ABSTRACT
        This study was intended to examine: (1) the kinds of
conflict preschool children between 2 and 5 years of age become
involved in; (2) the methods children use in dealing with such
conflicts; (3) the outcomes of the conflicts; and (4) differences in
behavior according to age and gender of children. Recorded were
random samples of conflict situations as they naturally occurred in
the course of observed play periods over the course of 4 months. A
total of 20 conflict situations were observed at each age, producing
a total of 80 instances. Participants in the conflict events numbered
179; some children were involved in more than one conflict. Instances
were coded as possession conflicts, territory or space conflicts,
course of play conflicts, or social intrusion or annoyance conflicts.
Responses were coded as physical nonconciliatory, verbal
nonconciliatory, conciliatory, or intervention. End of conflict was
coded as win/win, win/lose, or lose/lose. The numerous findings
discussed concern the topics mentioned above, as well as gender and
dyadic encounters, agonists, and number of movements used. (RH)

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DEVELOPMENT OF CONFLICTS AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

AMONG PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

A Project Submitted in Partial

Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Human Development

by

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Committee approval

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Heather picked up a plastic vegetable from the table. Janet reached out and grabbed hold of the vegetable. Heather squealed, "No-o-o!" loudly and jerked it from Janet's grasp. Heather placed the vegetable in the miniature sink where Janet immediately grabbed it. Heather snatched it from Janet's hand and retreated to a near-by table.

Conflict is defined in the dictionary as "A state of disharmony: CLASH; A Collision; the opposition or simultaneous functioning of mutually exclusive impulses, desires, or tendencies"(Webster's II New Riverside University Dictionary, 1984). Conflicts arise when one person does something to another person that he/she opposes or does not comply to (See Hay, 1984).

When people gather together, it is inevitable that conflicts will arise. Different viewpoints and personal interests sometimes clash when individuals act together in groups. Children have a strong interest in issues such as possessions and territory and space. Furby (1978) suggested that children feel they gain some control over their environment and lives when they can claim a possession as their own.

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Issues of conflict have been examined by a number of researchers. They have found that the most common kind of conflict appears to be over possessions (Dawe, 1934; Genishi and Dipaola, 1982; Hay, 1984; Bronson, 1975; Ramsey, 1986; Brenner and Mueller, 1982). Weigel (1984) studied children asserting or defending themselves from personal space intrusions and demographic factors that may influence how a child reacts. Ramsey (1978) studied the manipulation of space and how it effected conflicts (particularly possession conflicts). Social intrusions have been examined by some researchers as a way for children to gain access to a group and join an activity (Corsaro, 1979; Forbes, Katz, Paul and Lubin, 1982). Conflicts over fantasy roles, ideas, a child's action or a child's refusal to act (what this study calls course of play conflicts) have been included in the studies by Eisenberg and Garvey, 1981; Shantz and Shantz, 1985, Genishi and DiPaolo, 1982; Houseman, 1972.

Conflict encounters between children often end when one child achieves the desired goal while the other relinquishes or complies (Ginsburg, Pollman and Wauson, 1977; Strayer and Strayer, 1976; Shantz and Shantz, 1982; Dawe, 1934). However, not all conflicts end in terms of one child winning and one losing. Strayer and Strayer (1976) recorded a small percentage of conflicts that concluded with the two conflicting parties resolving the problem and cooperating together. Sackin and Thelen (1984) examined

behaviors or gestures occuring at the termination of the conflict that facilitated a cooperative or peaceful outcome.

There is a growing body of research that examines aggressive behaviors in conflict situations (Shantz, 1986; Deutsch, 1973; Hymel and Rubin, 1984). Shantz (1986) defines aggression as "any act in which a person deliberately bites, kicks, shoves, or otherwise physically hurts another (physical aggression) or verbally insults or derogates another (verbal agression)." Also, children may use hostile or aggressive gestures that may or may not initiate physical contact. Such gestures would include spitting, poking an object at a child's face, or pretend to be shooting a child. However, aggression may or may not be involved in a conflict situation. Indeed, studies show that aggressive methods are used rather infrequently by children (Hay and Ross, 1982; Eisenberg and Garvey, 1981). Aggression is a strategy that children can employ, but it is just one type of strategy and it certainly doesn't appear in all conflict situations.

Conflicts have three basic components: a beginning, a middle, and an end (Hay, 1984). The beginning of a conflict involves an issue or action introduced by a person in which one or more disagree or oppose. The middle of a conflict involves a reaction to this "antecedent event" (Shantz, 1987). A variety of verbal and/or physical strategies may be used in the opposition of the "antecedent event." The agonist (the child that initiates the conflict through

some sort of intrusion or aggression) may also persist, employing different strategies, to perpetuate the conflict. Therefore, a number of strategies and combinations of various strategies may occur between the conflicting parties. The end of a conflict occurs when one yields to the other or a mutual solution is found. Studies show that most conflicts end with one child subordinating (losing) and the two going separate ways (e.g., Strayer and Strayer, 1976) However, there are instances when children find a "conciliatory" solution and the play is maintained (e.g., Sackin and Thelen, 1984).

Some researchers (sociolinguists) have focused exclusively on verbal arguments of children. Brenneis and Lein (1977) discovered that arguments followed three different patterns. The first pattern is repetition in which the involved parties repeat the same utterances in successive turns. Second, is escalation in which each successive utterance is stated more insistently and often increases in volume. Third, is inversion which involves an utterance, such as an asse.tion (You stole my truck) and its inverse, such as a denial (No, I didn't).

Genishi and DiPaolo (1982) categorized children's argumentative utterances as being simple or complex. Simple arguments were basically repetitious and added no additional reasoning or supportive arguments. Complex arguments "was one that included an acceptance, appeal to authority, compromise, or supporting argument" (p. 55).

The purpose of this study is to examine (1) the kinds of conflict preschool children (two to five) are involved in, (2) the methods children employ in dealing with these conflicts, (3) the outcome of the conflicts, and (4) differences in behavior according to age and gender of children. A comparison of the results hopes to reveal any developmental stages of conflict and conflict resolution.

Chapter 2

METHODOLOGY

Observation

The observer recorded random samples of conflict
situations as they naturally occurred during the course
of observed play periods. Over the course of four months,
anecdotal records of two or more children interacting
in conflict situations were recorded. The observer was
present on the floor with the children during the course
of indoor and outdoor free play periods and occasionally
during teacher directed activities. Event sampling, which
is commonly used among investigators (Hay, 1984), was
the method employed in this study.

Observations were made among individual classes
of two, three, four, and five year old children. Henceforth,
children were observed interacting with peers approximately
of the same age. Twenty conflict situations were observed
from each age category; a total of eighty samples. Two
or more children were invovled in conflicts for a total
of 179 conflict participants. Some children were involved
in more than one conflict.

The observer's distance from the subjects ranged
approximately from 0.5 meters to 4.5 meters. Observation

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sessions lasted forty-five to ninety minutes.

Subjects

Observations were made at three different sites:
two day care centers and one college affilliated children's
school. The schools were located in the Pasadena, La Canada
vicinity. Each school had individual classes of two, three,
four, and five-year-olds; a total of twelve classrooms.
The number of children in the classes ranged from thirteen
to twenty-five. About a third of the children attended
a low income day care center. A total of 53 two-year-olds,
45 three-year-olds, 63 four-year-olds, and 47 five-year-olds
were enrolled at the three sites. Since conflicts were
recorded as they arose, the observer couldn't control
for gender and ethnic identity. Ninety-three white, 59
black, 15 Oriental, and 12 Hispanic children children
engaged in conflicts.

Table 1

Gender of Children Involved in Conflicts

	2-year-olds	3-year-olds	4-year-olds	5-year-olds
Male	34	24	35	17
Female	12	20	13	24

Many more boys than girls among the two-and four-year-
old classes were involved in conflicts.

Observation Schedule

Basic Conrlict Types

Once the event samples were recorded, a coding
schedule was designed to analyze types of conflicts and
methods used by children in dealing with conflicts.

The basic conflict types are possession conflicts,
territory or space conflicts, course of play conflicts,
and social intrusions or annoyances.

I.   Possession conflicts: one or more children
trying to gain a toy already possessed by a child; two
or more children trying to claim the same toy that both
are mutually attracted to.

II.   Territory or space conflicts: One or more
children attempting to crowd into claimed spaces; reclaiming
of a previous space occupied by a child; accidental or
incidental contact with another per on or possession that
initiates a protest response (either verbal or physical
reaction); two or more children trying to achieve superior
positioning that allows better visual contact of desired
object; materials overlapping into other claimed spaces.

III.   Course of play conflicts: one or more children
wanting to pursue an idea but is denied by other child(ren)
involved; protest of inaction of a peer.

IV.   Social intrusions or annoyances: teasing
or aggressive actions toward a child or group of children
without provocation and seemingly without a desired objective

(e.g., there is no attempt to gain a toy); one or more child(ren) deny a child entrance to an activity.

According to these definitions, the types on conflict in the samples were determined.

To determine what methods and how frequently particular methods were used in responding to conflicting situations, a coding schedule was designed to aid in analyzing responses.

Methods Employed

I. Physical Nonconciliatory

A. Repel/Reject

1. cry/scream (no words involved)

2. withdraw object from reach by means of distancing possession from agonist or blocking advances with body

3. grab, jerk or some other means to retrieve object

4. block a child with their body when infringing on space

5. push advancing hand away

B. Aggressive Rejection

1. hit, bite, kick, pinch, slap

2. push invader from space or territory

3. hostile or aggressive gestures without physical contact (e.g., imitate shooting, poking an object towards a child; spit)

4. throw objects

C. Passive Rejection

1. gathers all of a particular toy/material

for self (e.g., hoards all the Legos)

2. gesturing in a passive or nonthreatening way

   (e.g., holding hand out)

D. Avoidance

1. seems to ignore the intrusion, action, or

   protest (e.g., keeps singing a song after another

   child protests, "Stop singing that song. That's

   not a good song."); gives no response after

   receiving an action such as a push

2. leaves conflicting situation; withdrawal (e.g.,

   abandons toys and retreats from area)

E. Reciprocate: seek to return same action received;

   a gesture is returned in kind (e.g., a child is

   pushed so he responds by returning the push)

F. Substitutions

1. find a substitute for self (e.g., a child gets

   another chair after hers ahd been taken)

2. offer a substitute to other child (e.g., two

   children claim the same purse so one child

   offers a different purse as a substitute for the

   or ____ are disputing over)

II. Verbal Nonconciliatory

A. persuade, coax, plead

B. threatens (e.g., I won't be your friend anymore)

C. suggest alternatives (e.g., turn taking, sharing)

D. argue

E. negative protests (e.g., "No! Don't do that!")

      E.   verbal rebukes (e.g., "You're bad.")

      F.   verbally claims object or space for self (e.g.,
           "That's my truck; I can play here.")

      G.   verbally denies a child entrance to an activity
           (e.g., "You can't play here.")

      H.   gives directior or command (e.g., "Open the gate."
           "Get out of here.")

      I.   calls names

III. Conciliatory Behaviors[*]

      A.   cooperative propositions: a friendly overture or
           suggestion for cooperative engagement (e.g., "I'll
           be your friend"; "You help me move this puppet
           stage, then you can play in my house.")

      B.   apology (e.g., "I'm sorry. Are you O.K.?")

      C.   symbolic offering: made an offering of something
           that wasn't readily available (e.g., I'll bring my
           new doll to school and you can play with it)

      D.   object offering or sharing

      E.   grooming: hugging, stroking, handholding, etc.

IV. Intervention

      A.   Requested Intervention

          1.   request an adult to intervene on their behalf
               through nonverbal means (e.g., looking towards an
               adult while pointing at the agonist)

          2.   request a child to intervene on their behalf
               (e.g., "Help me.")

[*] These Conciliatory Behaviors were adapted from Sackin and
Thelen (1984)

B. Adult Initiated Intervention

    1. child removed from scene

    2. adult mediator: solutions discussed and agreed upon (child directed)

    3. adult forces children to accept her/his version of a solution

    4. verbal direction: voices alternative; gives words to clear up a situation (e.g.,"I don't think he wants to give you a ride right now. How about using this wagon instead?"); reminds children of rules

    5. object taken away from child

    6. physical proximity or a look by an adult causing conflict to end

    7. offers a substitute item

C. Child Intervention (third party involves themselves)

    1. voices protest on behalf of a child

    2. suggests solutions

    3. takes aggressive action toward one or all of those initially engaged in the conflict situation (hitting, pushing, etc.)

    4. retrieves/rebuild object on behalf of child

End of Conflict

I. win/win: the conflicting parties find a satisfactory solution and the play may be continued; both parties win

II. win/lose: one of the conflicting parties achieves their objective while the other party concedes; one party gets what they want (winner) when the other party gives in (loser)

III. lose/lose: neither party achieves desired objective or solution often due to an outside party intervening (e.g., an adult takes the disputed object away)

Intercoder Reliability

The purpose of the intercoder reliability study is to find out if there are any ambiguities in the use of the coding schedule. Another coder was trained to use the coding schedule to determine if agreement could be reached. Fifteen percent of the observations were recoded by the trained coder.

There was 100 percent agreement as to the type of conflict the children were engaged in, i.e., possession conflict, space or territory conflict, etc.

In coding methods used by children to deal with the conflict there was 81 percent agreement between the coders. Some ambiguity was found in the interpretations of how many methods children used in dealing with a conflict. Seventy-eight percent of the disagreements involved one coder including other methods not recorded by the other coder. Twenty-two percent of the disagreements were differences in how an action was recorded. For example, a child hitting a guitar was coded as a hit by one coder and a hostile gesture by another coder.

There was a 92 percent agreement between the coders
as to how the conflict ended. The coders agreed upon
whether the conflict ended in a win/win, win/lose, or
lose/lose manner in all but one observation.

There was a high level of agreement between the
coders which indicates the coding schedule to be a consistent
tool. Personal interpretations as to how many methods
used by conflicting children and to a lesser degree, how
an action was coded led to some ambiguities.

Chapter 3

RESULTS

Issues of Conflict

The first variable to be examined is the frequency
for which possession, space/territory, course of play,
and social intrusion/annoyance conflicts occur over the
ages of two through five.

It should be noted that there were instances when
the issue of conflict changed during the course of the
dispute. For example, two children started off trying
to gain control of a toy. However, the toy was forgotten
when one child tried to expel the other from the space.
A pushing match started along with protests, "I was here
first. Move!" Therefore, a sample may include more than
one conflict issue. (See Figure 1: Frequency of Conflicts,
and Figure 2: Frequency of Conflicts According to Age.)

For two- and three-year-olds possession is the
conflict issue that occurs most often. Possession conflicts
drop considerably for four- and five-year-olds. However,
possession disputes remain one of the most common types
of conflict for all age groups. Possession conflicts
represented 45.1 to 22.7 percent of the conflicts engaged
in by the children. It was the most frequent conflict

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issue for two- and three-year-olds and the second most
frequent conflict issue among fours and fives.

Territory and space conflicts are most common
with two- and three-year-olds. Again, this conflict issue
decreases in frequency among four- and five-year-olds.

Course of play conflicts are rather infrequent
for two-, three-, and four-year-olds, but it escalates
among five-year-olds. Indeed, course of play disputes
are the most frequent conflict issue among five-year-olds.

Social intrusions and annoyances occur more often
with two- and three-year-olds than does course
of play but it occurs twice as often among four-year-olds
than among other age groups. It is the most frequent
conflict issue among four-year-olds.

Gender and Dyadic Encounters

Dyadic pairs are two children interacting with
one another. The pairs may be both male, both female,
or one male and one female. Eighty-five point nine percent
of the conflicts involved a dyad. Only 14.1 percent of
the conflicts involved more than two children (i.e, 14
out of 99 conflicts involved three or more children).
There is evidence to suggest that male dyads and female
dyads have approximately the same amount of possession
and territorial conflicts (i.e.. female pair were as likely
as a male pair to have a conflict concerning a possession
or space). Male/female dyads were also often engaged

Table 2

Gender of Dyads Engaged in Conflicts

	2-year-olds	3-year-olds	4-year-olds	5-year-olds
Possession	M/F: 5	M/F: 2	M/F: 1	M/F: 2
	M/M: 5	M/M: 4	M/M: 2	M/M: 2
	F/F: 2	F/F: 3	F/F: 2	F/F: 2
Territory	M/F: 3	M/F: 2	M/F: 2	M/F: 1
	M/M: 3	M/M: 1	M/M: 1	M/M: 0
	F/F: 2	F/F: 3	F/F: 0	F/F: 1
Course of play	M/F: 1	M/F: 0	M/F: 0	M/F: 1
	M/M: 1	M/M: 0	M/M: 1	M/M: 1
	F/F: 1	F/F: 1	F/F: 2	F/F: 6
Social intrusions	M/F: 1	M/F: 0	M/F: 1	M/F: 3
	M/M: 2	M/M: 2	M/M: 7	M/M: 1
	F/F: 1	F/F: 1	F/F: 0	F/F: 0

M/F: Male/Female dyad; M/M: Male/Male dyad; F/F: Female/
    Female dyad

in possession and territorial conflicts. Approximately 36

percent of the dyads involved in a possession or territorial

dispute were a male/female combination.

There is also some evidence that five-year-old

females tend to engage in more course of play conflicts

than their male counterparts. (See Figure 3: Frequency

of Course of Play Conflicts and Social Intrusions/Annoyances

Among Male Dyads and Female Dyads.) Seventy-five percent

of the five-year-olds' dyads engaged in a course of play

conflict were female. Overall, 66.7 percent of the course

of play conflicts involved female dyads compared to only

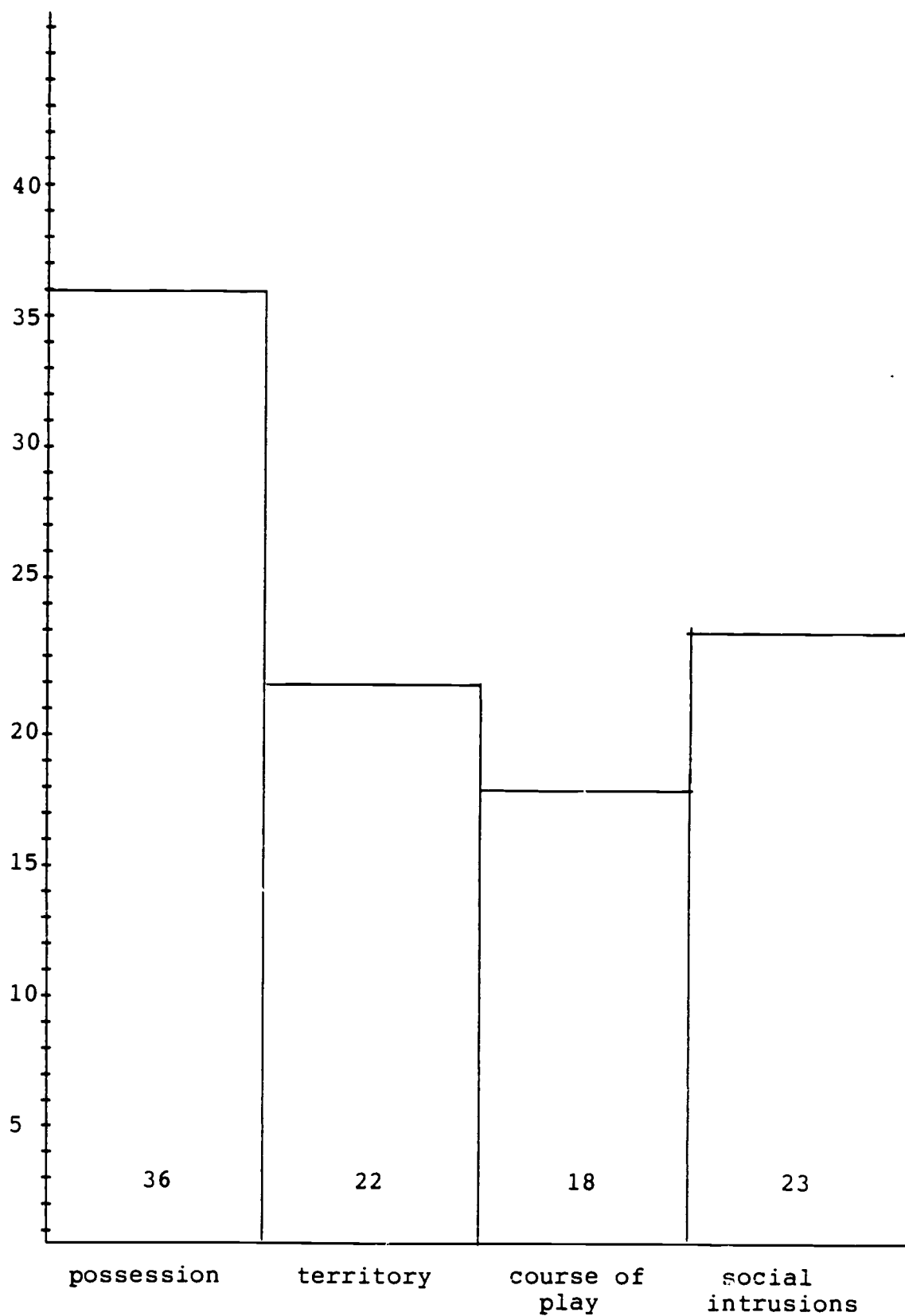20 percent comprising male dyads. Male/female dyads accounted
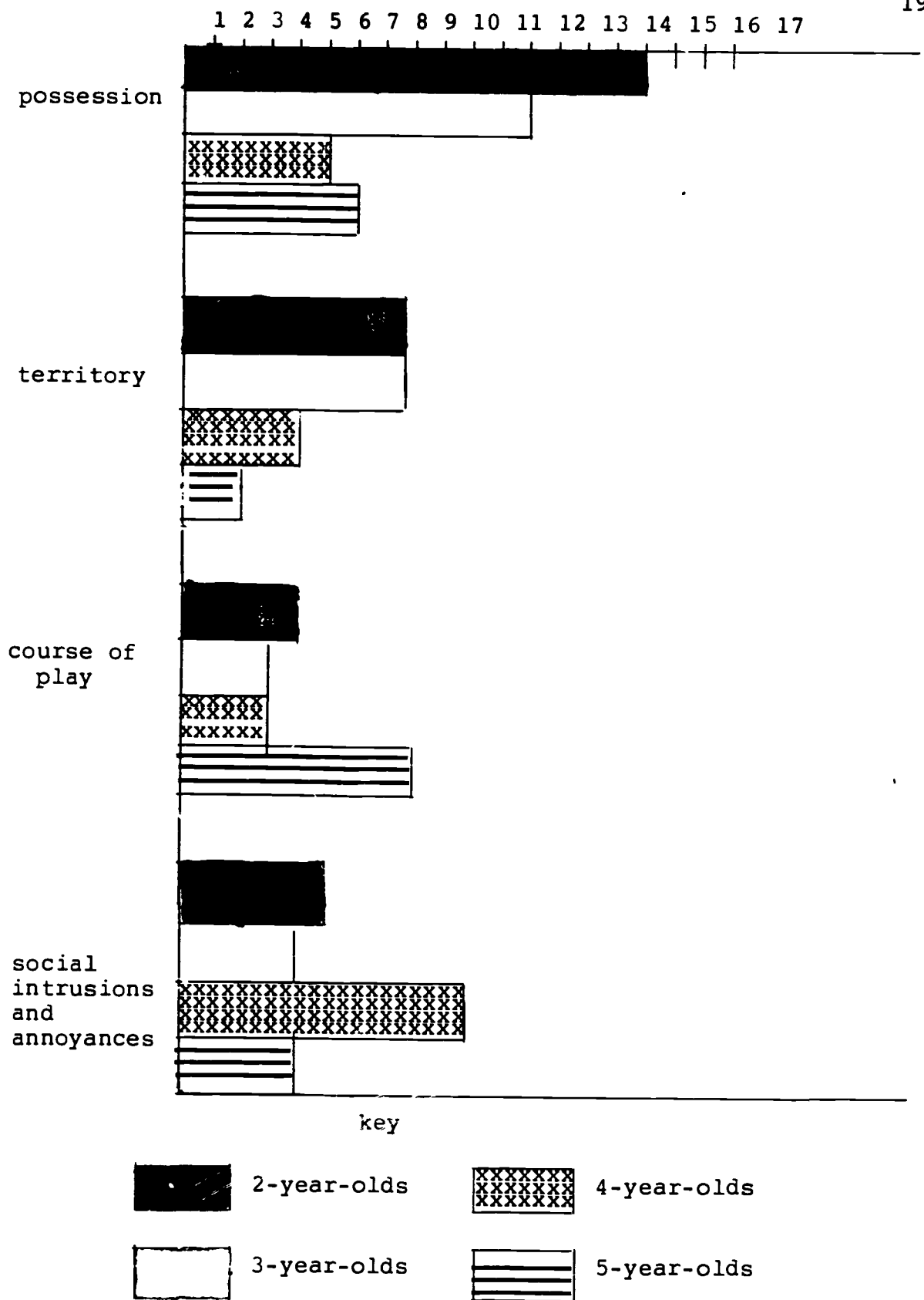
Figure 1

Frequency of Conflicts

Figure 2

Frequency of Conflicts According to Age
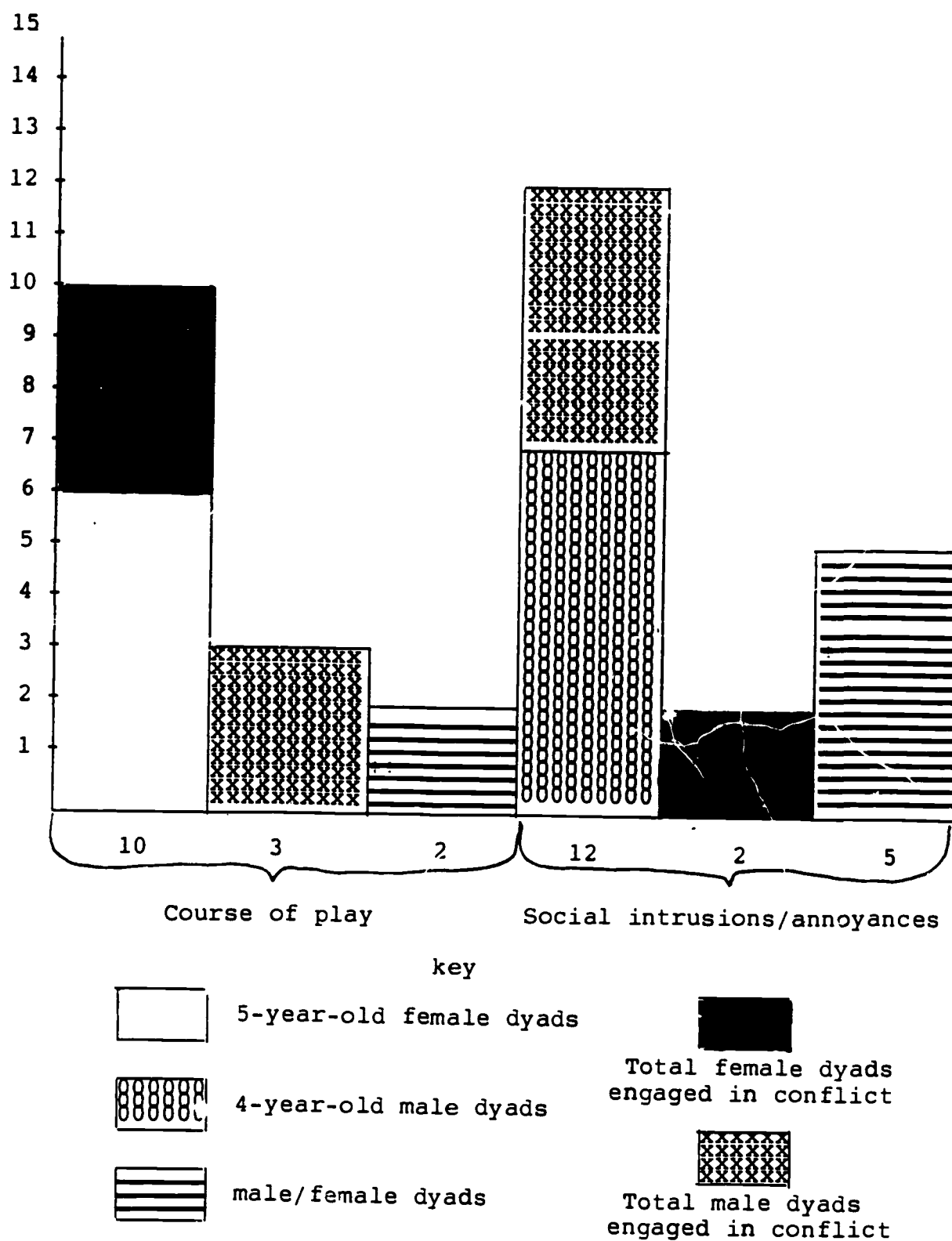
Figure 3

Frequency of Course of Play Conflicts and Social Intrusions/
Annoyances Among Male Dyads and Female Dyads

for 13.3 percent in course of play disputes. In contrast, males
were more likely to engage in social intrusion/annoyance
conflicts. Male dyads were involved in 63.2 percent of
the social intrusion/annoyance conflicts and 26.3 percent
involved male/female dyads. Female dyads only engaged
in 10.5 percent of the social intrusion/annoyance conflicts.
Males were the initiators in 67 percent of these encounters.
It's interesting to note that 100 percent of the social
intrusion/annoyance conflicts among four-year-olds were
initiated by a male. In fact 70 percent of these disputes
involved male dyads. Only 10 percent of the social intrusion/
annoyance encounters contain a male and female in the
dispute and no female dyads were recorded in any of the
four-year-old samples.

The samples of ethnic dyads were too small to
draw any significant conclusions; therefore, they were
not included.

The next question to be examined is how often
do male dyads, female dyads, and male/female dyads ngage
in conflicts? In order to examine this question one has
to look at the number of males and females in a classroom.
If there are more males in a classroom there is a greater
chance for two males to come into conflict and vice versa
for females.

Among the two-year-old classrooms there was a
fairly even number of females and males (within two of
either sex). However, there were nearly twice as many

conflicting male dyads to female dyads. Part of this
was inflated due to a particular subject who engaged in
frequent conflicts with his male classmates. That doesn't
mean two-year-old females were not engaged in conflicts.
Thirty-seven percent of the conflicts involved male/female
pairs. However, it was rarer to see two females engaged
in conflicts. Forty point eight percent were male dyads
and 22.2 percent were female dyads.

Among the three-year-old classes male dyads and
female dyads engaged in approximately the same number
of conflicts. Forty-two percent of the conflicting dyads
were female, 37 percent were male dyads, and 21 percent
were male/fema'e dyads.

Among the three-year-olds there was almost twice
as many potential male dyads as female dyads so you would
expect a higher rate of male dyadic conflicts. Indeed,
50 percent of the dyadic conflicts were between two males
compared to 16.6 percent for females and 33.3 percent
for male/female dyads.

The five-year-old samples had a slightly higher
potential female dyadic encounters than the male dyads.
The actual conflicting female dyads reflected this with
36.8 percent female dyads to 26.3 percent conflicting
male dyads. The conflicting male/female dyads was 36.8
percent.

Agonists

Among male/female dyads it will be investigated as to
how many females verses males are the agonist. An agonist
is the child that initiates the conflict through some
sort of intrusion or aggression. The following is the
percentage of the female and male being the agonist among
the conflicting female/male dyads.

Table 3

Male Agonists vs. Female Agonists

	2-year-olds	3-year-olds	4-year-olds	5-year-olds
female agonists	41.6%	50%	50%	28.6%
male agonists	58.4%	50%	50%	71.4

In almost every age category (with the exception
of the five-year-olds) females were as likely to initiate
the conflict as the males

White children were more likely to initiate a
conflict between another white child and children of color
were more likely to initiate conflicts between other children
of color. Seventy percent of the conflicts initiated
by a white child was directed at another white child compared
to 30 percent being directed at a child of color.

Children of color initiated a conflict between
another child of color in 75 percent of the samples compared
to 25% towards a white child.

<u>Number of Movements and Strategies Used</u>

A movement is when the action shifts from one
participant to the other. The initial intrusion or aggression
and the reaction to this intrusion/aggression is the opening
movement in a conflict. Each one of the subsequent strategies
used by the conflicting members is considered to be a
single movement. A child who combines two or more strategies
together is considered to be a single movement. The ending
movement is the strategy or combination of strategies   v
that causes the conflict to end. Conflicts ending due
to adult intervention will be eliminated.

Table 4

Mean and Mode Rate of Movements and Strategies for
Different Age Groups

	2-year-olds	3-year-olds	4-year-olds	5-year-olds
mean rate of movements	2.8	4.25	5.8	4.8
mode rate of movements	2	4	5	3
mean rate of strategies	3.0	4.3	4.6	4.0
mode rate of strategies	2	4	5	4

The purpose of this comparison is to see if conflicts
become more complex or more elaborate as children get
older. Two-year-olds do have the lowest mean and modal
rates of movements and strategies. Three-year-olds double the
modal rates of movements and strategies and use on the average

1.45 more movements and 1.3 more strategies than twos.
Four- and five-year-olds average more movements in their
conflicts than do three-year-olds. However, among the
average number of strategies used, five-year-olds decline
slightly from the threes and fours. Four-year-olds have
the highest average of movements and strategies.

There is evidence that the number of movements
and strategies used increases significantly between twos
and the older groups. However, the rates do not necessarily
increase in order of age.

Methods of Dealing with Conflicts

Table 5

Mean Percentage of Strategies Used by Different Age Groups

	2-year-olds	3-year-olds	4-year-olds	5-year-olds
repel/reject	31.2%	20.0%	17.2%	10.1%
aggressive	13.5%	17.0%	20.4%	8.9%
intervention	4.2%	0	4.3%	3.8%
avoidance	14.6%	14.0%	15.0%	20.2%
reciprocate	2.1%	2.1%	8.6%	1.3%
substitutions	0	0	0	1.3%
verbal	2.3%	45.0%	37.6%	54.4%

The above mean percentages shows how often particular
strategies or methods were used by groups of children
when dealing with a conflict. The figures compare how

often a strategy was used by a particular age group.
For example, two-year-old children used repel and reject
strategies 31.2 percent of all the strategies.

Repel/Reject Strategies

The repel/reject strategy was used most frequently
by the two-year-olds. This strategy declined steadily
from two to five. However, it was still a frequently
chosen strategy for other age groups, especially threes
and fours. Twos used crying/screaming, withdrawing the
object, and grabbing the object most often. Threes used
grabbing and withdrawing the object often but they rarely
cried or screamed. Four-year-olds made use of all these
strategies almost equally.

Aggressive Strategies

Use of aggressive actions varied among the different
age groups. The use of aggressive actions peaked among
four-year-olds. Incidents of hitting and kicking were
the highest among fours. However, many times the hits
were not hard. Most of them were opened-handed swats.
Four-year-olds used their bodies a lot and strength was
a source of pride. Rough and tumble play occurred with
greater frequency among fours which meant that sometimes
rough play escalated into more aggressive actions.

The use of aggressive strategies among the other
age groups were often overt physical means to deal with
a conflict. Rarely was the action so aggressive that

someone was injured. For example, pushing a child from a space occurred 25 to 35 percent as an aggressive method among twos, threes, and fours but it rarely was so aggressive as to knock a child down or injure them. Pushing and using hostile gestures were the strategies used most often by the children.

Aggressive tactics were used most often by boys. Aggressive strategies by males comprised 84.6 percent for twos, 68.7 percent for threes, 78.9 percent for fours, and 42.8 percent for fives. Five-year-olds had a very small sample of aggressive strategies so that may account for a low percentage of male participants.

There is 1.6 white males to every one male child of color. This would account for part of the reason of why more white males engaged in aggressive actions than male children of color. However, white males were engaged in 70.6 percent of the aggressive actions compared to 29.4 percent of male children of color or 2.4 aggressive incidents by white males for every one aggressive incident by a male child of color. In addition, white males engaged in more violent aggressive actions. Fifty-four percent of the aggressions by white males involved hitting, kicking, or thowing a child to the ground compared to 40 percent by male children of color.

Thirty-five percent of the aggressive strategies used were by females. There was 1.6 white females to every one female child of color and yet female children

of color were involved in 63.2 percent of the aggressive strategies compared to 36.8 percent by white females. Fifty percent of the aggressive methods used by female children of color was pushing. Pushing was also the most common strategy used among white females. The more aggressive actions such as hitting and kicking comprised 25 percent of the strategies used by female children of color and 43 percent for white females. This indicates that white females were more inclined to use the most aggressive of the strategies. Female children of color also engaged in hostile gestures such as spitting and poking objects at people 25 percent of the time. Females acted aggressively towards boys as often as they did towards girls. However, 50 percent of the aggressive actions towards the boys involved reciprocating an aggressive gesture. That is, half the time a female acted aggressively towards a male only after she had been initially hit, pushed or spit upon by that male.

Intervention

Intervention requires an outside party to involve themselves in a conflict. That intervention may be requested by a member of the conflicting party or the outside party involves themselves uninvited. The outside party may be another child or an adult.

Six point twenty-five percent of the samples involved an outside child intervening in an ongoing conflict. This child intervened on behalf of one of the conflicting members. The intervening party retrieved objects 37.5

percent, voiced protests 37.5 percent, used aggressive action
12.5 percent and offered suggestions 12.5 percent. Two-
year-olds usually retrieved objects and the older children
(fours and fives) used more verbal protests. Eighty percent
of the children intervening was by a female. The females
intervened for males and females equally.

Adults, on the other hand, intervened most ofter.
There was some sort of adult intervention in 13.75 percent
of the samples. Adults intervened most often among two-
year-olds. In fact, in 55 percent of the two-year-old
samples adults had intervened in some capacity. Adult
intervention dropped steadily as the children became older.
Adults intervened on behalf of three-year-olds in 20 percent
of the samples and only in 10 percent of the samples of
four- and five-year-olds.

Children requested adult intervention in fifteen
to twenty percent of the samples. It varied as to how
often an adult would respond to a child's request. Adults
tended to respond and act upon the request of a two-year-
old more frequently than older children. Seventy-five
percent of the requests by two-year-olds were acted upon
by an adult compared to 50 percent for four- and five-
year-olds. Three-year-olds made ro such request.

Adult intervention had a major influence not only
on the outcome of the conflict but also on whether or
not the play resumed. In 61 percent of the time when an
adult intervened the participants disbanded and went separate
ways. Thirty-nire percent of the time children resumed

their play. Adult intervention sometimes helped maintain
the play of a group. When an intruder threatened to break
up the play of a group an adult sometimes stepped in.
In 22 percent of the cases in which an adult intervened
it was to maintain the play of a group.

Avoidance

Probably the third most used strategy by conflicting
children was avoidance. (See Figure 4: Frequency of
Avoiding Conflicts.) This strategy was used 14 to 20
percent of the time by the different age groups. Twos
and fours tended to leave the situation twice as often
as they ignored it. One the other hand, five-year-old
children ignored intrusions nearly three times as often
as they withdrew from it. Three-year-olds were almost
twice as likely to ignore the action as they were to withdraw
from it.

Reciprocation

Reciprocation, or seeking to return the same action
received, was not very common for twos, threes, and fives
but, among four-year-olds, it occurred in 30 percent of
the samples. Four-year-old males reciprocated against
another male in 67 percent of these incidents compared
to females who reciprocated 33 percent. Among all the
samples, however, females reciprocated twice as often
as the males. An interesting note is that females reciprocated
against males 86 percent of the time while males reciprocated

key

■ ignores the intrusion, action or protest
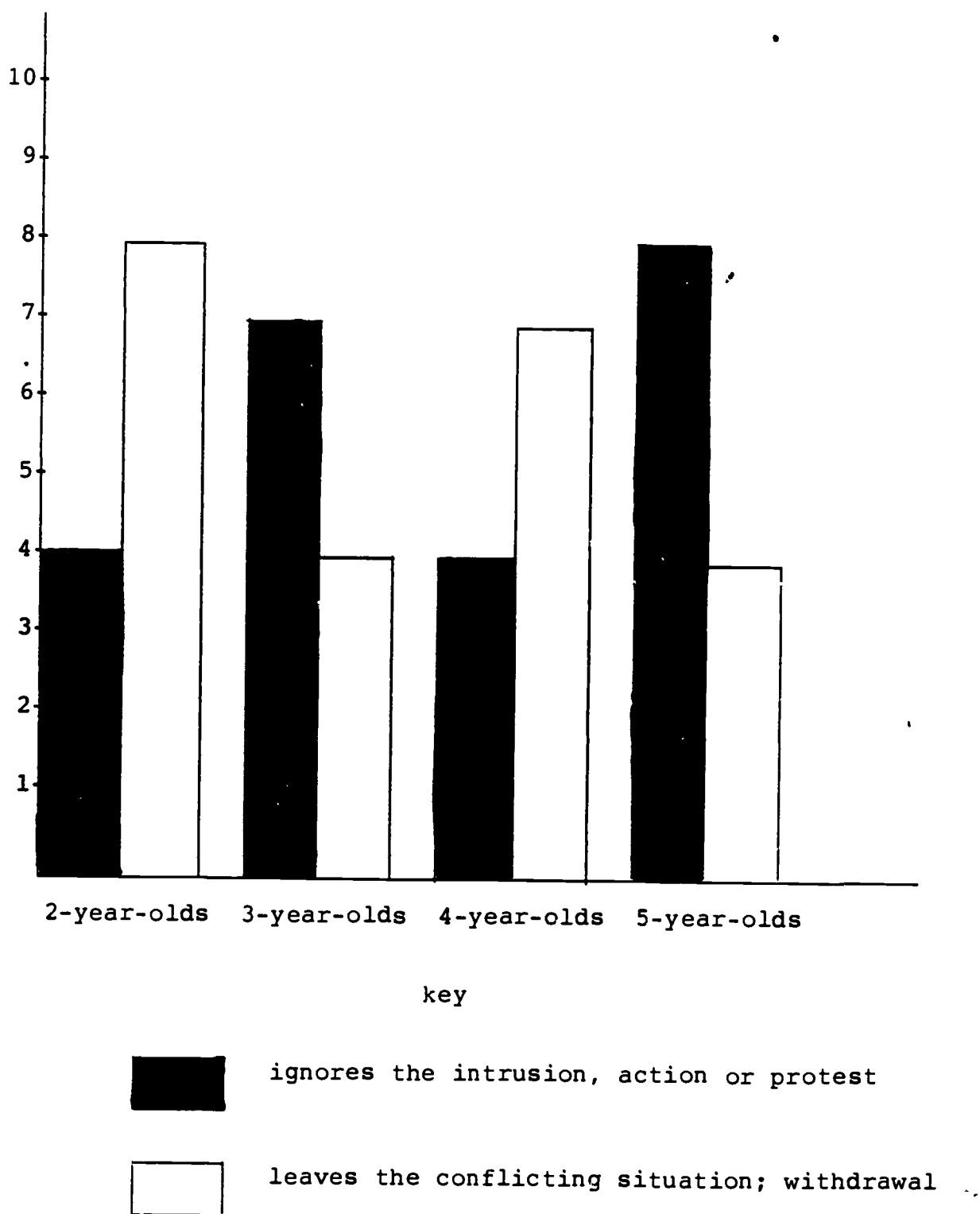
□ leaves the conflicting situation; withdrawal

Figure 4

Frequency of Avoiding Conflicts

a like action 100 percent of the time toward another male.
Girls reciprocated a push most frequently but they also
reciprocated a hit. In every instance, it was an aggressive
act that a girl reciprocated towards a boy.

Substitutions

Using substitutions as a strategy was almost nonexistent.
In all age groups this strategy was used only one time
by a child.

Verbal Nonconciliatory Strategies

It is not surprising that verbal strategies were
used most often by all age groups. It accounted for 32.3
percent of the strategies used by twos, 45 percent for
threes, 37.6 percent by fours and 54.4 percent for fives.
The occasions in which verbal methods were not employed
were instances in which the encounters were very brief
or the verbalizations did not pertain to dealing with
the conflict.

By far the most common verbal strategy used by
all ages was negative protests. Two-year-olds used negative
protests with great frequency. These were most often
simple negative protests such as , "NO!" which was often
repeated several times (e.g., "No, no, no, no-o-o-o!").
Arguments between two-year-olds were also very simplistic.
For example, child A made a statement, "This is my truck."
which was met by child B's counterassertion, "No." The
argument then became, A: "Yes"; B: "No"; A: "Yes"; B: "No..."

Threats, suggestions of alternative, denying a child access
other than through negative protests, verbal directions
or commands, and name calling were strategies rarely,
if ever, used by twos.

Three-year-olds used negative protests with second
greatest frequency. Forty-two point two percent of the
verbal strategies used were negative protests. Claiming
toys as their own was another strategy used (17.8 percent).
Three-year-olds often used negative protests in conjunction
with personal claims of toys. For example, a child protested,
"No! Don't! This is my chair." Three-year-olds also
start to use verbal directions and commands more. Fifteen
point five percent of verbal strategies used were some
sort of direction or command to the other disputing member.
Such examples include, "Move, we want to go through the
tunnel," or "Open the gate." Suggesting alternatives
and name calling was not coded in any of the three-year-
old samples.

Four-year-olds verbal strategies change significantly
from the younger groups. Negative protests are used in
only 25.7 percent of the strategies. Threats, verbal
rebukes, claiming toys for themselves, giving directions
and commands, and name calling are used equally often.
Name calling occurs more often among fours than any other
age group. It occurred 14.3 percent of the time compared
to less that 3 percent for all other age groups combined.
Gooey shoe, dodo brain, and cry baby is a sample of the

names used by fours.

Fives, like fours, combine and use a number of
verbal strategies. The context of their verbal usages
become more complex adding reasoning and compromise.
Here's as example:

Janelle put on some high heel shoes and a hat,
claiming, "I'm going to be Cinderella and you be the step
sister." Janet protested, "No, I want to be Cinderella."
Janelle proclaimed, "You can't. I have the magic slippers."
Janet said, "It's glass slippers, you dodo." Janelle
said, "You can't play Cinderella." Janet: "Yes, I can."
Janelle: "No, you can't." Janet: "Yes, I can. I can
play here if I want." Janelle replied, "Well, you can't
play with me." To which Janet countered, "I don't want
to." Janet then went to the stove and pretended to cook.
Janelle watched for a few moments and then said, while
holding up a cardboard tube, "Look, a magic wand. You
can do magic with this." Janet said enthusiastically,
"Yeah, I can be the fairy god mother." Janelle said,
"Let's go."

This conflict was dealt with by a number of verbal
strategies until a satisfactory solution was found. Such
strategies included claiming a role (I'm going to be Cinderella),
negative protests (No, I want to be Cinderella), denying
a child access and providing a reason for the denial (You
can't. I have the magic slippers), calling names (It's
glass slippers, you dodo), arguing (A: You can't play

Cinderella; B: Yes, I can; A: No, you can't; B: Yes,
I can...), threat (A: Well, you can't play Cinderella
with me), and suggestion for an alternative (Look, a magic
wand. You can do magic with this.) This was a complex
interaction that relied on the verbal skills of the children
involved. Some of the methods were complex such as denying
a child access to the role of Cinderella. It w. ? not
just a simple denial but it also included reasoning behind
it (I have the magic slippers). Other methods were simple
such as the argument which was assertions (You can't play
Cinderella), and counterassertions (Yes, I can) (Genishi
and DiPaolo, 1982).

Verbal strategies was the method used the most
by five-year-clds. 54.4 percent of the strategies used
were verbal. Five-year-olds combined a number o methods;
however, negative protests was the most common. It comprised
37 percent of the total verbal strategies used.

Conflict Endings and Conciliatory Behaviors

Conflicts usually ended with one participant being
a winner and one being a loser or a conciliatory solution
was found. A conciliatory solution means that a satisfactory
solution was found and that play continued among the conflicting
members. (See Figure 5: Percentage of Conflicts Ending
in Win/Lose and Win/Win.)

One hundred percent of the conflicts among two-
year-olds ended in a win/lose situation. The agonist

lost 66 percent of the encounters. Seventy-five percent
of the conflicts ended when one of the conflicting members
withdrew.

Win/lose endings continued to dominate among three-
year-olds with 83 percent of the conflicts sporting a
winner and a loser. Seventeen percent of the conflicts
found a conciliatory solution. Only male dyads found
conciliatory resolutions. Seventy-five percent of the
conciliatory resolutions involved cooperative proposition
while 25 percent involved object sharing. The agonist
ended up losing 82 percent of the conflicts initiated.
Threes concluded conflicts 38 percent of the time by withdrawing
from the situation but they also used threats and screaming
protests with success.

There was a dramatic increase of conciliatory
solutions among four-year-olds. Forty-seven percent of
their conflicts ended with a conciliatory resolution,
while 53 percent had a winner and loser. Thirty-seven
point five percent of the conciliatory resolutions involved
cooperative proposition, 25 percent grooming, and apologies,
symbolic offer, and sharing each representing 12.5 percent
of the resolutions. Male dyads were involved in 85.7
percent of the conciliatory resolutions and male/female
dyads 14.3 percent. The agonist also shared in more winning
situations with 57 percent going in their favor. Withdrawing
from the situation again occurred most frequently among
win/lose endings with appealing to an adult coming in second.

Five-year-olds also had a high number of conciliatory
resolutions. Forty-five percent were conciliatory with
55 percent containing a winner and loser. Female dyads
were more likely to come to a conciliatory resolution than
male dyads. 56 percent of conciliatory resolutions were
by female dyads compared to 22.2 percent by male dyads.
Male/female dyads also claimed 22.2 percent of the conciliatory
resolutions. Most of the conciliatory resolutions used
cooperative propositions (77 percent). The other conciliatory
solutions were symbolic offers and object sharing (23
percent). The agonist won 36.4 percent of the conflicts
that had a winner and a loser. Threatening to quit or
eject a member from play was a very effective means to
end a conflicting situation among five-year-olds.

Lose/lose endings were quite rare. It occurred
in less than 5 percent of the samples. Most of those
samples were dropped due to the adults influence on the
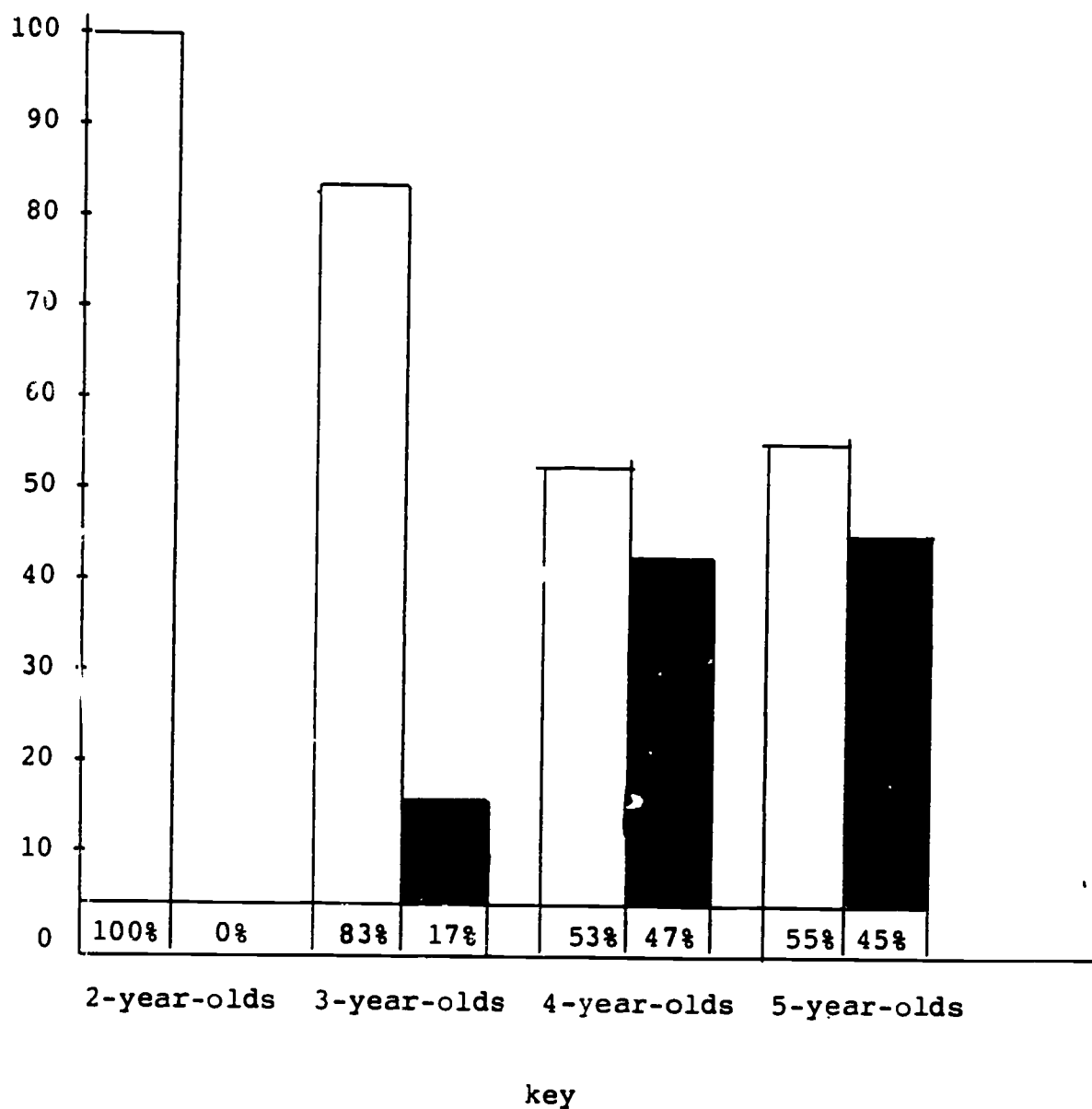conflict situation.

key

win/lose

win/win

Figure 5

Percentage of Conflicts Ending in
Win/Lose and Win/Win

Chapter 4

DISCUSSION

Issues of Conflict

Possessions

It seems that certain types of conflict are more
common for certain age groups than for others (See Figures
1 and 2). Twos and threes share a similar high percentage
of possession conflicts. It is the most common type of
conflict for twos and threes. The frequency for which
possession conflicts occur among fours and fives drops
significantly (by 12 to 17 percent). Perhaps part of
the reason for younger children (twos and threes) to partake
in more possession conflicts is that they are more defensive
about the tools of play than the course of play. Tools
of play may dictate the course of play. The loss of a
tool (toy) may totally disrupt the course of play. Therefore,
younger children may be much more defensive about toy
possessions in order to maintain their play. Course of
play disputes occur very infrequently for twos and threes
(11.5 percent to 12.1 percent). Again, this may indicate
that possession of a toy directs the course of play, henceforth,
a possession dispute may also be a course of play dispute.

Furby points out that "young children associate

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owernship with gaining some measure of control over their lives" (Ramsey, 1986). For twos and threes toy possession may mean empowerment. These younger children would be very inclined to maintain control of a possession because it's a source of power attainable to them.

Conflicts over possessions may also be an expression of autonomy. Young children, especially twos and threes, exercise assertiveness in maintaining control over their possessions.

Territory and Space

Territory and space conflicts is the second most common conflict issue for twos and threes. This may be for the same reasons mentioned before. Children have a need for control. Personal space is something that can be directly controlled. Also, losing a space may mean a stop to the play they were engaged in.

Twos and threes may also defend possessions and space more vigorously than fours and fives due to the disruption of outsiders. Twos and threes tend to be less sophisticated when it comes to entering play. These younger children often enter and cause disruption because they invite themselves to the toy or space occupied by another child. Corsaro (1981) showed that younger children tend to be more disruptive when they enter into an ongoing play situation. That is, they were more likely to take a toy or push.

The issues of possessions and space still are
very important among fours and fives. Forty-five percent
of the conflicts among four-year-olds involved possession
and space issues; 40 percent for five-year-olds. This
indicates that possessions and space are very important
to all young children. It is a strong need to have control
in their lives and these conflicts express that need.

Social Intrusions and Annoyances

The leading conflict issue for four-year-olds
is social intrusions and annoyances (See Figure 3). Four-
year-olds seem to have a propensity for t. ,ing and stirring
arousals among their peers. Plopping sand on the head
of a near-by friend or chasing a girl around while slapping
blocks together or chanting, "Carlos is a dodo brain,
Carlos is a dodo brain...," was great fun for the agonist.

Many intrusions were disruptive to the play in
progress, but in themselves, they were a form of play
also. The goal wasn't necessarily to gain entrance into
a play situation but to initiate their own kind of play,
sometimes much to the frustration of the recipient. Here's
an example:

Cheryl was making a mound of sand on the table.
John and Carlos came over and swept the sand on the ground.
Cheryl shouted, "Stop it!" and put more sand on the table.
John and Carlos again swept the sand to the ground. Cheryl
pleaded, "Come on you guys. Stop it." Cheryl attempted

again to make a mound of sand only to have it swept to the ground by the two boys. As John and Carlos stood laughing, Cheryl angrily said, "Stop it you gooey shoe. I'm going to smack you." Carlos and John jumped back in mock horror. As Cheryl ran over to the edge of the sand box to get a shovel, John and Carlos together picked up the pot of sand and poured it on the ground. When Cheryl returned and saw her pot empty, she yelled, "All right, who poured out the sand?" John and Carlos grinned and shrugged their shoulders. Cheryl knelt to the ground and started to make a little pile of sand. John and Carlos stepped on it and flattened it. Cheryl cried, "I'm going to tell." John chanted, "Cry baby, cry baby." Cheryl sat down on a near-by rock and whined, "You messed up my cake." Carlos and John stuck their tongues out and spit at her. Cheryl just sat there looking on as the two boys jumped on her "cake."

Many of these annoying intrusions were instigated as a source of amusement. Boys particularly participated in these conflicts.

Twos, threes, and fives were involved in social intrusions/annoyances 15 to 21 percent of the time. Many were disruptive attempts at entering a play situation. Some incidents were annoying type of play. However, four-year-olds seemed to have a high proportion of conflict incidents that involved disruptions of an annoying sort.

Course of Play

The leading conflict issue for five-year-olds was course of play disputes. The low frequency of course of play conflicts was fairly constant between the ages of two through four. It seems that many five-year-olds were interested in maintaining the play of the group. These children were able to make concessions when it looked as if they were going to lose their position or be cast out of the group. For example:

Three girls were at a table playing a card game. Janet said, "It's my turn," as she reached out to draw a card from Bea's hand. Bea pulled the cards back and said, "You can't take one of mine." Janet replied, "Yes, I can. It's my turn and I choose to take one of yours." Bea held the cards behind her back. Diana said, "That's how you play the game. If you're not going to play right then go away." Bea still refused to let Janet take a card so Janet turned to the teacher and said, "Teacher, Bea won't play the game right." There was no response by the teacher so Janet said to Diana, "O.K., you and I will just play." Janet started to take one of Diana's cards when Bea cried, "No-o-o-o! O.K., here, take one of mine." Bea held out the cards and Janet took one. The game then resumed.

Many of the play situations required a lot of cooperation among the participants. Five-year-olds seem to participate in more cooperative play than the younger

children so perhaps that's why there was a higher rate
of course of play conflicts.

Females were engaged in some capacity in 75 percent
of the course of play disputes (See Figure 3). This indicates
that females were often involved in complex cooperative
play situations and were prone to argue over ideas and
rules governing the play. Boys too were engaged in cooperative
play situations but many of their disputes were more focused
on social intrusions/annoyances as well as possession
and territory issues.

Gender and Dyadic Encounters

Analysis of dyads indicate that male dyads and
female dyads have some similarities and differences in
the kinds of conflict situations they engage in. Male
dyads and female dyads were involved in approximately
the same number of possession and territorial conflicts.
Male/female dyads were also involved in over one third
of possession and territorial disputes. This implies
that possession and territory conflicts are intrinsic
for females and males across all the age groups studied.

For the other two conflict issues, course of play
and social intrusions/annoyances, there was evidence that
male dyads engaged more often in social intrusions/annoyances
conflicts and female dyads engaged in more course of play
conflicts.

Among two-year-olds there were almost twice as
many male dyads even though there were approximately the

same number of males and females in the classes. This may be
partly due to the observer noticing more male conflicts.
Perhaps more females were involved in conflicts but they
were much more subtle. Many of the boys engaged in conflict
were often boisterous and physical, therefore, catching
more attention.

Perhaps another reason that there were fewer female
dyads is that girls were more prone to conflict with boys.
Nearly 37 percent of the twos conflicting dyads were males
and females. There is one theory which predicts that
children who are more different would come into more conflict
because they are less compatible. However, you may also
expect boys to conflict more often because they share
a similar trait, which is a tendency to emit aggressive
behaviors (Maccoby and Jacklin, 1980; Tieger, 1980). Therefore,
it's possible that males and females were involved in
a number of conflicts due to their differences and boy
dyads conflicted more due to their aggressive tendencies.

Four-_ ar-olds had almost twice as many males
so there was grea er likelihood that male dyads would
conflict more. Five-year-olds had more females and there
were more female dyads involved in conflicts.

From the results, however, there is no strong
conclusion as to why certain dyads conflict. It could
all be due to chance or other variables not detected.
More specific studies would need to be done to see if
there is any relationship.

Agonists

Those that initiate the conflict, that is, the one who intrudes or acts out aggressively, is called the agonist. Among the male/female conflicting dyads, the females were as likely as the males to initiate the conflict except among the five-year-old group. Perhaps part of the reason for the inflated male agonist role in the five-year-old group is that there was a small sample of male/female dyads. A few samples had more males as the agonist; therefore, it influenced the mean percentage.

It is interesting to note that white children were more inclined to initiate conflict between another white child and children of color were likewise inclined to initiate conflict with another child of color. One possible reason for this is that like children play more together and therefore have more conflicts due to greater amount of time spent together. More studies need to be conducted to come to any strong conclusions.

Movements and Strategies

The examination of the rates of movements and strategies is to see if conflicts become longer or more complex as children get older. That is, do the number of movements and strategies employed increase with age?

The most significant difference of rates is between two-year-olds and the older groups. Twos use the least

number of strategies and methods of all the groups. This
means that the interactions of the conflicting parties
are more brief and fewer strategies are used by twos than
older children.

There are slight differences of rates amongst
three-, four-, and five-year-olds. Four-year-olds have
the highest mean and modal rates of movements and strategies
of all the age groups. However, they are actually only
averaging one or less movements and strategies compared
to the other age groups. The differences in mean averages
is not that significant. Four-year-olds do, however,
have more samples than contain more movements and strategies
than threes and fives. The conflicts that four-year-olds
engage in tend to be extended longer than among the other
age groups.

In conclusion, the most striking difference in
the rates is between two-year-olds and the older groups.
Differences between threes, fours, and fives vary slightly,
but fours do seem to employ more strategies and movements.

Conflict Strategies

There are some strategies that all age groups
use to varying degrees and there are some strategies that
are almost mutually excluded by all ages. Those strategies
that are rarely used by young children include intervention
by a child, reciprocating a like action, and offering
a substitute or finding a substitute for oneself. Most

of these strategies were used less than five percent of the
time by the various age groups.

One of the popular strategies used, especially
by younger children, was repelling and rejecting. One
of the reasons this may have been used often was that
it was usually effective and got immediate results. Children
often used their bodies to defend a possession such as
blocking an advance with body or hands or snatching back
a toy. Repelling and rejecting provided a physical barrier
which often was difficult for the agonist to overcome.
It took great persistence to gain control of a toy that
was being well guarded by a child's body.

Repel/Reject

Two-year-olds used the repel/reject strategy most
often among the age groups. Not only did they withdraw
objects from reach and block advancements by the agonist
but they often screamed and cried as well. A shrill scream
can be very intimidating and often brings the attention
of adults to the situation.

Two-year-olds had the higest rate of repel/reject
strategies and the lowest rate of verbal strategies.
Perhaps twos chose repel/reject strategies often because
they lacked in verbal skills. The use of this strategy
declined steadily as the children became older. It may
be an indication that as children become more sophisticated
in their verbal skills they have less need for such physical
reactions.

Aggressive Strategies

Use of aggressive tactics was highest among four-
year-olds (20.4 percent of strategies used) and lowest
for five-year-olds (8.9 percent of strategies used).
Among four-year-olds it was the second most common tactic
used. Four-year-olds tend to incorporate aggressiveness
as a part of their play. It seemed that fours used aggression
in certain instances to get a rise out of a peer. This
may be due to fours showing more interest in people's
reactions and finding it amusing to get someone riled
up.

Fours also tend to engage in rough and tumble
play which can become quite aggessive. Here's a brief
example:

Four boys were involved in a game of chase. Henry
caught up with Terry, grabbed him from behind, and flung
him to the ground. Terry screamed loudly. Max raced over
and slapped Terry on the head. Terry again screamed loudly.
Henry approached Terry and rubbed his head gently. Terry
sniffled a bit, then got to his feet and rejoined the
chase.

Aggressive strategies among twos and threes were
not uncommon. As with repel/reject, aggressive strategies
were physical means of dealing with a conflict. Twos
and threes often used aggression when acting out of anger
or great annoyance. Rarely, however, were the aggressive
actions so violent that one was hurt. Most of the hits

were open-handed swats or slaps. Pushing and using hostile
gestu`es were the most common aggressive strategies used.

The results show that boys used aggressive tactics
more often than girls except among five-year-olds. The
used of aggressive strategies was rare among fives (only
8.9 percent were aggressive strategies). Because the
sample was so small it may have influenced the percentage
of boys involved in aggressive behaviors. Boys were involved
in 64.8 percent of the aggressive strategies compared
to 35.2 percent by females.

White males were much more likely to use aggressive
means than a male child of color. White males were involved
in 2.4. aggressive incidents for every aggressive act
by a male child of color. White males were involved in
over 14 percent more violent aggressive acts such as hitting
or kicking than male children of color.

On the other hand, female children of color employed
26.4 percent more aggressive strategies than white females
but white females were involved in 18 percent more violent
aggressive acts than female children of color.

Studies such as Weigel (1984) show that a number
of demographic variables (e.g., sex, age, birth order,
sibling group size, ethnic identity, number of parents
in the home, etc.) influence different genders and ethnic
groups in their use of aggressive behavior. Shantz (1986)
has shown that peer status also influences aggressive
behaviors. For example, among boys, a dislike score by

peers was positively related to th percentage use of physical aggression. These factors, as well as the conflict situation and the emotional states of the children involved, may have significant influence on the use of aggressive behaviors.

Intervention

There are times when a third party may involve themselves in an ongoing conflict. Occassionally, it is a child that intervenes on behalf of one of the conflicting members. Six point twenty five percent of the samples had a child intervene who was an outsider (i.e., one who was not initially involved in the conflict). These intervening children usually retrieved objects or voiced protests. It was rare when an intervening child used aggressive acts or gave suggestions.

It's not surprising that adults intervene more often in children's conflicts. Eighteen point seventy-five percent of the conflicts recorded included an adult involving themselves. There was a high percentage of adult int vention among two-year-olds. In fact, over half of the two-year-old samples had an adult intervening. Part of the reason is that two-year-old groups tended to be smaller so adults could pay more attention to the classes' activities. Two-year-olds also often screamed or cried when engaged in a conflict situation which gets the attention of an adult. Also, adults may be more protective

and be more responsive to a two-year-old's request. Adults responded more frequently to a two-year-old's request for intervention than among the other age groups.

As children became older, adults intervened less often. Twenty percent of the three-year-old samples had an adult intervening; ten percent among fours and fives. Adults also responded less often to an older child's request for intervention. Adults may feel that older children are more capable of taking care of their own conflicts so they are less inclined to intervene. Also older children tend to be in larger classes than two-year-olds so the adults attention may be more divided and therefore are unable to respond to every request.

When adults intervene, the play more often than not breaks up and the participants go separate ways. Adults are often interested in the rules and enforcement of the rules. It's not uncommon to hear, "Billy had it first. You need to wait for a turn." Statements such as this encouraged isolated play. A child isn't going to sit around and wait for a toy. They are more likely to leave the situation and find something else to do.

Also, a conflict sometimes ended in a lose/lose situation when an adult intervened. For example, a toy that was hotly argued over was removed by the adult. Both children ended up as a loser. Sometimes adult intervention dictated the course of the conflict so much that it had to be eliminated from this study.

There are times, however, when an adult's intervention is important in maintaining the integrity of the play. Disallowing a child to cause havoc in a play situation, providing additional materials to enhance play and avoid potential conflicts, or facilitating a conflict instead of directing it helped to maintain the play in 22 percent of the instances in which an adult intervened.

Avoidance

Avoiding a situation by withdrawing from the situation or ignoring the action was a popular strategy among all the age groups. For twos and fives it was the third most common strategy used, just right behind verbal and repel/reject strategies (see Figure 4). Avoidance takes the participant out of the conflict situation and requires the persistent pursuit of the other conflicting member. Two-year-olds withdrew from the situation twice as often as they ignored it. Five-year-olds tended to ignore the intrusion three times as often as they withdrew from it. This may indicate that five-year-olds are more reluctant to abandon a play situation due to a disruption. They tend to ignore the intrusions and maintain the activity they are involved in. Two-year-olds' attention tends to become focused on the disruption rather than maintaining their activity. The intrusion becomes too distracting so they are more inclined to withdraw.

Threes and fours used avoidance strategies 14 to 15 percent of the time. Three-year-olds tended to

ignore the action more than they withdrew from it. Four-year-olds, on the other hand, had a tendency to withdraw more often. Because four-year-olds tended to engage in more aggressive and intrusive ways, this may account for a higher frequency of withdrawal.

Reciprocation

Reciprocating an action received occurred less tha 3 percent of the time among twos, threes and fives. Four-year-olds had the highest rate of reciprocation (8.6 percent of total strategies used by fours). Boys reciprocated an action only towards other boys. Girls usually reciprocated an action towards boys. Eighty-six percent of the reciprocated actions by a girl was directed tcwards a boy. In every case, it was an aggressive action that a girl reciprocated back to a boy.

Substitutions

Substitute objects was not a popular option for any of the age groups. Substitutes was the strategy used the least by the children. It may be that children found substitutes unacceptable or it never occurred to them to try to find one. For whatever reason, a substitute by a child was used in only one sample.

Verbal Strategies

Verbal strategies was the most frequently used method by all the age groups. The results show that the younger children (twos and threes) are rather simplistic

in their verbal strategies. As children become older they become more sophisticated and can use a variety of verbal methods.

Simple negative protests are very characteristic of two-year-olds. Many of the protests were repetitive which were emphasized by increasing volume. For example, a child protesting, "No, no, no, no..." often got louder with each consecutive no until it was almost a scream. Two-year-olds used only a few verbal methods such as negative protests, simple arguments, or verbal rebukes.

Three-year-olds also used negative protests often but they became a little more complex. They tended to use negative protests in conjunction with other verbal strategies such as claiming a toy for themselves. There was also an increase in the use of directions or commands. Three-year-olds were able to tell another child what they wanted or expected. Verbalizing what one wanted made expectations clear but that didn't mean others would comply. Threes usually used only a few strategies that were simply combined such as, "No! Move out of the way" (negative protest and a direction),

Four-year-olds use more verbal strategies that were more persuasive than their younger counterparts. The use of threats (I'm going ot tell) or name calling (What a cry baby) were effective means to get a peer to conform or back away. Name calling was a favorite verbal strategy among fours and often got a response from a peer.

Samples from the five-year-old classrooms had a number of verbal interactions that demonstrated that these children were capable of complex discussions and arguments. Fives had the highest rate of verbal strategies employed. Over half of the strategies used in dealing with a conflict were verbal. Five-year-olds were able to combine verbal methods and provide reasons to their arguments. They were also able to offer suggestions and find alternatives in order to maintain their play.

The samples show that there are differences between the age groups in their choice of verbal strategies and how they combine them. In general, younger children tend to use fewer strategies and combinations. Older children's verbal strategies are often more complex. They use more kinds of strategies and combinations and can be very persuasive.

Conflict Endings and Conciliatory Behaviors

A conflict usually ends in one of two ways: (1) one child is a winner and the other a loser, or (2) a conciliatory gesture is made which resolves the conflict and play can resume. Occassionally there is a lose/lose outcome. This outcome is usually the result of an adult intervening and taking control of the conflicting situation. An adult that takes the disputed object or dictates the course of the conflict may influence a lose/lose outcome.

Most of the conflicts among twos and threes ended with a winner and a loser (see Figure 5). Only 17 percent

of the conflicts that three-year-olds engaged in found
a conciliatory resolution while none of the conflicts
among two-year-olds concluded in resolution. The agonists
ended up the loser while 83 percent of the three-year-
old agonists lost out. It seems that these younger children
were intolerent to intrusions and were quite resistent.
Often these young intruders were disruptive to the play
in progress so they usually met strong opposition.

There was a sharp increase of conciliatory resolutions
for fours and fives. Forty-five to forty-seven percent
of the conflicts ended with a conciliatory resolution.
A cooperative proposition was the conciliatory gesture
used most often by these older groups.

There were some differences, however, between
fours and fives. Among four-year-olds most of the conciliatory
resolutions were made by male dyads. In contrast, it
was female dyads that were able to come to a resolution
most often in the five-year-old encounters. In addition,
the agonist won more of the conflicts in the four-year-
old group (57 percent among fours compared to 36.4 percent
among fives).

These differences may be partly accounted for
by the genders of the dyads. There were more male dyads
in the four-year-old group and more female dyads in the
five-year-old group (see Table 4). This means that there
was more four-year-old males interacting together in conflicts
which increased the rate of conciliatory resolutions by

males.   The same thing for the five-year-old group.   More female dyads were interacting together than male dyads so they were more likely to encounter resolutions.

Perhaps it was also the fact that there were so many males engaged in conflicts among the four-year-old groups that more of the agonists won.   Males, particularly four-year-old males, tended to be more aggressive.   Perhaps this aggressive behavior prompted the other children to give in to the agonist.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

Conflicts share the same structure. That is, they all nave a beginning, a middle, and an end. The beginning of a conflict requires an initial intrusion by a second party over an issue such as a possession, territory, course of play, or a social intrusion/annoyance. The middle of a conflict includes strategies used by children to deal with the conflict and can involve a number of movements. The end of a conflict occurs when one of the conflicting members yields, causing a win/lose situation or a conciliatory resolution is found permitting the play to resume.

There are differences and commonalities between the age groups concerning conflict issues, strategies used, and how conflicts end. The younger children (twos and threes) engage in more possession and territorial conflicts. Possession and territorial issues were important for all age groups, but other conflict issues were more common for the older children (four- and five-year-olds). The most common conflict issue for four-year-olds were social intrusions/annoyances. Five-year-olds engaged most often in course of play conflicts.

The most common strategies used by all age groups were verbal, but younger children tended to be more simplistic

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in their usages while older children progressed to more

complex practices. Five-year-olds were often the more

sophisticated group when it came to verbal strategies.

They combined more verbal methods and provided more reasoning

in their arguments than the other age groups. Twos and

threes employed a lot of physical tactics to repel and

reject advancements by the agonist. Four-year-olds also

engaged in physical tactics which included the highest

rate of aggressive strategies of all the age groups.

Two- and three-year-olds usually ended a conflict

with one conflicting member a winner and one a loser.

Four- and five-year-olds were able to find more conciliatory

resolutions to their conflicts.

The purpose of this study was to examine similarities

and differences between children engaging in conflict

situations. The whole conflict structure was examined

in order to discover trends among the different age, gender,

and ethnic groups. It is hoped that looking at the overall

picture will demonstrate specific differences and commonalities

between young children and the development of conflicts

and resolutions.

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