Emotion socialization and socio-emotional development

Julie C. Dunsmore, PhD
Social Development Lab
Psychology (0436)
109 Williams Hall
ascarpa@vt.edu
540-231-4201
www.psyc.vt.edu/labs/socialdev/
Areas of Research

Family emotional communication
- Expressive style
- Reactions to behavior
- Attributions @ behavior
- Discussion

Family beliefs about emotions
- Value of + and -
- Danger
- Parents’ guidance
- Roles in relationships

Child outcomes
- Emotional skills
- Sense of self
- Positive social behavior

Cultural context
Relevant Findings

• Active teaching about emotions is beneficial
  • Better emotion understanding (Dunsmore & Karn, 2001, 2004)
  • More prosocial behavior and less physical aggression (Garner, Dunsmore, & Southam-Gerow, 2008)
  • Effects especially strong for children who have difficulty regulating emotions (Dunsmore, Booker, & Ollendick, 2012)

• Context matters
  • Gender differences in associations of emotional skills with peer relations (Dunsmore, et al., 2008)
  • Maternal acculturation related to both emotion socialization and child emotion understanding (Perez-Rivera & Dunsmore, 2011)
CAR Research Ideas

- Application of basic developmental research to ASD
  - Emotion socialization strategies – what translates? What needs to be modified?
  - Socio-emotional skills – generalizability? Developmental sequence?

- Behavioral assessment of socio-emotional skills
  - Emotions – sending, receiving, managing
  - Social behavior
Current Relationships & Resources

• Social Development Lab
  • playroom equipped for video observation
  • Noldus behavioral observation software

• VT-Community Partners
  • Psychology Dept lab space in Roanoke
  • Playroom equipped for video observation
  • Multiple family-appropriate rooms

• Current Collaborations
  • Dr. Tom Ollendick (Psychology) – developmental psychopathology
  • Dr. Cynthia Smith (Human Development) – emotion regulation
Resources Needed

- Comparison samples
- Clinical assessment tools
- Funding
- Interested collaborators with expertise in ASD