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## ABSTRACT

This study explored how children are socialized through discipline in the preschool classroom. Using detailed descriptions of teacher-student interactions and an interpretive method, the study mapped the process of the children's socialization and the role of discipline. The case study in one 4-year-olds' room examined early socialization processes in an institutional setting. Classroom discipline was then categorized into two major themes: constructing rules and solving conflicts. The observations indicated that classroom discipline has multiple layers, which assist the process of socialization: vertically, explicit and implicit rules; horizontally, teacher-student interactions, and peer interactions. Through communicating explicit and implicit rules and cues to the teachers and peers, the teacher and the children were reciprocally involved in the complicated process of socialization. The findings suggest that young children's abilities to understand insinuated communication and to use communication skills are key aspects of socialization in the preschool classroom. Findings highlight the importance of the teacher's awareness of the influence of communication in the classroom. Examining cultural differences in communication skills may reveal another level of the socialization process of young children. (Contains 17 references.) (HTH)

Running head: CLASSROOM DISCIPLINE

Classroom Discipline and Socialization  
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### Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore how children are socialized through discipline in the preschool classroom. Dunn (1988) illuminates how 1- to 3-year-old children are socialized at home in interaction with their mothers and siblings. I will extend Dunn's study to the preschool setting to include interaction with the teacher. Studying the socialization process in the preschool setting can capture the first moment of how children interact with a broader society than their family and how they build relationships with others (i.e., peer, teacher) beyond family members. Using detailed descriptions of teacher-student interactions and an interpretive method, I will map the process of the children's socialization and the role of discipline.

I categorize classroom discipline into two major themes, constructing rules and solving conflicts. The main research questions are:

1. How do students interact with the teacher to construct the rules of this classroom?
2. How do students interact with teacher in the teacher-student conflicts in this classroom?
3. How do students interact with the teacher in peer conflicts in this classroom?

Shedding light on a socialization process of discipline by focusing on teacher-student interactions will expand educators' understanding of what discipline is and also what to do with children in a practical and contextual sense.

### Literature Review

Most educators regard discipline as an important premise for academic learning (e.g., Edwards, 1993). A narrow understanding of learning in school has skewed numerous studies on discipline (e.g., Canter & Canter, 1992; Charles, 2000; Jones, 1987). These studies have focused on developing new techniques of how to control children for the best academic results rather than examining what discipline is and what children learn from classroom discipline. Most of these studies employ methods and theories that do not take into account children's socialization in the process of discipline.

Socialization is not a one-way process. It works interactively in a child's relationships with other people, such as mothers, friends, and teachers. Corsaro(1997) expresses how children are actively involved in the socialization process.

Interpretive reproduction views children's evolving membership in their cultures as reproductive rather than linear. According to this reproductive view, children do not

simply imitate or internalize the world around them. They strive to interpret or make sense of their culture and participate in it. (p. 24)

Children learn the rules and customs of society in various levels of interactions with others.

Researchers call for more empirical studies on classroom discipline using qualitative methods (Rosiek, 1994). The methodology of previous empirical studies on discipline focuses on surveys or experiments. Surveys (e.g., Field, 1997; Gruss, Jackson, Grimson, & Hedgecock, 1998; Hammarberg & Hagekull, 2000) were answered by teachers, so children's voices were not heard. Experiments (e.g., Ladd, Lange, & Stremmel, 1983; Crahay & Delhaxhe, 1991; Baer, Tishelman, Delger, Osnes, & Stokes, 1992) cannot explain the lived contexts of classrooms. A few studies (e.g., Cavell & Jackson, 1999; Wittmer & Honig, 1988; Birch & Ladd, 1998) investigate students' behaviors in accordance with teacher's interactions with student. However they could not describe the complexity of classroom interactions as reciprocal process rather as attachment or as one way process from teacher.

#### The Interpretive Approach

The interpretive approach provides methodology to understand the meaning of human action in contexts (Gaskins, Miller, & Corsaro, 1992). It is more inclusive term to cover various methodologies and it will avoid simplification caused by quantitative vs. qualitative distinction (Graue & Walsh, 1998). I tried to elucidate interpretive framework which can help insiders as well as outsiders to understand the meaning of their socially constructed interactions.

Rosiek (1994), who is influenced by Nel Noddings, stresses the importance of narration to capture the complexity of disciplinary situation in classroom. He summarizes three advantages of using narratives to study classroom discipline: (a) Narrative can demonstrate how general disciplinary guidelines can be modified to actual classrooms; (b) narrative can display wider teacher-student relationships rather than specific students' actions (e.g., misbehavior, confrontation); and (c) narrative can transfer emotional aspects of relationships, which are usually overlooked in research. I believe that description also can share similar advantages. To portray complexity of disciplinary situations, I tried to describe verbal and nonverbal teacher-student interaction in detail based on observation. Even though it is a story told by outsider, through formal and informal interview I reflected insider's perspective.

To describe the classroom interactions in detail, I conducted a case study in one 4-year-old classroom. The case study examines early socialization processes in an institutional setting.

Even though I observed only one classroom, interpretation of detailed interactions will find contextual examples of some general processes of socialization in preschool (Stake, 1995).

#### Research Procedure

The data for this study were collected in a full-day classroom at University Child Care Laboratory (UCCL), which is affiliated with a large university in Illinois. The full-day program operates 12 months a year except on official university holidays (e.g., Thanksgiving, Christmas) and during 2 weeks in August when preparations for the new semester are made. The center is open from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. UCCL teachers spend a considerable amount of time with students over the year.

UCCL's website describes using "inductive discipline (explaining and providing consequences, giving reasons for rules) rather than punishment or love withdrawal." The institution does not impose solutions but encourages a child to evaluate the problem by himself/herself. UCCL also asks all parents to sign a consent form regarding cooperation for cohesive discipline between the lab and home and its termination policy. Termination of enrollment occurs when a child compromises others' (including the teachers') health, safety, and well-being.

In this full-day program, 3- and 4-year olds are combined into one big classroom. Each classroom has its own individual sections (e.g., group meeting place, art area, writing area) and sharing sections (e.g., dramatic play area, gross motor area, and bathroom). Each classroom has its own schedule. However, during inside play time, 3- and 4-year olds can play together in every part of classroom. This system helps transition from 3- to 4- year old smooth. One head teacher and two assistants take charge of each class and one floater helps both classrooms according to the children's needs. 3-and 4-year olds also share playground. Both classes have two times to play outside. During the first outside play time, only one class goes out and plays. However, during the second outside play time, all children in the full-day program go out and play together. They spent almost 2 hours a day outside. The teachers prepare diverse activities and toys for the children, and they also provide quiet activities, such as painting or writing outside. This provides a balance of active and quiet activities. The teachers often rotate the activities and toys. And when it is too hot or rains, both classes play inside instead of going outside. I chose to observe only 4-year-olds' interactions in order to focus more attention on the part verbal communication played in the socialization process than non-verbal communication.

Daily schedule in UCCL starts at 7:30 a.m. One teacher per class takes charge of early arrivals. The teachers take turns with this responsibility. When the children arrive, they wash their hands and start playing with toys. Around 9:00 a.m., most of the children have arrived, and their daily schedule starts. They go to bathroom together and have the first snack and have short group time, and then they play outside. After outside play, they use bathroom and play inside and have group time while a teacher and a child is setting lunch. After having lunch together, they have story time and naptime. After a nap, they had short group and a second snack. They play outside till their parents pick them up. By 5:00 p.m., most parents have begun to pick up their children. The daily schedule is relaxed and repetitive which enables students to feel less stress and to internalize the school routine. During the indoor and outdoor play time, children can freely choose the activities and friends to play with. Snack is served by the teachers and children helpers in the classroom. Individual children take turns doing small tasks, such as passing out the sponges, passing out napkins, moving the cart, and setting the tables. During nap time, teachers set out tubs for children in the classroom and one or two teachers take charge of the children who are taking naps, while preparing classroom materials. On Fridays, all the full-day teachers have a meeting, so the student teacher or the teacher from half-day classroom takes charge of the children.

My major sources of data are observations, informal and formal interviews, and the artifacts regarding discipline policy at UCCL. I observed the class from June to September 2001 for 2–3 hours three days a week. This study focused on the head teacher's interaction with children in this classroom. Her name is Becky (a pseudonym), who had 6-year-experience and who is European American. In general, this classroom has three teachers. The three teachers operated under the same discipline policy. Their strategies for discipline were coherent, and they maintained their coherence by holding weekly staff meetings. The head teacher, however, is most responsible for managing the classroom, making decisions, and enforcing the rules. During the observations, I audio-taped teacher-student verbal interactions with the aid of a wireless microphone, which the head teacher wore. I recorded nonverbal interactions in field notes. While observing in the classroom, I did informal interviews with the teachers. In October, I performed follow-up formal interviews.

The class usually had 20 children. But I was able to observe 30 children during my observation period because it was summer, a high student turnover period. The group of 30

children included children who moved from the 3-year-old to the 4-year-old class. This situation gave me a chance to compare how teacher-student interactions begin and how they develop, even though I did not observe the class for the whole school year. UCCL purposefully balanced ethnicities in proportion to the ethnic populations of the town. Almost 30 % of the students were from countries other than the United States. The population of students was approximately 15% African American, 25% Asian or Asian American (including Indian), 50% European American (including Hispanic), and 10% interracial.

### Results

I analyzed teacher-student interaction in the classroom, especially how they deal with rules and how they apply the rules to conflicts.

#### Classroom Rules

The classroom has two layers of rules. The first layer is the simple rules, which are often explicitly mentioned, such as “walking feet,” or “indoor voices.” The second layer is the complicated rules, which are implicitly shared by students and Becky, the teacher. Becky and children construct both rules by using various interacting strategies.

##### *First Layer: Explicit Rules*

This classroom does not display rules on the walls or anywhere else. Children, however, know what is expected in the classroom. The class flows so well that the children seem to live with the rules as easily as the air they breathe. Becky, explicitly and implicitly interacts with the children, enforcing classroom rules. At first, I thought rules in this classroom were relatively simple. Becky often told the children “walking feet,” “indoor voices,” and “no fighting at UCCL.” Later, I realized how complicate the rules used in this classroom are.

##### *Second Layer: Implicit Rules*

Children in this classroom know these rules even though they are not explicitly mentioned. These implicit rules become routine in this classroom. The fact that 3-year-old children, who are sharing the classroom, re-enroll in the 4-year-old class makes these implicit rules more routine and firm. When newcomers enter the classroom these implicit rules are challenged. I was not aware of the implicit rules and interactions until the new semester began and newcomers challenged them.

*Contextual differences.* Different times and situations change the rules. For example, children could talk loudly out on the playground, but they could not talk loudly in the classroom.

They need to understand that the rule, “indoor voices,” can be applied differently according to the situation. The following examples show the further complexity of contextual difference.

Example 1 Outdoor play (8/31/01)

Becky Jack, your voice is too loud. You can talk loudly off the porch.

(see APPENDIX A)

Even though Jack was outside, he needed to differentiate the on-the-porch and off-the-porch contexts. Children can talk loudly off the porch but not on the porch. Children can run outside. They can run off the porch but not on the porch. Children can ride a bike outside and also ride on the end of the porch but not in the center of the porch.

Example 2 Outdoor play time (8/31/01)

Charles I am thirsty.

Becky You need to go one-by-one. [Children need to go inside to get water.] You have to wait ‘til he [JT is drinking water right now.] is done.

Charles I got to pee. [He goes inside.]

Charles understood the priorities between rules. He understood “got to pee” allows him to go inside earlier than asking for a drink. He used the rules to get what he wanted.

Rules apply differently by age. Three-year-olds have to go to bathroom with a teacher. Four-year-olds can go to the bathroom alone with a teacher’s permission. Threes need to sit at assigned seats at the assigned snack table, but fours can sit anywhere at the assigned table. Fours can sit on the play structure, but Threes cannot. However fours can sit on the play structure only when threes are not outside.

Example 3 Outdoor play time (7/27/01)

Becky Remember that we do not sit here when threes are here.

*Double meanings.* Sometimes explicit rules can have more than one meaning and include some other instructions. Explicit rules include implicit rules.

Example 4 Transition from outside to inside (6/27/01)

[Children are in line to go inside. Bryan pushes in the line and talks with other children.]

Misha Someone pushed. ((angry))

Becky Inside voices. Bryan, let's go. Come around this way.

Inside voices had a double meaning: talk quietly and do not push in the line. Becky warned Bryan by using an explicit rule rather than addressing what he did wrong. Becky reminded Bryan of the other actions, such as "be quiet" and "let's go", in order to prevent pushing in the line.

*Routine.* Children in this classroom live with the rules without noticing them. The rules are a natural part of their routine at UCCL. When children start indoor play, the teachers put out toys on the table. Children can play with the toys at the table, but they cannot take out any other toys from the shelves. Children did not seem to realize that the other toys are on the shelves. Many rules are hidden in the daily schedule, such as when children are eating their snack and going to the bathroom.

Example 5 Daily ritual of snack time (8/27/02)

A teacher and a child, who chose the job of pushing the cart, pushed the cart into the classroom and they set the table. The other children have to walk to the bathroom and wash their hands with soap and sit anywhere they like. They eat their snack and chat, but they cannot talk with their mouth-full. The snack time is the easiest moment when they can casually talk with their teacher. But they cannot call over to other children at another table. When they finish their snack, they put the cups in a stack and dishes in a separate stack and put silverware in a separate container on the cart. No more than five cups should be in a stack. And they throw the napkins in the trash can right next to the cart. Then they should wait at the table 'til all finish their snacks. You cannot stand up or leave the seat. The sponge passer gives out the sponges at each table. The passer needs to choose a color for the table. She should not ask another child to choose the color because it does not represent everyone's idea at the table. They need to wipe their table and pass it

to the next child and wait again. Then the teacher calls their names, and they go to the bathroom to wash their hands and go to group. You have to walk all the way to the bathroom and to group.

The process of eating a snack includes what children should do and should not do. In this process, children actively use the rules to get what they want.

Example 6      Snack time (7/26/02)

[Abby leaves her table to talk with Monica who is at the other table.]

Becky            What are you doing, Abby?

Abby            I am getting a paper towel [When they spill something, the children use a paper towel.]

Becky            Then you have to get it and get back to the table right away.

Abby excuses herself from the table by saying that she is getting the paper towel.

### *Strategies for Constructing the Classroom Rules*

Becky uses diverse strategies to remind children of these rules and supports the idea of following classroom rules.

#### *1. Straightforward direction.*

Interview with Becky, 10/10/01:

After teaching for a few years, I came to realize that positive discipline is not always working. Explaining does not help sometimes . . . Sometimes I need to be very straight forward. This is one thing I learned after I graduated.

As the interview demonstrates, sometimes telling the rule directly is more effective than a long explanation of the rule.

Example 7      Indoor play (7/26/01)

[Amy is hitting other children.]

Becky            Amy, use your words, not your hand.

- Example 8      Transition to bathroom (7/26/01)  
                     [Kate and Amy are running to the bathroom.]
- Becky            Kate, you need to walk.  
                     Amy, you need to go back and walk.

“Walking feet,” “indoor voices,” “no fighting games at UCCL,” “no talking during the group time” are the most often used directions in this classroom.

*2.Questioning.* Becky asks questions to remind the children of classroom rules. Questions are consistent with each situation (see Example 9), or not (see Example 10).

- Example 9      Consistent question, outdoor play (7/02/01)
- Becky            Misha, why are you carrying sand around?
- Misha:          . . . . [unintelligible]
- Becky            Sand should stay in the sandbox with the other food. [food made of sand.]

- Example 10     Inconsistent question, transition to bathroom (7/26/01)
- Becky            Kai, do you need some help?
- Kai                No.
- Becky            You know what? You sound like you’re teasing the other children.

Questions function in two different ways. First, from Becky’s perspective, she can be reassured that what she observed is right to get the children’s assent on what is happening. Second, from the children’s perspective, they have more opportunities to redirect their behavior voluntarily. In Example 4, Becky might ask the question to stop Kai’s behavior and questioning allows Kai to have a chance to reflect on his behavior voluntarily.

*3.Restating the situation.* Becky simply restates what is happening. Therefore, the children have a chance to rethink the situation and redirect their behavior themselves.

- Example 11     Outdoor play (7/27/01)

[Veronica is sitting on the table.]

Becky           The table is not a chair. [Veronica moves to a chair.]

                    Good thinking.

In contrast to Veronica, some children can not understand Becky's intention of restatement. If this is the case, Becky directly tells them what to do.

*4. Using institutional authority.* Becky applies institutional authority to enforce the rules.

Example 12   Outdoor play (7/02/01)

[Abby is lying under the slide, and Monica is putting rocks in Abby's underwear.]

Becky           Monica, you have to leave Abby's bottom alone. We don't do this in UCCL.

Example 13   Indoor play (6/27/01)

[Ashley tells Becky that some children are playing a game they are not supposed to play. Becky approaches the group of children.]

Becky           Power Rangers are not allowed in UCCL.

Children       I am not playing. We are not.

Institutional authority can avoid an explanation of why a rule exists. Becky uses this authority to support the rules which are usually complicated for children and controversial for Becky to explain. Institutional authority helps Becky to have better relationships with the children because the one who does not allow the activity is not Becky herself, but the institution.

*5. Using children's agreements.* Becky lets the children vote on important decisions, which can make routine changes. The children recognize the schedule changes voluntarily, and Becky uses the results of the vote to support the reason for redirecting or persuasion.

Example 14   Snack time (7/31/01)

[The class votes for playing inside during snack time.]

Susie           I want to go outside.

Becky We voted, and we are staying in.

Susie I want to stay in.

Becky OK.

*6.Instructing.* Becky sometimes uses disciplinary moments to instruct. She explains to children what to do in this situation and the reasons. One of example can be showing appropriate way to play with toys or instructing specific social skills or attitudes. It can be a totally opposite strategy from a straightforward one.

Example 16 Suggesting what to do: outdoor play (7/27/01)

[Abe is running around the table to race a car.]

Becky Abe, walking feet. Slow down.

Abe I wanna go fast.

Becky Let me show you. [She pulls the car backward to let it go, so Abe does not need to walk.]

*7.Group discipline.* On special occasions, Becky talks about what children should do during group time. This is also an instructional moment, but instruction that happens in a group generates different contexts. Group discipline is not personal. When children talk with Becky in a group, they think how they will be viewed by other children. I observed only three occasions over the duration of my investigation. One was 2 days before the summer break. From the teacher's perspective, the children were losing control. They were excited about their summer vacation. Becky asked them to control themselves. Another was before the class went to watch a wheelchair basketball game. A third incident was after nap time in the first month of the semester. Every Friday, teachers have a staff meeting during the children's nap time. The student-teacher and teacher from a half-day classroom supervise the nap time. Newcomers use this moment to explore the limits of what they can do.

Example 17 Group time (9/07/01)

Becky All the teachers were sort of angry last Friday.

Children Why?

[Becky reminds the children of what happened last Friday. She tells the children what they were supposed to do last Friday, but it did not work out.]

Jack I did it.

Susie I did it.

[Both of them were defending that they did what they supposed to do.]

Becky I am talking and you are not. It was very disappointing. Some children did not do what they were supposed to do during the rest time. Today, if you break the rule, the teachers are going to be very, very upset.

Beth I was quiet, but Jack was loud.

Becky I am not sure. And I don't need to hear that. What is important is how we work on this time. [Some children raise their hands.] Jim, if you are not going to talk about how you were quiet and who was not quiet, you may talk.

Jim . . . . [mumbles]

Becky I wonder what should happen to the child who does not follow the rule. [Some children raised their hands.] Charles?

Charles . . . . [no response]

[Kim talked about the choice of today's job. YJ asked why teachers were leaving and if they were coming back. The children did not give any answer to Becky's question, and Becky ends the group time.]

It was interesting to see which children Becky chose to talk because Jim and Charles were the ones who broke the rules last Friday. Beth also broke the rules last time, but she was defending herself by describing Jack's faults. Becky knew Beth's strategy was to defend herself, so Becky reacted with doubts and directed the talk to finding a solution rather than blaming others.

*8. Defining.* Becky sometimes defines the children's behavior. This is different from restating the situation because Becky judges the behavior and labels the behavior in positive or negative terms.

Example 18 Outdoor play (7/27/01)

Becky Nanana...that was teasing. Did you tell him you don't like that? [to the other child.]

*9. If.* Sometimes Becky warns the students that if a child is continuously not following the rules, then she has to revoke their right to play. She usually mentions the reason the behavior is not allowed.

Example 19 Snack time (7/26/01)

Becky Bryan, you can sit down. If you stand up, I will think you are done eating.

Bryan Why?

Becky In UCCL, when we eat, we eat at the table.

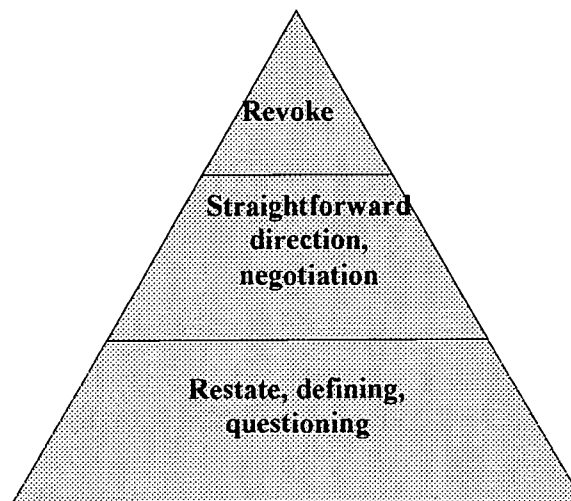
#### Teacher-Student Conflicts

In the previous section, Classroom Rules, I usually chose the case when the teacher told the child what to do and the child followed the suggestions. The interaction was rather a one-way process. Still children were orienting their behaviors in accordance to complex classroom situation. In this section, I elicited more reciprocal processes between teacher and students from

daily conversation in this classroom. Therefore, teacher-student conflicts do not always mean an argument in this section. Rather, the meaning of teacher-student conflicts includes all the reciprocal interactions.

Teacher-student conflict usually happens when the interests of the teacher and student are different. The most severe conflict might be a student's confrontation with a teacher. I did not observe many cases of confrontation in the classroom. Most conflicts occur during the process of enforcing rules and routines. The teacher and student interact to gain his/her own interest.

The teacher and children use diverse strategies to achieve personal interests. Becky uses the same strategies she uses for constructing the rules. However, in conflicts, how she uses the rules is displayed in hierarchical order. Figure 1 shows her order of discipline hierarchy.



*Figure 1* Discipline hierarchy.

Becky usually starts with “restating,” “questioning,” or “defining” when children behave differently from her expectation. In most of cases, children understand Becky’s intention and followed it at the first level. However, sometimes children resist or pursue their interest rather than Becky’s. Then she uses more explicit disciplinary skills such as “straightforward direction” or “negotiating.” Most of the cases end at the second level. However, in a few cases, children continuously resist after second level interactions, then Becky revokes their right of play or toys. This rarely happens. In these cases, she does this to establish the coherence of rules as well as her authority. This disciplinary hierarchy provides just overall patterns in conflicts. The data show that it is not an absolute pattern for understanding conflicts. Sometime conflicts start in the

second level and go to the third level. Other disciplinary strategies are also used and integrated at each level. Regarding frequency and the degree of intervention, I categorized the disciplinary hierarchy pattern.

In conflicts, on the one hand, straightforward direction becomes more specific than straightforward direction in rule construction. She suggests to the children what to do, and how to communicate. The strategy is more combined with instructional strategy. On the other hand, sometimes Becky implies double meanings through straightforward direction. She offers other suggestions which they need to do right away to stop the conflicts.

Example 20 illustrates former case. Example 21 illustrates the latter case.

**Example 20** Suggesting how to communicate: outdoor play time (8/27/01)

[Jack just started at UCCL and still needs potty training. So, Becky regularly asks Jack to come with her to the bathroom together. Jack is playing outside and excited about an airplane which the student teacher is folding for him. Becky gives a 5-minute warning that Jack needs to go to bathroom. But after 5 minutes, he gets upset because he wants to wait 'til making the airplane is done. He starts crying.]

**Becky** Jack, you have to say, "I want to wait for the airplane to be done." You have to say "please wait," instead of crying.

**Jack** [Calming down] Please wait 'til my air plane is done.  
[Becky waits 'til his airplane is done, and they go inside together. Becky goes into bathroom with Jack and asks what song he wants her to sing. Jack said, "Barney." And Becky sings the song while he is on the potty]

Becky told Jack what he needed to say in order to solve the conflict. Becky taught the communication skill to solve the conflict.

**Example 21** Offering other suggestions: from outside to inside (7/27/01)

**Ashley** I heard the noise, Becky. They are fighting.

[Bryan is chasing Kai]

Becky Bryan, bring the bike. We are going in, Sweetie.

Becky reminded Bryan of the other things he needed to do right away instead of addressing what he did wrong.

Negotiation is not used in a one-way process, rule construction. Negotiation happens when reciprocal interactions such as conflicts appear. It reflects how children also actively use strategies to gain their interests.

Example 22 Negotiation: Indoor play (7/31/01)

Becky I hope no one is playing Power Ranger.

Bryan No, we are just making stuff for Power Ranger. But we are not going to play Power Ranger.

In Example 22, Becky insinuates her concern by restating. Bryan understood teacher's intention and defended his activity as not for fighting game.

At last, Example 23 shows how revoking generally happens.

Example 23 Outdoor play (7/02/01)

[Bryan and Kai are moving the basket ring.]

Becky Bryan, you need to stop moving it. Kai, you need to stop moving it. The teacher does this, not the children. Hold on JT.

[Becky leaves Bryan and Kai to help JT.]

Becky I said stop moving it.

[After awhile]

Becky Neither one of you are listening, so you have to choose another play.

Becky gave Bryan and Kai a straightforward direction twice. Finally, she revoked Bryan and Kai's rights to play basketball.

### Peer Conflicts

In peer conflicts, not only teacher-student interactions, but also peer interactions are involved in socialization. The further complicated landscape of socialization is described. Basically, interactions in peer conflicts are displayed in three levels: Becky's interactions with a child; Becky's interactions with the other child; and interactions between the children. In accordance with the number of children involved in the conflict, the interactions multiply. All the strategies already used in interactions involving rules and dealing with teacher-student conflicts, are combined.

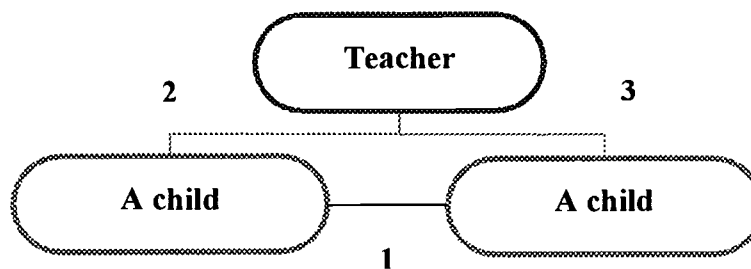


Figure 2 Three interactions in peer conflicts.

Becky solves the conflicts by supporting one party or by suggesting another solution for both parties. In both cases, Becky follows the first and the second steps of discipline hierarchy (see Figure 1). The same for teacher-student conflict, Becky opens up peer conflicts by asking questions, restating the situation, or defining. Then she uses more specific straightforward direction and negotiation. One difference from teacher-student conflicts is, in peer conflicts, Becky does not use revoking, the final step of the hierarchy. Instead, she tries to give comfort and support to the child who is emotionally hurt in peer conflicts, rather than punish the opposite party.

Example 24 shows the first level of conflict solution.

Example 24 Questioning and restating: Indoor play (7/02/01)

[Misha wants to drive the car, but Beth does not let her join in, even though there is a seat left.]

- Becky           What's the problem, Beth?  
[Beth talks about the reason.]
- Becky           I could not understand what you are saying.  
[Beth tries to tell Becky again.]
- Becky           You are saving this for Susan. Misha, did you hear that?
- Misha           Can I share with Susan?
- Becky           Let's ask Susan. [Susan is around] Have a sit, Susan.  
[Misha asks again and Susan agrees to share with Misha.]
- Becky           Sounds like you settled the problem.

First, Becky asked questions to make the conflict public, and then she restated Beth's answer. Finally, Misha suggested a solution by herself.

If the children can not find the solution in peer conflicts, Becky uses similar straightforward directions as in teacher student conflicts. Also in peer conflicts, straightforward direction is integrated with instruction such as what to do and how to communicate. Or it implies double meaning. Becky just reminds them of other things to do immediately in order to distract from conflicts. In peer conflicts, Becky often suggests how the children should communicate with each other.

Example 25    Suggesting how to communicate: Outdoor play (8/27/01)

- Becky           Charles, if you want to play with him, you don't hit. You ask him to play with you. Like this, "Can I play with you?"

In negotiation, defending occurs more frequently in peer conflicts, compared to teacher-student conflicts. Children are more active on justifying their behavior among peers.

Example 26    Defending: Outdoor play (7/02/01)

- [Kai plays a fighting game with Veronica. This is Kai's second time to play a fighting game today]
- Bryan Kai is playing Power Puff Girls.
- Becky They can play Power Puff Girls unless it is fighting game.
- Bryan It is.
- Becky Oh really? [Becky approaches Kai.] Kai, you need to talk with me. I am very disappointed that you keep choosing inappropriate games at UCCL. What do we do about this? You need to think about what you are going to play and whether it is good for UCCL or not.
- Kai OK.
- Becky What are some other ideas that are good for UCCL?
- Kai Riding a bike.
- Becky Good.
- Veronica They don't fight each other.
- Bryan They fight against monsters.
- Becky So it is a fighting game.

Veronica tries to negotiate with Becky so she can still play Power Puff Girls. But Bryan defends his thought with some other information. Example 27 shows how children could position themselves and negotiate skillfully involving complicated relationships when one is the teacher and others are peers.

I find two interesting sub rules used for peer conflicts: “you can not say we are not friends,” and “when you let go of the toy, it means the others can use the toy.” Children and Becky use these rules to defend their ideas in peer conflicts.

Example 27 outdoor play (6/27/01)

[Bryan and Calvin fights over the ball]  
 Becky [to Bryan] Did you drop it?  
 Bryan Yes, but just for a while.  
 Becky Bryan, try to find a different ball.

Becky uses the rule, “if you let go of the toy, then others can have the toy” to solve the conflict. Children also internalize and use the rules to justify their behaviors.

Example 28 Outdoor time (8/02/01)

Beth Susie and Calvin told me they were never going to be my friend, but it is not true. I told Susie and Calvin that.  
 Becky Susie cannot say that because it hurts the others’ feeling. It is OK to play with others, but saying that is not good. I told Calvin to decide for himself, not for Susie.  
 Becky I see Michael’s coming, Michael will play with you. Do you want to?  
 [Beth greets Michael and they play together.]  
 Becky Calvin, don’t throw the name tag.

Beth already knew the rule, “you cannot say we are not friends,” and she internalized it and used it to defend herself.

In peer conflicts, instead of revoking strategies, Becky tries to solve the problem by give comfort and support to the child who is emotionally hurt in peer conflicts, rather than punishing anyone.

Example 29 Outdoor play (7/27/01)

- Becky Kate, what's wrong?  
[Kate explains that Amy keeps screaming in her face.]
- Becky You have to say that "I don't want you to scream in my face."
- Kate I said it.  
[After awhile, Kate is yelling at Amy.]
- Becky Kate, you look frustrated. What happened?
- Kate Amy, keeps running away from me.
- Becky If I were you, I would find another friend to play with today.
- Beth Can I play with you?
- Kate But Amy is my best friend.
- Becky You still can be friends even though you are not playing together right now. It is your choice if you are playing with her or not.

Becky suggested how to communicate and Kate was already internalizing the communication skill (e.g., saying I do not want you to scream in my face). Instead of talking to Amy about what she did wrong, Becky asked Kate to choose anher friend today. Becky reversed the rule, "you cannot say we are not friends" to "we still can be friends without playing with each other all the time." Becky suggested some solution to comfort Kate. But Kate did not choose to listen and

finally she was very upset later. Becky showed emotional comfort by giving her a hug, even though Kate did the wrong thing to Amy.

### **Conclusion and Implication**

This study indicates that classroom discipline is a valuable learning process for young children's socialization. Classroom discipline has multiple layers, which assist the process of socialization: vertically explicit and implicit rules, horizontally teacher-student interactions, and peer interactions. Through communicating explicit and implicit rules and cues to the teachers and peers, the teacher and the children were reciprocally involved in the complicated process of socialization. This study suggests that young children's abilities to understand insinuated communication and to use communication skills are key aspects of socialization in the preschool classroom. Therefore, this study suggests the importance of the teacher's awareness of the influence of communication in the classroom. For further study, examining cultural differences in communication skills may reveal another level of the socialization process of young children.

Most educators and researchers have regarded classroom discipline as an adult's device to control the children. They defined classroom discipline as a one-way process, from adults to children. The present study, however, shows how children and adults actively interact in the process of socialization through classroom discipline. From this perspective, children and adults become partners rather than conflicting parties. Children's worlds and adults' worlds have been thought to be separate and conflicting worlds, but this study agrees with an integration of the two worlds.

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## Appendix A

### Transcription format adapted from Hong (1995)

1. Regular uppercase and lowercase type is used to indicate speech.
2. Double parentheses, (( )), used to provide information about a speaker's tone of voice or about nonverbal speech activity.
3. Single parenthesis, ( ), used to provide information about a speaker.
4. Four dashes, ----, indicates that a speaker pauses to rephrase or self-correct.
5. Ellipsis, . . . . , indicates no response or unintelligible.
6. Bracket, [ ], indicates description of people's action.
7. Children indicates the voice cannot be identified.



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