-term friendship qualities are not seen in children until preadolescence years (ages eight to ten years old).
- This study concluded that children ages four to five consider parental factors when determining who to be friends with.
- Future research can determine how children ages four to five define friendship itself to determine if this young population can accurately define the word "friend".

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Citations:

Berndt, 2004
 Danby, Theobald, & Thorpe, 2012
 Dunn, Cutting, & Fisher, 2002
 Gottman & Graziano, 1983

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Figure 1: Childhood Friendships