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Sociometric Status and Aggression as Predictive of Childhood Conflict

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Spring 1998

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Abstract

Following recent trends in the study of children's conflict, researchers compared relationship strength between conflict resolution style and the personal variables of aggression and sociometric status. Participants consisted of 136 fourth- and fifth-grade students, who completed assessments measuring sociometric status and aggression, as well as reports on both hypothetical and real-life conflict resolution styles. Results revealed aggression levels to be more strongly associated with antisocial styles of conflict management, while sociometric status was a stronger predictor of assertive styles of resolution. In contrast to previous research, children's reported use of prosocial methods was consistent across all measures of conflict. Implications of the present findings for social skills intervention are discussed.

Sociometric Status and Aggression as Predictive of Childhood Conflict

Recent developmental applications have focused on the incidence of conflict within children's lives. Although conflict is often associated with unfriendly interactions, Hartup (1992) found that children are most likely to experience conflict with people to whom they are closest. Research demonstrates that conflicts occur within all relationships and are necessary for relationship growth (Gottman, 1983). Consequently, kids with poor conflict management skills are at greater risk for relationship difficulties. Utilizing the growing body of conflict literature, psychologists have begun to focus on applying research concepts to early intervention in children's social skillfulness. Though research has primarily focused on pre-school and early elementary-school children, findings have been applied to all age groups. Specific programs such as conflict management seminars have been implemented in an attempt to teach intervention techniques to older kids involved in conflict.

In addition to presenting children with prosocial forms of conflict resolution, researchers have investigated individual characteristics and their relationship to conflict styles. Characteristics have included antisocial behavior, peer status, gender, and family patterns and history. Through the study of attributes associated with unhealthy conflict styles, psychologists hope to identify children at risk, with possible intervention needs. In the present research, psychologists will focus on assessing two of these personal factors, aggression and peer status, and the association of each with children's conflict management styles. Research will focus

on an older age range of nine to ten years in order to expand current knowledge of personal factor associations in conflict to include older children. Examination of this age range will offer two benefits-- first, it will allow observation of how patterns found in younger children develop and change. Secondly, findings may be more applicable in conflict intervention programs since many attempts at modification are implemented within this age group.

Operational Definition: What is Conflict?

Conflict is a dyadic state of opposition or disagreement, in which two persons have incompatible goals or behaviors (Shantz, 1987). Though most researchers concede mutual opposition is a central feature of conflict, debate exists over its structure. Some scholars study conflict as a unilateral event (Laursen and Collins, 1994) in which the behavior of child A provokes an objection or refusal from a child B. However, others assert that this two-step procedure is not sufficient to create a conflict state (Shantz, 1987; Shantz, 1986). This alternate view poses that conflict consists of three separate events: (1) Child A engages in a specific behavior, (2) this behavior provokes an objection or refusal from child B, and (3) child A persists in the specific behavior despite opposition. For example, if two children were in conflict over possession of a toy, the accompanying events would fall into the following three-step sequence: (1) child A takes child B's toy, (2) child B cries and asks for the toy to be returned, and (3) child A continues to play with the stolen toy despite requests to return it.

Regardless of the number of steps defined in a conflict occurrence, researchers

must separate serious conflict from nonserious (or playful) conflict. Serious conflicts can be characterized by comments or opposition which is sincere; nonserious conflicts include playful banter, such as teasing or insulting, which lacks sincerity. Laursen and Koplas (1995) note that characteristics such as affect and resolution serve as cues to identifying serious and nonserious oppositions. According to the researchers, anger is "an unequivocal indicator of a serious conflict" (pg. 538) and tends to end in coercive resolutions. On the other hand, nonserious conflicts are characterized by positive affect and a careful avoidance of dominant resolution tactics.

For the purposes of this research, conflict will be defined as a serious, interpersonal, two-step event in which a behavior of person A provokes an objection or refusal from person B. This operational definition allows more reliable conflict definition by researchers and participants, as well as separation of conflict from other associated constructs.

Among these constructs commonly associated with conflict are aggression and competition. Parke and Slaby (1983) define aggression as "behavior that is aimed at harming or injuring another person or persons" (pg. 550). Aggression can be distinguished from conflict in that aggression is only one of many ways to solve a conflict situation. Because the majority of aggressive behaviors occur within the context of conflict, the two constructs are often associated. However, most conflicts do not involve aggression (Shantz, 1987). To illustrate this, imagine a conflict situation in which two children want to sit in the same seat. The situation itself

does not necessarily imply an aggressive act-- a child may resolve it by other means, such as compromising and sharing the seat. However, should the child kick the other in an attempt to win the seat, this would constitute an act of aggression. As demonstrated in this situation, it is not necessary for aggression and conflict to occur together.

Similarly, competition should not be confused with conflict. Although competing for rewards sometimes produces conflict, it does not constitute behavioral opposition by itself. Hartup and Laursen (1993) confirm this with the finding that not all conflicts are concerned with the distribution of rewards.

Conflict Topology

Once a conflict situation has been defined, it may be separated into specific components. Shantz (1987) examines conflict as a time-distributed social episode with distinct features, including (1) incidence and duration (the frequency and length of a conflict episode), (2) intensity (the affective involvement of both parties involved), (3) initiation and opposition (initial conflict behaviors), (4) resolution strategies (behaviors which conclude a conflict), and (5) outcome (the result and aftermath of a conflict occurrence) (Laursen and Collins, 1994; Laursen and Koplas, 1995).

Within all components of conflict, behavior may change across different relationship contexts. Children may behave in one manner during conflict with peers, but the same child might alter behavior when fighting with parents or siblings. Collins and Laursen (1992) distinguish between these differing

relationships by separating *open-field* interactions from *closed-field* interactions. Closed-field relationships, which involve parents and siblings, are constrained by law and social norms and are not easily disrupted because of these strong attachments. Open-field relationships, on the other hand, involve persons outside the family and thus are not burdened by such constraints. Open-field relationships are voluntary, and as a result they are more easily disrupted and easier to change. Consequently, differentiation in conflict resolution may be attributed to the different manner in which these relationships are formed and maintained (Collins and Laursen, 1992).

Incidence, Duration, and Intensity

Reports of conflict occurrence differ as a function of relationship context. Hay (1984) estimated that conflict occurs in preschool children between 5-8 times per hour. Adolescents, relatively more mature and selective in their oppositions, report an average of 7 conflicts daily (Laursen, 1989). Regardless of age, Laursen (1989) found that most conflicts involve mothers, followed by siblings, friends, romantic partners, dads, and other peers and adults. Conflict intensity (or affective involvement) varies across relationships, with the most affectively-involved disagreements occurring within families. Though one might expect this phenomena to also relate to the different dynamics of closed-field and open-field relationships, supporting empirical data is yet to be found.

Issues

Conflict issues between younger children include disputes over possessions,

physical or psychological harm, violation of school or cultural rules, violation of rules regarding friendships, and arguments over beliefs, opinions, or facts (Shantz, 1993). Research indicates that the majority of arguments among younger children focus on possession and use of objects (Shantz, 1993; Shantz, 1987). Among adolescents, conflict issues between child and parent have been most frequently studied, with the most commonly reported conflict issues involving authority, autonomy, and responsibilities (Collins and Laursen, 1992).

Regardless of age, conflicts may be provoked by virtually any behavior (Shantz, 1987). An unassuming comment or unintentional behavior may spark the time-ordered sequence of conflict, so long as a person objects to such an action. By definition, conflict does not necessitate rationality, and it is therefore absent in some instances. Shantz (1987) also noted that an issue which provokes a conflict may not remain as a dominant issue throughout the conflict sequence. For example, if two peers are arguing over a possession when one physically assaults the other, the situational goal may change from object possession to revenge for the physical aggression.

Resolution Strategies

Conflict resolution entails actions which contribute to the termination of mutual opposition. Strategies employed by children to meet their goals within conflict are endless, though most share common tactics. Methods include (1) hostile/coercive (acting in an unfriendly manner in direct opposition to the other party's actions), (2) prosocial (both parties incorporate the needs of each other),

(3)assertive (stating directly what one wants), (4)passive (sacrificing one's own needs), and (5)third-party interventions (an uninvolved person settles the dispute)(Chung and Asher, 1996). Other researchers have recognized additional resolution strategies, including standoff (attention is shifted away from conflict to an alternative activity), withdrawal (one party refuses to further participate in the conflict) and aggression (Asher, Chung, and Hopmeyer, 1995; Shantz, 1987).

Regardless of the strategy employed, conflict resolution patterns change consistently over time. Selman (1981) presents these changes in a developmental model of conflict management which involves four different levels. At level 0, Selman explains, children operate in a physical, "in-the-moment" orientation. Here, conflicts are resolved through "impulsive" strategy, such as stopping interaction or physical force. Children operating at the next level have "unilateral" perspective on conflict, which reflects beliefs that the conflict may be solved by one person. Much of existing conflict research focuses on disputes occurring within the realm of these first two levels (Shantz, 1986; Bryant, 1992; French and Waas, 1987).

Levels 2, 3, and 4 reflect development of resolution strategies. At level 2, where relatively less research has been performed, children operate on "bilateral" conceptions of conflict. The child realizes that both parties must agree on the solution, but does not yet realize that the agreements should be mutually satisfying in order for the conflict to be completely resolved. At levels 3 (occurring in adolescence) and 4 (occurring in adulthood), conflict participants become aware that resolution requires mutual satisfaction with the outcome, taking on a

"collaborative" perspective. In addition, conflicts are divided between trivial disagreements and those carrying the potential of disrupting the relationship within which the conflict exists (Selman, 1981).

As a consequence, resolution strategies (like most components of conflict) differ across various relationship dyads. Montemayor and Hanson (1985) found that negotiation in parent-child conflict is rare; rather, the majority of these situations involve stand-offs and submission (due to assertion of power by one party). Although strategies utilized with friends tend to be more amiable than those employed with siblings, Raffaelli (1990) found that both instances majoritively involved disengagement.

However, differences in conflict resolution emerge depending on whether one is examining actual or hypothetical conflict. In hypothetical disagreements, participants have been found to use compromise and disengagement up to twice as often as such tactics were reportedly used in actual situations (Youniss and Smollar, 1985; Sternberg and Dobson, 1987). Such findings suggest that assessment of conflict management in hypothetical situations may have lowered external validity, a notable issue to be considered later in this paper.

Outcomes

The majority of children's conflicts are solved quickly, with few instances of adult intervention (Shantz, 1987). Outcome categories include (1) a clear emergence of a winner/loser, (2) partial equality of conflicting parties (one party must concede more or compromise more than the other), and (3) complete equality of conflicting

parties (both participants compromise equally). Laursen and Collins (1994) found that most disputes end in submission or disengagement (such as stand-off, withdrawal), resulting in clear definitions of a winner and loser. Continued interaction following conflict is dependent upon the relationship represented--social interaction is more likely to continue when friends and romantic partners are involved, rather than parents, siblings, or others (Laursen, 1993). Laursen (1993) explained the more positive outcome of conflict with close peers, writing that "by virtue of their voluntary nature, these open-field relationships have the most to gain or lose from conflict. Friends and romantic partners are well aware of this, so they take care not to disrupt mutually rewarding exchanges" (pg. 546). Kinship relationships, Laursen (1993) argues, are "less susceptible to dissolution" (pg 546), thus relatives tolerate and forgive behaviors within conflict that might be unacceptable in peer relationships.

Aggression and Conflict

Commonly associated with negative peer relationships, the role of aggression in conflict has been a frequent focus of research. Defined previously to include any behaviors (physical or verbal) aimed at injuring another person, aggression rarely occurs in conflict episodes (Shantz, 1987). However, though most conflict does not involve aggression, aggression occurs most frequently within the context of conflict.

The ways in which conflict and aggression interact in peer relations vary with each child. Even children defined as aggressive differ in their application of force within conflict, leading to separation of aggressive subtypes by researchers. Perry et.

al (1992) distinguish between children's use of aggression in extended conflicts by separating effectual aggressors from ineffectual aggressors. Effectual aggressors are similar to the image of the school bully-- they exert aggression in a quick and dominating manner, leaving little room for resistance from an opposite party. Thus, effectual aggression is usually applied without conflict (because there is no ensuing state of opposition). Some children, however, only become aggressive in the context of a prolonged conflict which has escalated into force. Perry et. al (1992) refer to these children as ineffectual aggressors--despite aggressive displays, they rarely end up getting their way in conflict situations.

Crick and Grotpeter (1996) offer another subtype of aggression with the distinctions of relational versus overt aggression. Overt aggression is defined as "behaviors intended to harm another through physical aggression or the threat of such force" (pg. 2329). Instances of overt aggression might include hitting, kicking, or threatening to hurt another. Miller, Danaher, and Forbes (1986) found that boys characteristically engage in overt aggression more than girls. Relational aggression, however, is practiced more consistently by girls (Miller et. al, 1982) and involves a more subtle and indirect method of aggression, in which peer relationships are manipulated in order to cause harm. This type of aggression often involves enlisting others' help to aggress against another, such as getting friends to help one spread rumors damaging a peer's social status. Other examples of relational aggression might include excluding another person from a peer group or threatening withdrawal of one's friendship (Crick and Grotpeter, 1996).

Within all aggression subtypes, certain conflict situations tend to precipitate escalation into aggression. Hartup (1974) found that much aggression is typically provoked by disputes over objects or threats to one's ego. Perry et. al (1992) have suggested that other contexts of aggressive conflict include exclusion from a social group and reactions to social manipulation and provocation by peers.

Reasons explaining why some conflict situations escalate into aggression, while others do not, remain unclear. Research indicates that aggressive children may lack specific cognitive skills necessary for positive conflict management, in particular the ability to accurately interpret social situations. In one study of third- and fifth-grade boys, Sancilio, Plumert, and Hartup (1989) found in ambiguously intended actions, aggressive children attributed hostile intentions more often than non-aggressive children. Thus aggressive children may interpret more social situations as hostile than their nonaggressive counterparts and may respond in a more negative manner, including aggression. In summary, conflict may escalate into aggression if poorly managed.

Sociometric Status and Conflict

Avoidance of poor conflict management and its escalation into aggression is mastered by social skillfulness, a trait often associated with well-liked children. For this reason, one would expect that sociometric status (equal to a child's social standing or popularity) is related to conflict style. In addition, this association becomes further likely by the established correlation between aggression in children and how they are viewed by their peers (Dodge, 1983). Since aggression plays a role

in conflict and its management, one would expect that popularity might also be a factor in conflict involvement.

Researchers have found that children with low sociometric status are at risk for future difficulties in social, marital, and psychological realms (Parker and Asher, 1987). One possible explanation for this tendency is the association of peer-rejected children with negative behaviors. Peer-rejected kids are viewed as less prosocial and more disruptive than their accepted peers and commonly behave in aggressive and disruptive behaviors (Coie, Dodge, & Kupersmidt, 1982).

This association is especially notable in the conflict resolution strategies of peer-rejected children. In one study of ten- to thirteen-year olds, Bryant (1992) found that children with low sociometric status were seen as more likely than their accepted peers to engage in anger-retaliation, withdrawal, or avoidance in order to solve conflict. Sociometrically accepted children, on the other hand, were perceived as responding more frequently with calm, discussional approaches to conflict. Similar strategy ineptitude was found in research by French and Waas (1987), who found that rejected children's responses to hypothetical conflict situations were less effective than those of accepted children.

Recent research has investigated whether these marked differences in conflict management by sociometrically accepted and rejected children might be due to motivational differences. Renshaw and Asher (1982) first suggested this possibility by asserting that accepted and rejected children pursue different social goals in conflict, and this discrepancy leads to the visible differences in strategy and outcome.

Chung and Asher (1996) supported this theory with findings that children's social goals are, in fact, related to the type of resolution strategy selected. In particular, children whose goals were oriented toward maintaining good relationships with peers frequently utilized compromise or sacrifice, while children whose primary goals included situational control selected more hostile and coercive strategies.

Rabiner and Gordon (1992) continued this focus with the investigation of the social goals of accepted and rejected fourth- and fifth-grade boys. Participants completed responses to hypothetical conflict situation and were measured on how well their goals and responses were integrated. Responses of rejected boys were less integrated and more self-focused than non-rejected peers. Poor conflict management may thus be a result of the goals of rejected children, which focus more on attaining personal needs within conflict than acceding to peers' needs.

Relationship of Aggression and Sociometric Status

Aggression and popularity are both related to conflict, yet they are also intercorrelated. Consequently, it is important to isolate the unique conflict variance explained by each of these variables. Only a few studies have attempted to do this, using aggression and sociometric status as interactive variables.

Multiple researchers have investigated the relationships between aggression, popularity, and conflict by subtyping children according to both their aggressiveness and popularity. The resulting groups are aggressive-rejected, aggressive non-rejected, non-aggressive rejected, and a control group (neither aggressive nor rejected). Studies of these subtypings have produced results indicating different

resolution tactics predicated by group membership. For example, Spetter, La Greca, Hogan, and Vaughn (1992) evaluated conflict resolution strategies among six-year old boys and found that in hypothetical conflict situations, aggressive-rejected boys used more indirect aggression, while aggressive non-rejected boys utilized more assertiveness in resolution.

In a study by Dodge, Coie, Pettit, & Price, (1990), researchers found that frequency of conflict was higher for disliked boys than for liked boys. Dodge et. al (1990) also found that both conflict-related and non-conflict related aggression occurred most frequently with children who were sociometrically rejected. Waas (1988) found that among third and fifth grade boys, aggressive-rejected kids made more hostile attributions of intent and offered more aggressive responses than any other group.

Evidence clearly suggests that both aggression and popularity are factors in resolution style; however, researchers are uncertain which of these two factors is more strongly related to conflict, and virtually no research attempts have been made to maintain aggression and popularity as separate constructs. Shantz (1986) attempted to separate these constructs from conflict in an observational study of first and second-grade children's conflicts. From observations of children's free play, Shantz found that (1) rates of aggression and negative sociometric status were correlated, and (2) negative sociometric status was also correlated with rates of conflict. After isolating variables, Shantz discovered that conflict, as opposed to aggression, was more directly related to social rejection. Thus, sociometric status

and conflict rates have a stronger relationship than do popularity and rates of aggression.

This study will attempt to separate the constructs of aggression and sociometric status and their relative contribution to conflict styles. After assessing the relationships of both factors to aggression, researchers will analyze which factor is a stronger predictor of conflict management (thus which construct is more strongly related to conflict). Researchers will ask the following questions: (1) does sociometric status correlate with conflict resolution in pre-adolescents (as it does with younger children), (2) does aggression correlate with conflict management (as it does with younger children), and (3) if both factors produce correlations, which one has a stronger relationship with conflict management? Researchers predict that aggression levels will prove more strongly related to conflict resolution style than will sociometric status.

In addition, researchers will assess the documented discrepancy between hypothetical conflict responses and real-life conflict resolution strategies. By evaluating responses in both realms, researchers hope to discover the strength of agreement between the two responses. In accordance with previous findings, researchers predict results indicating higher compromise levels for hypothetical responses than those reported in actual experience.

Method

Participants

Participants consisted of 136 fourth and fifth grade students (69 males, 67 females) from a small-town, midwestern U.S. elementary school. 55 of the participants were fourth-graders, while 81 of the participants were fifth-graders. 79.5% of all students participated.

A parent/guardian consent form was sent home with students, listing information and procedures involved in the project and will explain any possible risks and benefits. Once parent/guardian consent was granted, researchers also required students to personally assent to completing the assessments. Student assent form were attached to all measurements, once again explaining information and procedures critical to the project. Students were also informed that they could refuse to answer any or all questions, or withdraw entirely from completion of the study, without any consequence.

Measures

Sociometric Status

Sociometric status was measured with the use of a ratings scale (Singleton & Asher, 1977). Students were asked to evaluate "how much I like to play" with each of their classmates, rating their answers on a scale from one to five (one being 'I wouldn't like to,' five being 'I'd really like to'). A student's single score in this assessment was the average score received on classmate responses.

The validity of rating-scale measures has not been extensively reviewed; French, Waas, & Tarver-Behring (1986) found convergent validity between rating-scale sociometric assessment and nomination assessment.

In an extensive review of the literature, Asher and Hymel (1981) concluded that the test-retest validity for rating-scale assessments of popularity is above that of nomination assessments. Oden and Asher (1977) found test-retest correlation to be .82 for third- and fourth-grade children completing a "play with" scale, while the test retest correlation for a positive nominations measure was .69. Asher and Hymel (1981) believe this greater reliability is explained by the large number of ratings received by each child. In a rating-scale assessment, because a child's score is determined by the responses of many other children, one or two ratings will not make a significant difference in that child's overall average rating. However, when positive or negative nominations are utilized, the gain or loss of a nomination can substantially affect that child's resulting popularity score.

Aggression

A portion of the Pupil Evaluation Inventory (P.E.I.; Pekarik, Prinz, Libert, Weintraub, & Neal, 1976) was completed by classmates in order to measure students' aggression, including classroom disruption and attention-seeking behaviors. Although the complete P.E.I. was designed to assess the factors of both withdrawal and likeability as well as aggression, only its aggression items were used.

The inventory consists of eleven statements associated with aggression; students were asked to circle every student's name which fit each description item. Sample descriptions include "those who start a fight over nothing" and "those who always mess around and get into trouble." Questions assessing aggression will be intermixed with three questions assessing relational aggression and three positive

filler questions (for example, "those who are taller than most").

Pekarik, et. al (1976) found high internal consistency for the aggression factor in the P.E.I. assessment, as well as a test-retest reliability average of .90 in two classes of the third and sixth grades. Similar results between teacher and pupil evaluations supported the concurrent validity of the measure as well.

Conflict Resolution Style

Students completed three measurements assessing individual conflict resolution details. As suggested previously, participant responses differ when responding to real-life conflict situations versus hypothetical conflict entanglements (Youniss & Smollar, 1985; Sternberg and Dobson, 1987). Because participants tend to report more compromise in hypothetical conflict situations than reported in actual conflict, two separate assessments were used to assess conflict strategy. One assessment measured conflict strategies employed in actual conflict situations occurring in the past, while another assessed resolution styles in hypothetical conflict situations. In order to test for accuracy of students' self-report, a third measure required students to rate each classmate's personal conflict style.

Classmate Ratings. The Conflict Strategy Questionnaire (see Appendix A) required students to rate classmates' involvement in the five different conflict resolution strategies (hostile/coercive, prosocial, assertive, passive, and adult-seeking). The measure, designed in accordance with the strategy types designated by Asher & Chung (1996), listed each strategy separately and asked children to rank their classmates' tendencies to utilize each one. Students were ranked on a scale

from one to three, with one meaning "they never do this," two meaning "they sometimes do this," and three meaning "they always do this." (see Appendix B for an explanation of each strategy). Participants will be assigned a single score average of classmate rankings for each strategy. The measure was designed to examine how accurate children's reports are of their individual conflict resolution styles, by allowing direct comparison of their self-reports to the assessments of their classmates. Because the measure was newly developed, psychometric data is unavailable.

Hypothetical Conflict. The assessment measuring participant conflict resolution strategy in hypothetical situations was a shortened version of the Children's Conflict Resolution Measure (Chung & Asher, 1996), in which students are asked to respond to six hypothetical situations. Participants read six vignettes detailing realistic conflict situations (see Appendix C for specific vignette situations; see Appendix D for individual vignette example). Students were instructed to imagine personal involvement in each situation with a classmate and were then asked to rate possible responses, all within the five strategies (listed in random order)--hostile/coercive, prosocial, assertive, passive, and adult-seeking.

Hostile/coercive responses involve a counterattack of an unfriendly manner in response to the other person's actions, such as grabbing back a toy which has been taken. Prosocial responses incorporate the needs of both children involved, such as playing with the toy together. Assertive responses consist of direct statements of what the child wants ("Please give the toy back to me, I want to play with it").

Passive responses are those in which the child sacrifices his or her own needs, such as allowing the toy to be stolen and giving up the desire to play with it. Finally, adult-seeking strategies are those in which children respond by seeking third-party intervention (See Appendix E).

Scores within each strategy were averaged from children's rankings on each conflict vignette. Chung and Asher (1996) found Cronbach alpha coefficients for hostile/coercive, prosocial, assertive, passive, and adult-seeking strategies to be .90, .79, .40, .55, and .57, respectively. Thus, internal consistency was acceptable for the hostile/coercive and prosocial strategies, while the assertive, passive, and adult-seeking strategies yielded somewhat lower internal consistency results.

Reported Conflict. For the third conflict measure, children were asked to complete a questionnaire detailing recent conflicts in their lives. Participants recalled up to three conflicts occurring within the past two weeks. Requesting accounts of conflict within a recent time period is likely to reduce memory error and improve recall accuracy; Collins and Laursen (1992) found this to be particularly true for conflicts recalled within 24 hours of occurrence. Gathering data on participants' real-life conflict outcomes may provide more valid assessments of personal resolution styles and could also be compared to the strategy measurements resulting from the hypothetical conflict situations for correspondence. Following Shantz' (1987) conceptions, conflict will be defined as "a state of opposition or disagreement between two persons." Participants were given examples of conflict situations and informed that conflict can range from a difference of opinion to a

loud, "full-blown" argument.

Participants were asked to visualize each conflict one at a time, imagining themselves in that situation once again from start to finish. Participants then answered both open-ended and rating questions concerning conflict issue, length, intensity, frequency, resolution, and outcome for each identified disagreement (see Appendix F). If students could not remember three personal conflicts, they were asked to report as many as they could remember.

Children's written descriptions were independently coded by two researchers into Chung and Asher's (1972) five strategy scales (see Appendix E). Conflicting coding was discussed until an agreement was reached. No data was kept on interrater reliability. Because this measure was also newly developed, psychometric data is unavailable.

Procedures

The five assessments, along with two assessments from a separate study, were group administered in an hour-long session. Students not participating in the task were given an alternate activity. Before completing the assessments, researchers reviewed the concept of conflict with participants, offering Shantz' (1987) definition and asking for examples. Researchers informed the students that there is no right or wrong answer and instructed the students to keep their answers private, stressing the importance of confidentiality. Researchers also emphasized that students could refuse to answer any or all questions and could discontinue the assessment at any time, both without resulting consequences.

Following these instructions, students were given a packet of measurements, covered by the student consent form which participants read and signed before beginning completion of the assessments. Researchers read all measurement directions and then allowed students to respond at their own pace, while remaining in the room throughout the entire session for participant monitoring and responding to any questions which arose.

Results

Conflict Strategies Across Measures

Analyses of conflict resolution strategies across the three assessments of peer ratings, hypothetical situations, and reported experience were conducted using Pearson correlations (hypothetical responses and peer-generated rankings) and point biserial correlations (hypothetical responses and reported experience; peer-generated rankings and reported experience).

Peer Rankings and Hypothetical Conflict Measures

Assessments between peer-evaluated conflict behavior and hypothetical conflict responses yielded significant correlations within hostile/ coercive, prosocial, and adult-seeking strategy scales (see Table 1). Results within hostile/ coercive methods yielded $r=.3885$ ($p<.001$) for the total sample, as well as significance within males and females, at $r=.2989$ ($p<.05$) and $r=.3042$ ($p<.05$), respectively. Assessments within the prosocial scale of conflict resolution demonstrated a total sample correlation of $r=.3728$ ($p<.001$), while split analyses of sexes showed significance only

within males ($r=.3770$ at $p<.01$). Adult-seeking scales of conflict resolution were calculated at a correlation of $r=.2180$ ($p<.05$); split analyses of sexes revealed exclusive significance within the female subgroup at $r=.2773$ ($p<.05$).

Hypothetical and Actual Conflict Measures

Similar results were obtained in assessments of hypothetical conflict responses and reported strategies in actual conflict experience, with three of the five strategy scales yielding significant results (see Table 1). A total sample significant correlation was found in hostile/coercive methods at $r=.3438$ ($p<.01$) and split analyses of sex resulted in significance within males ($r=.5374$ at $p<.01$). Total sample significance was also found in prosocial methods, at $r=.3186$ ($p<.01$). Within the adult-seeking scale of conflict resolution, a strong correlation was found within the male subgroup ($r=.5008$ at $p<.01$), despite an absence of significance within the total sample.

Peer Rankings and Actual Conflict Measures

In comparisons of response strategies in actual conflict experience and peer-evaluated conflict behavior, no significant correlations were calculated for total samples within any of the five strategy scales. Within split analyses of sexes, a single correlation was determined for males utilizing passive strategies, at $r=.3654$ ($p<.001$)(see Table 1).

Aggression and Sociometric Status

The cronbach alpha coefficient for the Pupil Evaluation Inventory aggression measure was determined to be .970. Table 2 shows that total sample mean

aggression was 1.31 (SD=1.64), while split analyses revealed markedly higher aggression levels for boys (M=1.68, SD=1.70) rather than girls (M=.86, SD=1.46). Roster and rating methods of determining social status revealed a total sample mean popularity of 2.63 (SD=.56) and relatively similar ratings for each sex (boys: M=2.54, SD=.56; girls: M=2.73, SD=.55). A significant relationship between aggression and sociometric status was determined at $r = -.3769$ ($p < .001$) for the total sample, while split analyses of sexes yielded a significant correlation only for girls ($r = -.5653$ at $p < .001$). The correlation between social status and aggression was not significant for boys ($r = .2050$).

Aggression and Sociometric Status Within Conflict Measures

Peer-Rated Conflict

In ratings of peer conflict behavior, students ranked prosocial methods of conflict resolve as most frequently utilized by classmates (M=1.88, SD=.31), followed by adult-seeking (M=1.74, SD=.29), passive (M=1.72, SD=.23), assertive (M=1.57, SD=.33), and hostile/coercive methods (M=1.41, SD=.34). Split analyses of sexes yielded higher ratings of hostile/coercive and assertive methods for boys, while girls were ranked higher in prosocial, passive, and adult-seeking methods (see Table 3).

Significant relationships were found between sociometric status and peer rankings of conflict behavior for four of the five strategy scales. Table 3 reveals strongest correlations between rankings in prosocial methods and peer-rated popularity, at $r = .5849$ ($p < .001$), with a marked increase in relationship strength for girls ($r = .7755$ at $p < .001$). Sociometric status strongly correlated with hostile/coercive

evaluations as well ($r = -.4202$ at $p < .001$); once again, girls demonstrated stronger correlations than boys (girls: $r = -.5372$ at $p < .001$; boys: $r = -.2702$ at $p < .05$). Significant relationships with sociometric status were also determined within assertive peer rankings, at $r = -.3533$ ($p < .001$), and passive peer evaluations, at $r = .1970$ ($p < .05$). Analyses of sociometric status and peer-rated use of adult-seeking methods yielded no significant results.

Similar to sociometric status, comparison of aggression and peer-rated conflict behavior revealed significant relationships within four of the five conflict strategy scales (see Table 4). Hostile/coercive methods strongly correlated with aggression at $r = .8277$ ($p < .01$), followed by significant results within assertive methods at $r = .7575$ ($p < .01$). Within sexes, females retained a stronger correlation between peer-evaluated assertive strategies and popularity ($r = .8265$ at $p < .001$) than did males ($r = .6921$ at $p < .001$). Prosocial methods and aggression were calculated at a correlation of $r = -.6233$ ($p < .001$), with boys maintaining a stronger relationship than girls (boys: $r = -.6837$ at $p < .001$; girls: $r = -.4862$ at $p < .001$). Peer-rated methods of passive conflict resolve were also found to be significant in relationship to sociometric status ($r = -.2651$ at $p < .0001$), although split analyses within sexes determined a correlation exclusively for boys ($r = -.2756$ at $p < .05$). No relationship between adult-seeking evaluations and popularity was found for the total sample mean, but relationships were yielded within sexes. Girls maintained a stronger correlation, at $r = .5174$ ($p < .001$), than did boys ($r = -.2215$ at $p < .05$).

Hypothetical Conflict

Measures of hypothetical conflict yielded consistently high Cronbach alpha coefficients, with alpha scores for the five strategy scales as follows: hostile/coercive, .973; prosocial, .895; assertive, .833; passive, .850; and adult-seeking, .929. Within total sample analysis, children rated prosocial methods of conflict resolve highest ($M=4.08$, $SD=.84$), followed by assertive ($M=3.09$, $SD=.85$), adult-seeking ($M=2.97$, $SD=1.30$), passive ($M=2.32$, $SD=1.04$), and hostile/coercive methods ($M=1.65$, $SD=.88$). Split analysis within sexes found girls to rate prosocial and passive methods higher than boys, while boys ranked hostile/coercive and assertive methods more strongly than girls (see Table 5).

In assessing relationships with sociometric status, only two of the five hypothetical conflict response scales yielded significant correlations (see Table 6). Hostile/coercive methods were calculated at $r = -.2782$ ($p < .01$); however, within sexes, only males retained a significant relationship at $r = -.2992$ ($p < .05$). Assertive methods also yielded a significant correlation with popularity at $r = -.2153$ ($p < .05$); split analyses of sex revealed significant results within females but not males ($r = -.3207$ at $p < .05$). Insignificant results were found between sociometric status and total sample groups for prosocial, passive, and adult-seeking methods. The only other significant relationship determined for sociometric status and hypothetical response scales was split analyses of sex within prosocial methods, where girls yielded a correlation of .2834 ($p < .05$).

Correlations between aggression levels and hypothetical conflict situation response scales revealed significant effects within only one of the five response

scales. Hostile/coercive methods correlated with aggression levels at $r=.3241$ ($p<.001$) for the total sample; within sexes, only females retained a significant relationship at $r=.2876$ ($p<.05$).

Reported Conflict Experience

Children most frequently reported use of prosocial methods to resolve actual conflict experiences; prosocial solutions were reported for 43 percent of these experiences (see Table 7). Utilization of prosocial methods was followed by reports of use of passive and adult-seeking strategies, at 25 and 22 percent of responses, respectively. Reported use of assertive responses constituted six percent of all answers, while hostile/coercive made up the remaining two percent.

No significant results were found between aggression and any resolution methods reported in actual conflict experience (see Table 8). A single correlation was discovered between sociometric status and reported conflict strategies within the prosocial scale, at $r=.2324$ ($p<.05$)(see Table). In split analyses of sexes, a single correlation was determined within adult-seeking methods for girls at $r= -.3665$ ($p<.001$).

Discussion

Two major questions guided this investigation. The first addressed whether children's reports of conflict would correspond across different measures of conflict resolution. The second questioned the singular and combinational relationships of

aggression and sociometric status to conflict resolution of children. These topics will be addressed in succession below, concluding with present research limitations, as well as suggestions for future research on children's conflict.

Conflict Across Different Measures

Within all three conflict assessments, notable results were found in correspondence of conflict strategies and differences between the sexes.

Strategy Correspondence

Across all measures of conflict, children more frequently reported use of prosocial conflict resolution methods. Correspondence across the three measures was varied within other strategies. In assessing resolution methods within hypothetical contexts, children who endorsed prosocial and hostile/coercive behaviors within the measure supported these methods with similar strength across both peer-rankings of conflict behavior and reported conflict experience. Children choosing adult-seeking strategies within hypothetical conflict situations were also ranked highly in adult-seeking behavior by their peers, and strong support was offered that males endorsing adult-seeking methods within hypothetical measures report use of such strategies in their actual experience as well.

There was little consistency between conflict strategies reported by peers and reported experience. In contrast, there was strong correspondence between strategies reported in conflict experience and those endorsed within hypothetical contexts, as evidenced by finding significant correlations within three of the five strategy scales. These results indicate that children's reports of the nature of their conflict

experiences are consistent. Similarly, the strong correspondence for prosocial, hostile, and adult-seeking methods within hypothetical contexts and peer-rated conflict behavior suggests that students can also consistently identify conflict strategies typically employed by their classmates.

Though some consistency was found across conflict measures, correlations involving reported conflict experience appeared weaker than others. The weaker relationships involved in children's self-reported conflict experience may be attributed to two factors--first, the number of participants completing the recent conflict questionnaire was much smaller than those within other measures. In contrast to previous research on actual conflict with adolescents, middle-aged children seemed to have difficulty recalling recent conflicts within their lives. Secondly, the power of statistical analysis within the recent conflict measure is relatively weak, because responses were dichotimized into preferred and non-preferred resolution strategies. Thus those correlations involving children's reports of conflict experience are especially noteworthy, due to such factors which may weaken the data.

In contrast to researchers' hypothesis (Sternberg & Dobson, 1987), children did not overestimate reports of prosocial methods within hypothetical conflict situations. Rather, children who endorsed prosocial strategies also reported their use in actual conflict experience, and children who endorsed hostile/coercive strategies within hypothetical contexts similarly noted use of such strategies within actual experience. Student ratings of prosocial and hostile/coercive strategies seem

to be accurate across varying conflict measures. However, children may overestimate use of assertive conflict strategies within hypothetical context.

Although the mean for assertive resolution methods within hypothetical situations was second only to prosocial, use of such strategies within actual experience were infrequently reported, comprising only six percent of total responses.

Sex Differences Across Conflict Measures

Within both hypothetical conflict and peer-rated conflict behavior, girls more strongly endorsed use of less demanding conflict strategy methods (supporting prosocial and passive resolution methods), while boys rated themselves consistently higher in assertive and hostile/coercive methods. Such observations indicate that students may perceive females as less likely than male classmates to assert or demand fulfillment of personal conflict needs, or possibly less demanding of situational control. This trend may also be related to the higher aggression ratings for boys, which may contribute to greater use of aggressive methods in conflict resolution.

Aggression and Sociometric Status

Investigation of peer-rated aggression and sociometric status variables demonstrated that unpopular children are perceived as more aggressive than their peers, as supported by Coie et. al (1982).

Children who were more aggressive more strongly endorsed hostile/coercive conflict resolution strategies than did their peers. However, in separation of the sexes, only aggressive females maintained significant endorsement of

hostile/coercive conflict strategy.

Children who were less popular also endorsed use of hostile/coercive resolution methods more strongly than their classmates. In addition, less popular children consistently supported use of assertive strategies, particularly within females.

Discovery of a correspondence between use of hostile/coercive conflict resolution methods and peer-rated aggression and popularity levels is consistent with previous research findings that aggressive children and peer-rejected children tend to engage in negative conflict resolution (Bryant, 1992). However, Bryant's research which indicated that socially accepted children practice calm, discussional approaches to conflict was not supported, with an absence of correlation between sociometric status and choice of prosocial methods within hypothetical conflict situations.

Researchers' main hypothesis that peer-rated aggression, rather than sociometric status, was more strongly related to children's conflict resolution strategies was supported within one strategy scale and nullified within another. Children's aggression levels were more strongly related than popularity levels to choice of hostile/coercive methods within hypothetical conflict situations. However, within hypothetical assertive responses, sociometric status maintained a stronger relationship with endorsement than did aggression.

Data Limitations

Although significant results were obtained in assessing children's conflict

resolution across varying measures and personal variables, results may be somewhat biased due to study limitations. Findings represent middle-class children from small towns, but may not be applicable to children of other ethnic and/or socioeconomic backgrounds. In addition, results may be limited due to a small number of participants, particularly within groups completing reports of actual conflict experience. Because the measure assessing conflict experience was developed specifically for this study, it is difficult to assess its accuracy and internal validity due to the nature of the questions. In addition, interrater reliability was not assessed and may explain some variance in results, particularly within assertive responses which were more difficult to code unanimously.

In addition, conflict assessed across all measures included disputes within differing relationship dyads, including parents and siblings, as well as peers. As previously noted by Collins & Laursen (1992), conflict strategies differ depending on relationship context; thus inclusion of all relationships may have affected results. In particular, conflict responses involving parents may have biased responses away from aggressive and assertive choices, since children are less likely to use such methods with parents.

Differences between present results and those of previous research may also be explained by differences in participant age range--while previous research noting the discrepancy between hypothetical and real-life strategy choices focused on adolescents, the present research concentrates on younger children, who may be less capable of accurately recalling conflict. Younger children might also have a more

difficult time remembering past conflict than adolescents, as supported by the small number of participants able to complete evaluations on recent conflict experience.

Future Research Implications

Results for the present study support previous research findings that future conflict management interventions should focus on unpopular and aggressive children (cite), who seem to have more frequent involvement with negative methods of conflict resolution. In addition, results suggest that interventions might concentrate on addressing hostile/coercive methods of resolve within aggressive children, while interventions with peer-rejected children might focus on use of both hostile/coercive and assertive resolution methods.

The present study also indicates that assessing conflict across multiple measures is a viable way to examine children's disagreements. Future research might begin to address children's reports of actual conflict experience, which remain relatively ignored in conflict assessments, yet offer significant relationships to children's actual and perceived behaviors. In particular, researchers might (1)investigate ways to assess real-life conflicts and their methods of resolution in a way which allows resolution strategy scores to be coded as continuous data, permitting more detailed analysis of results across all strategies employed and (2)seperate conflicts by relationship contexts. With additional research and intervention, researchers can continue to improve children's social relations, and therefore their chances at successful adjustment later in life.

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Table 1

Correlations Between Children's Conflict Measures (Peer-Evaluated Conflict, PEC; Hypothetical Conflict Response, HCR; and Reported Conflict Experience, RCE) Within Conflict Strategy Scales

	<u>Bivariate Correlations</u>		
	PEC/HCR	HCR/RCE	RCE/PEC
Prosocial			
Total	.3728***	.3186**	.1975
Males	.3770**	.3380	.0137
Females	.1957	.1982	.1888
Hostile/Coercive			
Total	.3885***	.3438**	.0332
Males	.2989*	.5374**	.1934
Females	.3042*	.1037	-.1458
Assertive			
Total	-.0016	.1403	-.1098
Males	-.1307	.1865	-.0907
Females	.0283	.0782	-.1608
Passive			
Total	.0970	-.0936	-.0527
Males	.0764	-.1075	.3654***
Females	-.1336	.0128	-.1669
Adult-Seeking			
Total	.2180*	.0814	-.0165
Males	.2330	.5008*	-.0242
Females	.2773*	-.2157	.0654

***p<.001. **p<.01. *p<.05.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for Children's Aggression and Sociometric Status

Factor	Mean	Standard Deviation
Aggression		
Total	1.31	1.64
Males	1.68	1.70
Females	.86	1.46
Sociometric Status		
Total	2.63	.56
Males	2.54	.56
Females	2.73	.55

Table 3

Sample Mean (M) and Standard Deviations (SD) of Peer-Evaluated Classmate Behavior in Conflict Situations

Strategy	<u>Overall</u>		<u>Boys</u>		<u>Girls</u>	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Hostile/Coercive	1.41	.34	1.50	.35	1.29	.29
Prosocial	1.88	.31	1.79	.28	2.00	.32
Assertive	1.57	.33	1.63	.31	1.49	.35
Passive	1.72	.23	1.62	.20	1.83	.21
Adult-Seeking	1.74	.29	1.61	.28	1.90	.23

Table 4

Relationships of Aggression and Sociometric Status to Peer-Evaluated Conflict Behavior Within Strategy Scales

		<u>Conflict Strategy Scales</u>				
		Hostile/Coercive	Prosocial	Assertive	Passive	Adult-Seeking
Aggression						
Total		.8277***	-.6233***	.7575***	-.2651***	-.0647
Males		.8279***	-.6837***	.6921***	-.2756*	-.2215*
Females		.7932***	-.4862***	.8265***	-.0377	.5174***
Sociometric Status						
Total		-.4202***	.5849***	-.3533***	.1970*	.0281
Males		-.2702*	.3890***	-.2248*	.0790	.0036
Females		-.5372***	.7755***	-.4525***	.2161	-.0763

***p<.001. **p<.01. *p<.05.

Table 5

Childrens' Ratings of Conflict Resolution Strategies in Response to Hypothetical Situations

Strategy	<u>Overall</u>		<u>Boys</u>		<u>Girls</u>	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Hostile/ Coercive	1.65	.88	2.02	1.03	1.29	.48
Prosocial	4.08	.84	3.82	.96	4.34	.60
Assertive	3.09	.85	3.30	.88	2.88	.78
Passive	2.32	1.04	2.06	1.05	2.59	.97
Adult-Seeking	2.97	1.30	2.97	1.34	2.96	1.26

Table 6

Correlations of Aggression and Sociometric Status to Hypothetical Conflict Responses Within Strategy Scales

		<u>Conflict Resolution Strategies</u>				
		Hostile/Coercive	Prosocial	Assertive	Passive	Adult-Seeking
Aggression						
Total		.3241***	-.1862	-.0238	.0919	-.0288
Males		.2610	-.2298	-.0974	.1817	-.2268
Females		.2876*	.0916	-.0941	.2221	.2138
Sociometric Status						
Total		-.2782**	.1639	-.2153*	.0059	.1067
Males		-.2992*	.1336	-.1042	-.1158	.1075
Females		-.2691	.2834*	-.3207*	.2491	.2052

***p<.001. **p<.01. *p<.05.

Table 7

Children's Self-Reported Conflict Resolution Strategies

<u>Strategy</u>	<u>Percentage of Total Reported Conflicts</u>
Hostile/Coercive	2%
Prosocial	43%
Assertive	6%
Passive	25%
Adult-Seeking	22%

Table 8**Correlations of Aggression and Sociometric Status to Reported Conflict Experience Within Strategy Scales**

		<u>Conflict Resolution Strategies</u>				
		Hostile/Coercive	Prosocial	Assertive	Passive	Adult-Seeking
Aggression						
Total		.0400	.0182	-.0593	.0865	-.0696
Male		.0861	.1001	-.0058	-.1181	-.0102
Female		-.0327	.1407	-.1977	.1971	-.2209
Sociometric Status						
Total		.0546	.2324*	.0045	-.1080	-.1760
Male		-.0343	.1936	.1881	-.3077	.0040
Female		.1006	.2864	-.1749	.0913	-.3665***

*** $p < .001$. * $p < .05$.

Appendix A

Example of Conflict Strategy Questionnaire Rating Hostile/Coercive Behaviors

Please circle the number that best describes how often your classmates act the following way in a conflict situation (do not circle a number for your own name, or if you don't know what answer to give for a classmate):

"He or she acts unfriendly when other classmates are angry at him or her. He or she will be mean in a conflict situation, sometimes yelling at kids or threatening them."

Here are what the numbers mean:

1	2	3
They never do this	They sometimes do this	They often do this
Shane Allison	1	2
Monica Bishop	1	2
Tom Bredfield	1	2
Aimee Burkert	1	2
Stuart Carlson	1	2
Stacey DeVries	1	2
James Dunaway	1	2
John Dunlap	1	2
Laura Engstrom	1	2
Emily Fawver	1	2
Tyler Fults	1	2
Sarah Graham	1	2
Daniel Helgemo	1	2

Appendix B

Conflict Strategy Descriptions Used in Conflict Strategy Questionnaire (Peer-Rankings of Conflict)

Hostile/Coercive

"He or she acts unfriendly when other classmates are angry with him/her. He or she will be mean in a conflict situation, sometimes yelling at kids or threatening them."

Prosocial

"He or she stays and talks when a classmate is angry with him/her. This child is concerned about what the classmate is angry about, stays to talk about the problem, and tries to work it out so that both people are happy."

Assertive

"He or she always wants to get his/her own way when having an argument with another child. This child often says what he/she wants in the middle of a conflict situation."

Passive

"He or she gives in when a classmate is angry with him/her. This child is worried that the classmate is mad, but would rather just not talk about it or not deal with the conflict."

Adult-Seeking

"He or she often asks for help from adults when having a conflict with another classmate. For example, he/she might tell the teacher whenever there is a problem with another classmate."

Appendix C

Vignette Situations Used in Assessing Hypothetical Conflict

1. The participant wants to watch his/her favorite TV show, but a classmate that he/she invited over wants to watch a different show.
 2. A classmate refuses to return a puzzle piece that the participant needs to finish a puzzle.
 3. The participant and a classmate want to play on the only swing left on the playground.
 4. A classmate grabs away a basketball that the participant is using.
 5. The participant has just chosen a book to read, but a classmate insists on reading the book first.
 6. The participant and a classmate want to sit in the same place to draw a picture in art class.
-

Appendix D

Example of Conflict Vignette Within Hypothetical Conflict Measure

You and two classmates are watching TV at your house one afternoon. The three of you are watching a show you really like a lot. In the middle of the show, one classmate says she doesn't like it anymore and she wants to watch something different. You tell this classmate that you and the other classmate like the show a lot and the two of you want to watch it. This classmate says she is getting bored and then changes the TV to a different channel.

Imagine that this has really happened.

1. What would you do?

	I definitely would not do this				I definitely would do this
___ Ask her nicely to turn the channel back. -----	1	2	3	4	5
___ Punch her or slap her hands off the TV. -----	1	2	3	4	5
___ Let her watch whatever she wants. -----	1	2	3	4	5
___ Tell her I will kick her out of my house if she doesn't turn the channel back. -----	1	2	3	4	5
___ Ask the other classmate for help. -----	1	2	3	4	5
___ Push her away from the TV. -----	1	2	3	4	5
___ Tell her we were watching the show and I want to watch it until it is over. -----	1	2	3	4	5
___ Call her a name. -----	1	2	3	4	5
___ Ask my mom or dad to help out. -----	1	2	3	4	5
___ Tell her we'll finish the show and then watch a show she wants. -----	1	2	3	4	5
___ Turn the TV channel back. -----	1	2	3	4	5

2. Put a check mark (✓) next to the thing you would do first..

Appendix E

Conflict Strategy Scale Definitions and Examples (Asher and Chung, 1976)

Hostile/Coercive

Behaviors that involve directly counteracting the other person's actions in an unfriendly manner (e.g., "I would push him/her away")

Prosocial

Behaviors that involve accomodating to the needs of both parties (e.g., "I would ask him/her to play with me and finish the puzzle together")

Assertive

Behaviors that involve stating what one wants (e.g., "I would tell him/her that I need the puzzle piece and to give it back")

Passive

Behaviors that involve giving in or forfeiting one's own interests (e.g., "I would just quit working on the puzzle")

Adult-Seeking

Behaviors that involve requesting help from adults (e.g., "I would go ask the teacher for help")

Appendix F

Example of Reported Conflict Experience Assessment

Recent Conflict Questionnaire**Recent Conflict #1**

Think of one recent conflict in which you have been involved. It can be a disagreement that happened today, yesterday, or even last week. Try to remember what happened again in your mind and then answer the following questions about this conflict:

1. Where did the conflict happen?

2. Who was the conflict with? How do you know this person?

3. What was the conflict about?

4. How did the disagreement end? Describe how it was settled.

5. What was the outcome of the conflict? Did either person get what they wanted?