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CONFLICT BEHAVIORS OF MALTREATED AND NONMALTREATED CHILDREN

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Abstract—Maltreated and nonmaltreated children (ages 3–7 years) were paired for brief play sessions involving a single desirable object. Facial, verbal, and physical actions used while negotiating access to the object were examined. Results showed that the maltreated-nonmaltreated pairs were able to engage in a negotiation process resulting in approximately equal sharing of the object. The differences found between maltreated and nonmaltreated children primarily suggested that maltreated children were somewhat hesitant to engage their partners. Results also showed that children's scores on a facial expression recognition task predicted greater responsiveness to their partners' indication of reluctance to relinquish the object.

Key Words—Conflict, Facial expressions, Politeness.

INTRODUCTION

DURING THE PAST 15 years, a considerable body of research has shown maltreated children to exhibit maladaptive or socially undesirable behaviors in peer group interaction (Mueller & Silverman, 1989). In a widely cited early investigation, George and Main (1979) found that abused toddlers were more aggressive than nonabused toddlers in a daycare setting. Furthermore, they were more likely to respond to friendly overtures with avoidance. Subsequent studies have also reported both increased aggression and increased avoidance or withdrawal in maltreated children. For example, during natural observations in preschool settings, maltreated children have been observed to exhibit more aggression and less prosocial behavior than controls (Haskett & Kistner, 1991; Herrenkohl & Herrenkohl, 1981; Howes & Eldridge, 1985; Howes & Espinosa, 1985; Klimes-Dougan & Klister, 1990; Main & George, 1985). In a study of older children (6 to 8 years), maltreated subjects were rated by their teachers as more aggressive than nonmaltreated peers (Reidy, Anderegg, Tracy, & Cotler, 1980). During laboratory play sessions, Jacobson and Straker (1982) observed 5–10-year-old maltreated children to interact less and display less positive affect than their peers, although they did not show more hostile behavior. Similarly, Kaufman and Cicchetti (1989) found that older maltreated children (5 to 11 years) scored lower on ratings of prosocial behavior and self-esteem provided by peers and counselors in a daycamp setting. The maltreated youngsters were also rated as being more withdrawn—though not more aggressive—than their matched controls.

Current models of social competence (e.g., Dodge, Pettit, McClaskey, & Brown, 1986) indicate that deficits in a variety of social cognitive skills may contribute to children's difficul-

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ties in social interaction. For example, Dodge reported that hyperaggressive boys differ from average boys both in their interpretation of ambiguous social cues and in the types of strategies they generate to cope with ambiguous provocation. In a study of kindergarten children, Cassidy and Parke (1991) found emotion understanding to be associated with greater social competence as measured by peer and teacher ratings. Few studies have focused on maltreated children's social cognitive abilities (see Smetana & Kelly, 1989, for a partial review).

However, maltreated children have been found to have a less sophisticated understanding of social roles than nonmaltreated children (Barahal, Waterman, & Martin, 1981). In addition, they are less able to recognize emotions portrayed in audiotaped scenarios (Barahal, et al., 1981) and photographs of facial expressions (Camras, Grow, & Ribordy, 1983; Camras, Ribordy, Hill, Martino, Spaccarelli, & Stefani, 1988; During, 1986) and less often express their own emotions in their language (Cicchetti & Beeghly, 1987). Maltreated children also have been shown to be more attentive to irrelevant aggressive stimuli during tests of cognitive control functioning (Rieder & Cicchetti, 1989). These social-cognitive deficiencies may contribute to maltreated children's problematic social behavior.

Although conflicts over object possession are important in the lives of children (Shantz, 1987), no study thus far has focused specifically on maltreated children's conflict resolution strategies. Studies of nonmaltreated children have defined and measured conflict in a variety of ways and, not surprisingly, the results of these investigations are not always completely consistent. For example, measures of social cognitive abilities have been found to predict conflict frequency and conflict behaviors in some investigations (Dodge et al., 1985) but not in all studies (e.g., Shantz & Shantz, 1985). While well-liked children compete for objects less often than disliked children (Putallaz & Sheppard, 1990; Shantz & Shantz, 1985), friends do not engage in fewer conflicts than nonfriends (Camras, 1984; Hartup, Laursen, Stewart, & Eastenson, 1988)—although their conflicts may be less intense. Overall, recent findings indicate that overt physical aggression occurs less often than previously believed (i.e., during about 5% of children's conflicts, Krasnor & Rubin, 1983; Shantz & Shantz, 1985). Thus, most conflicts are resolved by means of negotiation rather than physical force.

Developmental changes in conflict behaviors are difficult to ascertain because comparisons across age groups have rarely been made within the same study. However, Camras (1984) found that between preschool and second grade, girls decreased their use of physical pulls, increased their use of verbal statements, and increased in the politeness of the language they used during object disputes in a semi-naturalistic laboratory play session. Boys showed little change across this age range, were generally more physical, less verbal, and less polite than were girls.

Regarding the effectiveness of children's behaviors, Camras (1984) found that verbal justifications or reasons for the child's claim (a relatively polite form of verbal statement) were generally more successful than imperative demands for the object. Similar findings on the relative effectiveness of verbal justifications versus unrationalized insistence were reported by Eisenberg and Garvey (1981) in a study of verbal conflicts between preschoolers. In conflicts between unacquainted kindergarten children, Camras (1977) also found that negative facial expressions were associated with greater success in retaining a disputed object. However, this finding was not replicated across the board in a later study (Camras, 1984) of acquainted children who varied in their age, sex, dominance, and friendship relations. Physical aggression (e.g., hitting another child or grabbing an object) has not been found to be an effective tactic among school-age children (Camras, 1984; Shantz & Shantz, 1985) although it may be effective for preschoolers (Krasnor & Rubin, 1983).

The present study investigates maltreated and nonmaltreated children's behavior during mild object conflicts produced during semi-naturalistic laboratory play sessions. The several purposes of this study are to compare maltreated and nonmaltreated children in their verbal

and nonverbal conflict behaviors, to examine the influence of such behaviors on conflict outcome and to also examine the contributions of maltreatment status and emotion recognition skill (an important social cognitive ability) to the determination of conflict outcome.

METHOD

Subjects

The subjects were 18 maltreated and 18 nonmaltreated children ranging in age from 3 years 4 months to 7 years 3 months (M = 4 years 11 months). The maltreated children were identified as such by the Illinois Department of Child and Family Services and their families were currently participating in child-abuse preventive services programs at a day-care or social service center. Ten families had been reported for both physical abuse and neglect, five for abuse only and three for neglect only. Number of reports per family averaged 3.45 and eight children had been temporarily placed outside the home.

Each maltreated child was matched with a nonmaltreated child who attended the same day care or social service center but was not in the child-abuse program and had never been identified as maltreated. Children were matched as closely as possible in age, race, sex, SES, and Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test scores (Dunn, 1965). The final sample contained 8 male and 10 female pairs, and 7 African-American, 6 Caucasian, and 5 Hispanic pairs of children. The maltreated and nonmaltreated children were not significantly different in age (M = 59.1 months vs. 59.7 months), number of parents in the home (M = 1.2 vs. 1.2). However, maltreated children scored lower on the Peabody test (M = 72 vs. 89), $t(34) = 2.66$, $p < .02$; their families ranked lower on the Hollingshead Social Position Scale (Hollingshead & Redlich, 1958; M class = 4.9 vs. 3.3), $t(31) = 8.5$, $p < .001$; and they had more siblings in the home (M = 2.5 vs. 1.3), $t(34) = 2.6$, $p < .02$. The subjects were participating in a larger project on emotional facial expressions of maltreated and nonmaltreated children and their mothers (Camras, et al., 1988; Camras, Ribordy, Hill, Martino, Sachs, Spaccarelli, & Stefani, 1990).

Procedures and Materials

Expression recognition task. Each subject was presented with 20 brief emotion stories and was asked to choose a facial expression appropriate to the child in the story. In 12 pure emotion stories (two per emotion), the protagonist was represented as experiencing either happiness, surprise, anger, disgust, fear, or sadness. In eight masked emotion stories, the protagonist experienced a negative emotion (anger, disgust, fear or sadness) but was trying to hide it. Stories were pretested to ensure that children understood the emotions represented (Ribordy, Camras, Stefani, & Spaccarelli, 1988).

With each story, the subject was shown three photographs, each showing a child model posing an emotional facial expression (i.e., the correct expression or a randomly chosen distracter). The photographs were inspected by two raters trained in Ekman and Friesen's (1978) Facial Action Coding System (FACS) to ensure that the requisite facial expressions had been produced (see Camras et al., 1988, for details).

Play sessions. Each pair of children was covertly videotaped during a brief play session designed to generate occasional conflicts between the interactants. The children were seated on opposite sides of a small table and allowed to take turns playing with a pair of gerbils in a box. The play apparatus had several features that ensured that: (a) the children could not physically contact the animals, (b) each child could always reach a rope handle enabling him

to pull or hold onto the box, (c) but only one child could play with the gerbils at a time (see Camras, 1977 for apparatus details).

The children were told that they could play with the gerbils for 10 to 12 minutes while the experimenter left the room to "do some work." No instructions were given about sharing or competing for the gerbil box. However, the children were asked to remain in their seats and pull the box over to their side of the table when they wanted to play.

Scoring

Recognition task. Two summary scores were computed for each child: A Pure Expression Recognition score representing number of correct responses to the 12 pure emotional expression stories (range = 0 to 12) and a Masked Expression Recognition score representing responses to the 8 masked emotional expression stories (range = 0 to 8).

Laboratory play session. Videotape coding focused on processes involved in negotiating the exchange of the gerbil box. In a first round of coding, attempts to obtain the box were identified, responses to these attempts were classified, and the outcomes of attempt-resistance sequences with respect to the exchange of the gerbil box were also classified. In a second round of coding, behavioral components (i.e., verbal, facial, and physical actions) of attempts and resistance responses were coded. Lastly, the length of time between attempts and each child's total playing time was determined.

An attempt was considered to occur whenever a child physically pulled or tugged on the box and/or produced an unambiguous demand, request, or declaration (e.g., "Give me the box," "Can I have it?," "It's my turn!"). Ambiguous verbal fragments (e.g., "Hey Johnny") were not coded as attempts.

Responses to attempts were classified as: (a) Comply (e.g., pushes box over, verbally assents, nods), (b) Ignore (i.e., no discernible response), (c) Resists (i.e., physically holds onto box and/or produces unambiguous verbal statement such as "No," "It's still my turn").

Conflicts were defined as attempt-resistance sequences. As has been found in previous studies (Shantz, 1987), most conflicts ended with the possessor temporarily retaining access to the disputed object. Thus, Attempter Waiting Time (i.e., the length of time that the attempter waited before making a new attempt to get the gerbil box) was adopted as a more sensitive measure of conflict outcome. If a conflict ended with the attempter gaining immediate access to the gerbil box, waiting time was recorded as 0.

For each attempt and each resistance, the performing child's verbal/vocal, facial, and physical actions were further coded. Verbal statements were given politeness ratings by naive adult raters. To obtain these ratings, all statements were transferred to audiotape and presented to four undergraduates (two male and two female) who were also given a summary of the procedure as well as a drawing of the play apparatus to help them envision the interaction. Each rater judged the politeness of the verbal attempt or resistance statement on a 7-point Likert scale with "Very impolite" and "Very polite" serving as anchors.

Facial expressions were coded using Ekman and Friesen's (1978) fine-grained, anatomically-based Facial Action Coding System. Based on this coding, each attempt and resistance episode was then scored as involving or not involving three non-mutually exclusive categories of facial behavior: (a) smile (i.e., facial movement produced by the action of m.[muscle] zygomatic major), (b) negative upper actions (i.e., brow movements that are components of anger, fear, or sadness expressions, see Ekman & Friesen, 1975, 1978), and (c) negative lower actions (i.e., nose or mouth movements that are components of anger, disgust, fear, sadness, or contempt expressions). It is important to note that when negative upper or lower facial actions are used alone (e.g., brow frowns or lip presses), they may indicate determination, concentration or seriousness as well as or instead of mild negative affect.

For purposes of data analysis, each episode was also assigned a single "expression valence" score representing its balance of positive versus negative facial action content. These were: 1 = only positive actions, (i.e., smiles) were used, 2 = smile combined with negative upper or lower actions, or no positive or negative expressions at all; 3 = only a negative lower face action or negative upper face action was used, and 4 = both negative upper and negative lower face actions.

The nonfacial physical action components of attempts were coded as: 1 = no pull or tug, 2 = tightening the rope, 3 = tug, 4 = pull and 5 = very fast pull. The nonfacial physical action components of resistances were coded as: 1 = no pull or hold, and 2 = holds or pulls on box.

Reliability

A single coder identified and classified all nonfacial variables. Reliability was established by then having a second coder identify all attempts occurring during 18 1-min segments, each randomly selected from one of the 18 interactions (agreement = .92). The second coder next examined 50 randomly selected attempts, coding the accompanying nonfacial physical actions (agreement = .87) and response to the attempt (agreement = .89). Finally, the reliability coder examined 50 randomly selected resistance responses, coding the nonfacial physical actions (agreement = .85) and outcome (agreement = .91).

Facial expressions were coded by three research assistants trained and certified to use Ekman and Friesen's (1978) Facial Action Coding System. Further reliability was established by having all three coders score 287 facial expressions randomly selected from this study. Each coder's score was compared to a mutually-determined criterion scoring. Reliability scores were .79, .79, and .70, acceptable levels for facial scoring (Ekman & Friesen, 1978). Facial and nonfacial coders were blind with respect to the children's maltreatment status.

RESULTS

Expression Recognition Scores

As reported previously (Camras et al., 1990), nonmaltreated children were better able to recognize both the pure and masked expressions than were maltreated children, $F(1,36) = 9.58$, $p = .004$ for the pure expression scores; $F(1,36) = 3.97$, $p = .054$ for the masked expression scores. However, the group difference was greater for the pure than for the masked expressions.

Laboratory Play Session

An initial set of 2 (child sex) × 2 (maltreatment status) ANOVAs utilizing child's age as a covariate compared the children's overall tendencies to attempt or resist their partner. Results (see Table 1) showed a nonsignificant tendency for nonmaltreated children to make more attempts to obtain the gerbil box from their partner than maltreated children, $F(1,31) = 2.96$, $p < .10$. No differences were found in the proportion of attempts that were resisted or the proportion of time each child played with the gerbil during the play session.

The children's facial behavior was examined in two MANOVAs both utilizing maltreatment status and child sex as between subject variables, child age as a covariate, and three facial expression scores as dependent variables. The expression scores represented the proportion of attempts or resistance episodes during which the child produced a smile, negative upper face expression, and negative lower face expression. Raw proportion scores were subjected to the arcsine transformation. The MANOVA for attempt episodes yielded no significant effects.

Table 1. Effects of Maltreatment, Sex, and Age: Mean Behavior Scores and Significance Levels

Behavior Measures	Maltreatment Status			Sex			Age Covariate
	M	NM	Signif. Level	M	F	Signif. Level	Signif. Level
General							
No. of Attempts	8.9	12.3	.10	10.8	10.4	—	—
% Attempts Resisted	60.6	53.1	—	56.4	58.4	—	—
% Playing Time	45.3	54.7	—	50.0	50.0	—	—
During Attempts							
% w/Pulls	63.8	66.1	.06	68.0	62.7	—	—
Politeness	3.7	3.8	—	3.6	3.8	—	.07
% w/Smiles	62.2	48.9	—	58.5	53.8	—	—
% w/NU Actions	6.5	10.7	—	8.9	8.3	—	—
% w/NL Actions	5.2	2.2	—	3.8	3.7	—	—
During Resistance							
% w/Pulls	59.0	63.5	—	69.1	54.1	—	—
Politeness	3.7	3.8	—	3.3	4.1	.003	—
% w/Smiles	51.5	27.7	.02	36.8	41.0	—	.005
% w/NU Actions	8.5	18.0	.02	23.5	6.0	—	—
% w/NL Actions	8.1	0.0	—	2.7	4.8	—	—

Note: M = maltreated; NM = nonmaltreated; NU = negative upper facial actions; NL = negative lower facial actions; — = nonsignificant; $p > .10$.

The MANOVA for resistance episodes yielded significant effects for maltreatment status, $F(3,26) = 4.14$, $p < .02$, and the age covariate, $F(3,26) = 3.61$, $p < .03$. The univariate analyses indicated that maltreated children smiled during resistance more than nonmaltreated children $F(1,28) = 6.72$, $p < .02$., while nonmaltreated children utilized more negative upper face expressions, $F(1,28) = 6.38$, $p < .02$. In addition, smiles were found to covary positively with age, $F(1,28) = 9.63$, $p < .005$.

Further analyses compared children in their use of pulls and the politeness of their verbal statements during attempts and resistances. Results for the analyses of attempts showed that nonmaltreated children tended to use pulls more often than did maltreated children, $F(1,30) = 3.9$, $p < .06$. Furthermore, the analysis of vocal politeness scores yielded a near-significant covariate effect, $F(1, 29) = 3.66$, $p < .07$, suggesting that older subjects' attempts were more polite than those of younger subjects. The analysis of vocal politeness during resistances yielded a main effect for sex, $F(1,28) = 10.40$, $p < .003$, and a maltreatment $\times$ sex interaction, $F(1,28) = 8.31$, $p < .007$. Data inspection showed that the nonmaltreated girls were rated most polite (m score = 4.43), followed by the maltreated girls (3.76), maltreated boys (3.68), and finally the nonmaltreated boys (2.91).

The effectiveness of children's attempts and resistances was examined in two regression analyses. Each included the predictor variables of age, sex, maltreatment status, verbal/vocal politeness, pull intensity, facial expression valence score, the proportion of preceding play time during which the child possessed the gerbil, and the pure expression recognition score of the child's partner. For the analysis of attempts, the dependent variable was the partner's response score (i.e., comply, ignore, or resist the attempt). A significant multiple correlation was obtained, $r(2,244) = .31$, $p < .001$, with significant beta coefficients for pull, $B = .28$, $p < .001$, and vocal politeness, $B = -.13$, $p < .04$. Thus children were more responsive (i.e., less resistant) to attempts involving more polite verbal statements and less intense pulls on the box (see Table 2).

For the analysis of resistance responses, the dependent variable was the waiting time score, that is, the length of time that the child's partner waited after encountering resistance to

Table 2. Effects of Predictors on Responses to Attempts and Resistances

Predictors	Responses to Attempts	Responses to Resistances
Age		
Sex		***[b]
Maltreatment Status		**[b]
Politeness	*[a]	
Full intensity	***[a]	
Facial Expression Valence		
% Playing Time		
Responder's Expression Recognition Score		*[b]

[a] Children were more responsive (less resistant) to attempts involving more polite verbal statements and weaker pulls.
[b] Girls, maltreated children, and children with higher expression recognition scores were more responsive to (waited longer after) resistance to their attempts.
* $p < .05$.
** $p < .01$.
*** $p < .001$.

his/her attempt. A significant multiple correlation was obtained, $r(3,152) = .31, p < .001$, with significant beta coefficients for sex, $B = .17, p < .001$, maltreatment status, $B = .21, p < .004$, and partner's pure expression recognition score, $B = .18, p < .03$. Inspection of the data showed that girls, maltreated children, and children with higher expression recognition scores waited longer after encountering resistance before renewing the attempt to obtain the gerbil box.

DISCUSSION

This study obtained several findings relevant to previous claims regarding aggression and withdrawal by maltreated children. First, maltreated children tended to make fewer attempts to obtain the gerbil box and tended to use fewer pulls during their attempts than did their nonmaltreated partners. In addition, when resisting their partners' attempts to get the box, maltreated children were more likely to smile and less likely to use negative upper face expressions than were the nonmaltreated subjects. In this context, children's smiles may be interpreted as signs of placation (Ekman & Friesen, 1982; van Hooff, 1972) while the negative upper face expressions (usually brow frowns) might indicate determination to maintain possession of the disputed object (Darwin, 1872/1965; Ekman, 1977). Lastly, when maltreated children were themselves resisted in their attempts to obtain the gerbil box, they waited longer before renewing their attempt than did the nonmaltreated children. Together, these findings suggest that maltreated children were somewhat reluctant to engage or resist their partners.

Overall, maltreated children thus showed signs of withdrawal rather than aggression during the play sessions. These findings are consistent with some past studies (e.g., Jacobson & Straker, 1982, Kaufman & Cicchetti, 1989) but not others, (e.g., George & Main, 1979; Haskett & Kistner, 1991). Clearly, the circumstances under which maltreated children display withdrawal as opposed to aggression merit further investigation. Although the literature is not completely consistent, in general, maltreated preschool children have been reported to be more aggressive while maltreated older children have been reported to be more withdrawn than their nonmaltreated counterparts. In addition, physically abused children have been

reported to be aggressive more often than neglected children. However in the present study, both physically abused and preschool age children were included, yet few signs of aggression were seen. This suggests that other factors—for example, ecological variables—may also influence maltreated children's behavior. In particular, possibly withdrawal rather than aggression was observed in the present study because the maltreated children were somewhat inhibited in the unfamiliar laboratory environment, and/or anxious or fearful of jeopardizing their special play opportunity. Furthermore, the structure of the play apparatus was not conducive to aggression involving physical contact between children. In any event, our results add to the growing body of evidence indicating that maltreated children do not inevitably manifest aggression in all play situations.

Maltreated and nonmaltreated children did not significantly differ on a number of measures (see Table 1). Furthermore, maltreated and nonmaltreated children played with the gerbil box for approximately the same length of time. Thus these children were able to engage in a negotiation process resulting in equitable sharing of a limited resource. These results are consistent with studies by Howes (Howes, 1984; Howes & Eldredge, 1985; Howes & Espinoza, 1985) that show maltreated preschool children to be capable of competent social interaction under some circumstances. Howes suggests several factors that may foster the display of social competence: participation in a treatment program, familiarity with peer interactants, and a play setting that provides a variety of options other than competition for a limited resource. The present study suggests that competence may be shown by maltreated children even in a structured play situation that engenders mild conflicts between children. Whether this competence is limited to interactions with a nonmaltreated partner or to maltreated children participating in a treatment program remains to be determined.

Irrespective of maltreatment status, children responded more positively to less coercive attempt tactics by their partners. In particular, weak pulls and more polite language by the attempter both predicted less resistance by the current possessor. These results are consistent with Shantz and Shantz's (1985) finding that physical and verbal aggression were not effective conflict tactics among nonmaltreated first and second graders. In the present study, the greater effectiveness of polite language and more tentative pulls may also be related to the fact that the attempts involved encroachment on another's current possession. In general, current possession appears to confer a distinct advantage on a child engaged in an object dispute (Shantz, 1987). Thus attempters may be more likely to prevail if they use tactics that acknowledge this inequality of power.

Regarding the outcome of resistance efforts, attempters generally waited some length of time after encountering resistance before making a new attempt to obtain the object. Results showed that waiting times were longer after resistance by nonmaltreated children and for the female dyads. In addition, resistance success was associated with higher facial expression recognition scores for the attempter. These findings indicate that the effectiveness of resistance depends on characteristics of both members of an interactive dyad. That is, resistance is more successful if the resisting child has a partner who is sensitive to his or her emotional signals. This is consistent with Eisenberg and Garvey's (1981) description of successful conflict resolution among preschoolers as a "mutual endeavor."

Although measures of specific facial, verbal, and physical resistance behaviors were entered in the regression equation, these made no significant additional contribution to the prediction of resistance outcome. This contrasts with previous investigations of nonmaltreated children (Camras, 1977, 1984) in which measures of facial or verbal behavior were related to resistance success. Inconsistencies between these studies and the present investigation may reflect differences in the subject populations or in the range of variables whose relative influences were examined. For example, only the present study included both general child characteristics (i.e., maltreatment status, emotion recognition skill) and episode-specific behaviors in a single

regression equation. The results suggest that for maltreated-nonmaltreated pairs, the characteristics and skills of the interactants overwhelm the contribution of resistance tactics to the prediction of conflict outcome.

In conclusion, the present study showed maltreated children to differ from nonmaltreated children in some—but not all—aspects of their conflict behaviors. Despite several indications of hesitancy and withdrawal, maltreated children were able to engage in a play interaction in which a limited resource was equitably shared with a nonmaltreated partner. The findings also suggest that children's ability to recognize emotional facial expressions is related to their conflict behavior. In particular, this aspect of social competence predicted greater responsiveness to a partner's expressed desire to retain possession of the object. Further research is necessary to clarify the process through which emotion recognition and other social cognitive skills are translated into behavioral choices during both conflicts and other forms of social interaction.

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Résumé—Des couples d'enfants composés d'un enfant maltraité et d'un enfant non maltraité ont été mis devant un objet perçu désirable afin d'étudier l'activité faciale, verbale et gestuelle qu'ils manifestaient dans leurs négociations enfantines pour déterminer qui aurait accès à l'objet en question. Ils étaient âgés de 3 à 7 ans. Les résultats ont démontré que les enfants maltraités et non maltraités étaient capables de négocier avec succès et de partager à part égale l'objet désiré. On a constaté que les enfants maltraités hésitaient quelque peu à engager la participation de leur partenaire. Leur capacité de déceler les expressions faciales ont servi à prédire leur habileté à réagir à leur parentaire lorsque celui-ci démontrait une réticence à délaisser l'objet désiré.

Resumen—Niños y niñas maltratados y no-maltratados (3–7 años) fueron comparados en pares durante breves sesiones de juego que incluían un solo objeto deseable. Se estudiaron las reacciones faciales, verbales y físicas mientras negociaban el acceso al objeto. Los resultados mostraron que los pares maltratado y no-maltratado fueron capaces de entrar en un proceso de negociación que resultó en compartir el objeto aproximadamente igual. Las diferencias encontradas entre maltratados y no-maltratados sugirieron que los niños maltratados estaban un poco vacilantes para unirse a sus parejas. Los resultados también indicaron que los puntajes de los niños en una tarea de reconociemiento de expresión facial predijo una mayor respuesta a la señal de duda de la pareja para dejar el objeto.