

ASSESSMENT OF PEER RELATIONS

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Child's name: _____

Date(s) of observation: Section I _____

Section II _____

Section III _____

Observer(s): _____

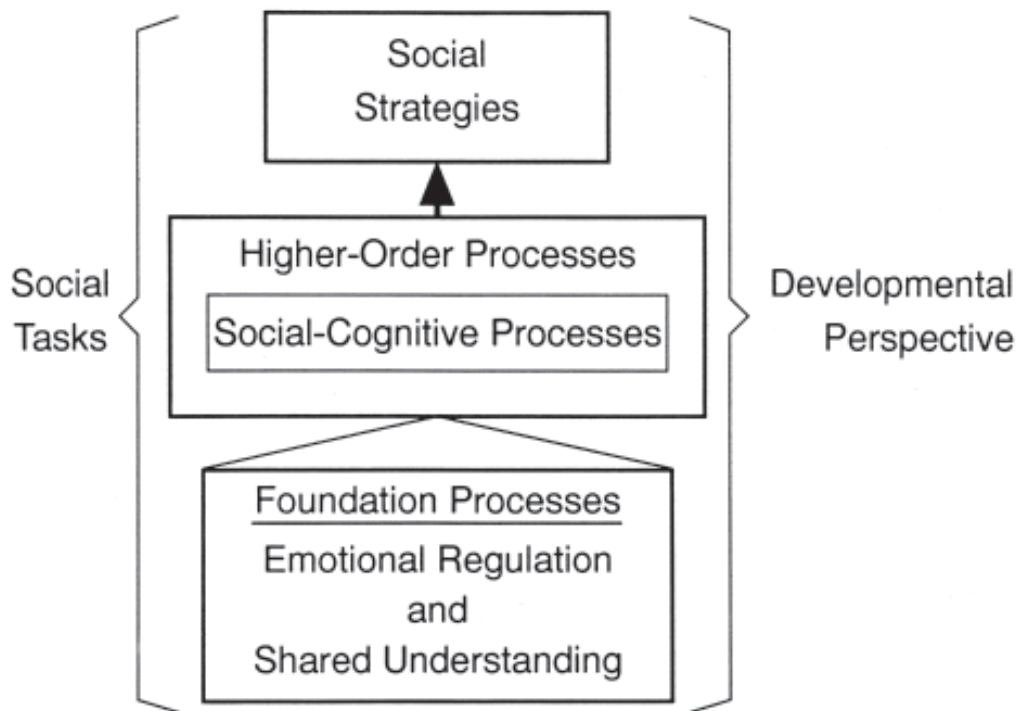
INTRODUCTION

The Assessment of Peer Relations is the first of five components designed to improve the peer-related social competence of young children (3-5 year olds). The five components are as follows: (1) Assessment of Peer Relations; (2) Peer Intervention Program; (3) Child's Social and Family Environment; (4) Handbook of Intervention Activities; and (5) Glossary and Bibliography. Although originally intended for children at risk or those with disabilities, the approach represented here is likely to be of value to all children experiencing problems in establishing and maintaining successful and productive relationships with their peers.

The philosophical basis for this approach to peer-related social competence is rooted firmly in the principles of general child development, and relies extensively on information obtained on the sequence, organization, and structure of children's peer relations within this framework. In addition, it conceptualizes children's peer relations as being governed by a series of important processes that, in concert, determine the quality of a child's relationships with peers. Once these processes are understood for an individual child, they can provide a vital guide for developing intervention strategies. In particular, this understanding requires a recognition of the involvement of cognitive and emotional processes as well as the interaction between the two. Although a child's peer relations are assessed in preschool, nursery school, or daycare settings as presented in this manual, family and community influences are evaluated as part of the overall program. Both child and family/community factors are included as part of the intervention component.

The Assessment of Peer Relations (APR) found in this manual is designed to serve both educational and clinical purposes. It is educational in the sense that it is intended to communicate the idea that forming successful peer relations is an integrative process, one that depends extensively on fundamental developmental abilities, skills, and processes. Accordingly, in the first section, general information about the nature of the child's observed peer interactions is obtained in conjunction with an assessment of processes that form the essential foundations for appropriate and effective peer interactions to occur. Specifically, the Foundation Processes of Shared Understanding and Emotional Regulation are of interest. Information is then obtained with respect to developmental issues associated with the child's cognitive, language, affective, and motor development. Of special interest is the influence of the profile of strengths and concerns in these domains on peer relations. To complete this section, a bridge between assessment and intervention is provided in the form of a series of summary statements referred to as special considerations.

The second section of the APR is organized in terms of three social tasks important to young children: (1) peer group entry, (2) conflict resolution, and (3) maintaining play. From observations of children engaging in these social tasks, assessments are obtained initially of the child's use of social strategies specific to each task. These observations then form the basis for determining the influences of underlying processes on social strategies of concern. The first is the foundation process of emotional regulation now considered specific to each social task. The second consists of those component processes children employ in a particular social exchange to generate a social strategy. Put another way, we are attempting to evaluate how children think about a particular problem during interactions with peers, i.e., social-cognitive processes. Third, an assessment is made of the child's ability to both recognize specific social tasks and consistently and effectively pursue those tasks over time. It is these higher-order processes that are the keys to sustained interactions with one's peers. The figure on page ii illustrates these relationships. Finally, a Special Considerations summary component related to the social tasks in this second section is also provided.



This assessment instrument is also a clinical tool in that it is designed to help organize how educators and clinicians think about the complex factors that influence young children's peer relations. In essence, the assessment process is intended to guide clinical judgment to assist in formulating the most likely hypotheses with regard to why children may be experiencing difficulties in peer relations. Having accomplished that, this developmental and clinical information can be used as a basis for designing intervention programs. It is hoped that an understanding of the integrative nature of children's peer interactions and the role of processes will lead to a more effective individualized intervention program.

As a clinical tool, the assessment depends extensively on the judgments of those carrying out the observations. No numbers or cutoff scores are generated by the Assessment of Peer Relations. It assumes that, through informal or formal observations as well as information obtained from developmental checklists or standard rating scales, a decision has been reached that programs should be designed to enhance a particular child's relationships with peers. Accordingly, this assessment is intended to serve as the step subsequent to the identification that concerns exist. Moreover, this process is designed to enhance the knowledge of those who work with young children, and keeps decision-making fully in their hands. It is important to emphasize that the expectations and judgments of those using the instrument must be considered within the framework of the child's developmental level. It is from that perspective that a clear understanding of the child's peer-related social interactions will emerge.

Finally, it is important to note that research has clearly demonstrated that children with disabilities, irrespective of their nature, are at much greater risk of manifesting significant difficulties in establishing relationships with their peers. The close correspondence between peer relations and other aspects of development such as communication, as well as the connection between the peer interactions of young children and future life adjustment, provide a sense for the importance and urgency for improving the peer relations of children with disabilities. Moreover, in many ways, difficulties in peer-related social competence are barriers to children's acceptance into peer groups, thereby profoundly affecting a child's full inclusion into the social community.

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SECTION I

OVERVIEW, FOUNDATION PROCESSES, AND DEVELOPMENTAL ISSUES

This section of the APR consists of four components. First, an overview is obtained of the child's interactions with peers. The child's level of involvement, purpose of initiations, and the success of those initiations provide a good starting point from which to think about possible interventions. The second section introduces the general foundation process of emotional regulation. At this juncture, you are asked only to assess general emotional regulation tendencies of the child, i.e., to determine if overall patterns of concern exist. (In the second section of the APR, emotional regulation processes are linked more directly to specific social tasks and the circumstances of any concerns.) In the third component of this section, the other foundation process of shared understanding is examined emphasizing social rules, the common background of everyday events, and various aspects of pretend play. (Specific connections of shared understanding to the three social tasks are found in the second major section.) Where appropriate, this first section places the questions in a developmental perspective. The fourth component of this section asks specific questions about the child's developmental level in relation to interactions with peers.

A. OVERVIEW

In this Overview section, an assessment is made of the general level and profile of the child's peer-related social interactions. You are asked to judge the extent to which the child participates with others in play and the length and complexity of peer interactions when they do occur. This information provides an important framework for thinking about the child's peer interactions. An assessment is also made regarding the child's reasons for interacting, information that provides important insights into the importance of social involvement as viewed by the child. In the last scale, the responses of peers to the child are evaluated, providing a clear sense of the immediate effectiveness of the child's social interactions.

To use the APR most effectively, first familiarize yourself with the scales and then observe the child in a variety of play situations for a few days. A mark can be placed at any point on the scales. Advice from others familiar with the child may also be of value when completing the APR.

Involvement	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
1. Tends to be unoccupied [unoccupied]	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Plays with toys or materials but does so alone [solitary play]	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Plays near others using similar toys or materials [parallel play]	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. When not playing with toys or materials, actively watches the activities of other children [onlooker]	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. Prefers peers to adults when both are available [prefers peers to adults]	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. Notices but then ignores approaches and initiations of others [ignores]	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. Appears to be unaware of the initiations of others [unaware]	_____	_____	_____	_____
<i>When playing with peers (group play):</i>				
8. Engages in simple brief responses or exchanges (usually not more than two interactions per child) [brief exchanges]	_____	_____	_____	_____
9. Engages in role reversals during social games [complementary or reciprocal play]	_____	_____	_____	_____

	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
--	--------	-----------	-------	---------------

- | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| 10. Engages in play that is maintained for an extended period that varies in diversity and character, (often with complementary roles) and usually as part of a pretend play sequence [maintained play] | | | | |
| 11. Engages in social pretend play that includes explicit communication (planning and negotiations) regarding themes, roles, and scripts [complex social pretend play] | | | | |

Purpose of Initiations

- | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| 1. Gain the attention of others [attention] | | | | |
| 2. Acquire toys or materials of others [acquire] | | | | |
| 3. Stop a peer's action or activity [stop] | | | | |
| 4. Elicit or give affection [affection] | | | | |
| 5. Gain information or clarification from peers [information] | | | | |
| 6. Seek permission from other children [permission] | | | | |
| 7. Generally engage in social contact [social] | | | | |
| 8. Propose joint (we, let's) activities [joint] | | | | |

Success of Initiations

- | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| 1. Peers respond to child's requests for assistance [help] | | | | |
| 2. Peers acknowledge or comply with requests for action [requests for action] | | | | |
| 3. Peers respond appropriately to requests for clarification [clarification] | | | | |
| 4. Peers respond to efforts to gain their attention [attention] | | | | |
| 5. Peers respond appropriately to general questions about objects, events, and feelings [questions] | | | | |
| 6. Peers respond readily to initiations for social purposes [social/joint/permission] | | | | |

B. FOUNDATION PROCESSES

The foundation processes of the child's ability to regulate emotions during interactions with peers and the extent to which aspects of a shared understanding exist are evaluated here. These two scales reflect the importance of both emotional and cognitive factors in the success of children's peer interactions. Shared understanding in particular is linked to the child's overall developmental level, and establishes the basis from which an intervention program can be constructed.

Emotional Regulation (general)

Clearly, play is often an emotional activity, providing the energy found in social exchanges. However, emotional reactions can trigger a variety of interfering patterns as well, preventing social play from occurring, diminishing its quality, or abruptly ending an interaction. In the next major section, more specific evaluations of emotional regulation in the context of social tasks will be obtained, including the particular circumstances in which emotional regulation problems may arise. However, at this point, only an overall assessment of general patterns or tendencies that are apparent are of interest.

	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
1. Becomes anxious when approached by others as indicated by gestures, facial expressions, or active withdrawal [anxious]				
2. Vehemently rejects social overtures by peers [rejects]				
3. Plays with considerable enthusiasm and expressiveness [enthusiasm]				
4. Becomes angry or hostile during interactions with peers [hostile]				
5. Hovers around others in play, vacillating between approaching and withdrawing [vacillates]				
6. Responds positively by reciprocating in some reasonable way to the initiations of others [reciprocates]				

	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
7. Responds with a positive but muted or delayed reaction to interactions of peers [delayed response]				
8. Interactions during exchanges with peers seem to occur quickly and without much thought [impulsive response]				
9. Becomes disorganized and upset during interactions with peers [disorganized]				
10. Becomes calm after upset in a reasonable period of time [settles]				

Shared Understanding

The appropriateness and ultimate effectiveness of a child's interactions with peers depend upon important shared understandings. Unless both the child and his or her peers have a shared understanding of the task or activities at hand, a common awareness of prevailing social rules, and agreed upon patterns of interaction, coherent, connected, and relevant exchanges are not likely to occur. Knowledge of the sequences of events found in common activities such as baking or grocery shopping or the actions of fictional characters provides a conceptual basis for social play among peers. Shared understanding is essential for connectedness to occur, provides a structure that reduces cognitive demands on participants yet allows for creative exchanges, and serves as the context for the transformations that occur during pretend play. By observing the child's play with peers or, as may well be the case, through adult structured play themes, you are asked to evaluate the extent to which the child is able to demonstrate an understanding of the sequence and structure of these everyday scripts.

This section of the assessment asks you to make an overall evaluation of the child's ability to recognize different aspects of shared understanding. Often failures to achieve a shared understanding will result in some form of conflict. At best, the children may persist during this conflict and attempt to establish a common ground. Consequently, concepts associated with the social rules of ownership and turn-taking are included in this section.

Social Rules	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
1. Appears to understand the concept of ownership as evidenced by the nature of the child's requests (permission), justifications for child's own behavior (claims), or behaviors (returns object) [ownership]				
2. Appears to understand general classroom rules regarding sharing and turn-taking with peers [turn-taking]				
3. Recognizes that children have different skills and abilities and adjusts requests and other communications accordingly [adapts to skills]				
4. Appropriately varies style of interacting depending upon whether peer is unfamiliar (e.g., less demanding of strangers) or familiar (including friends) [adapts to companion status]				

Pretend Play Complexity and Diversity

**Rarely Sometimes Often Almost
Always**

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| 1. Engages in pretend play using simple single actions [simple actions] | _____ _____ _____ |
| 2. Uses multiple actions in pretend play [multiple actions] | _____ _____ _____ |
| 3. Engages in organized, coherent, and elaborated pretend play sequences [elaborated actions] | _____ _____ _____ |
| 4. When involved in multiple or elaborated actions, child exhibits considerable diversity [diversity] | _____ _____ _____ |
| 5. Adapts pretend play interactions in accordance with changing demands of the evolving pretend play theme [adapts/pretend] | _____ _____ _____ |

Everyday Events

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| 1. Demonstrates either through actions or descriptions a basic knowledge of shared themes involving everyday events similar to other children in the program (e.g., birthday party, lunch, circle time, grocery shopping, baking cookies) [scripts] | _____ _____ _____ |
| 2. Scripts of these everyday events have a well-developed sequential character [temporal order] | _____ _____ _____ |
| 3. Scripts agree with others on the main actions of the activity [agree scripts] | _____ _____ _____ |

C. DEVELOPMENTAL ISSUES

Gaining a sense for the child's general functioning in various key developmental domains is essential information for any assessment/intervention program focusing on peer-related social competence. Information about a child's developmental status is obtained from standard diagnostic and assessment batteries that may have been administered by specialists or by teaching or resource staff. It is extremely important to gain an understanding of the child's general developmental level, including areas of strength and concern, in each of the domains below. Please consider your assessments of these domains in terms of their potential influence on the child's peer relations.

1. **Language development** - provide a summary of the child's level of receptive and expressive language. Also note any articulation difficulties or other problems with intelligibility, voice, or fluency.

2. **Cognitive development** - provide a summary of the child's general cognitive level including available intelligence test results and any information regarding the child's ability to attend and process complex information.

3. **Affective development** - provide an estimate of the child's ability to recognize and display emotions. Include assessments of the speed and vigor with which these emotions are usually displayed and any problems the child might have in regulating his/her affect.

4. **Motor development** - provide information about the child's motor development with special reference to mobility and ability to gesture.

5. **Other child characteristics** - note any special characteristics of the child that do not fit into the previous domains but are likely to be relevant to the child's ability to form and maintain peer interactions. Hearing or visual impairments, unusual facial features, the stature of the child, or similar characteristics should be described below.

6. **Developmental strengths** - highlight specific strengths in development this child exhibits that would be valuable in designing peer-related intervention programs.



SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

OVERVIEW, FOUNDATION PROCESSES, AND DEVELOPMENTAL ISSUES

This final portion of Section I calls for a summary of the Overview, Foundation Processes, and Developmental Issues. In essence, you are asked to determine if these behavior patterns, processes, or developmental issues warrant **special consideration** when developing intervention approaches. This summary may also highlight any inconsistencies such as when the child tends to play alone almost exclusively but is highly successful in gaining positive responses from peers when choosing to initiate. In many respects, these special considerations constitute a bridge between assessment and intervention and will provide the basis for designing intervention objectives.

A. OVERVIEW

Involvement

Areas of concern: _____

Areas of strength: _____

Purpose of Initiations

Areas of concern: _____

Areas of strength: _____

Success of Initiation

Areas of concern: _____

Areas of strength: _____



B. FOUNDATION PROCESSES

Emotional Regulation

Areas of concern: _____

Areas of strength: _____

Shared Understanding

Social Rules (concerns and strengths): _____

Everyday Events (concerns and strengths): _____

Pretend Play Complexity and Diversity (concerns and strengths): _____

C. DEVELOPMENTAL ISSUES
(consider possible effects on peer interactions)

Areas of concern: _____

Areas of strength: _____

SECTION II

SOCIAL STRATEGIES AND SOCIAL TASKS

In the previous section of the Assessment of Peer Relations, an overview of the extent to which children participated in interactions with one another was obtained in conjunction with an evaluation of the foundation processes of emotional regulation and shared understanding. Developmental issues in relation to the child's peer relations were also considered. Together, this information formed the basis for the Involvement phase of the intervention.

In this section, we now focus on how children solve problems associated with important social tasks. It is this information that will be used to develop interventions for the Enhancement phase of the Peer Intervention Program. In many ways, these tasks can be considered as longer-term goals involving sequences of social exchanges. The three social tasks that have been identified for this assessment as being important in young children's lives are: (1) peer group entry; (2) conflict resolution; and (3) maintaining play.

To assess a child's ability to appropriately and successfully engage in social tasks, we must move to another level of understanding of peer relations. In essence, our concern now is the appropriateness and effectiveness of specific social strategies that occur in the context of social tasks. Whether children compromise or negotiate during a dispute, escalate play at the right time during a social exchange, or use approaches to gain entry into a group that are harmonious with those of their peers are examples of social strategies of interest.

A. Peer Group Entry

One of the most difficult and important tasks for children to accomplish, both in new social groups and in familiar social groups, is initiating an interaction to enable a child to enter an existing playgroup. In typical social situations, two or more children may be playing together (referred to as hosts) and another child finds the peers or the activity of interest and wishes to participate. Another entry situation may involve a single host child playing actively but alone with materials or toys. Please note that the ability of a child to accomplish this important social task of peer group entry is highly predictive of peer-related social competence. Accordingly, it is worthwhile to take some time to observe how the child seeks to enter groups during free play.

It may also be of value to structure this process so you can get a clearer view of what is going on. For example, you might take two host children, particularly ones who have been reasonably responsive to the child in the past, and structure some interesting activity for them. Then encourage the child being assessed to move into that area, suggesting that the play that the hosts are engaging in might be especially interesting. If there are too many distractions, you might have to try this in a separate room or corner in order to maximize the number of peer entry attempts. Overall, try to observe 5 or more efforts of the child trying to gain peer group entry.

The sequence or order in which the child uses certain types of strategies is important. Based on observations of socially competent children, it is probably critical initially that the entry child spend some time observing what the host children are doing in order to establish a **frame of reference** (shared understanding of the context). Once that occurs, children who are typically successful in entry tasks follow their observations of this situation by engaging in behaviors similar to the group; that is **harmonious behaviors**. Usually, the harmonious behaviors are nonverbal in form, engaging in some version of the ongoing activity. If this seems to be working, children who are successful generally proceed to make more direct statements or requests about the play or even directly request entry into that play.

Consequently, for the initial attempts at entry, please complete the following section based on your observations of the entry attempts by the child. The child may use somewhat different strategies with different results on each attempt, but indicate on the form what appears to be most typical.

a. Initial Attempt

1. **Harmonious and Relevant Strategies** - Please note whether in the initial attempt to gain entry the child first seeks to communicate to the hosts that he or she is interested in joining the existing activity and not in redirecting it. This is usually accomplished by doing or saying something similar to that of the hosts or perhaps directly imitating one of the host child's behaviors. Please check all those attempts to establish harmony that you observed for the child.

Initial Attempts (Specific Behaviors) to Establish Harmony with Peer

(Check all that apply)

- 1. Stands near or watches peers, appearing to wait for an opportunity [waiting]
- 2. Gains attention through eye-contact, gesture, or gentle touch [active attention]

- 3. Imitates a peer's play verbally or nonverbally [imitates]
- 4. Produces a variation of peers' verbal or nonverbal activity [variation]
- 5. Shows or offers a toy related to peers' play [shows/offers]
- 6. Asks a question relevant to existing play activities [ask relevant question]
- 7. Politely requests direct access to the play activity [polite request]
- 8. Shares information relevant to existing play activities [shares information]
- 9. Makes reasonable but direct request to play [direct request]

2. **Possible Reasons or Strategies for Failure of Initial Attempt at Peer Entry** - Even socially competent children often fail to gain entry during the first attempt. Based on your observations, please check all of the reasons why the child's attempt at group entry may have failed (if observed).

- 1. Attempts to play with nonresponsive peers [nonresponsive peers]
- 2. Attempts to play with children who have rejected the child regularly in past [reputation]
- 3. Attempts to play using objects and actions unrelated to peers' activity [unrelated toys]
- 4. Attempts conversation unrelated to peers' conversation or play activities [unrelated conversation]
- 5. Attempts to redirect peers' activity [redirect]
- 6. Attempts to play with peers before establishing face-to-face and/or eye contact [eye contact]
- 7. Timing of social interactions was poor such that the child interrupts peers when intently engaged in another activity [poor timing]
- 8. Uses overly intrusive strategies such as demanding inclusion in play or physically intruding on space and toys [intrusive/demanding]
- 9. Acts aggressively toward peers (hits, shoves, grasps) [aggressive]
- 10. Other _____

3. **Outcomes of Initial Attempts** - Please rank order (1 = most frequent result) the typical response by the host(s) to child's initial entry attempts.

Rank

Order (1-4)

- acknowledgment (of interest or promise of later involvement)
- acceptance
- ignoring
- rejection

b. Second Efforts - *A child's subsequent attempts following being rejected, ignored, or having initial bids to enter group postponed.*

1. **Strategies** - Many children do not succeed in gaining access to play on the first attempt. How the child reacts to being ignored, rejected, or asked to wait to join the group until some future time is a critical aspect of the peer entry process. Please check those strategies in the following list that are most typical of the child.

- 1. Does not persist [not persist]
- 2. Repeats previous effort with minor variations [repeats]
- 3. Becomes less intrusive but maintains proximity and interest [less intrusive]
- 4. Becomes more directive in requests for access, but comments and/or behavior are relevant to play activity [directive and relevant]
- 5. Becomes highly intrusive by being more demanding (says everyone must play together; tries to take over) [highly intrusive]
- 6. Makes irrelevant comments, self-statements, or suggestions [irrelevant]
- 7. Makes threats or appeals to adult authority for access [threats or appeals]
- 8. Responds appropriately to host's questions, directives, or attention getters [responds]
- 9. Engages in some form of positive negotiations with peers (see conflict resolution strategies in next section) [positive conflict resolution]
- 10. Becomes disruptive or disagreeable [disruptive or disagreeable]
- 11. Other _____

2. **Outcomes of Second Attempt** - Please rank order (1 = most frequent result) the typical response by the host(s) to child's second entry attempts.

Rank

Order (1-4)

- acknowledgment (of interest or promise of later involvement)
- acceptance
- ignoring
- rejection

B. Conflict Resolution

The ability to resolve conflicts that inevitably and frequently occur during peer interactions is perhaps the central feature of peer-related social competence. All that is required to be considered a conflict is that child A does or says something that has some effect on child B; child B resists or objects to child A; and child A then persists in his or her claims, requests, or other related behaviors. Conflicts rarely turn into hostile or aggressive interactions, but sequences of conflict are found in almost every activity. Disputes over possessions or territory are common but disagreements about social control or rule violations or even one's ideas about the world attain increasing prominence over the preschool years. Having found themselves in a conflict episode, children become part of a complex process involving numerous strategies. The language of conflict resolution (strategies) includes demands, mitigation, justification, compromise, rejection, as well as insistence.

Conflict resolution is considered to be a separate social task, but it should be recognized that it is usually embedded within a larger context of social interactions, even within other social tasks such as peer group entry or trying to maintain play interactions. Accordingly, as part of your general observations of the child, try to pay special attention to social exchanges in which some form of conflict arises. You may have to make additional observations focusing just on conflicts (especially those which involve a child trying to obtain goods or services from another) to be sure you have a clear understanding of how the child tries to resolve various conflicts.

Perhaps the easiest situations to assess the effectiveness of the child's conflict resolution strategies are within **directive episodes** or episodes concerned with **defending one's own property**. In the first instance, the child initiates an exchange that results in conflict whereas in the second instance the child is the recipient of a social interaction that yields the disagreement. It is these two general situations that are to be evaluated.

Directive episodes occur when children seek to gain some goods or services from a peer. Directives usually occur in the form of requests for action, i.e., they want their companions to do or say something ("Give me the toy," "Stop that," "Try this," or "You be the baby"). However, only about half of children's directives achieve their ends immediately due either to a peer's unresponsiveness or opposition. Most children persist in the face of this initial failure, pressing the request further. This persistence then creates conflict which must be resolved before other forms of social exchange can continue.

Defending one's property is also a common event that often results in conflicts and provides an excellent example of an instance in which the potential conflict is initiated by a peer. The manner in which children negotiate this situation is a critical aspect of peer-related social competence.

OVERVIEW

a. **Reasons for Conflict** - Note on the scale the circumstances in which conflict appears to arise.

	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
1. conflicts regarding possessions [possessions]	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. conflicts regarding space [space]	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. conflicts regarding social rule violations [social rules]	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. conflicts regarding disagreement over ideas or assertions [ideas]	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. conflicts regarding social control, e.g., dominance, role assignments [social control]	_____	_____	_____	_____

b. **Initiator/Recipient Role** — Evaluate the extent to which these conflicts are initiated by the child (e.g., directive episodes) or occur as a reaction from the initiations of peers (e.g., defends property).

Initiates most exchanges resulting in conflict	Is equally likely to be initiator or respondent	Is mostly a recipient of exchanges resulting in conflict
_____	_____	_____

INITIATIONS RESULTING IN CONFLICT — The scales below are designed to be responsive to directive episodes, as they are the most common bases for conflict.

a. **Initial Response of Peer to Child’s Initiative**

It is important to determine the type of initial opposition that generally occurs to the child’s directive. This information informs us both about the characteristics of the child’s peers as well as the child’s social status, reputation, or reasonableness of the directive. Of greatest importance, this initial opposition sets the tone for subsequent exchanges in the conflict resolution episode.

	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
1. Peers ignore child’s initial directive [ignore]	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Peers negate, deny, or contradict [negate]	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Peers object but provide a reason, explanation, or other justification [provide reason]	_____	_____	_____	_____

SECTION II

- b. Initial Reactions to Initiatives by Peers** — The immediate reaction of the child to initiatives by peers (e.g., seeking property of others), primarily in the form of directives, is an important element in an exchange that results in a conflict episode. Please note below the initial reactions by the child to peers' directives that have resulted in conflicts.

	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
1. rejects request without providing a reason [flat rejection]				
2. rejects request but provides a rationale [provides rationale]				
3. seeks more information [seeks information]				
4. becomes disagreeable [disagreeable]				
5. becomes aggressive [aggressive]				
6. is nonresponsive to request [nonresponsive]				
7. makes irrelevant comments or responses [irrelevant]				
8. offers an alternative or clarifies [alternative/ clarification]				

CONFLICT EPISODES

- e. Strategies During Directive Episodes or Defends Property Episodes** — Now that the child or peer has not achieved what he or she wanted or was opposed, a conflict arises which requires the child to persist or resist using some strategy or sequence of strategies. Strategies occurring during these episodes are the keys to understanding how children resolve conflicts. Those children that can do so in a positive fashion, minimizing further disagreement, maintaining connectedness, and reaching a resolution acceptable to both child and peer are clearly those who are considered to be more socially competent. Consequently, successful outcomes are not the only measure of competence; the strategies children use to achieve those outcomes are equally critical. It is important to note that the use of conciliatory and agreeable strategies implies that the interaction was connected and relevant.

Please estimate the extent to which the child uses various strategies in the episodes you observed.

	<u>Rarely</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Often</u>	<u>Almost Always</u>
--	---------------	------------------	--------------	--------------------------

1. Conciliatory Strategies by Child -those that appear to consider the rights, willingness to carry out the request, needs, or obligations of their peers. Strategies include:

- | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| (1) Mitigates or minimizes a request
("do a little," "please")
[mitigates or minimizes] | | | | |
| (2) Provides an alternative suggestion
or compromise
[compromise] | | | | |
| (3) Provides reason for prior
directive or noncompliance
[reason] | | | | |
| (4) Seeks information about concerns
or interests of peer
[seeks information] | | | | |

2. Agreeable to Peer's Initiatives - during an episode, peers may offer statements or ideas regarding the conflict which may or may not receive a positive response from the child. Please note how agreeable the child is in that he or she:

- | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| (1) Accepts a proposal [accepts] | | | | |
| (2) Concurs with a request for agreement
("that's right, isn't it?"), approval, or
cooperation [concur] | | | | |
| (3) Provides clarification when requested [clarifies] | | | | |
| (4) Makes an informative response
to peer's question
[informative response] | | | | |

SECTION II

	<u>Rarely</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Often</u>	<u>Almost Always</u>
<p>3. Negative or Disconnected Strategies - a number of strategies children use can either prolong episodes, escalate them into larger conflicts, or create general feelings of ill will. Strategies that fit this category include the following statements:</p>				
(1) Threatens peer [threatens]				
(2) Insults peer [insults]				
(3) Insists in a demanding tone [negative insist]				
(4) Becomes aggressive [aggressive]				
(5) Becomes disruptive [disruptive]				
(6) Refuses a request without a reason [flat rejection]				
(7) Makes irrelevant comments or responses [irrelevant]				

GENERAL STRATEGIES ASSOCIATED WITH DIFFICULTIES IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION

The problems listed below represent some of the primary overall reasons why the child may be having difficulty resolving conflicts appropriately and effectively. Include observations of the child whether he or she is the initiator or recipient of interactions that result in conflict.

General Strategies (check all that apply that are highly characteristic of the child)

- 1. comments or behavior not relevant
- 2. takes primarily an aggressive or rejecting approach
- 3. disagreeable or unpleasant
- 4. not using conciliatory strategies
- 5. not sufficiently assertive
- 6. repeats same strategy despite its ineffectiveness
- 7. others (list) _____

C. Maintaining Play

The ability to maintain play (group play) with peers is the most stringent test of peer-related social competence. The reasons why children attempt to sustain play with others in spite of enormous difficulties are many and varied. Among these reasons are the affective relationships that can be established and the satisfaction derived from obtaining a harmonious highly interactive relationship. The interest value of play with others is also enhanced when one has companions who promote increased opportunities to carry out more intricate, longer-term projects (e.g., creating new constructions). Consequently, extensive play with peers provides opportunities to establish friendships but requires the child to manage a range of other social tasks, such as conflict resolution, that arise within this larger context.

Maintaining play requires two general types of abilities. First, it requires that children understand and adhere to a role structure (play themes) and an activity structure (play tasks). It is these structures that give rise to and provide the framework for coherent sequences of sustained interchanges with peers. As can be seen, in order to maintain play, sufficient development of the foundation process of shared understanding is required.

Second, maintaining play constitutes a management task, as young children must contend with the changing pattern of play activities and the demands of play partners. The intensity and intrusiveness of play waxes and wanes. Children who are successful at maintaining play can manage these pressures, including taking the initiative to enhance the interest and complexity of play, without allowing an interaction to disintegrate.

Please base your ratings on the scales below on your observations of the child's **group play** interactions. If insufficient group play occurs (see Section I), do not complete this section.

		Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
a.	Role and Activity Structure Strategies				
	1. Adequately provides information when requested by peers [informative response]				
	2. Remains within theme or role of play activity [frame of reference]				
	3. Agrees to reasonable suggestions of peer during play [agreeable]				

	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
b. Management Strategies				
1. If disengages with peer during a difficult period (e.g., conflict) stays in proximity and re-engages shortly [disengage]				
2. Tries to escalate play making reasonable requests to increase its interest or complexity [escalate]				
3. Conflicts are allowed to escalate to the point in which play stops for extensive periods of time [excessive escalation of conflict]				
4. Allows play to disintegrate without substantial efforts to sustain [disintegrate]				
5. Exhibits reciprocity by matching own behavior to peers' activity or initiatives [reciprocates]				
6. Deescalates demands on peer if difficulties become apparent [deescalates]				

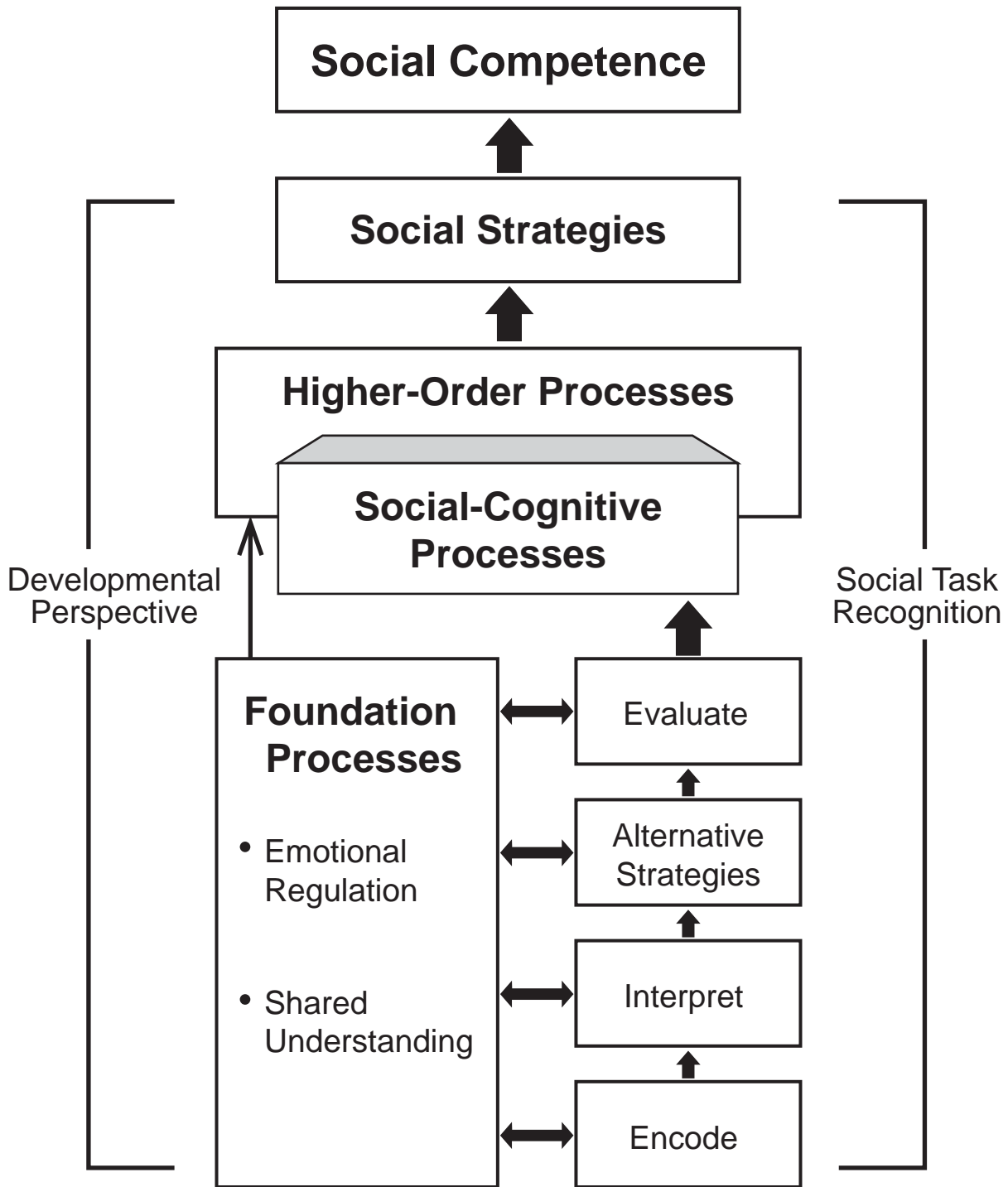
SECTION III

PROCESSES

In the previous section of the APR, you were asked to evaluate the child's use of social strategies for each of the three social tasks. This is an important set of observations. Most directly, the APR provides a perspective on the specific strategies children employ and a sense for their effectiveness and appropriateness. In addition, these observations provide the basis for speculating about the processes regulating children's peer relations. The purpose of this section is to take your observations one step further and to speculate about these processes.

Specifically, during social tasks, a child must first recognize the task at hand, then organize, integrate, and sequence social behaviors over the course of extended cycles of social exchanges. To accomplish this sustained longer-term aspect of the social task, the child must invoke **higher-order processes** that organize the sequence of events. Similarly, when selecting a social strategy within a turn, a child typically relies on a series of **social-cognitive processes** such as attending to and accurately interpreting relevant information, generating alternative social strategies and, finally, evaluating the situation (particularly the shared understanding that prevails) to select a specific strategy. These higher-order and social-cognitive processes are influenced by the **foundation processes of emotional regulation and shared understanding**, reflecting once again the interactive and integrative nature of the child's peer-related social competence. The figure on the next page illustrates the mutual influences among the components of social-cognitive and emotional regulation processes.

Descriptive information about each of the processes for each of the three social tasks is presented next. For example, you are first asked to think about emotional regulation problems associated with each social task. Second, you are asked to consider which specific social-cognitive processes may be affected during single turns of a social exchange. Third, you are asked to consider higher-order processes that govern the sustained, longer-term aspects of social tasks. It is identified concerns related to these three processes that will form the special considerations for this section of the APR, thereby serving as a guide to intervention. Because processes of concern typically affect more than one social task, all the social tasks are evaluated at the same time. Space is available in each column to note concerns.



EMOTIONAL REGULATION

Peer Group Entry

The way a child reacts emotionally may well affect which social strategy is selected. Sometimes emotional regulation problems are apparent during the initial entry effort (e.g., hesitating to approach) but can be found during subsequent attempts as well. To gain a better understanding of the issues regarding emotional regulation for the peer group entry task, please note concerns as indicated on the assessment form. In addition, observe the child carefully and note the situations or setting factors under which these concerns arise. These emotional regulation concerns may occur during the child's initial attempt, in response to reactions from peers (immediate or subsequent responses to rejections, postponements, etc., by peers), or may be linked to specific types of play situations. This latter category refers to concerns that may arise primarily in one setting, game, or activity. Please provide sufficient details to permit patterns of concerns in relation to the initial attempts, responses to peers, and the situations to be identified. Where appropriate, reference is made to the role of developmental domains as possible contributors to any concerns identified.

Conflict Resolution

By their very nature, conflicts and their resolution evoke emotional responses that must be regulated for a socially-competent pattern to result. As was the case for peer group entry, please identify any concerns related to this process of emotional regulation as they occurred during the conflict resolution social task. For each concern noted, information should be provided regarding: (1) the initial reaction of the child (i.e., either to the peer's rejection or postponement or the initial reaction to a peer's request that ultimately resulted in conflict); (2) the child's subsequent pattern of regulation during conflict sequences; and (3) the specific situations (e.g., possession disputes) which appear to precipitate disputes associated with concerns regarding emotional regulation.

Maintaining Play

Differences in emotional regulation can also affect this most complex of social tasks. Increased demands to interact a certain way by peers or efforts by peers to increase the complexity of the role or theme can create problems in emotional regulation. (It is sometimes difficult to distinguish emotional regulation concerns for maintaining play and the social task of conflict resolution. Accordingly, you should focus on circumstances in which group play has achieved some level of stability between the child and peers.) Also, try to identify those situations which are of concern for specific types of emotional regulation processes.

PROCESSES

EMOTIONAL REGULATION

Concerns

(1) Reacts or initiates too quickly not allowing time to consider alternative (presumably more appropriate) strategies [impulsive]

<p>PEER GROUP ENTRY <i>Initial Attempt:</i></p> <p><i>Responses to Peers' Reactions:</i></p> <p><i>Situations:</i></p>	<p>CONFLICT RESOLUTION <i>Initial Reaction:</i></p> <p><i>Responses to Ongoing Conflict:</i></p> <p><i>Situations:</i></p>	<p>MAINTAINING PLAY <i>Situations:</i> (e.g., seeking to escalate play, response to demands of peer, agreeing on specific themes or roles)</p>
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PROCESSES

EMOTIONAL REGULATION

Concerns

(2) Fails to initiate or respond quickly enough to peers; action tends to be delayed [delayed]

PEER GROUP ENTRY	CONFLICT RESOLUTION	MAINTAINING PLAY
<p><i>Initial Attempt:</i></p> <p><i>Responses to Peers' Reactions:</i></p> <p><i>Situations:</i></p> <p><i>Consider Social-Cognitive or Higher-Order Processes:</i></p>	<p><i>Initial Reaction:</i></p> <p><i>Responses to Ongoing Conflict:</i></p> <p><i>Situations:</i></p> <p><i>Consider Information Processing Difficulties:</i></p>	<p><i>Situations:</i></p> <p><i>Consider Information Processing Difficulties:</i></p>

PROCESSES

EMOTIONAL REGULATION

Concerns

(3) Becomes angry or hostile such as when (a) peer group entry attempts are resisted; (b) child has difficulty settling down during conflicts despite reasonable requests, rejections, or postponements; or (c) if child remains angry or hostile following a difficult period of sustained play [angry]

<p style="text-align: center;">PEER GROUP ENTRY <i>Initial Attempt:</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Responses to Peers' Reactions:</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Situations:</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">CONFLICT RESOLUTION <i>Initial Reaction:</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Responses to Ongoing Conflict:</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Situations:</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">MAINTAINING PLAY <i>Situations:</i></p>
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PROCESSES
EMOTIONAL REGULATION

Concerns

(6) Describe how any of these concerns may be influenced by developmental issues (i.e., absence of expressive language or motor difficulties)

PEER GROUP ENTRY	CONFLICT RESOLUTION	MAINTAINING PLAY

(7) Describe strengths you see with respect to the child's ability to regulate emotions

PEER GROUP ENTRY	CONFLICT RESOLUTION	MAINTAINING PLAY

SOCIAL-COGNITIVE PROCESSES (SINGLE EXCHANGE)

Peer Group Entry

On a social exchange-by-social exchange basis, it is suggested that strategy selection is influenced directly by a series of social-cognitive processes. Problems can exist in one or more of the four social-cognitive processes noted here (selective attention or encoding, interpreting, making available appropriate alternative strategies, and evaluating and selecting an appropriate alternative strategy). In addition, it is possible that these social-cognitive processes are themselves influenced by the foundation processes of emotional regulation and shared understanding. Please indicate on the forms if you think this is the case for each process of concern.

Conflict Resolution

As was the case for the peer group entry task, the selection of a strategy within the context of a social exchange during conflicts will depend upon specific social-cognitive processes. Because conflicts often evoke strong emotional responses, special attention should be given to the potential influences by emotional regulation processes.

Maintaining Play

The selection during a specific social exchange of strategies related to the role and activity structure as well as management strategies essential for maintaining play depend upon a series of social-cognitive processes. As is the case for the other social tasks, problems can exist in one or more of the four aspects of social-cognitive processes and can themselves be influenced by the foundation processes of emotional regulation and shared understanding.

PROCESSES

SOCIAL COGNITIVE PROCESSES (SINGLE EXCHANGE)

Concerns

- (1) Fails to attend selectively (encode) to relevant information provided by peers' activity (e.g., does not attend to facial expressions or focuses on portions of play activity not relevant to major theme; this may result in a failure to establish a frame of reference) [attend selectively]

<p>PEER GROUP ENTRY <i>Examples:</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Influence by Emotional Regulation:</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Influence by Shared Understanding:</i></p>	<p>CONFLICT RESOLUTION <i>Examples:</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Influence by Emotional Regulation:</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Influence by Shared Understanding:</i></p>	<p>MAINTAINING PLAY <i>Examples:</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Influence by Emotional Regulation:</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Influence by Shared Understanding:</i></p>
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PROCESSES

SOCIAL COGNITIVE PROCESSES (SINGLE EXCHANGE)

Concerns

(2) Misinterprets cues in the social situation (e.g., mistakes postponement for rejection and could thereby result in hostile or aggressive interactions [influence by emotional regulation] or not sufficiently knowledgeable about activities or play themes [influence of shared understanding], or fails to process information accurately [misinterprets])

<p>PEER GROUP ENTRY <i>Examples:</i></p> <p><i>Influence by Emotional Regulation:</i></p> <p><i>Influence by Shared Understanding:</i></p>	<p>CONFLICT RESOLUTION <i>Examples:</i></p> <p><i>Influence by Emotional Regulation:</i></p> <p><i>Influence by Shared Understanding:</i></p>	<p>MAINTAINING PLAY <i>Examples:</i></p> <p><i>Influence by Emotional Regulation:</i></p> <p><i>Influence by Shared Understanding:</i></p>
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PROCESSES

SOCIAL COGNITIVE PROCESSES (SINGLE EXCHANGE)

Concerns

- (3) Does not appear to have sufficient repertoire of appropriate alternative strategies such as compromise or harmonious behavior (e.g., primarily disagreeable or self-oriented), accepting proposal, providing reason, or mitigating a response; cannot escalate or deescalate play within context of common roles or themes [alternative strategies]

<p>PEER GROUP ENTRY <i>Examples:</i></p>	<p>CONFLICT RESOLUTION <i>Examples:</i></p>	<p>MAINTAINING PLAY <i>Examples:</i></p>
<p><i>Influence by Emotional Regulation:</i></p> <p><i>Influence by Shared Understanding:</i></p>	<p><i>Influence by Emotional Regulation:</i></p> <p><i>Influence by Shared Understanding:</i></p>	<p><i>Influence by Emotional Regulation:</i></p> <p><i>Influence by Shared Understanding:</i></p>

PROCESSES

SOCIAL COGNITIVE PROCESSES (SINGLE EXCHANGE)

Concerns

(4) Fails to consider (or understand) shared context regarding ownership or other social rules including those associated with play activities and games when evaluating which strategy to select (i.e., takes over; is intrusive), or fails to consider skills, abilities, and other characteristics (e.g., familiarity or friendship status) of the peer [evaluation]

<p>PEER GROUP ENTRY <i>Examples:</i></p>	<p>CONFLICT RESOLUTION <i>Examples:</i></p>	<p>MAINTAINING PLAY <i>Examples:</i></p>
<p><i>Influence by Emotional Regulation:</i></p>	<p><i>Influence by Emotional Regulation:</i></p>	<p><i>Influence by Emotional Regulation:</i></p>
<p><i>Influence by Shared Understanding:</i></p>	<p><i>Influence by Shared Understanding:</i></p>	<p><i>Influence by Shared Understanding:</i></p>

PROCESSES
SOCIAL COGNITIVE PROCESSES (SINGLE EXCHANGE)

Concerns

(5) Describe how these concerns are influenced by developmental issues

PEER GROUP ENTRY	CONFLICT RESOLUTION	MAINTAINING PLAY

(6) Describe strengths you see with regard to the child's social-cognitive processes

PEER GROUP ENTRY	CONFLICT RESOLUTION	MAINTAINING PLAY

HIGHER-ORDER PROCESSES

Peer Group Entry

At a more general level, the child must provide a reasonably planned and organized framework that yields a coherent sequence of events during the peer group entry task. In a real sense, social tasks themselves are similar to the foundation process of shared understanding and have script-like features that guide the structure of the social exchanges. This longer-term perspective is a hallmark of peer-related social competence and suggests that it is vital to assess as best as possible these higher-order or executive-type processes.

Three aspects of this higher-order process are evaluated here. First, you are asked to judge whether the child appears to recognize that he or she is, in fact, facing an entry task. Second, you are asked to judge if the child sustains attention across the sequence of events. This sustained attention is quite different from the selective attention found as part of social-cognitive processes. Third, you are asked to evaluate the extent to which the child monitors the behavior of the host children and utilizes that information in subsequent exchanges. This monitoring and utilization feature is needed to ensure continuity and a shared understanding across the sequence.

Conflict Resolution

In order to resolve a conflict in a socially competent fashion, an organized sequence of events must result that requires the child to recognize the conflict situation (which may not occur immediately), to sustain attention to the task across the various social exchanges, and to monitor the behavior of peers, utilizing the information gained in a meaningful way. Social tasks, like certain familiar play themes, have a distinct pattern of events or scripts. Please note on the forms any concerns that are evident related to these three aspects of higher-order processes. Remember, it is only possible to make reasonable hypotheses at this time. However, your insights will provide an initial guideline in helping to design intervention programs.

Maintaining Play

By its very nature, the social task of maintaining play requires a long-term perspective. The child must recognize and organize the task in some planned way (despite shifting themes and demands). In addition, the framework of the task must remain intact. For this to occur, the child must sustain attention to the task and monitor and adjust to the feedback of peers.

PROCESSES

HIGHER-ORDER PROCESSES

Concerns

- (1) Fails to recognize task as there is little indication that the child makes a deliberate, planned series of efforts in attempting to join activity, resolve conflict, or maintain play, i.e., a general organization or sequence is not observed [task recognition]

<p>PEER GROUP ENTRY <i>Examples:</i></p>	<p>CONFLICT RESOLUTION <i>Examples:</i></p>	<p>MAINTAINING PLAY <i>Examples:</i></p>
<p>(2) Fails to <u>sustain attention</u> to the social task as indicated by becoming distracted and not persisting in the task [sustain attention]</p>	<p>CONFLICT RESOLUTION <i>Examples:</i></p>	<p>MAINTAINING PLAY <i>Examples:</i></p>
<p>PEER GROUP ENTRY <i>Examples:</i></p>	<p>CONFLICT RESOLUTION <i>Examples:</i></p>	<p>MAINTAINING PLAY <i>Examples:</i></p>

PROCESSES

HIGHER-ORDER PROCESSES

Concerns

(3) Fails to monitor and utilize prior feedback by peers during course of social exchanges for the entry task, or during conflicts, or throughout the course of the play sequences [monitor]

<p>PEER GROUP ENTRY <i>Examples:</i></p>	<p>CONFLICT RESOLUTION <i>Examples:</i></p>	<p>MAINTAINING PLAY <i>Examples:</i></p>
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(4) Describe how any of these concerns are influenced by developmental issues

<p>PEER GROUP ENTRY <i>Examples:</i></p>	<p>CONFLICT RESOLUTION <i>Examples:</i></p>	<p>MAINTAINING PLAY <i>Examples:</i></p>
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PROCESSES

HIGHER-ORDER PROCESSES

Concerns

(1) Describe child's strengths with regard to these higher-order processes

<p>PEER GROUP ENTRY <i>Examples:</i></p>	<p>CONFLICT RESOLUTION <i>Examples:</i></p>	<p>MAINTAINING PLAY <i>Examples:</i></p>
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SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS — PROCESSES

In this final section of the APR, please summarize those concerns you identified with regard to each of the processes within the three social tasks. It is these processes that must be considered in efforts to enhance the child’s peer relations. Also, please identify any special strengths the child appears to have that may be of value in developing intervention plans.

EMOTIONAL REGULATION

Emotional Regulation (concerns):

Specific Situations of Concern:

Emotional Regulation (strengths):

SOCIAL-COGNITIVE PROCESSES

Social Cognitive Processes (concerns):

Specific Situations of Concern:

Social Cognitive Processes (strengths):

HIGHER-ORDER PROCESSES

Higher-Order Processes (concerns):

Specific Situations of Concern:

Higher-Order Processes (strengths):

SECTION III

Developmental Issues: It is important to ensure that our expectations of children's level of peer interactions are commensurate with their developmental level and adapted to specific developmental concerns. Please summarize the developmental expectations for a six-month period that you noted in the assessment of processes in connection with each of the three social tasks. What can we reasonably expect the child to accomplish independently? What are his or her strengths? What developmental concerns should be highlighted?

EXPECTATIONS:

Peer Group Entry:

Conflict Resolution:

Higher-Order Processes:
