

# Emotion socialization and socio-emotional development

Julie C. Dunsmore, PhD  
Social Development Lab  
Psychology (0436)  
109 Williams Hall  
[ascarpa@vt.edu](mailto:ascarpa@vt.edu)

540-231-4201

[www.psyc.vt.edu/labs/socialdev/](http://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