



CENTER ON HUMAN DEVELOPMENT & DISABILITY
UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON



Preschool Inclusion and Children's Peer Relationships

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Goals for Preschool Inclusion



Access – universal access to inclusive programs

Accommodations – adjustments that maintain integrity of program model; personnel preparation

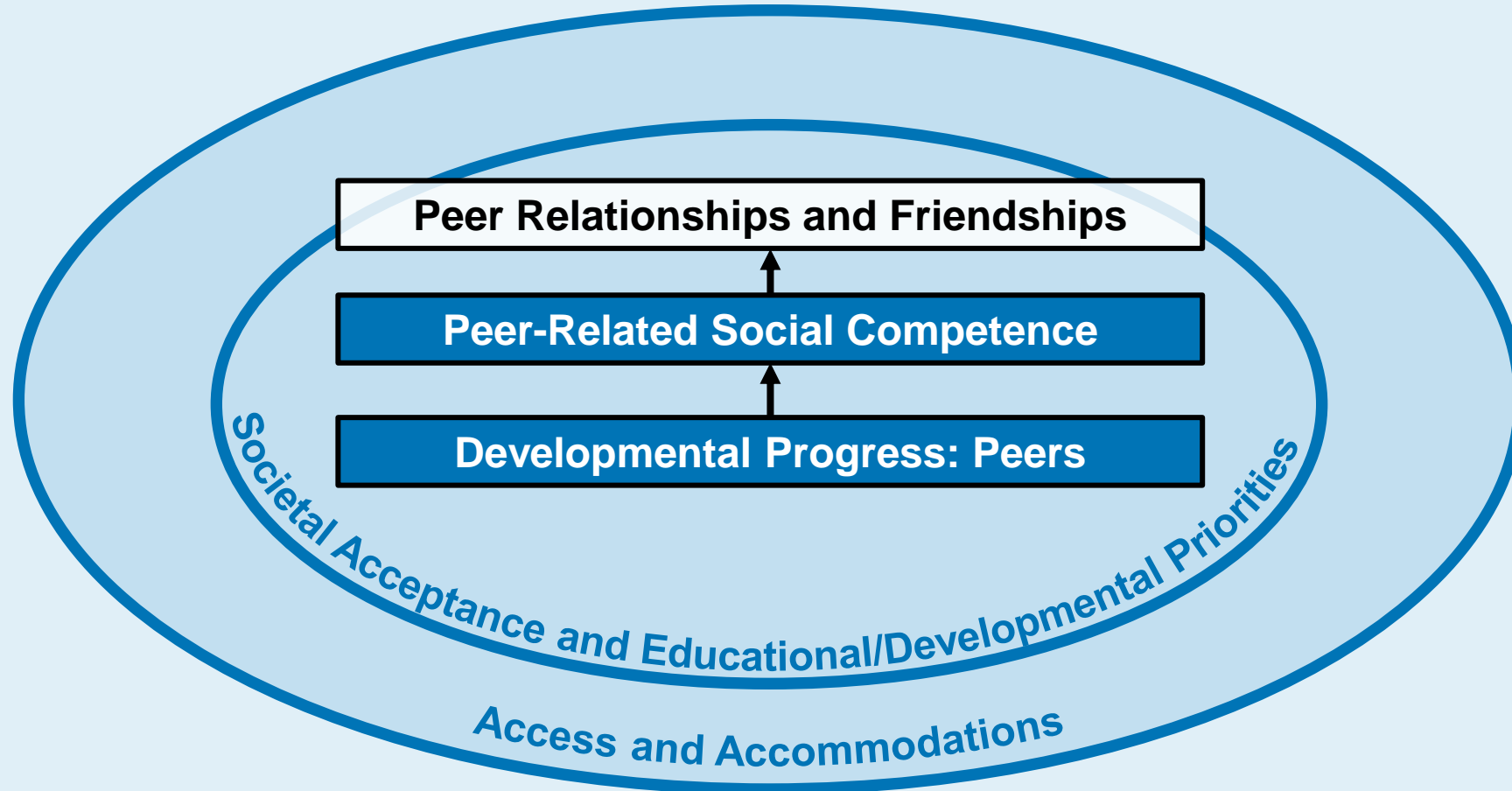
Developmental Progress – at minimum, equivalent social and cognitive competencies in inclusive settings compared to specialized settings; generate developmental advances

Social Integration – meaningful social participation between children with and without disabilities; sense of belonging

**Diversity
Equity
Inclusion**



Focus on Goals of Developmental Progress with Peers and Social Integration



Peer Relationships and Friendships

Peer-Related Social Competence

Fundamental Issue in Our Field

Building relationships is core component of child development—including relationships with peers

Features

- Characterized by more balanced exchanges
- Relationships with peers are often unpredictable and unforgiving
- Peer system easily perturbed by environmental or biological factors



Functions of Peer Relationships

- Carry implications for cognitive, communicative, emotion-regulation, and prosocial domains of development (developmental progress)
- Essential element in social integration at all levels
- Key to independence and self-determination



Three Key Points


- Inclusion must be a core component of all early intervention programs
- Enhancing peer competence must be a goal and high priority in the context of early intervention programs
- Critical to consider the broad developmental influences on peer competence, including family patterns of interaction

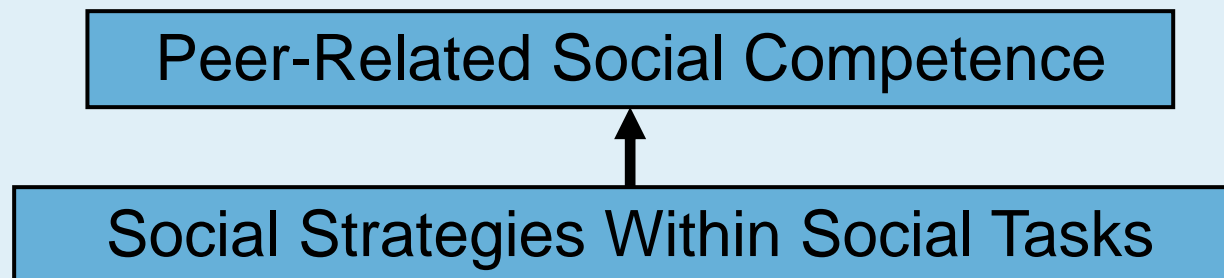


Peer-Related Social Competence

Definition: Use of appropriate and effective social strategies in carrying out one's interpersonal goals in the peer context

Peer Context: Goals as Social Tasks

- Peer group entry
 - Conflict resolution
 - Maintaining play
- Building Peer Relationships
- 



Status of Children's Peer Competence

Sources of Information

- Observational measures
- Parent reports
- Teacher reports
- Children's reports

Summary of Findings

- Consistent patterns suggesting existence of major and pervasive peer-competence difficulties for young children with developmental delays
- Significant implications for the inclusion goals of developmental progress and social integration



Focus on Observational Measures of Peer Social Competence

Dimensions of quality and quantity of social interactions with peers to index peer competence

- Free-play settings: window to interpersonal expression
 - Group (sustained interactive play)
 - Positive / negative exchanges
 - Communication: compromise/negotiate
- Peer system complex and easily disrupted
- Evidence of any unusual problems and their nature becomes most evident during this developmental period
- Emphasize children with mild developmental delays







Social Participation Scale

- Solitary
- Parallel
- Group
- Unoccupied
- Onlooker
- Reading
- Transition
- Conversation
- Rough & Tumble
- Exploratory
- Adult Involved

Cognitive Play

- Functional
- Constructive
- Dramatic
- Games

Individual Social Behavior Scale

- Attention *
- Resource *
- Lead - Positive *
- Lead - Negative *
- Follow Activity
- Imitate
- Affection
- Hostility
- Compete - Adult *
- Compete - Equipment *
- Pride Product
- Follow Lead
- Refuse/Ignore
- Modeling

* Successful or unsuccessful

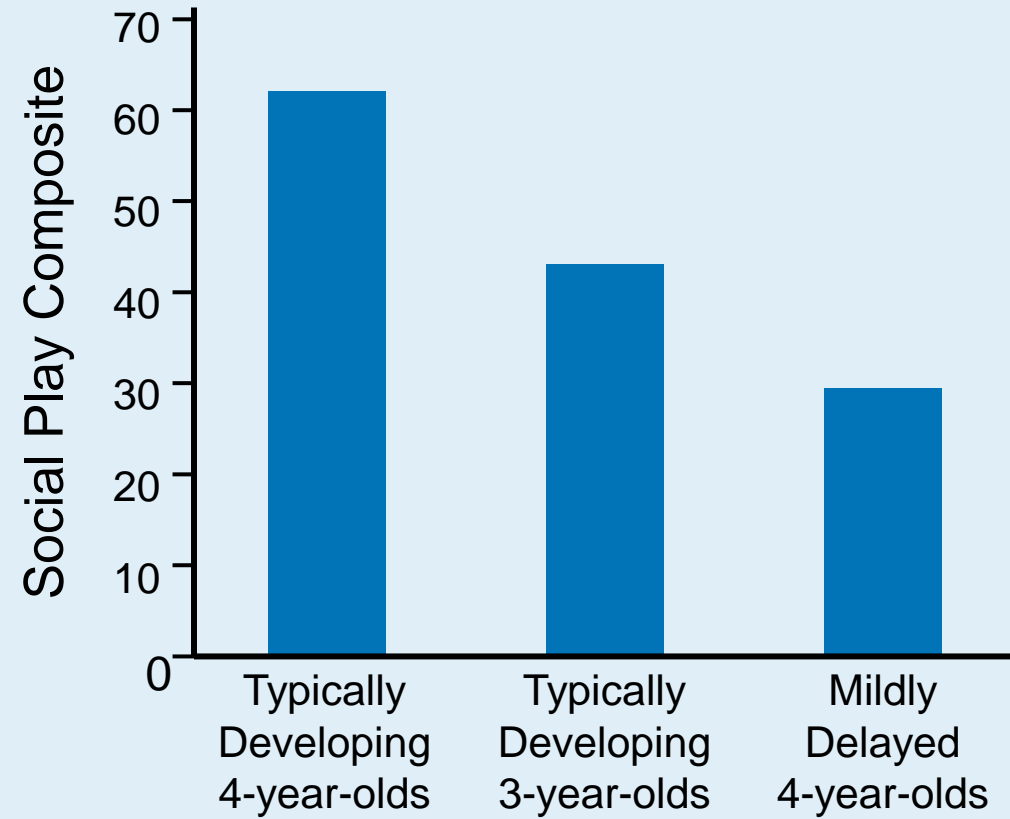


Communicative Measures

- Structural
 - MLU
 - no. complex utterances
- Functional
 - behavior requests
 - information statements
 - information requests
- Discourse and Speech Style
 - attentionals
 - exemplification & demonstration
 - mitigated directives
 - permission requests
 - agreement/disagreement

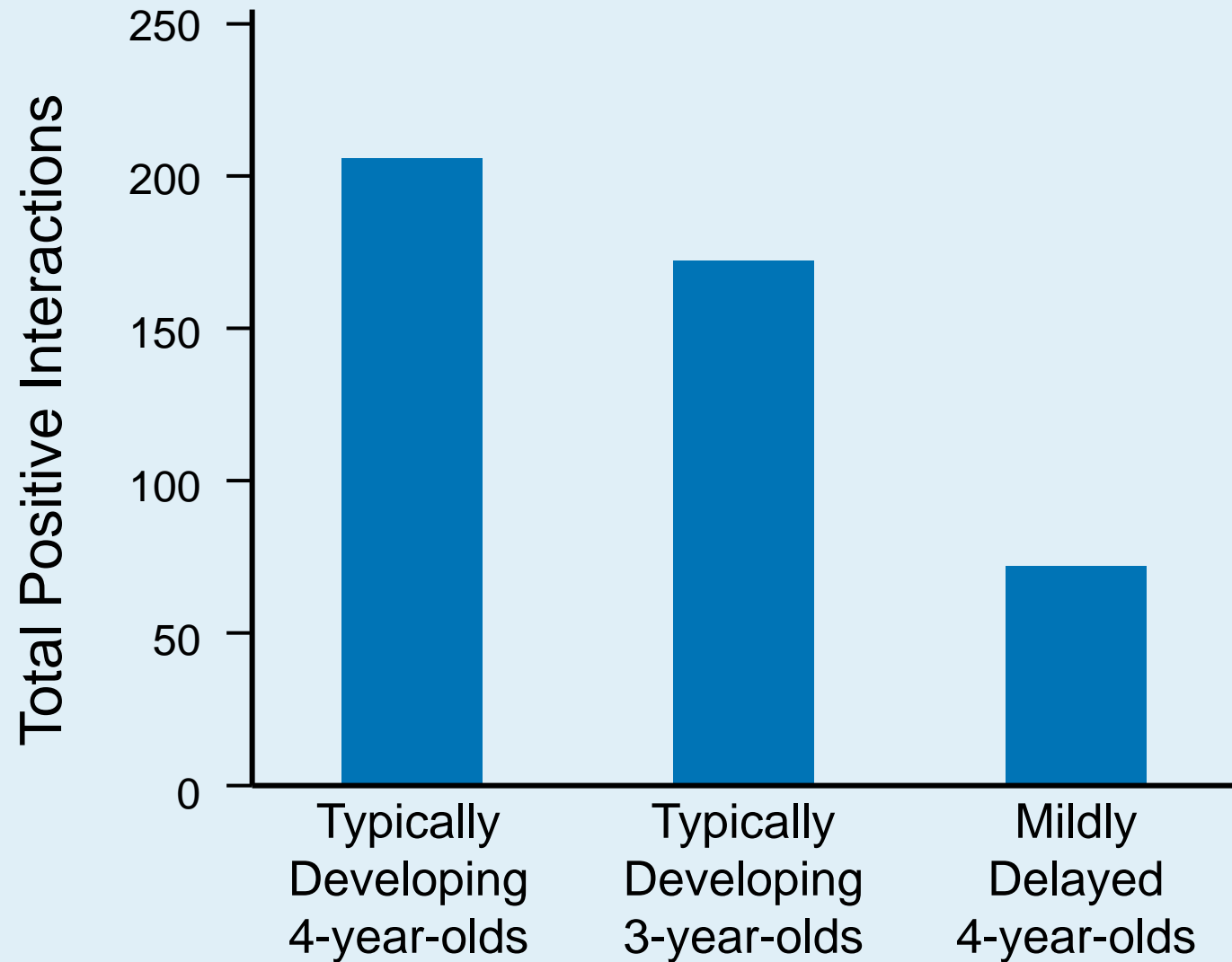
Peer Interaction Comparisons

Mixed Playgroups

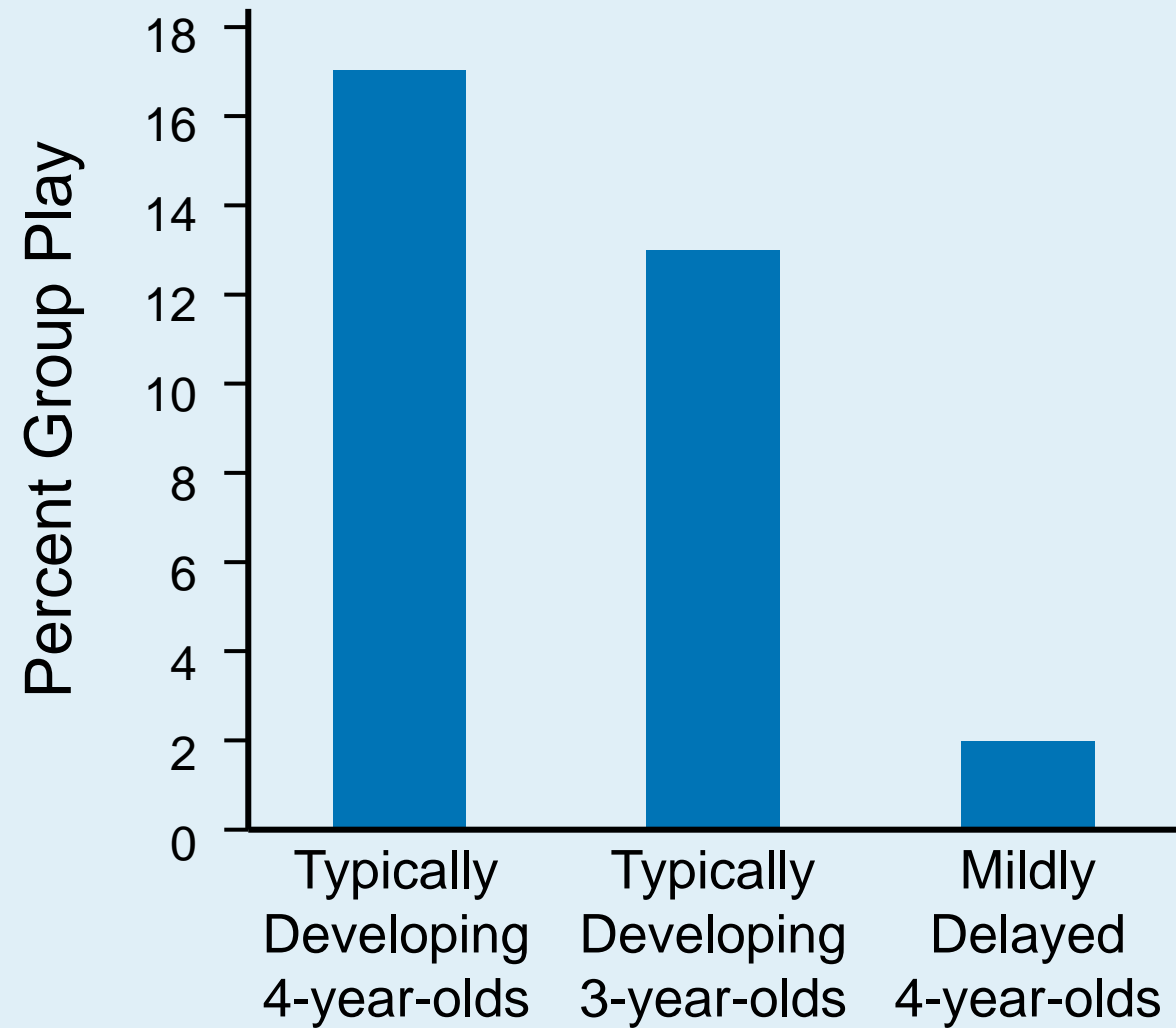


Inclusive Playgroups: Matching

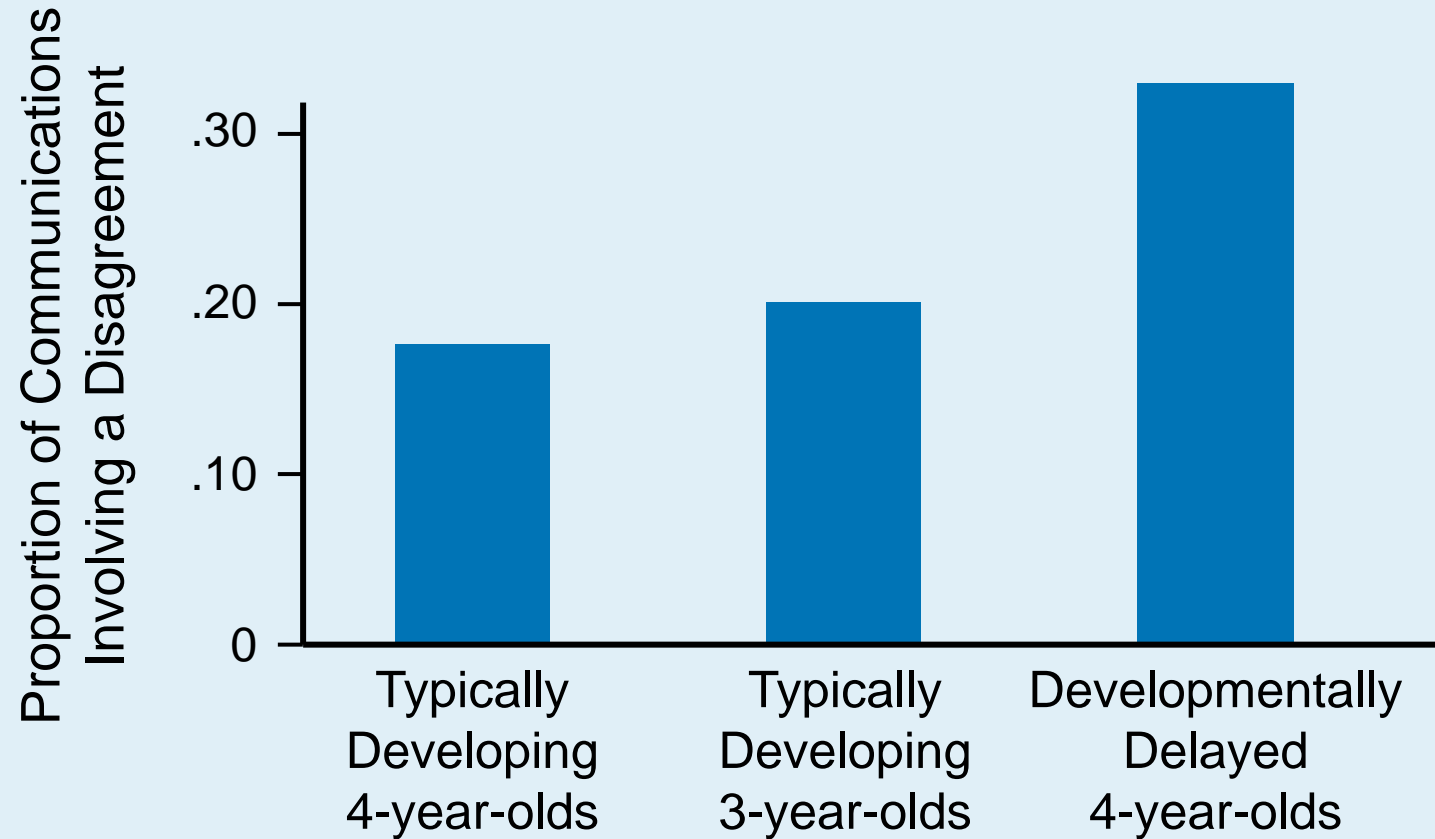
Directiveness



Dyadic Interactions

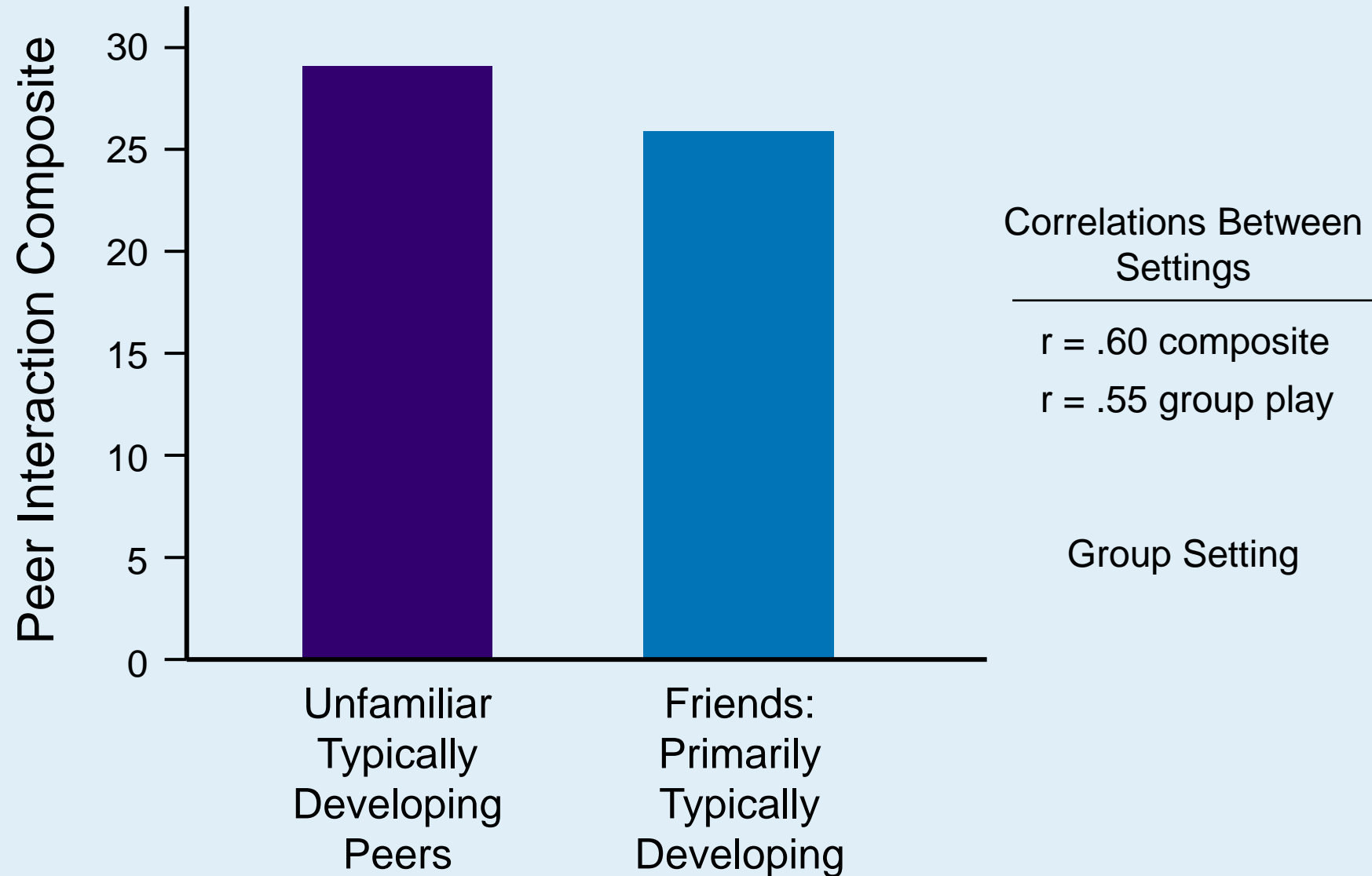


Conflicts



- Less mitigation of imperatives
- More insist negatives as a strategy
- High use of non-adaptive strategies

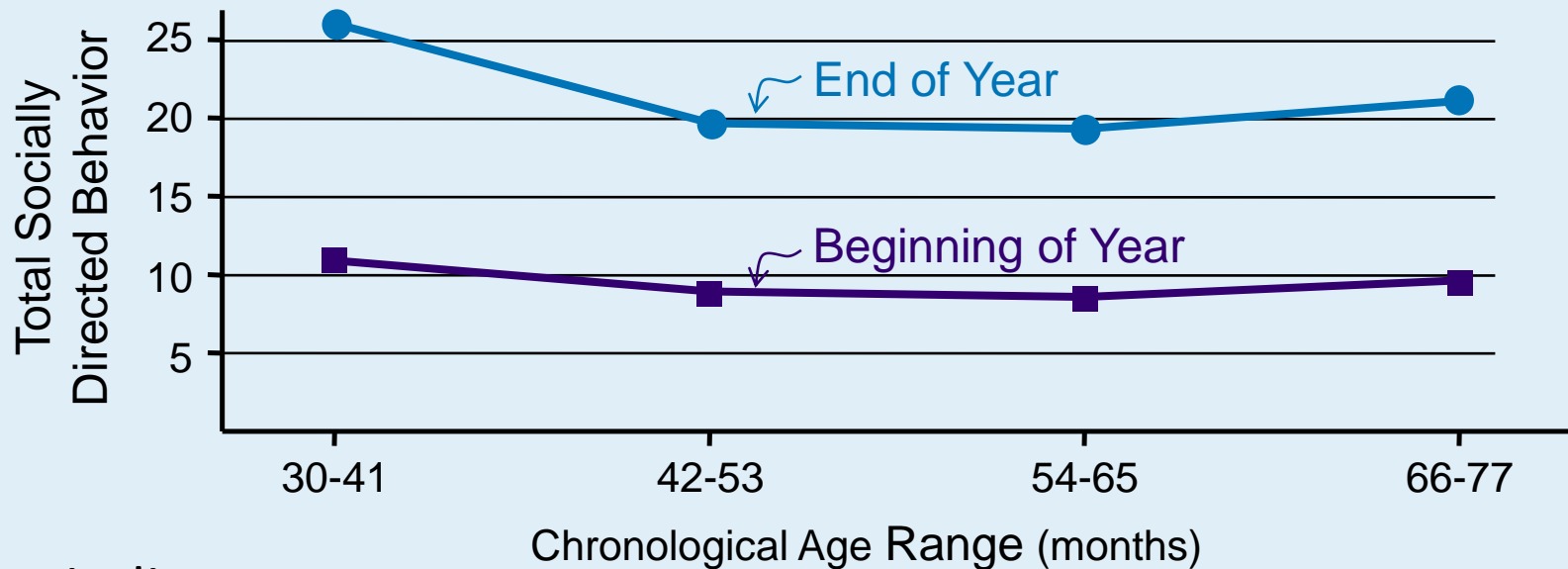
Constraints Imposed by Peer Competence



Concerns in Community Programs

Conditions

- Cross-sectional
- Moderate-mild delay
- Community preschool (specialized)



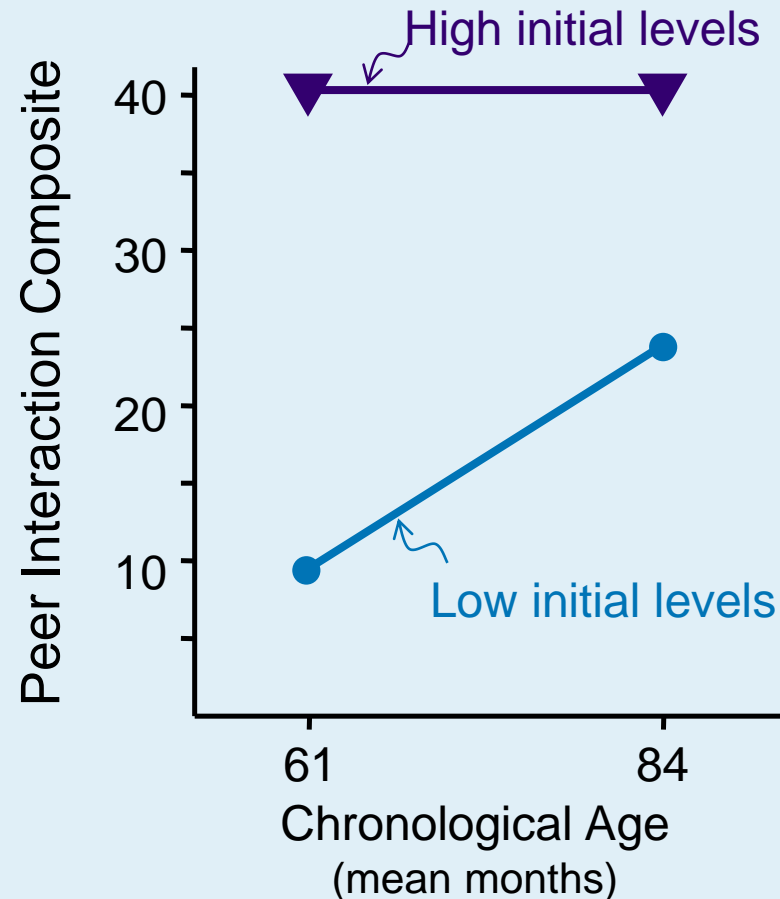
Findings

- Absence of change over time (30-77 months)
- Dominance of two-unit exchanges
- Fragility after summer hiatus—lower level at beginning of each year
- Small percentage dominated group play

Problems Persist Over Time

Conditions

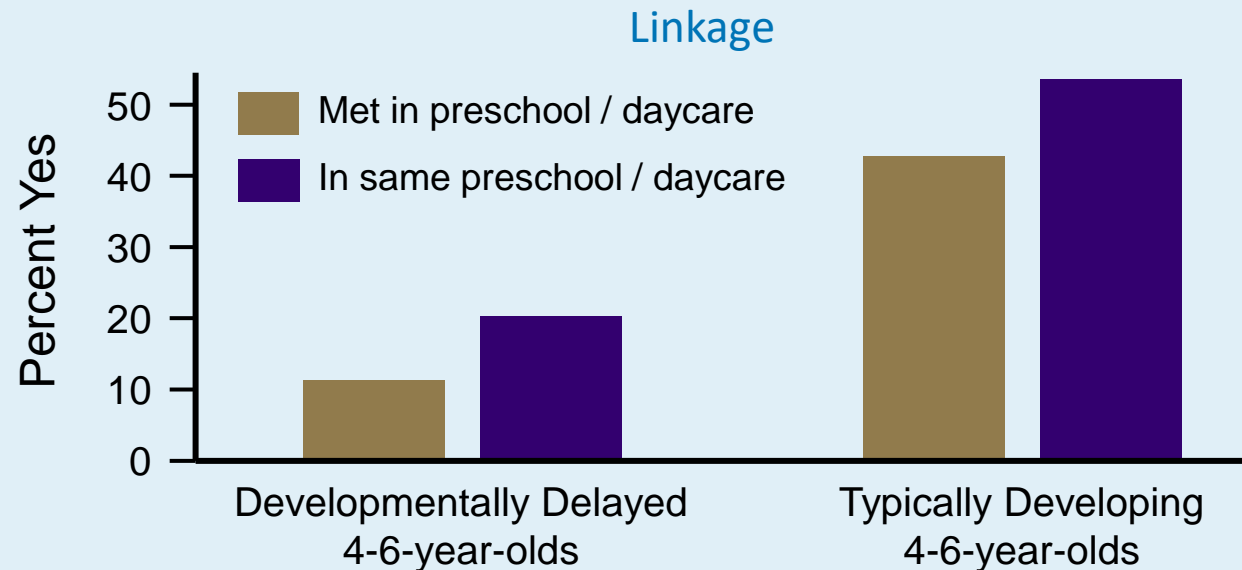
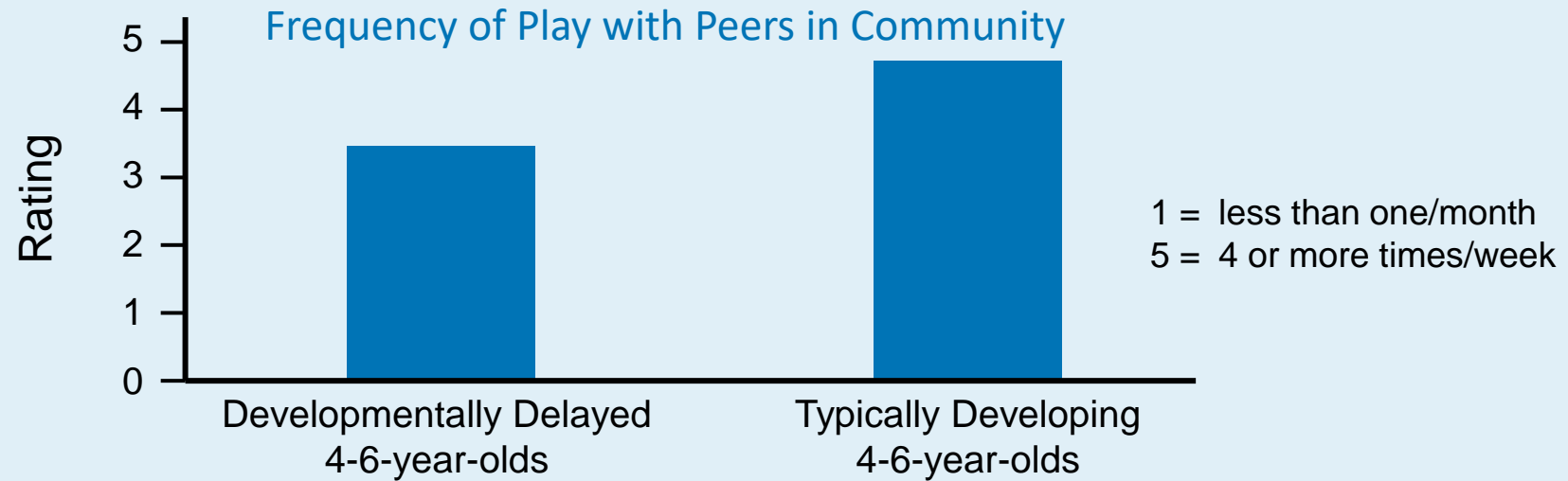
- Longitudinal (2 year period): mild delay
- Quartets with typically developing children



Findings

- No gains for high interactors
- Low levels of group play overall (8% at 84 months)
- Negative and positive behaviors highly correlated—conflicts
- Minimal gain for low interactors

Peer Social Networks in the Community



Friendships

Community: 14% identify best friend

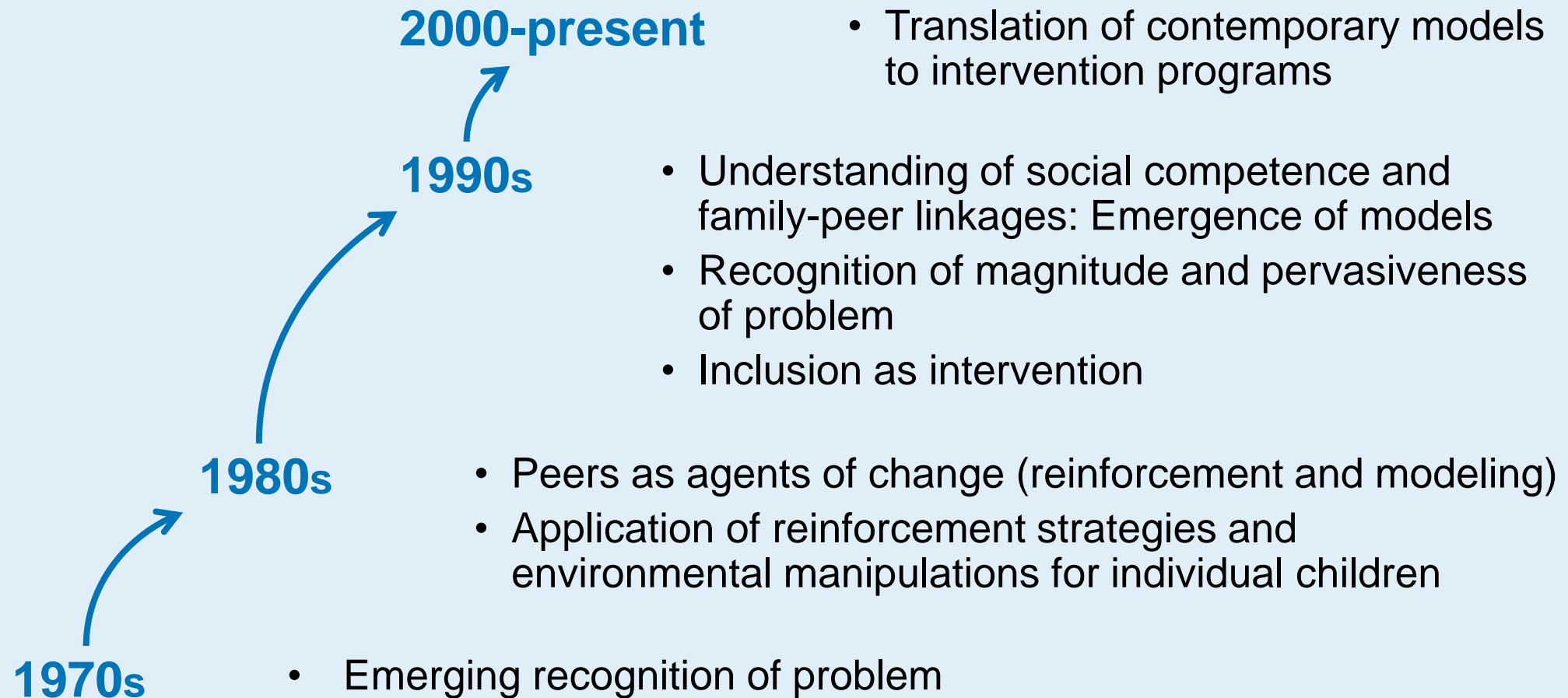
Difficulty finding friend for playdates



Peer-Related Social Competence: Summary

- Problems of peer competence extend beyond those expected based on developmental level
- Low levels of productive, especially group play
- Lack of directiveness (organization)
- Social goals (tasks) not well established
- Conflicts are common; high correlation between positive and negative interactions
- Modest changes over time; fragile set of social skills

Behavioral Interventions

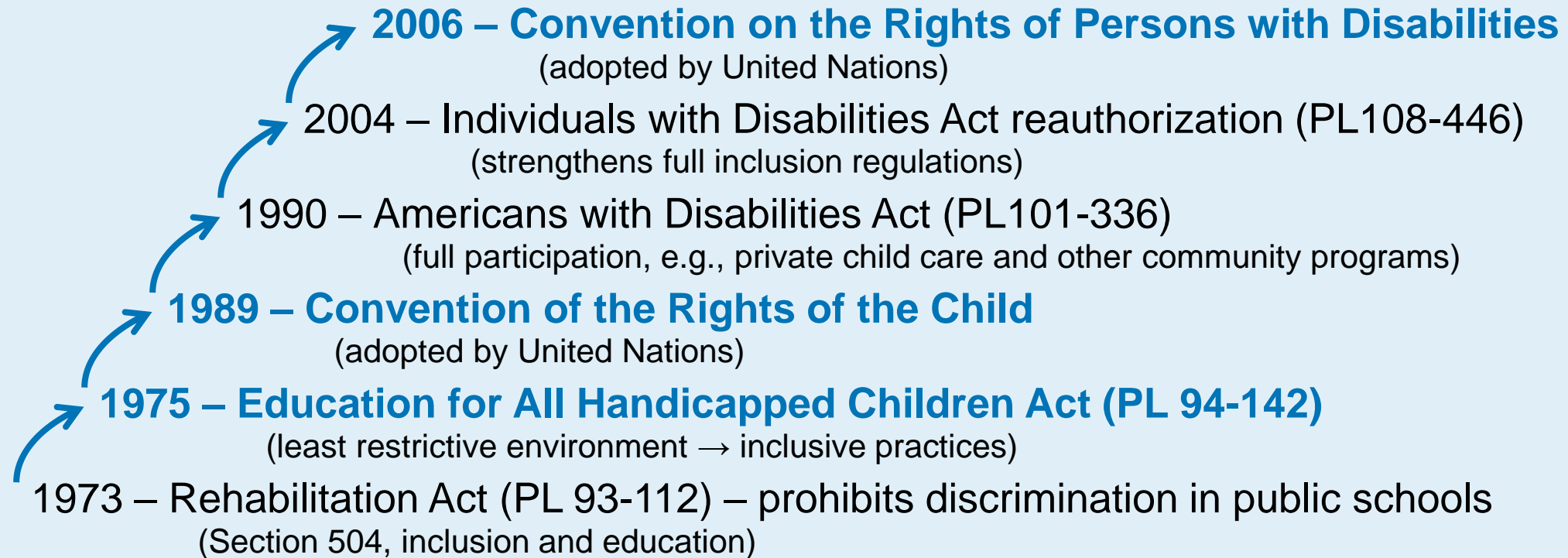


Current Progress

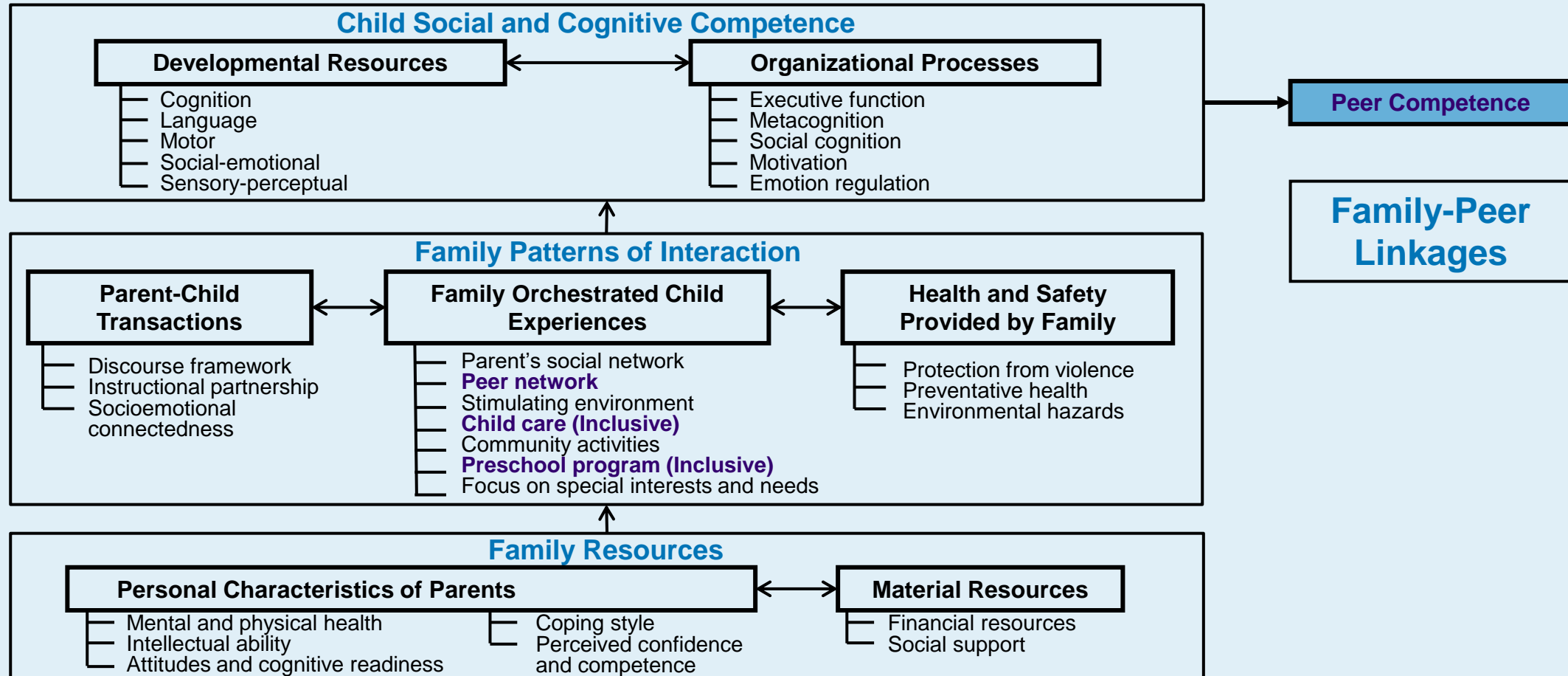
- Access: legal requirements, equity
- Accommodations: personnel preparation, international community
- Societal changes: neurodiversity
- **Interventions to promote higher levels of peer interaction and social integration**

Early Childhood Inclusion: Human Rights

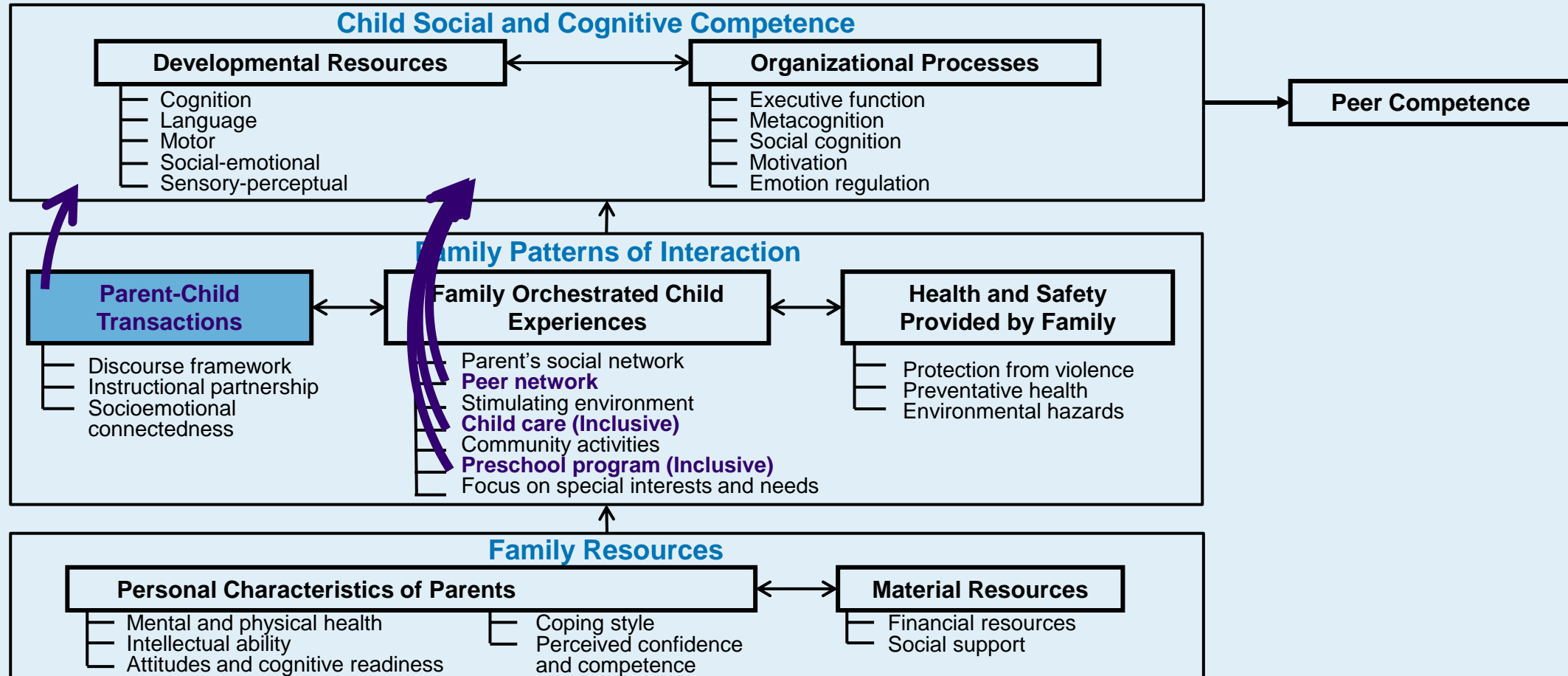
Philosophical, Legal and Legislative Grounds



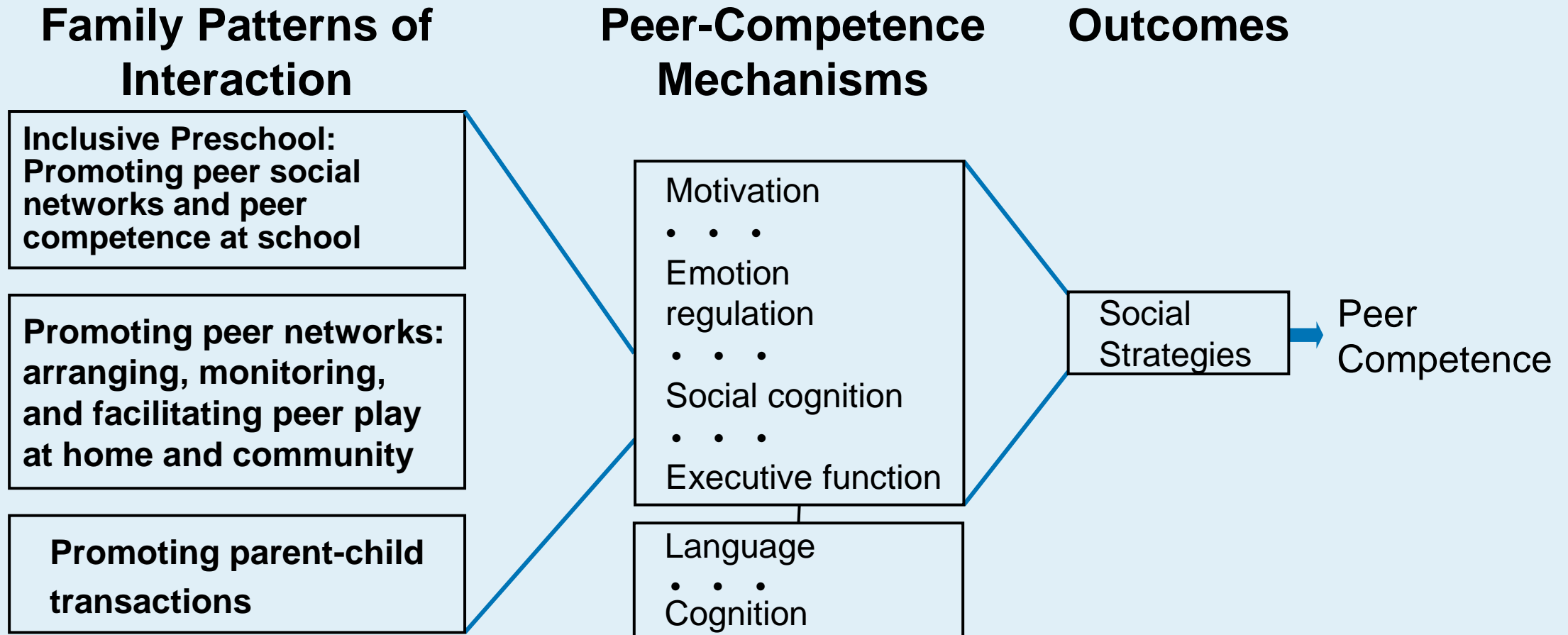
Developmental Systems Approach



Developmental Systems Approach



Family-Peer Linkages: DSA



Developmental Systems Framework

What Can the Early Intervention Team and Families Do to Promote Peer Competence?

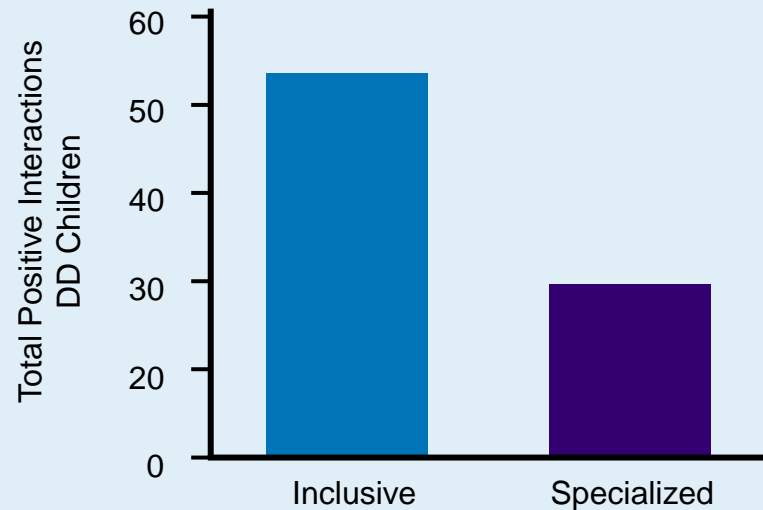
Evidence for:

- Finding and supporting an inclusive preschool
- Arranging, monitoring, and facilitating peer play at home (peer networks)
- Strengthening “horizontal” parent-child interaction patterns (parent-child transactions)

Effects of Inclusion: Preschool Programs

Conditions

- Majority of children were TD and similar CAs
- Within subject design (matched on other programmatic factors such as teacher-child ratio and number of children)



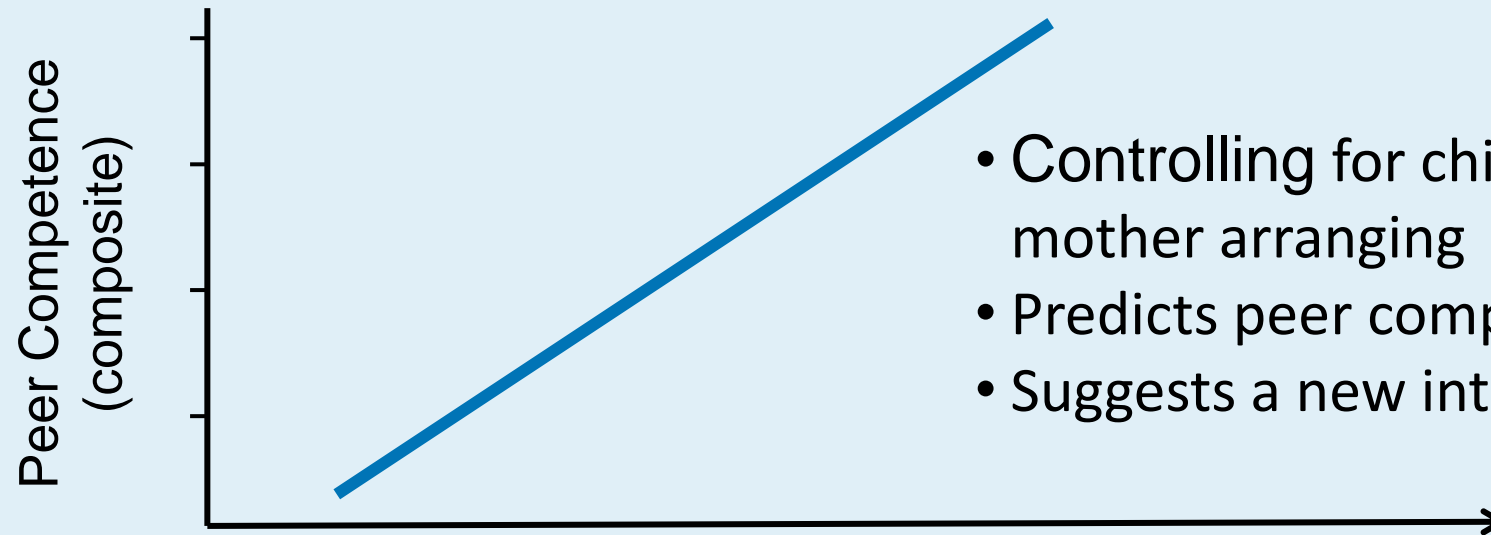
Findings

- Inclusion had major impact on overall positive interactions with peers
- Suggest value of majority of TD peers and potential influences related to modeling and demand characteristics

Minimal Influence on Social Strategies or Mechanisms

Family Influences on Peer Competence

- Mother-child play interaction
- Importance of horizontal (mutual) vs vertical exchanges

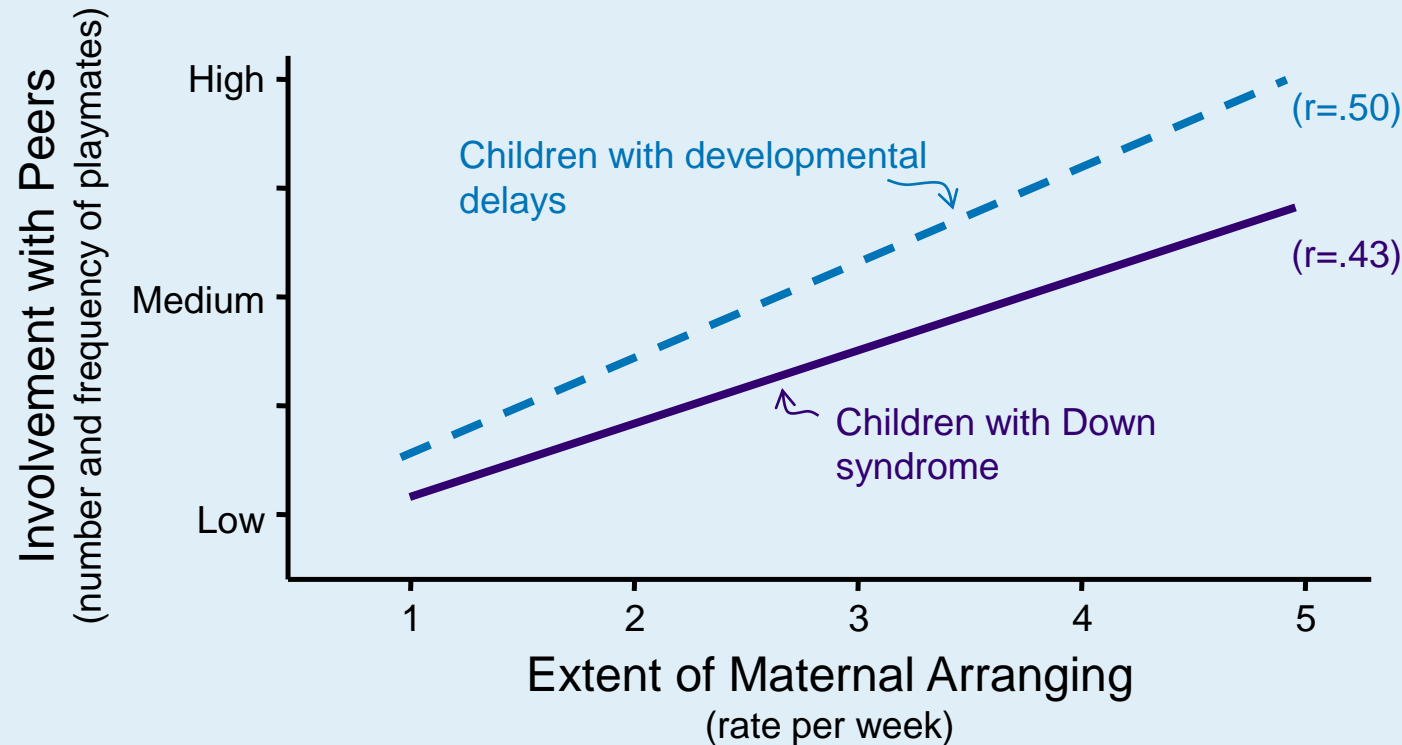


Children's Influence Attempts with Mothers During Play
(Frequency) (Requests, Directives, and Mother Compliance)

- Controlling for child characteristics and mother arranging
- Predicts peer competence two years later
- Suggests a new intervention approach

Family Influences on Peer Interactions


- Arranging playdates
- Potential for promoting peer competence

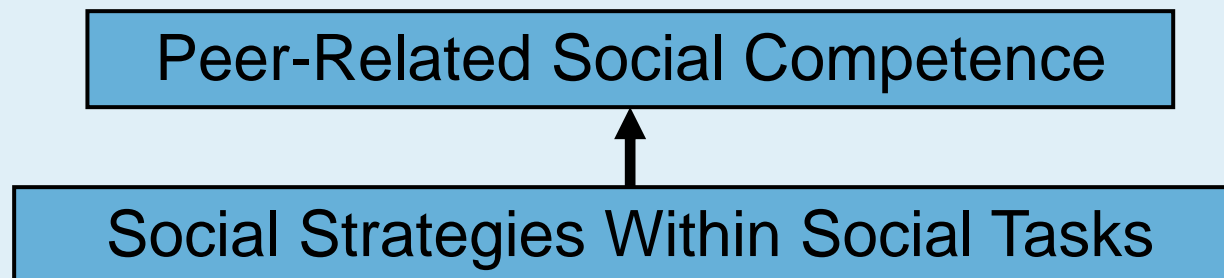


Peer-Related Social Competence

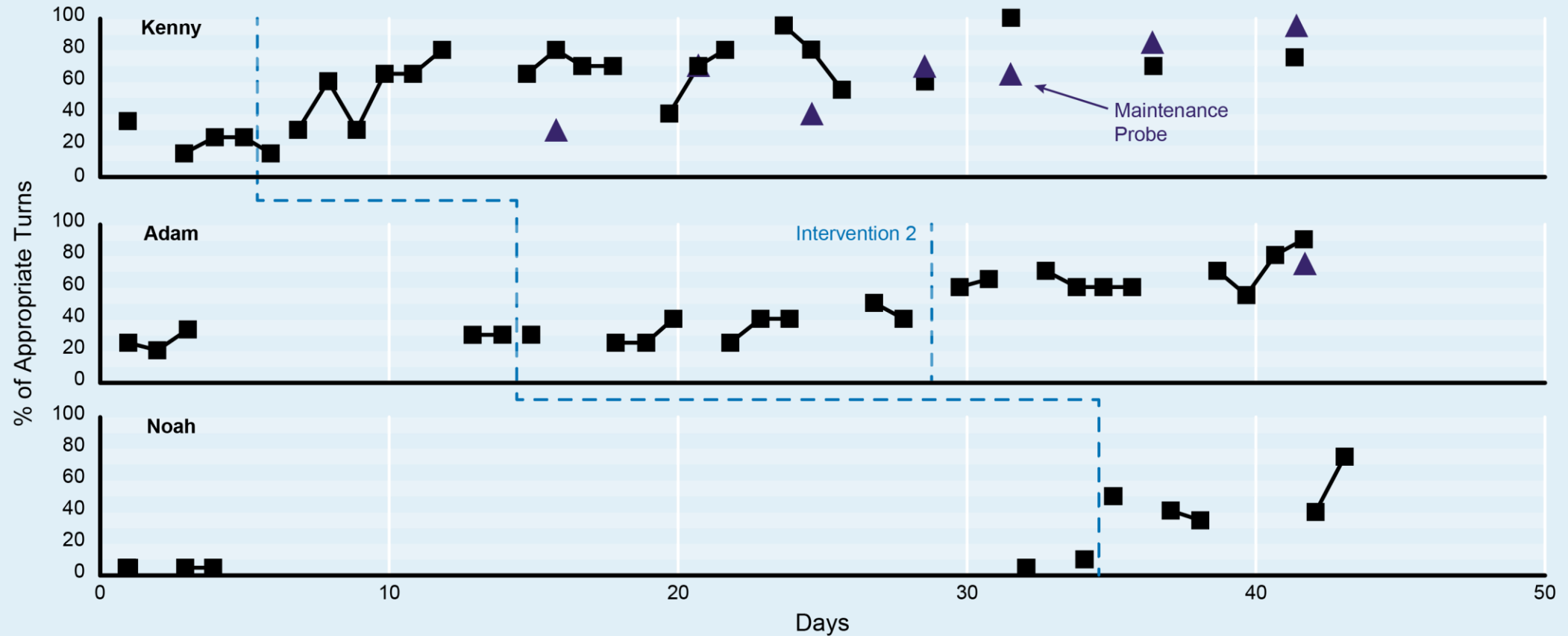
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Peer Context: Goals as Social Tasks

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Contemporary Innovative Approaches: Peer Mediation in Inclusive Use of Touch-Screen Devices with Verbal and Physical Prompts



Turn taking: Children with ASD

Single Case Designs: Current Status

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Including Peers in Intervention for Young Children With Disabilities

A Systematic Review of Single Case
Design Studies

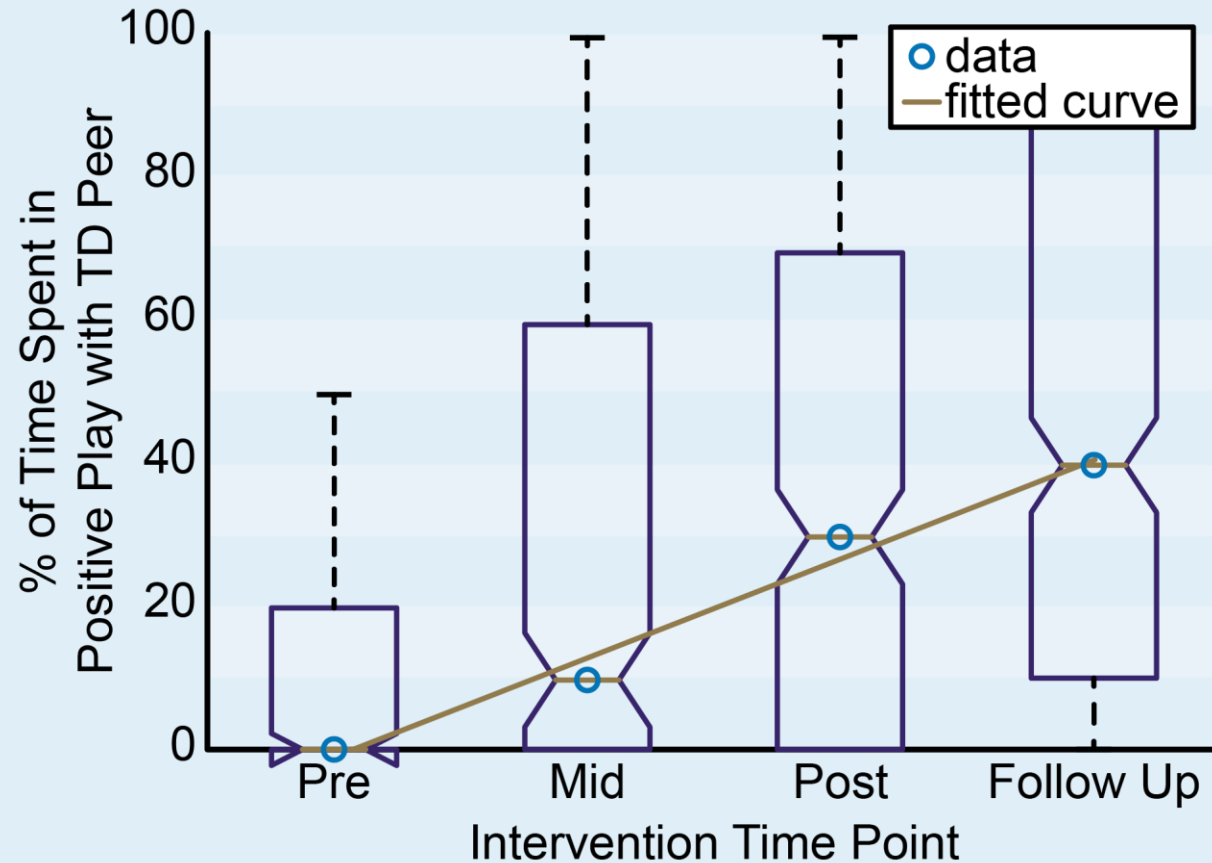
Mary Frances Hanline, PhD;
Jennifer Nicole Eldridge, MS; Audrey Robbins, MAE

Results:

- 39 studies
- Overall positive effects
- Concerns about rigor of research (ecological validity, generalization, maintenance, social validity)

Contemporary Innovative Approaches

“Understanding Our Peers” Program



Story Time

Problem solving with children with diverse abilities and behaviors in book reading intervention

Peer Related Social Competence in Inclusive Settings

Major Accomplishments

- Improved peer interactions
- More responsive to peers
- More engagement with peers

Major Concerns

- Minimal evidence meeting criteria for improved peer competence
- Peer group entry; conflict resolution; maintaining play
- Social integration and its meaning uncertain

Next Steps

- Peer competence interventions within a broader developmental framework: relationships, comprehensiveness, and continuity
- Address social tasks in peer context directly: problem solving

Contemporary Models

Features of the First Comprehensive, Randomized, Prospective, Controlled Design

- Developmental systems approach framework to guide early intervention
- Longer-term intervention (2 years)
- Children in inclusive settings
- Highly individualized (Assessment of Peer Relations; Family Assessment)
- Comprehensive – consultant model involving teachers and mothers (partnerships)

Clinical Tools

Assessment of Peer Relations

Social Strategies

- A. Peer Group Entry Strategies
 - initial attempt
 - second efforts
- B. Conflict Resolution Strategies
 - conciliatory/agreeable
 - negative/disconnected
- C. Maintaining Play Strategies
 - role and activity structure
 - management

Social Processes

- A. Shared Understanding
- B. Emotion Regulation
- C. Social-Cognitive
- D. Higher-Order

TRANSLATION, ADAPTATION AND CONTENT VALIDATION OF SECTION I OF THE SCALE "ASSESSMENT OF PEER RELATIONS" INTO THE PORTUGUESE LANGUAGE

Elsa Soares¹, Ana Serrano², Michael J. Guralnick³

Abstract

Objective: adaptation and content validation of Section I of the scale "Assessment of Peer Relations" to the Portuguese language. **Methods:** section I was translated and back translated by experienced translators. The version of consensus was used in two pilot studies that indicated the necessity of linguistic improvements. After realizing these modifications, it was possible to gather an expert panel - composed by 8 researchers in early intervention and social interaction - who thoroughly discussed each item of section I. **Results:** this research process was essential to deeply explore section I allowing, consequently, to perceive which modifications should be done in order to operationalize its use in Portuguese's language and culture. **Conclusions:** the objective of this research was achieved and, consequently, it was possible to do the adaptation and the content validation to the Portuguese language concerning Section I of the scale "Assessment of Peer Relations".

Key words: social adjustment; interpersonal relations; social behavior disorders; child behavior; content validation

DSA Intervention Framework

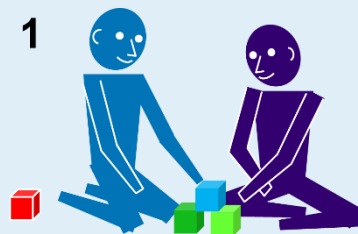
- Promote effective and appropriate use of social strategies within social tasks
- For mothers: address playdates, monitoring and facilitating dyadic play, improve social support, control issues, and promote horizontal interactions
- Frequent use of role playing relying on **scripts**, both mothers and teachers
- **Guidance in script development based on mechanisms identified on APR: A social task context**

Scripts

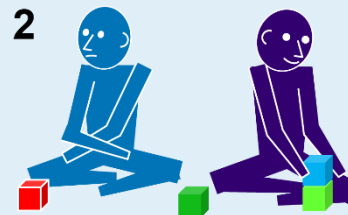
- Assume structure within each social task
- Remembering and acting upon event sequences
- Critical events have nodes (variations around nodes)
- Teach scripts for the three social tasks; repetition and variation are keys
- Content of scripts:
 - goal of social task
 - a cue to evoke the goal
 - strategies toward goal
 - successful resolution of task
- Attempt addresses issue of generalization: teach scripts in context of play

Nodes

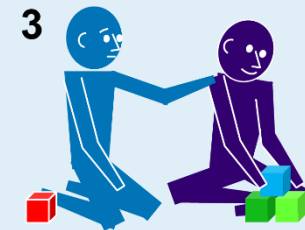
Maintaining Play Script Icons Goal: Stay Together



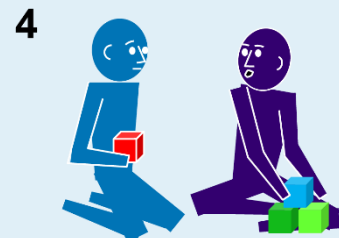
Engaged



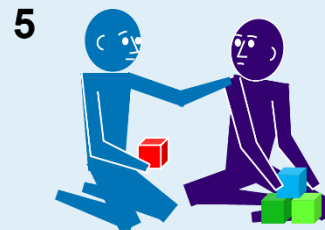
Disengagement



Strategy



Failure



Second effort



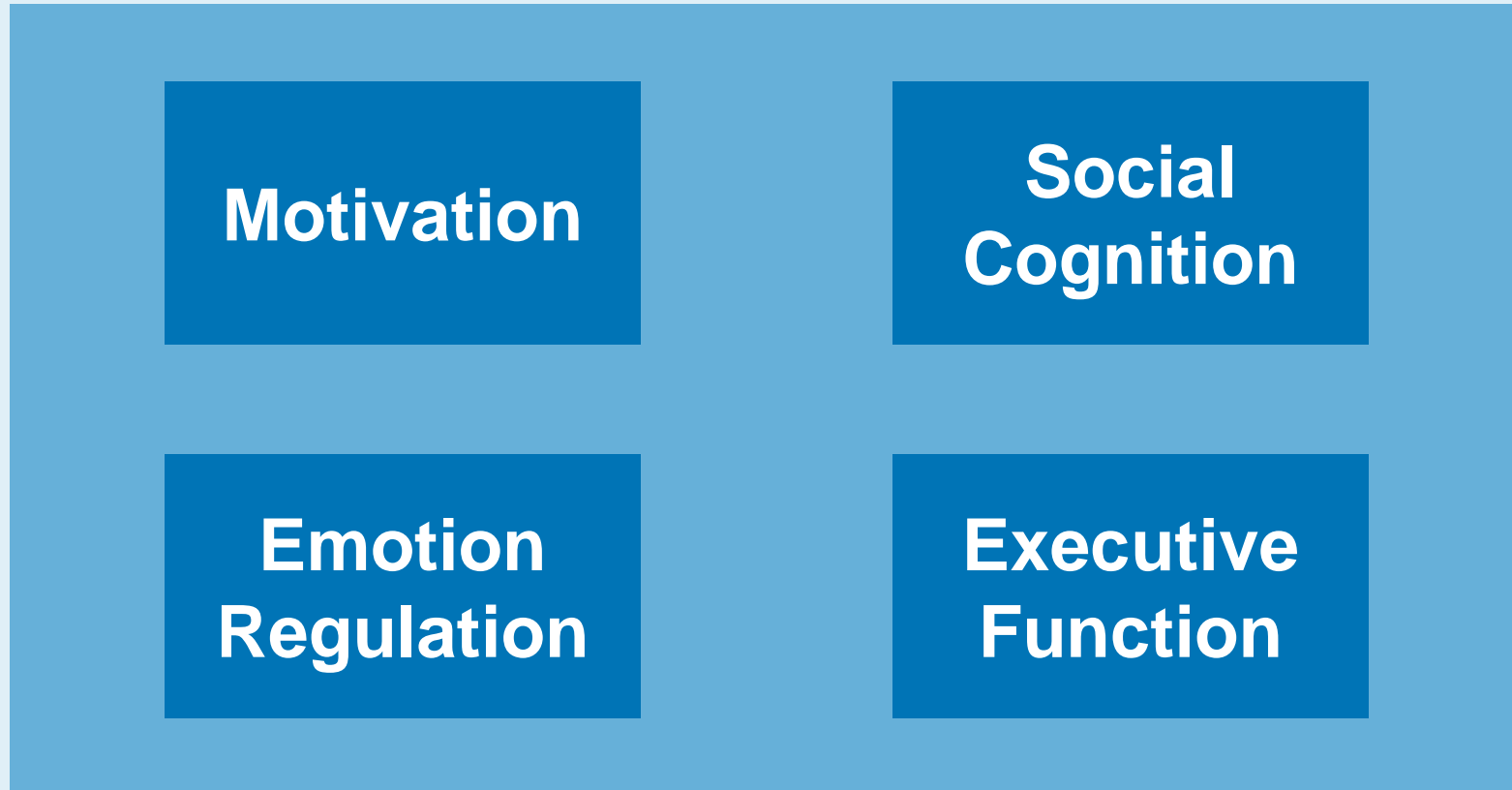
Stay Together

Building the Script

- Follow nodal structure
- Practice at school and home
- Always worry about Social Task Recognition (higher - order); Executive function
 - emphasize cues that one is involved in a social task
 - emphasize goal (join, happy, stay together)

**Mechanisms to be addressed
incorporate fictional characters**

DSA Mechanisms to be addressed incorporate fictional characters



Mechanisms: Organizational Processes

Use of Fictional Characters: Mechanisms

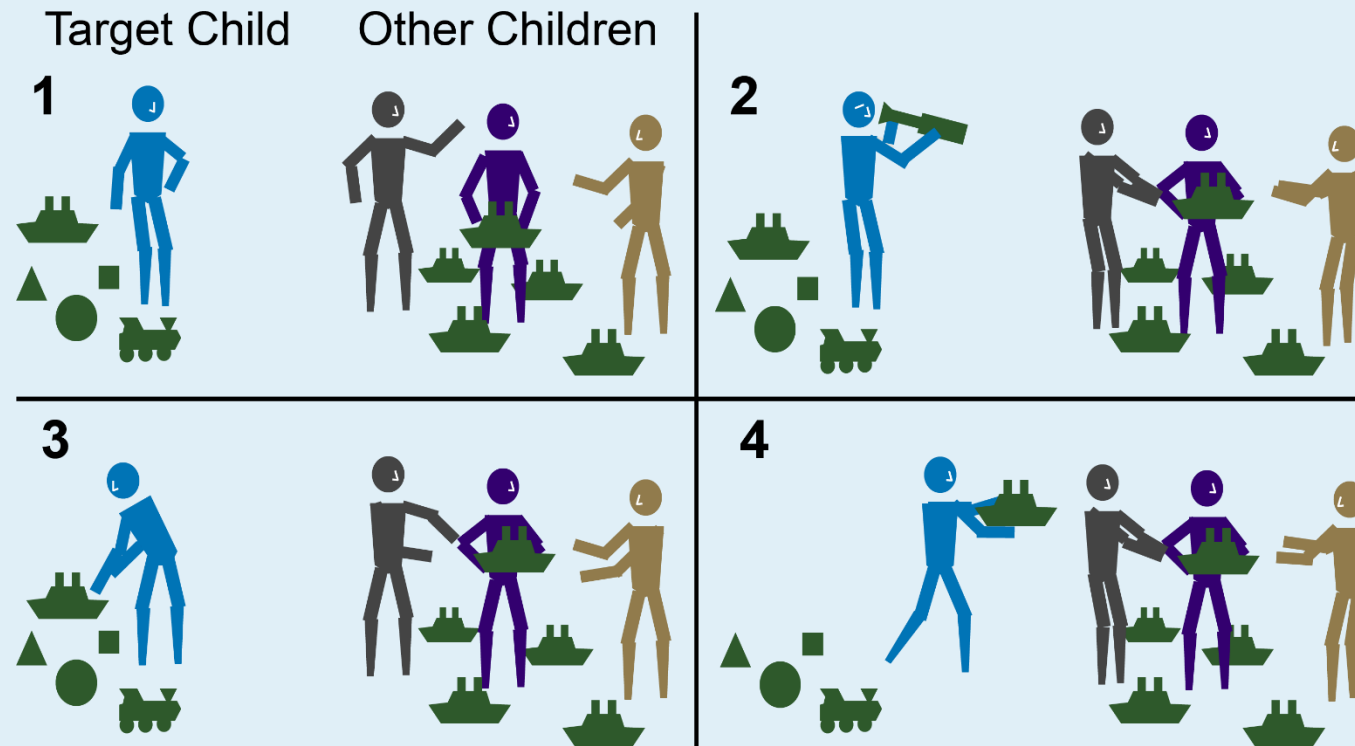
- Not just teach strategy
- Not teach mechanisms independent of social task (e.g., strengthen emotion regulation)
- Address process as part of fictional characters representing mechanisms of interest in context of a social task

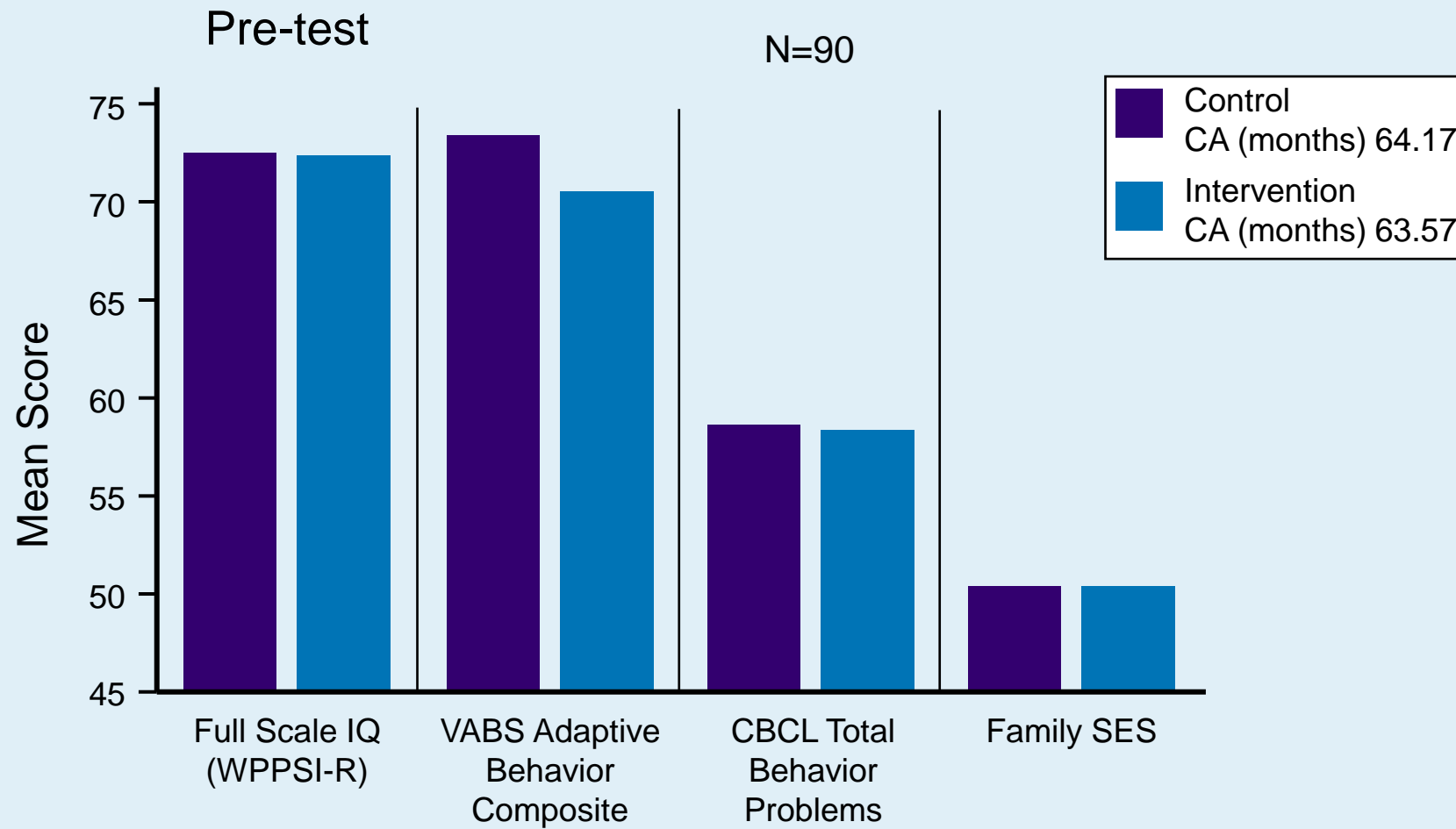
Examples:

1. child fails to persist (executive function / motivation) – choose character who tries again and again
2. child easily upset (emotion regulation) – choose character who exhibits even or consistent mood
3. child fails to encode cues accurately (social-cognitive) – choose character who is attentive to cues

Peer Entry Task: Spy Game Selecting Non-Intrusive Toys

Frame of Reference Encode

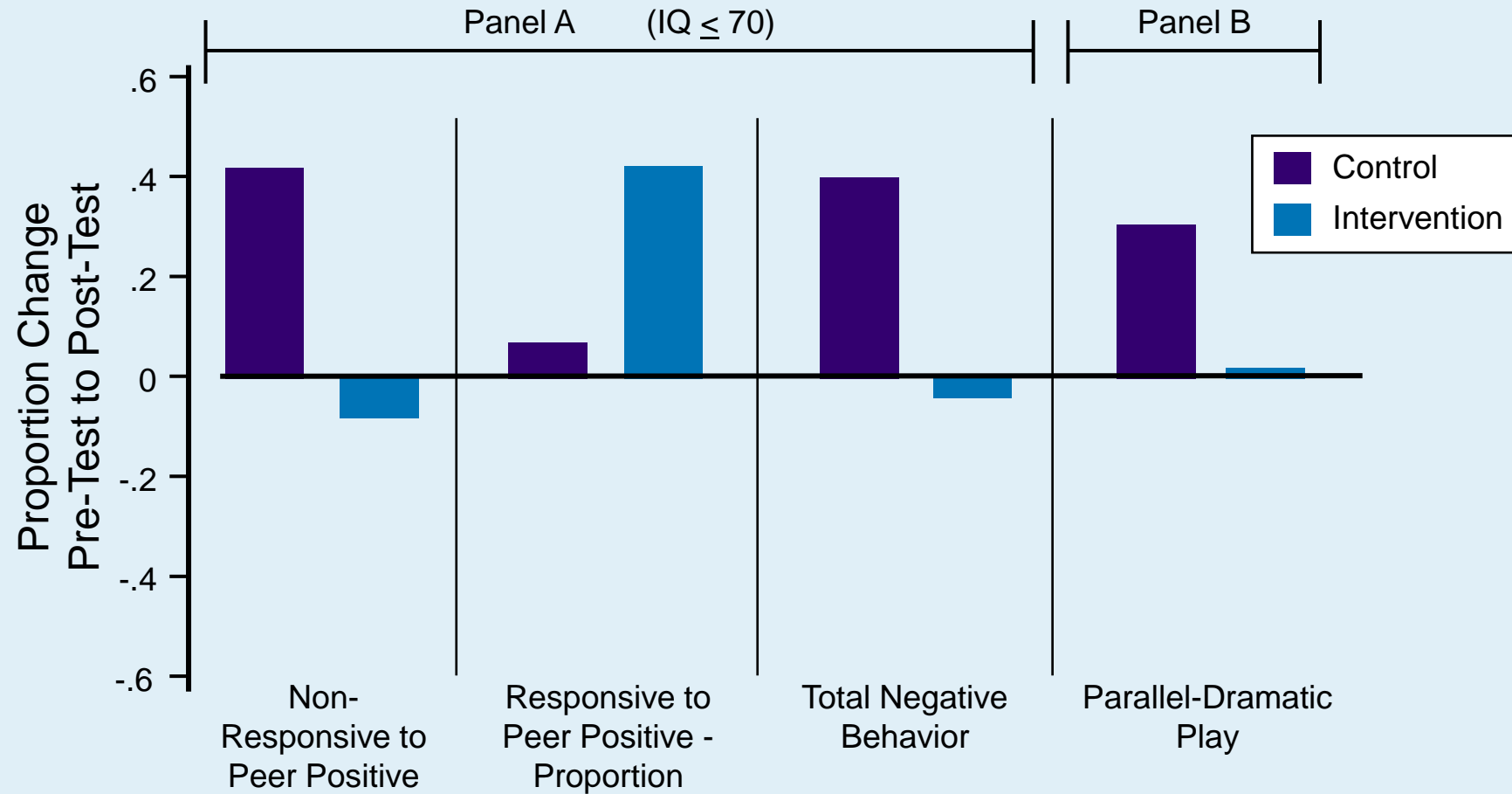




Evaluation Setting

- Focus on generalization
- Three typically developing children (slightly familiar with one another) – entry task
- Same CA and gender as target child
- Quartets played for three consecutive days (1 hr/day)

Main Findings



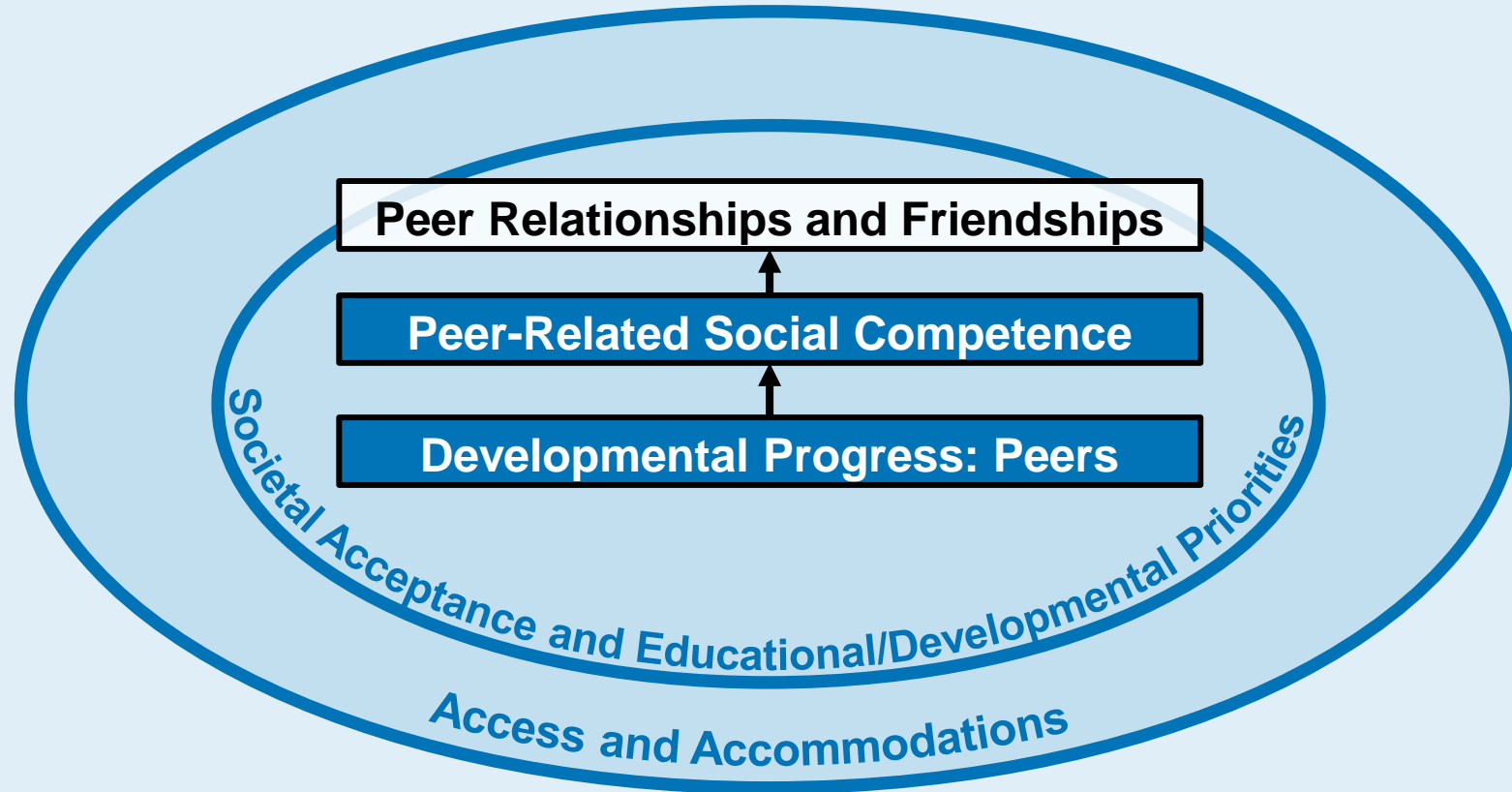
Summary of Research Findings

- Major improvement in peer competence not found
- Encouraging—bar set high for generalization (unfamiliar peers in unfamiliar settings)
- Preventing peer interaction problems

Conclusions

- Peer competence is critical to goals of inclusive practice
- Relevant to developmental progress and social integration
- Inclusion is a critical component of early intervention programs needed to support children's peer competence
- Promoting peer competence requires an understanding of family-peer linkages within a developmental framework
- Peer competence is strongly associated with long-term independence and quality of life
- Future research and practice must take a systems-level approach and directly target peer competence

Focus on Goals of Developmental Progress with Peers and Social Integration



Integration of Developmental Science and Practice