

The Effects of Maltreatment on Children's Moral Development

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Chapter 1: Introduction

According to the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, there were 794,000 cases of child maltreatment in 2007 (Centers for Disease and Control Prevention [CDC], 2009). Many of these children were identified after the abuse had occurred. Although parents who mistreat their children would like to believe the abuse they inflict on them has no detrimental consequences, various aspects of a child's development are affected by the abuse. One particular pathway that has received limited research is the effects of abuse on a child's moral development, a domain where the child gains the ability to take into consideration a person's well-being and use fairness when conflicts emerge (Smetana, 1999). Being able to appropriately react to social cues helps children shape the interactions between themselves and those around them, making it one of the prominent components of social development (Koenig, Cicchetti, & Rogosh, 2004). Unfortunately, a parent's abusive behavior and reactions have harmful effects on the child's formation of moral development.

The relationship between maltreatment and moral development can be explored to gain an understanding of the reasons abused children react differently than their counterparts in interpersonal situations. Astor (1994) found contrasting responses between abused and nonabused children to stories in which characters used physical retaliations for self-defense. The maltreated participants had a higher rate of approving physical retaliations for self-defense especially when they believed the victim had been treated unfairly. Interestingly, victims of abuse have a concept of justice like any other child; however, they appear to reconstruct it to fit the abuse they have suffered (Smetana et al., 1999). For instance, children who are often physically punished may accept hitting as a solution for solving an issue. Since their parents model this type of behavior when they hit the children for misbehaving, children acknowledge

violent behavior as a legitimate way to reprimand others. Learning about the complexities of abused children's moral development will increase the comprehension of this population and provide helpful insights regarding its course when maltreatment is involved. Before investigating the effects of abuse on moral development, evaluating the findings of moral development in nonmaltreated children can help find discrepancies between children who have been maltreated and those who have not.

Hoffman labeled morality as "one's link to society" (Hoffman, 1979, p.958), which helps children develop a healthy understanding of others by means of grasping other people's perspectives. Moral development can be broken down into three categories: moral emotion, moral behavior, and moral understanding and reasoning. With regards to our analysis of the topic, empathy will be used to assess moral emotion. Empathy is a form of sympathetic emotion felt in correspondence to another's feelings. When demonstrated, it shows that a person can relate to the feelings expressed by somebody else; on the contrary, a person can feel distrusting of another's feelings and choose to disregard them (Hoffman, 1979). Moral behavior refers to a child's behavior in response to their social surroundings. Two types of behavior that show a child's appropriate moral development consist of engaging in prosocial behaviors and inhibiting anti-social ones (Koenig et al., 2004). Finally, moral understanding and reasoning refers to the motive behind children's behavior or reaction in response to a particular situation in their social environment. Kohlberg's Model of Moral Development shows that between the ages of 3 and 8, children's primary motives for their moral action are to avoid punishment and receive rewards (Mones & Haswell, 1998). Children's communication with people in their lives allows for the emanation of moral development and affects its trajectory.

Children construct their ideas and learn about social knowledge through their social

interactions (Smetana, 1999). While peer influence becomes increasingly evident as a child grows up, parents still continue to influence their child by modeling behavior and instilling values and beliefs. Parents have the ability to either facilitate or hinder their child's moral development through their use of disciplinary methods and their consistency in affection. It has been shown that using inductive discipline helps ensure the child positively internalizes and models appropriate moral behaviors and understandings in the future (Hoffman & Salzstein, 1967). Inductive discipline is a form of correcting behavior by explaining consequences of broken rules and displaying affection towards the child. Alternatively, power assertive discipline, such as using threats, in combination with the absence of affection can lead to a child who is unable to grasp why their behavior might be morally inappropriate. For example, when a child hits a peer because he wants the toy that the peer has and the child's parent says, "Stop that or I'll hit you," the child will stop to avoid getting hurt instead of learning not to hit others. As previously mentioned, if the child is already accustomed to physical punishment, this will also reinforce the use of violent behavior. Moreover, the child will believe hurting or threatening someone will help gain control over difficult situations, which may affect their future social interactions.

The emotions and behaviors children learn from their experiences in the home affect the type of moral relationships and understandings they form as they grow. Research in which abused children were measured for empathy has demonstrated that they employ less compassion and perspective-taking abilities (Feshbach, 1989). Instead, they appear to have difficulties understanding a peer's point of view and engage in impassive behaviors. The act of showing compassion is probably an unfamiliar response, since they usually experience no empathy from their abusive caregivers and associate the lack of empathy as a suitable response (e.g., Klimes-

Dougan & Kistner, 1990). Given that children lack skills in perspective-taking and are more aggressive, their peer relationships are likely to be unstable or short-lived. Aside from their peer relations, children's understanding of fairness or equality is also greatly affected. Children have difficulties recognizing the problem with using of instrumental violent responses in a conflict, and like other aspects of moral development, this may be attributed to the influences of their parent's behaviors and responses.

Similar trends regarding the causes of child maltreatment were found to be related to parents' misconceptions about typical child development and insufficient community resources for families to prevent domestic violence. Together, these issues increase the chances of parents using violence to cope with stress. It is beneficial to provide these parents with a form of intervention that can help them learn about general moral development in children so that their expectations can coincide to their child's actual stage of development. Taking into consideration that some parents may be reluctant to disclose their parenting styles or strategies, a brochure can be a discreet way of offering help. By providing parents with information and resources in the form of a brochure, we would like to interest parents in enhancing their views about children's behavior in relation to moral development. Parents will be provided with examples of concepts that make up moral development; therefore, assisting them with means of teaching children healthier views and behaviors regarding moral emotions, behaviors, and understandings. This project aims to increase awareness about the effects of abusive parenting practices on a child's moral development and help at-risk families decrease the likelihood of allowing maltreatment to occur by providing an informational brochure. The following research presents children's typical moral development with respect to their environments and how experiencing abuse can alter this formation.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Moral Development in Children

Moral development plays a significant role in a child's life. It lays the foundation for social interactions and helps children adapt to the standards in their environments (Koenig et al., 2004). Like other areas of development this process is shown to develop along a continuum. As children's thinking evolves, they are slowly introduced to conflicts between personal needs and social norms (Hoffman, 1979); thus, they begin to form moral codes based on their views about the world and the context in their lives. Some contexts help children develop healthy moral codes while others confound their formation. A circumstance that negatively affects the trajectory of moral development in children is maltreatment. In order to evaluate the effects of maltreatment on moral development, the purpose of this literature review is twofold. First, an overview of children's development in moral emotions, behaviors, and understanding and reasoning will be provided along with an examination of how they are affected by parental influences. Secondly, moral development in maltreated children will be investigated to help determine divergences in children's moral development, and suggestions for intervention and prevention to help families who are experiencing abuse or are at-risk will be provided.

The onset of moral development can be seen through the child's developing senses of moral emotions, behaviors, and understanding and reasoning. A common component of moral emotion is empathy, which is defined as a child's ability to understand another person's emotions (Berger, 2005). Understanding and relating to someone else's feelings allows the child to engage in moral behaviors, such as offering a hug to a seemingly upset peer or inviting a shy friend to play. Finally, moral understanding and reasoning is demonstrated through the child's capability to make judgments he or she deems appropriate on the basis of what seems fair to a

situation (Mones & Haswell, 1998). The development of this internal code, or set of rules, is vital for anyone to continue developing in a healthy manner throughout life.

Definition of Empathy

Empathy is recognized as one's emotional response to another person (Hoffman, 1979). Children can feel empathy or antipathy towards someone based on their perception of the person's feelings (Berger, 2005). Empathy refers to children's comprehension of a person's emotions. On the contrary, antipathy reflects children's feelings of distrust and anger against the person. Children's feelings of empathy can lead to prosocial actions, helping others without gaining personal benefits (Berger, 2005). This "other-centered" outlook includes a child's ability to share, take perspective, and be sensitive to others (Feshbach, 1989). Empathy plays a key role in social development since its use can affect the quantity and quality of formed relationships. For instance, children may have close friendships if they can understand what their friends are feeling and provide the necessary support. In turn, their friends may appreciate their benevolence and be inclined to continue the relationship. A child's sympathetic reaction to a person's distress gives evidence of their overall social understanding and emotional identification (Feshbach, 1989).

Development of empathy. Empathy can have both affective and cognitive elements, and a child's experience of empathy depends on the level at which they can recognize other's mindsets (Hoffman, 1979). Infants, for example, lack the ability to recognize distress in someone besides themselves; however, by 11-12 months of age children become aware that other people are capable of feeling a distress similar to their own. Nonetheless, at this point children cannot distinguish that people have individual inner states that are not the same as theirs (Hoffman, 1979). Then, at about 2-3 years of age children gain a basic awareness that others have their own

mindsets, bringing them to the first step in role-taking.

Role-taking allows a child to respond accordingly to other's feelings under specific situations (Berger, 2005). The concepts of role-taking and imitation are key components in social empathy, as they allow children to anticipate another's actions and be alert with an appropriate response (Feshbach, 1989). Children can also develop unwanted moral feelings, leading to inappropriate moral behaviors. In fact, researchers have found that heightened aggression and a lack of empathy, or social sensitivity, are common behavioral and socio-emotional effects of atypical moral development (Smetana, Kelly, & Twentyman, 1984). The idea and use of empathy involves a child first feeling, thinking, and then acting appropriately towards another individual in a situation.

Moral Behavior in Early Childhood

A common way to determine if a child is displaying adequate advancements in moral development is to observe their behavior in relation to their social surroundings (Smetana, 1999). Two types of behavior that show this development are the engagement of prosocial behaviors and the inhibition of antisocial ones (Koenig et al., 2004). Prosocial behaviors are closely associated with empathy and include actions such as helping someone stand up after he or she has fallen. A person's active response to the distress in someone else, meaning the person will try to alleviate the distress, is a central idea of morality (Hoffman, 1979). Zanh-Waxler and Radke-Yarrow (1982) conducted a cross-sequential study to examine the presence of prosocial behavior in 10-20 month old toddlers. The toddlers' mothers were trained to record their child's reactions to naturally occurring distress in others and when the mothers themselves pretended to be in distress. For instance, the mothers pretended to accidentally hit their foot on something and then say, "Ouch!" In general, children about 18 months old reacted to the distress with prosocial

behavior such as hugging or saying comforting words (Zahn-Waxler & Radke-Yarrow, 1982).

The appearance of prosocial behaviors in toddlers provides evidence that children are interested in understanding the needs of others.

Moral Understanding in Young Children

Piaget was one of the first psychologists to look at moral development in children systematically and noted a major shift regarding children's outlook on rules. He explained that children move from a heteronomous state, a place where adult rules are predominating, to an autonomous one, where rules are simply human products (Kurtines, 1974). Piaget also noted that around 3-4 years of age, concepts of intention and motive emerge about the same time as the concept of "whys," or when children begin asking about the explanations or reasons behind established rules (Nelson, 1980). Perhaps the emergence of this concept prompts children to engage in prosocial behaviors. In terms of Kohlberg's moral development model, most children ages 3-8 fit the characteristics outlined in the pre-conventional level; a stage based on egocentrism, or focusing on one's needs. The egocentrism Kohlberg referred to was children's primary motives for their moral actions, which were to avoid punishment and get rewarded (Mones & Haswell, 1998).

Parental Influences on the Developing Child

Children construct their forms of social knowledge through social interactions with adults, peers, and siblings (Smetana, 1999). As children grow, peer influences increase, while parents' influence diminishes. Even though parental influences decrease, parents can still influence their child's ideas and upholding of basic values. However, during early childhood when most children experience minimal formal education, parents are their significant models (Hoffman, 1979). In terms of aspects of moral development, the degree to which children

internalize moral values and their capacity for guilt is related to parental practices, discipline strategies, and parenting style (Krevans & Gibbs, 1996; Smetana, 1999). Discipline strategies are methods of correcting behaviors in children (e.g., getting them to stop biting when they are angry). They can involve parents using a high amount of communication to give children an opportunity to understand why their behavior requires modifications. On the contrary, they can also involve parents neglecting the child's needs and using anger or force to get their point across. Furthermore, discipline provides the primary model for a child to channel their own aggression (Hoffman & Salzstein, 1967). Since children have been reported to be disciplined 5-6 times every hour, it is clear the approach and method of discipline can profoundly affect a child's moral development (Hoffman, 1979). With a broad ability to influence their child during the early years, parents have the opportunity to foster and facilitate their child's moral and overall development. Parents have the power to help their child identify with and adopt positive characteristics.

Affection is identified as a necessary component for a child's moral development (Hoffman & Salzstein, 1967). Not only does it make a child more receptive to discipline and more likely to emulate their parents' behavior, but it also helps a child feel emotionally secure to respond to the needs of others (Hoffman, 1979). A parent's affective nature may help his or her child's moral development by using it in combination with inductive discipline. Inductive discipline involves explaining to the child why he or she is being penalized. Subsequently, the likelihood the child will model the parents' prosocial moral actions increases (Hoffman, 1979). Inductive discipline and expressive affection in everyday situations also foster the child's ability to internalize morality and weigh self-desire against the moral requirements of a situation. These initial representations are used by the child to understand and guide their social interactions

(Price & Glad, 2003). In a study by Krevans and Gibbs (1996), children whose parents predominantly used inductive discipline, rather than power assertion, were found to be considerably prosocial. In addition, parental warmth and involvement can enhance a child's motive to be attentive to others. Consistent communication can lead to a positive construction of moral knowledge by explaining reasons for rules and responding appropriately to moral violations (Smetana, 1999).

Freud suggested that children identify with and adopt their parents' methods for evaluating their own behavior (Hoffman, 1979). With consistent positive parenting styles this can direct children to a positive processing for assessing their own behavior. On the other hand, a harsh parenting style can negatively affect the child's processing of their own behavior, such as causing anxiety over physical attack or loss of a parent's love. In turn, children may attune all their efforts towards simply trying to please, rather than actually learning from the situation (Dean, Malik, Richards, & Stringer, 1986). When children are caught in this kind of damaging environment, they learn to soothe their anxiety by adopting their parents' negative behaviors and mindsets, which leads them to be critical of their mistakes and punish themselves for making them (Hoffman, 1979). They become accustomed to a parent's defective conflict resolution of using physical force to relieve anger and other upsetting emotions. Since this action also relieves a child's anxiety or guilt rather quickly, the use of physical force for conflict resolution becomes justified (Hoffman & Salzstein, 1967). The use of excessive power in discipline can base a child's morality solely on a fear of external punishment. In addition, destructive discipline techniques provide the child with a model for discharging anger against somebody. Acts of harm or unfairness towards the child provide them with altered understandings of wrongfulness and rule violations (Smetana, 1999).

The use of power assertion is correlated with poor moral internalization in a child (Smetana, 1999). In addition to physically powered discipline, other parental behaviors can produce non-ideal moral internalization and development. Ideally, parents should be explicit and specific about the unwanted behavior and the reasons as to why it is unwanted. This better equips the child to be able to learn from his or her environment (Mones & Haswell, 1998). A parent failing to communicate reasons for punishments can bring highly negative moral internalization (Smetana, 1999). Children threatened into following rigid rules can later feel like they are under constant surveillance; they seem to think their parents are continuously watching over their conduct. Consequently, they behave in ways their parents would have told them to, even when their parents are not physically present. With a limited understanding of the reasons behind the necessity to abide by specific behaviors, children learn inappropriate ways of adapting acceptable moral action to multiple environments (Hoffman, 1979).

A parent's inadequate expression of guilt also affects children's moral internalization. Since parents seldom convey guilt, they deprive children from learning about this emotion and applying it to their behaviors. If parents communicated this emotion, children may feel remorse when they commit a wrongful behavior such as intentionally hurting someone. Instead, children resort to self-criticism and have a difficult time doing otherwise (Hoffman, 1979). A parent that uses love withdrawal behaviors can also drastically and negatively affect their child's moral development (Hoffman & Salzstein, 1967). It is commonly seen that victimized children relate negatively to overt hostility, and often children attach anxiety directly to their hostile impulses. Overall, it has been discovered that extreme measures of parenting and discipline threatens a child's sense of security; thus, hindering their moral development (Hoffman & Salzstein, 1967).

Moral Development in Maltreated Children

Empathy and Perspective-Taking in Maltreated Children

During early childhood years, families serve as children's primary models for demonstrating empathy and perspective-taking abilities. If parents have difficulties identifying with others and showing empathy, children may have fewer opportunities to learn about these concepts. In a study done by Frodi and Lamb (1980), in which abusive and nonabusive parents were shown video clips of infants either smiling or crying, the abusive parents were found to have less sympathetic responses to the crying infants. Interestingly, the abusive parents also showed a heightened negative response to the infants' smiles; the parents appeared to be bothered with the child showing either emotion. The researchers suggested this demonstrates that abusive parents are more likely to correspond to children's affect with aggressive feelings and behaviors; thus, inadvertently demonstrating to their children that they feel indifferent towards them. Based on such results, abusive parents can portray and teach their children a negative outlook on the importance of perspective-taking and empathy.

Since children learn and interpret social cues from their parents, abused children have the potential to be aggressive towards others and employ apathy. George and Main (1979) observed abused toddlers' interactions with others in a daycare setting to learn about their social responses to their peers and caregivers. The abused toddlers demonstrated behaviors that were more avoidant and aggressive than the nonmaltreated toddlers. According to Feshbach (1989), the results from this study may be related to how empathy negatively develops in maltreated children. If abused children are more prone to avoid others, they may not get the opportunity to practice using or receiving empathy. Unfortunately, some abused children incorporate reluctant behaviors as part of daily form of interactions because the abuse they experience makes this a

reasonable way of preventing others from harming them.

In addition, Straker and Jacobson's (1981) results demonstrate a deviance in the use of empathy by children who have experienced physical abuse. The researchers used the Feshbach and Roe (1968) Affective Situations Test, a narrative measure, to analyze children's verbal responses to stories pertaining to empathy. The children were found to have poor abilities in understanding another person's emotions. Even though the researchers thought that the results were predictable, they asserted that this finding provides evidence of the need for children to have nurturing relationships. Experiencing physical abuse can alter a child's perceptions of relating to others and understanding other's distress, which can affect their interpersonal relationships with others beyond their family.

Peer Relations of Maltreated Children

In their early upbringing, children are mainly surrounded by family and have few opportunities for other forms of interactions. The availability to form peer relationships surfaces with the onset of daycare or schools. Unfortunately, based on Mueller and Silverman's (1989) overview of the effects of maltreatment on the formation of peer relations, abused children can have problems creating reciprocal interpersonal relationships. For example, abused children may be overbearing with their friends and attempt to dictate over activities; thus, hindering their friendships. They suggest this may be due to the history of abuse by which parents have repeatedly broken the child's trust in being able to rely on them for nurturance and basic needs. Perhaps the lack of trust in their lives encourages children to treat their peers with the same harsh and negative methods their parents have used with them. Another interesting pathway that peer relations may follow is that children may use them to attempt to receive the love and nurturance they did not obtain from their parents. However, similar to the effects on empathy, an abusive

parent's characteristics can influence the child to believe that relations with others may only bring forth negative repercussions. Consequently, children may feel discouraged to form intimate relationships or begin adopting antagonistic behaviors towards their peers.

Taking into account the lack of supportive reciprocities in the home, children initiate peer relationships with caution and suspicion. George and Main's (1979) results regarding the use of avoidance and aggressiveness by maltreated children help demonstrate that those children approach peer relations differently than nonabused children. The researchers suggest that the children used these tactics when they were confronted with the possibility of interacting with others because they wanted to make sure they exerted control over the situation. The possible desire to maintain a sense of control can be due to children's lack of rights and unfair treatment by their parents. Children who were avoidant may have been trying to be cautious about demonstrating a sense of vulnerability since it could bring them potential harm, a possible learned behavior from their negative moral internalization (Smetana, 1999).

Although some maltreated children have negative outlooks on peer relations, these relations can be beneficial and alter maltreated children's perceptions of the dynamics within interpersonal relationships (Bolger, Patterson, & Kupersmidt, 1998). Bolger and colleagues (1998) identified ways in which peer relations can positively affect maltreated children. One of their findings was that physically abused children can form close friendships, such as having a best friend. However, they also mentioned that the friendships are not usually long-lasting because the abused children gradually lower their attachment, or intimacy and amount of interactions, to their friends. In relation to George and Main's (1979) findings, Bolger and colleagues (1998) also observed that maltreated children sought to dominate their peers, or the relationship, which lead to conflict and possible termination of close friendships.

Moral Reasoning and Understanding in Maltreated Children

Research concerning the development of moral reasoning has suggested that it is impacted by the adverse effects of maltreatment. A negative effect of maltreatment on moral reasoning can include the evaluation of what seems fair or logical. Smetana and colleagues (1984) interviewed physically abused and neglected children after presenting them with stories about transgressions. Children were given a scale to rate how they would feel if the transgressions were committed against them or against someone else. Children were found to judge violations similar to the abuse they have experienced as being more serious. For example, physically abused children regarded violations that caused emotional pain for the victim as unfair. Neglected children, on the other hand, were more critical of violations that deprived people from basic needs. Children may become highly sensitive to the abuse they encounter on a daily basis; therefore, the similar behavior in the stories may have elicited some of the feelings they experience during abuse, making the children critical of the behavior (Smetana et al., 1984).

Another way to analyze how maltreatment affects the development of moral judgments is by comparing abused children's responses to both actual and hypothetical acts dealing with hurting others. Since hypothetical situations may not necessarily involve the child, the child may respond differently than to an actual one where he or she is directly affected. Smetana and colleagues (1999) presented these types of situations to both maltreated and nonmaltreated children. The hypothetical situations were demonstrated as fictional stories, whereas the actual situations dealt with real experiences in the children's lives. Children in the study were observed in a day care setting, making it possible to refer to real experiences. Maltreated children gave different assessments regarding each situation. They were less lenient with the hypothetical situations and stated that the aggressor deserved to be punished for his wrongdoings. However,

when they were presented with an actual situation, they had a difficult time discerning why the act was considered a wrongdoing or an offense. The authors suggested that this may be due to the history of maltreatment pertaining to each child, similar to the findings in Smetana and colleagues (1984). Also, children who have been abused may be able to realize when others are doing harm but have a hard time analyzing their own behavior. Based on prior research by Smetana and colleagues (1993) and Turiel, Smetana, and Killen (1991), children make these judgments because their thoughts are made valid by their maltreatment and they seek to construe their encounters around it.

Children learn about interpersonal relationships based on the examples presented by their parents, especially during the early years when their parents are their primary source for learning. Maltreatment can affect many aspects of children's moral developmental pathways. It can affect their construction of their social context outside their family and the way they form relationships. The abuse they encounter increases the likelihood of the children embarking and relying on a cycle of violence in their future.

Intervention: Breaking the Cycle

Given the multiple negative factors that can result from experiencing maltreatment, interventions are needed to help children and families cope with and prevent abuse. Based on findings regarding how the parent-child relationship can negatively influence a child's moral development (Hoffman & Salzstein, 1967; Walker & Hennig, 1999), intervention and prevention can provide the best outcomes when this primary interaction is targeted. As mentioned, the family context provides children with a key paradigm for constructing their knowledge about the world. Wolfe (1993) noted that poor parenting practices and low tolerance for stimulation are some of the symptoms demonstrated by abusive parents. Having misunderstandings about child

rearing practices and expectations that are not compatible with a child's development may positively reinforce parents to employ abusive behaviors when the child fails to meet their set expectations. Considering these factors, parents can benefit from interventions that aim at providing them with child development information. Parents can learn about stages of development and behaviors that are common during certain age groups with the aim of improving their child rearing practices.

By having programs or resources for parents to enhance their parenting skills, children will gain healthier personal skills regarding their moral emotions, behaviors, and understandings. In cases of interventions, families benefit from learning about alternative child rearing practices, which help reduce physical abuse. Teaching parents about child development can also help families that are considered at-risk to help prevent the possibility of parents maltreating their children. Intervention and prevention measures can work together to lower the incidence of child maltreatment and improve a child's prognosis. The purpose of the present project is to provide parents with information about moral development. This will be presented in the form of a brochure that outlines key aspects and offers examples of moral development in children. The brochures will be placed at a local nonprofit child care center that offers child abuse intervention and prevention services. The center serves low-income families, as well as, families referred by social services.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Participants

In order to efficiently reach at-risk families, our participants were the parents of children currently attending the San Luis Obispo Child Development Center (CDC). This center provides local at-risk families with therapeutic prevention and intervention resources. The children that attend the center typically range from 2 to 12 years of age. Not all families that are part of the CDC require assistance with domestic abuse issues, but most are of low-income. Low-income families may be considered at-risk since the stressors they encounter on a daily basis could make them prone to use abuse as a solution (Wolfe, 1993).

Based on the analysis of the influences parents have on their child's moral development, it was appropriate to provide parents with information about both moral development and their potential parental influence on it. Moral development is associated with many behaviors in children, predominantly those related to social interactions (Koenig et al., 2004). It can influence how a child interacts with others and their perceptions regarding particular interactions. Our project was designed to promote parents' knowledge of moral development in children. Research suggests that a parent's style, attitude, and discipline strategies are strong determinants of a child's moral development (Krevans & Gibbs, 1996; Smetana, 1999).

In a study done by Walker and Hennig (1999), parents' behavior and attitude towards moral dilemmas were found to affect the level of their children's moral development. For example, the parents that were affective and listened to their children's opinions of the moral dilemma helped their children increase their moral reasoning. Similarly, Smetana (1999) proposed that parents' responses to moral transgressions committed by their children, such as talking with the child about why their behavior was inappropriate, influences how children create

moral understandings. Therefore, by focusing on parents and increasing their awareness of moral development in their children, it was presumed that parents were going to gain an understanding of how moral development may affect their children's behaviors, as well as, how they can facilitate moral development in their children. By comprehending how moral development may affect children's behaviors, we hoped at-risk parents would be less inclined to use abuse when trying to discipline their children. In order to ensure that our audience, the parents at CDC, would be able to apply the given information to their lives, they were asked to voluntarily provide feedback through a follow-up survey. Additionally, they were given the opportunity to provide suggestions or additions to help improve our project in order to make it more applicable to their family situation.

Materials

We created an English and Spanish three-fold, two-sided brochure that presented moral development in children. In the addition to the English brochure, Spanish copies of the brochure and of other materials were created in order to accommodate the Spanish-speaking families at the center. We recognized that CDC has a considerable Latino demographic, thus we felt it important to include a bilingual presentation of our project to outreach the Latino families and welcome them to participate in the project. Topics that were covered in the brochure included explaining key concepts of moral development (e.g., providing definitions) and how it develops. The purpose of the explanations were to help increase the parent's knowledge of their child's actions and how those actions can change based on their child's stage of development. Another section also described examples of children exhibiting moral emotion, behavior, and understanding to help the parents relate to and understand the concepts. To conclude the brochure, there was a resource section on the back with recommended children books pertaining

to feelings. We followed the presentation of the brochure with a short survey to aid us in evaluating the effectiveness of the brochure.

Procedure

Prior to creating the brochure, we contacted CDC to explain our senior project idea. Since the families that use their services are low-income and may be considered at-risk for child abuse, this seemed like an optimal environment to distribute our brochures. The center allowed us to place the brochures there after they reviewed the material and approved it. To help the parents at the center feel comfortable about participating, our advisor created a letter explaining our project. The letter also included a request for parents to fill out the accompanying survey. We placed the brochures, letters, and surveys in the parents' boxes while being overseen by Angela Barakat, the CDC program manager. Since we did not know the families' language preference, she helped us by first putting all the Spanish materials in the Spanish-speaking parents' boxes. Then, we finished by placing the English materials in the empty parent boxes. Although the targeted audience was the parents at CDC, the center's teachers were also allowed to participate if they had children. Moreover, parents of all age groups in the center were given access to the materials to provide us with a larger sample size.

Angela Barakat also informed us that she would offer the parents an hour of parent participation if they took part in the survey. The CDC requires parents to complete 30 parenting hours by the end of June and they would be able to include this hour. By offering the participation hour, we hoped to offer parents an incentive to provide us with feedback. Once we obtained survey responses, the results were computed and represented on a graph (see Appendix G). The suggestions parents gave us in the surveys were compiled into a list for making future improvements and discussing implications.

Assessment

For our assessment, Spanish and English surveys regarding the information in the brochure were used. The questions in the survey were grouped into three different sets. The first set of questions dealt with the characteristics of the parent (e.g., how many children they have). The second set of questions concerned the participants' understanding and evaluation of the information we presented in the brochure. For this set, they were given a scale to rate their responses from 1-5. Finally, the last set of questions was in an open-ended format that asked the parents for suggestions or additional information they would have wanted to read in the brochure.

Chapter 4: Project Description

In order to provide parents with information about moral development, general concepts were explained and accompanied by examples. It was important to use causal, everyday language as much as possible, so that parents would have no trouble understanding the material. In addition, parents were supplied with some tips they can use to help encourage healthy moral development in their child. With regards to the Spanish brochures, the information was kept culturally appropriate. Each brochure was handed out to the parents with the letter from our advisor and a survey.

Section 1: “What is Moral Development?”

In this section, parents are introduced to the idea of moral development and how it can affect their children’s lives. Most parents want their child to have good morals and ethics, but do not understand how morality develops or how they can affect this development in their child. In order to get parents interested in the brochure, common misbehaviors relating to children developing morality were introduced. At the end, the concept of moral development was explained, as well as, how the misbehaviors described are common with respect to the child’s moral development stage.

One of the main focuses of the brochure was how moral development assists children in forming social interactions. Koenig and colleagues (2004) explained that moral development helps children adapt and react appropriately to others. Following that, we led into how empathy is a common root of most social reactions. To define empathy, we used Hoffman’s (1979) explanation as a model and stated that it occurs when a child can relate to a friend’s emotions. This led into moral behavior by explaining that children are impulsive with their emotions, as cited by Berger (2005). Lastly, we introduced moral understanding and reasoning by using

Mones and Haswell's research (1998) as support in explaining that a child's motive behind their behavior is important and is the best way for determining a child's stage of moral development.

Section 2: "How Moral Development Develops in Your Child"

In order to provide a simple description of moral development, Kohlberg's model was used (Berger, 2005). This provided a clear layout for the path of moral development. For each of Kohlberg's stages, key elements were provided along with recognizable behaviors a child would display in each stage. In order to make the development easy to understand, we decided to explain Kohlberg's model as 3 stages rather than 6 by combining his subheadings. Each stage was presented with the approximate age range of a child, the main motive for a child's actions, a recognizable specific behavior (used as an example to aid understanding), and either an example of a child's perspective or a fact about that stage.

The first stage was labeled, "self-centered," which generally applies to children between birth and 8 years of age. Since children of this age are egocentric and behave in ways that benefit themselves, it formed an appropriate heading. The primary motives for this stage are to both avoid punishment and get rewards, which reflect the "self-centered" concept of this stage. For our example of the child's motive, we explained that children at this stage will often treat others nicely in order to be treated nicely in return. By including this, we felt it would help parents understand why their child may be nice to someone in order to get something, and that this is common behavior. An example of what a child may be thinking in this stage is that they are scared to take something from another person because it will get them punished. They do not understand that they need to wait their turn or until the other person has finished playing with that toy. This example seemed like a common behavior that most parents may experience, making it a relevant behavior to include about a child's reasoning.

The second stage, “community centered,” included children from 8 to 12 years of age. During this stage, the focus of a child’s motive begins to move towards everyone being fair and not breaking rules. Children’s main motives in this stage are to please others and obey rules and laws. These motives not only summarize the motives for a child in this stage, but they also exhibit the overall theme of this “community centered” stage. The example of a common behavior was that children often become protective of the rules set. In our example, we referred specifically to rules of a game. The need to protect the rules leads to children getting upset when the rules are not followed. Parents can relate to this example and understand why their child may act out when a rule is overlooked. This can also help them put to rest any worries they have regarding their child behaving in this manner. We ultimately wanted to convey that this is a common behavior that a child can outgrow. To reiterate this notion, our example of what a child is thinking at this stage is directly related to this saying, “The rules do not say you get to re-roll the dice if it falls off the table,” rather than realizing that there are exceptions for accidents. This seemed to be a practical way to help parents understand the “black and white” thinking of a child in this stage.

The last stage, “Ideals Centered,” includes anyone from 12 years and up. Since this stage includes a complex and abstract way of thinking, this was an appropriate heading. This stage is more complicated to understand and it is difficult to give a definite, concrete example of behavior in people. Instead, further explanation about the understanding of a child in this stage was provided. A main idea at this stage is that children are beginning to understand that rules are put in place to benefit society. We hoped this would help parents gain an understanding about the dimensions of complex thinking that is required to get to this stage. We then expanded on this notion by explaining that children can start to realize that their own personal beliefs and values

may contradict the rules in place, but they can also recognize why they still need to follow the rules, despite their own beliefs. Instead of putting an example of what a child is thinking in this stage, we felt it would be more valuable to include the facts that only a small percentage of people go through this stage and that it varies highly between each individual. This seemed more appropriate and helpful for parents so that they do not worry if their child has not achieved this stage, even at a rather mature age.

Section 3: “Examples of Moral Development in Children”

In the event that some parents find it difficult to understand the concepts explained in the first section, the third section of the brochure provides relevant scenarios. The title of a moral development component was given (e.g., Moral Behavior), along with a specific idea related to it (e.g., Moral Behavior such as Prosocial Behavior). They were based on definitions of empathy (Hoffman, 1979; Feshbach, 1989), prosocial behavior (Zahn-Waxler & Radke-Yarrow, 1982), and moral understanding and reasoning (Astor, 1994) found in our research. This was done to help parents associate the concepts with an action. In the first example, a child was trying to alleviate a friend in pain. The child does this by patting the friend on the back and asking her how she feels, demonstrating that empathy is something that can be expressed in words and thoughts. In the second example, regarding moral behavior, a prosocial behavior of helping others was chosen. It is possible some parents already know that helping others is considered a good deed. However, this example may teach them a new term, “prosocial skills,” to use in the future. In the final example, moral understanding and reasoning was demonstrated by a child recognizing the unfairness of a situation. The purpose of this example was to help tone down any possible perceived complexities of moral reasoning and understanding. The examples were chosen to demonstrate to parents that there are ways they can observe moral development in their

children.

Section 4: “How You Can Encourage Pro-social Skills in Your Child”

The purpose of this section was to let parents know that they are capable of encouraging moral development in their children. It was crucial to also state that not every child may respond well to the tips. It would have been unfortunate if parents tried them and felt discouraged if their child did not respond accordingly. Additionally, it was important to emphasize to the parents that they are an important role model for their children. As demonstrated by Straker and Jacobson (1981), children’s empathic skills depend on the presence of nurturing relationships. With this in mind, parents were given suggestions that promote the use of expressing feelings. For example, one tip was: “Express your feelings. This can help children feel comfortable acknowledging their own feelings and those of others.” When parents have effective, responsive communication with their children, children are more likely to model similar behavior with others and their moral development is positively influenced (Krevans & Gibbs, 1996; Smetana, 1999; Walker & Hennig, 1999).

Section 5: “Recommended Books to Read With Your Child About Feelings”

Identifying feelings.

Understand and Care, Loving, Franklin’s Bad Day, and Asi Me Siento Yo.

These books explored how children can express their feelings, how they can understand the feelings of others, and how they can comfort friends. They highlighted empathy, which is a positive characteristic of healthy relationships. Since Feshbach (1989) and Smetana and colleagues (1984) found that a lack of empathy is common in atypical moral development, this book can help children improve their recognition of feelings.

Perspective-taking.

David Gets in Trouble (also in Spanish) and *One of the Problems with Everett Anderson*. These books present children with situations in which they need to view issues from other people's perspectives. Based on Frodi and Lamb's (1980) study, abusive parents may not model enough empathy or perspective-taking abilities. By listening to stories where somebody else's point of view has to be considered to mediate a problem, children will get a chance to improve their perspective-taking skills.

Peer relations and treating others.

Franklin Is Bossy (also in Spanish), *Clifford's Good Deeds* (also in Spanish), *It was you*, *Blue Kangaroo*, *How to Be a Friend: Find out*, *Pedrito's Day*, *Los Buenos Modales de Dora*, and *Las Manos No Son para Pegar*. In this set of books, the characters depict a wide range of issues in interpersonal relationships. For example, they explain how behavior can affect a friend's feelings. Mueller and Silverman (1989) suggested that maltreated children tend have trouble creating healthy interpersonal relationships. In some cases, this is because abused children are more likely to be aggressive with others (George & Maine, 1979). These stories could help children think about how their behavior may affect their friends' feelings.

Self-esteem.

I Think, I Am!, *The Little Engine That Could*, and *Tú Eres Importante*.

Abused children with low self-esteem may benefit from these books because they teach children that they can be in control of some events in their lives. Bolger and colleagues (1998) reported that maltreated children have low self-esteem because their parents fail to demonstrate love and support. These books can help children increase their internal locus of control and self-esteem by demonstrating that they are important people.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

Research findings concerning the effects of parenting styles on children's moral development demonstrates that parents who are supportive and affective have a positive influence on children's moral development (Smetana, 1999; Walker & Hennig, 1999). However, most abusive parents do not possess these characteristics. Crittenden and Ainsworth (1989) noted that abusive parents generally fail to meet their children's needs and do not provide them with adequate affection. Therefore, it is likely that moral development may not develop appropriately in maltreated children. Based on the negative effects of abusive parental influences on children's moral development, it was assumed that at-risk parents might also not be familiar with moral development in children. Keeping this in mind, a brochure about moral development was created to increase parents' awareness of moral development in their children. It was presumed that increasing awareness of moral development would help parents understand this component of their child's development and the importance of it to their child's life.

The brochures were evaluated by the parents in terms of the following: (1) their comprehension of the content, (2) whether the information could be applied to their lives, and (3) if they planned to use the provided resources. The surveys and brochures were distributed to 65 parents, of which 18 surveys were returned. Given the small sample size, the results do not give a full representation of the evaluation of the brochure. The following percentages indicate the answers given by parents using a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) for each statement: (1) 67% strongly agreed, 28% agreed, and 6% were neutral, (2) 67% strongly agreed, 22% agreed, and 11% were neutral, and (3) 50% strongly agreed, 39% agreed, and 11% were neutral. Upon analysis of the results, the parents who participated in the survey appeared to have understood the material, felt they could apply the information to their lives, and believed they

would use the children's book resources. Although this demonstrates that the brochure may have been effective in conveying the importance of moral development in children, there are confounding variables that must be taken consideration.

The parents at CDC were offered one parenting hour in exchange for completing the survey after reading brochure. For most parents, this seemed to be their primary motivation to participate. If the parent's goal was to turn in the survey and attain that hour, there is a possibility they did not read the material thoroughly enough to provide reliable feedback. Additionally, parents may have chosen their answers on the basis of what they thought would be considered appropriate, similar to the effects of a social desirability bias. Any potential bias in the responses could have affected the comprehensiveness of the evaluations. With these factors in mind, some parts of the procedure can be altered to enhance a future implication of this project.

A form of improving the project, with respect to the evaluations of the brochure, is by giving participants a longer time to look over the material and complete the accompanying surveys or questionnaires. For example, even though we set up an extended deadline for parents to turn in their responses, many did not return the surveys back in time. On the last day, we went to CDC in order to give parents one last opportunity to fill out a survey. Some parents decided to complete a survey, but they did not seem to read the material in the brochures prior to doing so. Instead, they quickly answered the questions, which is likely to have impacted the results.

The feedback received from our surveys also offers other information that could help improve this project in the future. While a general overview of the idea of moral development and its components is necessary, parents seemed to take highly to the step-by-step layout of the explanation on how morality develops, rather than the paragraph format of the introduction. In order to improve the receipt of the introduction, it is suggested that it be broken up into a more

eye-pleasing layout. This would allow parents an easier way to receive the intended information. In addition, most of the parents showed interest in the examples of each category of moral development. This was put in place to help parents relate their own experiences to each component of morality. Since parents seemed to understand this form of explaining moral development, it is suggested that in future revisions of this project these examples are expanded upon to include different ages of children showing each component of moral development.

Many parents also projected interest in receiving additional parental tips and family activities to improve moral development in their children. They suggested for the brochure to include more parenting tips with regards to specific children behaviors such as when children are mean to others, and how they can redirect behaviors. Thus, it is suggested to expand such section to include not only general guidelines and tips, but also tips for attending and modifying certain behaviors in children. This could include elaborating on common child misbehaviors, explaining how a child's stage of moral development affects their behavior, and what a parent can do to facilitate positive moral development. Moreover, while the book resources that parents can read with their children about feelings were well received, they didn't seem to gain the same interest as the rest of the brochure. Some parents suggested the brochure include low-cost activities they can do with their children to enhance moral development. Taking both considerations into account, it is suggested that instead of including a list of age appropriate books for parents to read with their children, a future brochure should include low-cost family activities. The activities can promote positive moral development for the child along with an opportunity to build positively upon the parent-child relation.

Overall, future projects and presentations should take into account the target audience's demographics when creating the material. For the current project, we took into consideration the

demographic for which we would be presenting the information to ahead of time. Since the particular site used to present the brochure had a large Latino demographic, it was necessary that a replica of each English part of the project be presented in Spanish. In order to provide the utmost valuable presentation of information, any future replication of this current project should take into consideration the intended demographic in order to provide the necessary materials, format, and language required.

Finally, future implications can also benefit from the parents' understandings of the information in the brochure. Based on our project and feedback, parents are more likely to comprehend information presented in a creative manner, rather than simple paragraphs. It should also be noted that in order to build upon the current project, it was suggested the brochure include more examples pertaining to each component of moral development, being moral emotion, behavior, and understanding and reasoning. In order to expand the examples in the brochure and improve the overall receipt of the information on children's moral development, it is suggested that future projects provide examples of children displaying each of the components of moral development at each of the stages listed in section 2 of the brochure. This will help parents to better understand the ideas behind the components of each stage of Kohlberg's Model of Moral Development.

Even though the results were from a small sample size, the parents that did participate seemed interested in the topic and learning about how it relates to their children. If there was additional time provided to implement a more extensive version of the project, it would be beneficial for at-risk parents to receive further recommendations about parenting practices. Wolfe (1993) suggested that an optimal intervention is to include and encourage at-risk parents to collaborate in forming alternative childrearing practices. An approach that can facilitate this

process is a parenting class structured with a lecture and an activity component that could expand on the information from the brochure. In the lecture part of the class, for example, parents would get an overview of moral development in children and an opportunity to discuss their thoughts about the subject. By letting parents talk about their views with each other, they may find that other parents have similar viewpoints. The activity element of the class could allow parents to be presented with scenarios of children at different stages of moral development. In this part, parents would be able to collaborate to understand the children's reasoning in the examples and ways of appropriately responding to them. Thus, parents would be encouraged to increase their responsiveness to their children's needs, which abusive parents tend to neglect (Crittenden & Ainsworth, 1989; Frodi & Lamb, 1980).

The purpose of this project was to increase and promote the awareness of the effects of child maltreatment on moral development. In general, this project proved to be successful in presenting and informing at-risk parents about moral development in children, as well as, easy tips they can use in their everyday life to enhance their child's positive moral development. Moral development is an important element in children's lives. It helps them interact appropriately with others and establish relationships. Maltreated children may not have the same opportunities to steadily progress through their development of morality. It is important to assist in preventing at-risk parents from engaging in harmful child rearing practices that may pose a threat to the development of children. With the previous suggestions of future implications, this project can provide parents with an improved outlook and awareness of moral development in their children.

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Appendix A: English Brochure

What is Moral Development?

Have you ever wondered how Children learn to Comfort their friends? or why your Child may

disobey rules when you are not around? It is not uncommon for a 5 year old to **steal** a toy from a friend when parents aren't looking, or for a



10 year old to get angry when rule exceptions are made in a game. Many of these behaviors have to do with the Child's stage of moral development.

Moral development assists Children in making appropriate reactions to others in the world. When looking at Children's relationships with their friends, a common root of their

reactions is found in an emotion called empathy.



Empathy occurs when a Child can relate to a friend's emotions. Once Children feel an emotion

they are quick to act on it, turning their emotion into a **behavior**. The most important thing to keep in mind when looking at Children's moral development is their reasons for why they choose to act on their emotions in the way they do. The **motive** behind their behavior helps pin-point what stage Children are in along their path of moral development.

How Moral Development Develops in Your Child:

Self Centered (birth—8 yrs)

In this stage a child's motives are to avoid punishment and get rewards.

Kids here often treat others nicely so that others will be nice to them.

Children in this stage are thinking, "I won't take the toy because mom will punish me."



Children in this stage are thinking, "The rules do not say that you get to re-roll the dice if it falls off the table," instead of realizing there are exceptions for accidents.



Community Centered (8-12 yrs)

In this stage a child's motives are to please others and obey rules and laws.

It's not uncommon for children to be protective over enforcing rules of a game. They even become upset when they aren't followed.

Ideals Centered (12 yrs+)

In this stage children begin to understand that rules are put in place for the benefit of society.

Children in this stage are beginning to understand that some values they hold may contradict rules set by authorities. They understand why those rules need to be followed.



Only a small percentage of people actually go through this stage. Each person has different results.

Examples of Moral Development in Children:

A Child Showing Moral Emotion such as **EMPATHY**:

Lauren is crying because she hurt her knee. Kelly goes to her and pats her on the back. She asks Lauren if she's okay. Kelly shows empathy by trying to soothe Lauren.



A Child Showing Moral Behavior such as **PRO-SOCIAL SKILLS**:

Mary is trying to reach a book on a shelf, but it's too high. Elaine sees and helps her. Elaine shows a pro-social skill of helping others.



A Child Showing Moral Understanding and Reasoning:

Ben is playing in the sandbox and someone throws a ball at his head. Phil tells his teacher, "That wasn't fair, Ben didn't do anything to him." Phil realizes that hurting someone on purpose is wrong.

How You Can Encourage Pro-social Skills in Your Child:

Sometimes it can seem difficult to teach children abstract concepts such as these. Here are some tips to help you. Keep in mind that every child responds differently and may need other approaches. Either way, you're an important part of the learning process and your children will look up to you.



Here are Some Tips:

- Take advantage of everyday situations to talk about how actions affect feelings.
- Express your feelings. This can help children feel comfortable acknowledging their own feelings and those of others.
- Children will try to act like you. Model what you want them to know or do. This will help them learn.



Recommended Books to Read With Your Child About Feelings

Toddler

- Understand and Care
(by Cheri J. Meiners,)
- Loving (by Ann Morris)

Preschool

- It Was You, Blue Kangaroo!
(by Emma Chichester Clark)
- The Little Engine That Could
(by Watty Piper)
- One of the Problems of Everett
Anderson (by Lucille Clifton)
- David Gets in Trouble
(by David Shannon)

School Age

- How To Be A Friend
(by Laurie Krasny Brown and Marc
Brown)
- Pedrito's Day (Luis Garay)
- Franklin's Bad Day
(by Paulette Bourgeois and Brenda
Clark)
- Franklin is Bossy
(by Paulette Bourgeois)
- I Think, I am! (by Louise Hay)
- Clifford's Good Deeds
(by Norman Bridwell)



**If you questions or comments please feel
free to contact us!**

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Appendix B: Spanish Brochure

Que es el Desarrollo Moral?

¿Se ha preguntado como aprenden los niños a consolar a sus compañeros? o por que su niño **desobedece** las reglas cuando usted no está alrededor? No es fuera de lo común que un niño de 5 años pueda **robarse** un juguete de un amigo en especial si los padres no están mirando, o que un niño de 10 años se moleste cuando se hagan excepciones de reglas de juegos. Muchos de estos comportamientos tienen que ver con la etapa de **desarrollo moral** del niño. El desarrollo moral ayuda a que los niños tengan respuestas apropiadas hacia los demás. Al examinar las relaciones de los niños con sus amigos, una raíz común de sus reacciones se encuentra en una emoción llamada **empatía**. La **empatía** ocurre cuando un niño puede relacionarse a las emociones de un amigo. Cuando los niños sienten una emoción tienden a actuar sobre ella, convirtiendo sus emociones en **comportamientos**. Lo más importante que uno debe tomar en cuenta con respecto a el desarrollo moral de los niños son las razones por lo cual eligen las maneras de actuar sus emociones. Las **razones** detrás de su comportamiento ayudan a identificar la fase en que los niños están en su camino de desarrollo moral.

Libros Recomendados para Leer con sus Hijos Sobre los Sentimientos

Niños


- Las Manos No Son para Pegar (por Martine Agassi)

Preescolar

- Los Buenos Modales por Dora (por Christine Ricci)
- Así Me Siento Yo (por Jahan Cain y Yanitzia Canetti)
- David Se Mete en Líos (por David Shannon)

Edad Escolar


- Franklin Es Un Mandón (por Paulette Bourgeois y Alejandra Lopez Varela)
- Las Buenas Acciones de Clifford (por Norman Bridwell)
- Tú Eres Importante (por Todd Snow)



Si tiene preguntas o comentarios, no dude en contactarnos!

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El Desarrollo Moral y La Crianza de Los Niños



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Como el Desarrollo Moral se Desarrolla en su Hijo:

Egocéntrico (nacimientos—8 años)

En esta etapa, los motivos de los niños son evitar el castigo y obtener recompensas.

Los niños son amables con los demás para que los demás los traten bien también.

Los niños en esta etapa piensan, "No me voy a llevar el juguete por que si me lo llevo, mamá me va a castigar."

Centrado en la Comunidad (8-12 años)

En esta etapa, los motivos son complacer a otros y obedecer las reglas y leyes.

Es común que los niños se conviertan en protectores de las reglas de un juego. Incluso, se molestan cuando alguien no las cumple.

Centrado en la Sociedad (12 años y más)

En esta etapa, comienzan a entender que hay reglas necesarias para el beneficio de la sociedad.


Los niños entienden que algunos valores personales contradicen las reglas de las autoridades y comprenden que tienen que defender las reglas de autoridad.

Sólo un poco de personas llegan a entender estas ideas. Cada quien tiene resultados diferentes.

Ejemplos de Desarrollo Moral en los Niños:


Un Niño Demostrando Emoción Moral como Empatía:

Claudia está llorando por que se lastimó la rodilla. Belinda se le acerca, le soba el hombro, y le pregunta si está bien. Belinda muestra empatía cuando trata de consolar a Claudia.



Un Niño Demostrando Comportamiento Moral como Habilidades Prosociales:

Oscar quiere un libro, pero no lo puede alcanzar. Brenda lo ve tratando y lo ayuda. Brenda demuestra una habilidad prosocial de ayudar a los demás.




Un Niño Demostrando Comprensión y Razón Moral:

Juan está haciendo un rompecabezas y un niño le pega con una peñeta. Antonio ve y le dice a la maestra, "Eso no fue justo, Juan no le hizo nada a el." Antonio reconoce que es injusto lastimar a alguien a propósito.

¿Como Puedo Animar Habilidades Prosociales en Mi Hijo?

A veces parece difícil enseñarle a los niños sobre los conceptos abstractos como estos. Aquí hay unos consejos. Tenga en mente que cada niño responderá de diferentes maneras y pueda necesitar otra forma de comunicación. Sin embargo, usted es una parte importante del proceso y sus hijos estimarán su participación.



Algunos Consejos:

- Use situaciones de cada día para hablar sobre como las acciones afectan los sentimientos.
- Expresar sus sentimientos con su hijo. Esto puede ayudarle a que se sienta cómodo con el reconocimiento de sus propios sentimientos y de los demás.
- Los niños tratan de actuar como usted. Modele lo que quiere que ellos sepan o hagan.

Appendix C. English Letter

California Polytechnic State University
San Luis Obispo, CA 93407

Psychology and Child Development Department
(805) 756-2033 • Fax (805) 756-1134

May 17, 2010

Dear Parents and/or Guardians:

First of all, thank you very much for taking the time to participate in a project created by Jenn Kreps and Teresa Gonzalez. Jenn and Teresa are students in Child Development at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, currently working on their senior projects. In order to apply what they have learned in classes to our community, they are required to complete a senior project.

I am writing to inform you of their activity at SLO Child Development Center. Jenn and Teresa will primarily be handing out an informational brochure on the relationships between moral development and parenting practices and asking you for your feedback. All surveys are of course, completely confidential, and the anonymity of the children, teachers, and the school will be strictly maintained. The surveys are due back by Friday, May 21st in Angela's office and will qualify for 1 parent hour.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (805) 756-2538 or at llee10@calpoly.edu or Angela Barakat at abarakat@slocdc.org.

Thank you very much for your time.

Sincerely,

Linda Lee, Ph.D
Assistant Professor
Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo

Appendix D. Spanish Letter

California Polytechnic State University
San Luis Obispo, CA 93407

Departamento de Psicología y Desarrollo Infantil
(805) 756-2033 • Fax (805) 756-1134

17 de Mayo, 2010

Estimados Padres y/o Guardianes:

En primer lugar, muchas gracias por tomar el tiempo para participar en un proyecto creado por Jenn Kreps y Teresa Gonzalez. Jenn y Teresa son estudiantes de Desarrollo Infantil en Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. Actualmente, están trabajando en su proyecto de alto nivel. Para que puedan aplicar lo que han aprendido en sus clases a nuestra comunidad, es requerido que completen un proyecto.

Estoy escribiendo para informarles de la actividad que las estudiantes van hacer en SLO Child Development Center. Jenn y Teresa les entregaran un folleto informativo sobre las relaciones entre el desarrollo moral y las prácticas de crianza. Además, habrá una encuesta para que puedan dar sus comentarios. Todas las encuestas serán completamente confidencial y el anonimato de los niños, maestros, y la escuela se mantendrá estrictamente. Las encuestas se deben entregar a la oficina de Angela el 21 de Mayo y calificaran como 1 hora de participación.

Si tienen preguntas, por favor no duden en contactarme al (805) 756-2538 o llee10@calpoly.edu. También, pueden contactar a Angela Barakat en abarakat@slocdc.org.

Muchas gracias por su tiempo.

Sinceramente,

Linda Lee, Ph.D
Profesora Asistente
Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo

Appendix E: English Survey

1. Ethnicity:
2. How many children do you have?
3. What is the age group of the children?
4. Who is the primary caregiver?

For questions 5-7 please circle the most accurate answer:

5. The information in the brochure was easy to understand.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

6. I can apply the information in the brochure to my life.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

7. I am planning on using some of the resources given in the brochure.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Suggestions and Comments

8. Was there other information you wish was included in the brochure?
9. Do you have suggestions for us?

Appendix F: Spanish Survey

1. ¿Cuál es su etnicidad?
2. ¿Cuántos hijos tiene?
3. ¿Cuál es el grupo de edad de sus hijos? Por ejemplo, de 2-12 años.
4. ¿En su familia, quién es la persona que se encarga de los niños?

Para las preguntas 5-7, por favor marque el número que describe su opinión.

5. La información del folleto era fácil de entender.

1	2	3	4	5
Totalmente En Desacuerdo	En Desacuerdo	Neutral	En Acuerdo	Totalmente En Acuerdo

6. Yo puedo aplicar la información del folleto a mi vida.

1	2	3	4	5
Totalmente En Desacuerdo	En Desacuerdo	Neutral	En Acuerdo	Totalmente

7. Estoy planeando usar algunos de los recursos del folleto.

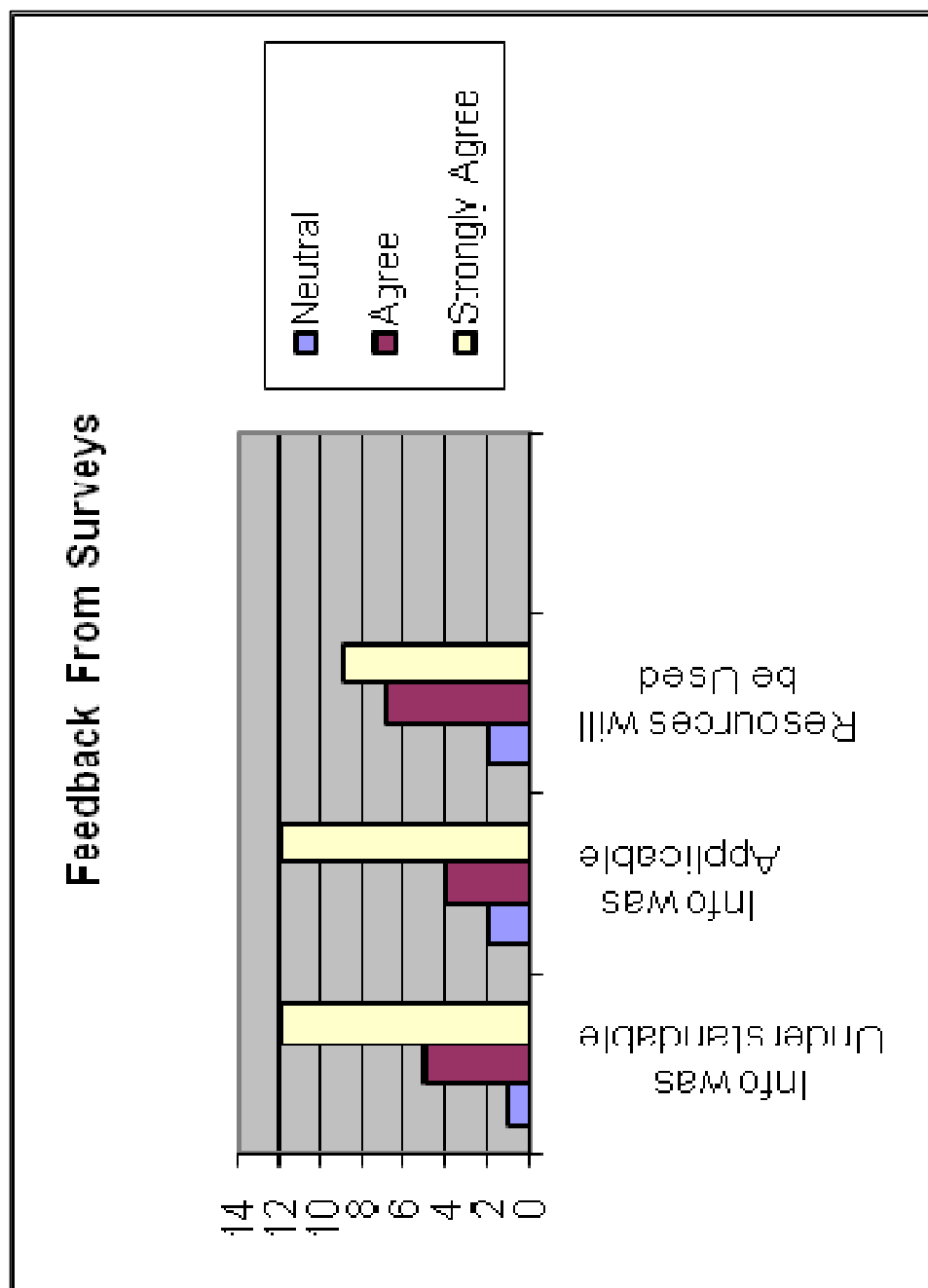
1	2	3	4	5
Totalmente En Desacuerdo	En Desacuerdo	Neutral	En Acuerdo	Totalmente

Sugerencias y Comentarios

8. ¿Hay otra información que le hubiera gustado ver en el folleto?

9. ¿Tiene sugerencias para nosotros?

Appendix G: Survey Results



Appendix H: Pictures (Putting Letter, Brochure, and Survey Packets Together for Parents)