MATERNAL RESPONSES TO ANTICIPATED CHILDREN’S NEGATIVE EMOTIONS AND SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
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Maternal Responses to Anticipated Children’s Negative Emotions and Social Adjustment in Early Childhood

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Abstract

The goals of the present study were: 1) to describe and provide initial support for the validity of the Future Scenarios Questionnaire (FSQ), a new self-report questionnaire designed to measure parental responding to anticipated children’s negative emotions; and 2) to examine how maternal responses on the FSQ related to young children’s aggressive, asocial, and prosocial behaviors with peers. Further, this study examined whether the temperamental trait of negative affect moderated the relation between maternal responses on the FSQ and children’s social adjustment outcomes. Participants were 92 mothers of preschool-age children (43 boys and 49 girls; M age 61.5 months). Mothers provided ratings on the FSQ and child temperament ratings on the Child Behavior Questionnaire (CBQ; Rothbart, Ahadi, & Hershey, 1994). They also completed a range of measures which were included to assess the construct validity of the FSQ. These included measures of attachment representations, maternal mind-mindedness, perceived control, and alexithymia. Sixty-nine teachers provided ratings on the Child Behavior Scale (CBS; Ladd & Profilet, 1996) for children’s aggressive, asocial, and prosocial behaviors in the peer context.
Factor analysis of the FSQ revealed two subscales: Encourage Emotion Expression (EEE) and Discourage Emotion Expression (DEE). Patterns of correlations among these subscales and the additional mother measures suggested that the FSQ demonstrates some construct validity. Further, the results of the moderation analyses showed that maternal responding on the FSQ interacts with negative affect in the prediction of child behaviors, however not in the hypothesized ways. In particular, encouraging emotion expression significantly predicted more asocial behavior and less prosocial behavior (approached significance), but only for children rated high in negative affect. Similarly, discouraging emotion expression significantly predicted less aggressive behavior only for high negative affect children. None of these relations was significant for children rated low in negative affect. The theoretical and practical implications of these findings are discussed in terms of the importance of considering child temperament in emotion socialization processes.
Acknowledgments

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all those who participated in many ways in the completion of this thesis. First, thank you to all the mothers, not only for the significant investment of their time but also, for their trust and openness in sharing aspects of their own and their children’s minds and personalities with me. Thank you also to the many teachers who gave precious time and energy to contribute to the dataset.

I would especially like to thank my advisor, Joan Grusec for her ongoing support, availability, and commitment to seeing this project through, and for always believing that it could be done even when I wavered in this belief. Thank you also, Joan, for your wise guidance, your persistent encouragement, and your kind mentorship over many years. I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to work with and learn from you. To my additional committee members, Mary Lou Arnold and Leslie Atkinson, thank you for your many helpful comments and suggestions, which never failed to improve the quality of this work and provide me with additional learning opportunities. And to Ann Lang, who was always there to make sure I was moving along, thank you for your patience, and your careful attention to all those details.

I would also like to express my heartfelt appreciation to the students who helped so much with the lengthy process of recruiting participants, and collecting and processing the data: Svea Vikander, Helena Macario, Johanna Rackham, and especially Emily Fan, without whose dedication, organizational skills, and cheerfulness, this task would have been far more daunting. You all brought much enthusiasm and fun to this project.

My fellow graduate students in the Psychology Department have provided many hours of support, encouragement, advice, and friendship over several years. In particular, to Norma
D’Agostino, Tsasha Awong, Alisa Almas, and Julia Vinik, a very big thank you. To Maayan Davidov and Ruwa Sabbagh, you have both always been there to listen, to empathize, and to offer (and provide) assistance. Your friendship is so valuable to me and has made the completion of this task all the more rewarding and meaningful.

To my spouse, Adam Blackman, thank you for your constant love and support, your sense of humor, and your tolerance of me throughout this, and every, aspect of my life. And to my sons, Benjamin and Jonathan, thank you for making me think and laugh every single day.
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MATERNAL RESPONSES TO ANTICIPATED CHILDREN’S NEGATIVE EMOTIONS:
RELATIONS WITH SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

One of the most important and challenging socialization tasks is the socialization of emotion. How a child comes to understand his or her own emotional life as well as that of others, in addition to how he or she expresses and regulates emotions, has significant implications for both personality organization and patterns of interrelating (Hubbard & Coie, 1994; Kopp, 1989; Saarni, 1990a). Emotion socialization involves the processes by which parents (or other socialization agents) impart to children socially and culturally acceptable ways of expressing emotion, as well as effective ways of responding in situations when they, or others, are emotionally aroused. For a child to respond optimally to emotionally-charged events, he or she requires an understanding of emotion as well as an ability to regulate and cope with his or her own heightened affect.

It is widely accepted that parents play a primary role in emotion socialization (Chaplin, Cole, & Zahn-Waxler, 2005; Eisenberg, Cumberland, & Spinrad, 1998; Morris, Silk, Steinberg, Myers, & Robinson, 2007). So while acknowledging the impact of siblings, peers, and teachers among others, it is the parental socialization of emotion that is the focus of this research. And although it is recognized that both mothers and fathers are important socializers in related and distinct ways, I focused on maternal socialization of emotion.

As with other socialization outcomes, there are often pronounced individual differences in what mothers deem desirable or appropriate with respect to children’s emotional displays and responses. That is, mothers have different ideas and feelings, both explicit and implicit, about children’s emotional lives, likely resulting from their own socialization experiences and attachment histories. Not all of these ideas translate into socialization strategies that are
adaptive with respect to children’s social and emotional outcomes. Further, children
themselves influence their own socialization in various ways. A significant and ongoing
challenge for developmental researchers is to identify those socialization variables, be they
from the mother, the child, or their interaction, that help produce emotionally and socially
competent children. The current study was designed to contribute to this research objective.

In particular, I examined one empirically neglected emotion socialization mechanism,
that is, the ways in which mothers anticipate and verbally address future-oriented emotional
events with their children, and how these ways might be related to children’s social
adjustment. I focused on emotion socialization in the preschool years because this is a time
when emotionally-laden events are quite frequent, and because, during this time, parents are
usually the foremost socializers of their children’s emotional lives (Denham, 1998). Further,
the emergent representational capacities of children during this developmental stage permit
greater opportunities for socialization of emotion via language and dialogue (Oppenheim &
Waters, 1995; Thompson, Laible, & Ontai, 2003).

First, I will provide a brief overview of parental socialization of emotion and its links
with children’s social competence. The role of child temperament will also be discussed.
Then I will describe the development and the preliminary validation of a new measure of
emotion socialization, the Future Scenarios Questionnaire (FSQ). Finally, I will make
predictions as to how the FSQ might relate to measures of young children’s social
adjustment.

**Parental Socialization of Emotion**

In discussing emotion socialization, it is important to define what it is that is being
socialized. One primary outcome of emotion socialization is emotion competence, typically
defined as the interrelated components of: 1) emotional experience and expressiveness, 2) the understanding of emotions and emotion-eliciting events, and 3) emotion regulation abilities (Denham, 1998; Denham, Basset, & Wyatt, 2007; Eisenberg, et al., 1998).

The experience and expression of emotion relates to a child’s overall affective demeanor, in other words, the frequency and intensity with which he or she experiences positive or negative emotions. It also includes a child’s ability to appropriately express verbal and non-verbal emotional messages, including complex or self-conscious emotions, such as guilt, pride, and shame. Of additional importance is a child’s ability to empathically respond to another person’s emotions, which encompasses but is not limited to the recognition that internal feelings may not necessarily correspond to overt displays.

Emotion understanding includes the ability to discern, label, and talk about one’s own emotional states as well as those of others. This assumes an understanding of the causes and consequences of emotions, that people can have conflicting or ambivalent emotions, and that another’s emotions can differ from one’s own.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly in terms of emotion competence, is emotion regulation. This refers to a child’s ability to cope with both distressing and pleasing situations, and includes the strategies a child might employ to emphasize or de-emphasize certain emotions in the service of attaining his or her social goals. Both emotional experience and emotional understanding contribute to emotion regulation (Denham, 1998).

Denham (1998) and others (e.g. Eisenberg, et al., 1998; Halberstadt, 1991) identify and describe three main mechanisms of emotion socialization, derived from social learning theory: 1) parents’ own emotional expressions (i.e. modeling of emotions), 2) parents’ reactions to their children’s emotions (i.e. contingency), and 3) the explicit teaching or
coaching children about emotions through discourse. I will briefly describe each of these mechanisms.

**Parental modeling of emotions.** The breadth and depth of parents’ own emotional expressiveness informs young children about which emotional reactions are appropriate or not and what circumstances are likely to evoke certain emotions (Denham, Zoller, & Couchoud, 1994). Such modeling is not entirely intentional on the part of the parent; nevertheless it is a highly influential source of information for a child. Indeed parental positive and negative emotions are related to children’s emotional positivity and negativity, in a variety of settings and even in the absence of parents (Denham, 1993; Denham & Grout, 1993; Halberstadt & Eaton, 2003). Further, frequent exposure to intense, negative emotions can disturb and upset children which can in turn, affect their understanding of emotions (Dunn & Brown, 1994; Denham, 1997; Denham & Grout, 1992; 1993; Garner, Jones, & Miner, 1994). Not only do parents differ in the intensity of their expression of negative emotion, they also differ in how they resolve or deal with emotional situations, for example by direct problem solving, denying or distracting from distress, or seeking emotional support from others (Roberts & Strayer, 1987). These displays have obvious implications for a child’s own abilities to cope with emotional events, again, through witnessing and adopting their parents’ responses.

**Parental reactions to child emotions.** In addition to displaying their own emotions, parents also react to children’s displays of emotions. In responding contingently to children’s emotions by either rewarding or punishing them, parents directly socialize emotion competence (Denham, 1998; McElwain, Halberstadt, & Volling, 2007). For example, parents’ punitive reactions to a child’s emotions can deter the child’s self-reflection regarding emotions and thus, obstruct emotion knowledge as well as impede the ability to regulate
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physiological arousal (Denham et al., 1997; Gottman, Katz, & Hooven, 1996). How parents react to negative emotions (e.g. anger, sadness, fear) is of particular significance and Eisenberg and her colleagues have examined this topic in considerable detail (e.g., Eisenberg & Fabes, 1994; Eisenberg, Fabes, & Murphy, 1996; Eisenberg, Fabes, Schaller, Carlo, & Miller, 1991; Eisenberg, Fabes, & Spinrad, 2006; Fabes, Poulin, Eisenberg, & Madden-Derdich, 2002). They have found that parents can either be accepting and supportive or alternatively, rejecting and non-supportive of children’s negative emotions. Overall, their findings reveal that in supportive and comforting environments, children learn to express, tolerate and control emotions while punitive or non-supportive environments are associated with negative child outcomes with respect to regulatory and coping abilities (e.g. Eisenberg & Fabes, 1994, Eisenberg et al., 1996).

**Parent-child emotion talk.** Another important way that parents socialize their children’s emotions is by talking about emotions with them (Cassidy, 1994; Dunn, Brown, & Beardsall, 1991; Denham, Cook, & Zoller, 1992; Fivush, 1993; Laible & Panfile, in press). Mother-child conversations about emotions, which begin to occur with some regularity from the time the child is about eighteen months old, socialize children about emotion language usage, expression, and understanding. In these conversations, mothers can clarify causes and consequences of emotion, can correct misunderstandings, and can ask questions about emotions. Additionally, they can confirm their acceptance of an emotion (e.g. “It’s ok to feel mad”), they can disconfirm an emotion (e.g. “We don’t like sad faces”), or they can overtly deny an emotion altogether (e.g. “You’re not sad”). Finally, mothers can also provide ways of coping with negative emotions (Laible & Panfile, in press).

Differences in mothers’ discussion of feelings have been related to toddlers’ or preschooler’s own use of emotion language (Denham & Auerbach, 1995; Dunn, Bretherton,
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& Munn, 1987) and to their understanding of their own and other’s emotions (Brown & Dunn, 1991; Denham, et al., 1992; Denham, Zoller, & Couchoud, 1994; Dunn, et al., 1991; Dunn, Brown, Slomkowski, Tesla, & Youngblade, 1991). Additionally and importantly, being able to talk about emotions can also provide young children with a tool to modulate and manage emotions, in particular, negative emotions (Bretherton, Fritz, Zahn-Waxler, & Ridgeway, 1986; Laible, 2007; Laible & Thompson, 1998).

For example, Kopp (1989) argues that children who can communicate their feelings through words become less distressed during frustrating situations, perhaps because they are more skilled at negotiating, verbally refusing to follow instructions, or changing the topic of discussion. Additionally, Denham, et al., (1992) found that mothers who used more frequent and elaborated emotion language with their preschoolers in an affect communication task (i.e. in which mothers and preschoolers discussed photographs of infants showing emotions), had children who scored higher on emotion situation knowledge and were more able to regulate negative emotions in a preschool setting. These authors suggest that an understanding of the causes of emotion can be reassuring to a child and aid in their feelings of intrapersonal control.

Parents can also talk about emotions in the context of conversations about specific emotional events in a child’s life. The co-construction of emotional experiences through discourse is posited to be an important means by which a child comes to regulate his or her emotions, and to develop adaptive coping strategies (Kopp, 1989). Conversing or joint reminiscing about emotions provides children with an opportunity to interpret and evaluate their emotional experience with the assistance of a more skilled partner (Fivush, Brotman, Buckner, & Goodman, 2000). Through conversation, parents can assist their children in making sense of past stressful experiences and in preparing them for potentially stressful
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experiences in the future (Laible, 2007; Laible & Panfile, in press; Sales, Fivush, & Peterson, 2003).

Typically, research involving mother-child conversations has focused more on child outcomes such as autobiographical memory development (e.g. Farrar, Fasig, & Welch-Ross, 1997; Nelson & Fivush, 2004; Fivush & Nelson, 2006; Peterson, Sales, Rees, & Fivush, 2007) and self-concept development (e.g. Bird & Reese, 2006; Fivush & Haden, 2005; Reese, Bird, & Tripp, 2007) and less on emotional outcomes such as emotion understanding or regulation (Denham, 1998; Eisenberg, et al., 1998). However, increasingly, researchers are recognizing how mother-child conversations about emotional events can impact the development of children’s emotion competence.

For example, Fivush, Berlin, Sales, Mennuti-Washburn, and Cassidy (2003) looked at mother-child reminiscing about negative experiences (i.e. those that involved fear, anger, and sadness) and how this influenced young children’s developing “emotional self-concept” which included coping with and resolving negative emotion. Additionally Laible and Song (2006) discuss the role of emotion-laden mother-child discourse in the construction of emotional and relational understanding. In their study, preschool children and their mothers took part in a reminiscing task which was coded for the emotional content and style of the discourse. Children also completed measures of emotional understanding and representations of relationships, and mothers completed reports of children’s aggressive behavior. They found that the children of more elaborative (versus repetitive) mothers scored higher on emotional understanding and were more likely to have coherent, prosocial representations of relationships.

More recently, Fivush (2007) looked at individual differences in how mothers reminisce about shared past experiences with their preschool children and how these
differences relate to several child outcomes. She found that in addition to having children who tell more coherent and emotionally expressive autobiographical narratives and show a better understanding of self, mothers who engage in elaborative reminiscing also have children who are better able to regulate their emotions.

Another gap in the existing emotion discourse literature is that it predominantly focuses on how mothers and children discuss events that have already happened, with very little investigation of how they discuss events that will happen in the future. The current study is premised on the belief that studying mother-child discussion about future-oriented emotional events is important towards achieving a greater understanding of the development of children’s socio-emotional competence.

There is evidence that parent-child conversations about upcoming events begin to occur around age two (Adamson & Bakeman, 2006), and during the preschool years, children begin to develop a sense of self that extends through time, both to the past and to the future (Hudson, 2001; Lemmon & Moore, 2001; Povinelli & Simon, 1998). There is also some evidence that young children can engage in episodic future thinking (Atance & O’Neill, 2005). However, children are certainly not as skilled as adults in being able to “mentally time travel” (Suddendorf & Busby, 2005) and thus still require a more experienced partner (i.e. a parent) to interpret anticipations for the future for them.

In the few examinations of “future talk” that have been undertaken to date, there has been little interest in the role of such talk in the socialization of children’s emotions. Rather, researchers have focused on children’s exposure to future-oriented talk and their developing concepts of time and planning (Benson, 1997; Lucariello & Nelson, 1987). For example, Hudson (2002) looked at maternal stylistic differences in mothers’ elicitation of future event talk, temporal frames of reference, and mothers’ use of conventional time terms in
conversations with young children about novel and familiar past and future events. And in another study, she examined the relation between characteristics of mothers’ talk about future events and young children’s ability to contribute to naturalistic conversations about future events and their subsequent understanding of future time concepts (Hudson 2006).

In one exception in this literature, Eisenmann (1997) looked at maternal modes of organizing, via discourse, an imminent emotional event (i.e. a brief separation from her child), and in particular, was concerned with gender differences. She examined mother-child dyads at four time points when the children were 17, 23, 30 and 36 months of age. She found that mothers talked in greater detail with daughters than with sons and that they were more likely to take daughters’, rather than sons’, perspectives into account. In particular, mothers of girls represented the imminent separation more frequently by making more pre-announcements and seeking girls’ cooperation, whereas mothers of boys more frequently left the room without any verbal utterance or collaboration-seeking. Boys, in turn, reacted with more distress to the separation. This one study suggests that how a mother organizes and prepares her child for an upcoming stressful event might have important implications for her child’s ability to emotionally deal with it.

**Emotion Socialization and Children’s Social Competence**

In addition to children’s emotion competence, another related and important outcome of emotion socialization is social competence. In their respective reviews of the emotion socialization literature, Eisenberg et al. (1998) and Morris et al. (2007) concluded that there is strong empirical evidence demonstrating a positive relation between parental emotion socialization and children’s outcomes in the domain of emotional experience and expression, which in turn, underlie children’s socio-emotional competence. Indeed, there is an
impressive empirical literature revealing that emotionally competent children are more socially competent (see for e.g. Denham, 1986; 1998; Denham et al., 2003; Denham, Mitchell-Copeland, Strandberg, Auerbach, & Blair, 1997; Denham, Renwick, & Holt, 1991; Eisenberg & Fabes, 2006; Spinrad, et al., 2006). It is generally accepted that the ability to express, make sense of, and cope with emotional experiences is intrinsic to adaptive and harmonious relationships with others.

Researchers are increasingly looking at the ways in which family and peer contexts are connected in their efforts to develop more comprehensive and meaningful models of child social development. In keeping with this, it is important to identify the emotion-related socialization practices or factors that contribute to the development of children’s problem behaviors with their peers. This is in large part because early maladaptive behaviors in the peer context can lead to unfavorable outcomes later on, in many domains of the child’s life, both socially and academically (e.g. Burt, Obradovic, Long, & Masten, 2008; Carlton & Winsler, 1999; Eisenberg, et al., 1999; Ladd, 1990, Ladd, Birch, & Buhs, 1999). Thus, in the current study, I looked at social competence as a child outcome, with the theoretically and empirically-supported assumption that mothers influence children’s social competence in large part via their socialization of children’s emotion competence (Denham et al, 2003; Denham, Blair, Schmidt, & DeMulder, 2002).

There is a great deal of evidence that cumulatively suggests that parents who respond to children’s negative emotions in supportive ways (for e.g., with acceptance, tolerance, and encouragement) contribute positively to the development of children’s social (as well as emotional) competence. And conversely, there is evidence to suggest that parents who respond to children’s negative emotions in non-supportive ways (for e.g., with dismissing,
minimizing, or punitive reactions) contribute to the development of emotional and behavioral problems in their children.

In a classic paper by Roberts and Strayer (1987), parental responses to the emotional distress (i.e. expressed anger, fear, sadness) of their preschool children were examined and the relation of these responses to children's general competence was assessed. In this study, “general competence” comprised peer competence, ego strength and being “purposive” (versus “aimless”). Overall, they found that parental encouragement of emotional expressiveness was positively associated with child competence and that parental responses that tended to discourage or suppress the expression of negative affect impaired children’s competence.

In a replication and extension of these findings, Roberts (1999) employed meta-analytic techniques in his report on five studies that investigated parents’ responses to the emotional distress of their children in relation to children’s prosocial behavior and ego resilience in preschool. Consistent with Roberts and Strayer (1987), it was concluded that parents’ tolerant, non-punitive responses to children’s emotional distress were related to children’s ego-resilient and prosocial behaviors.

In an extensive research program, Eisenberg and Fabes and their colleagues have examined the relation between parental responding to children’s negative emotions and children’s outcomes. For example, Eisenberg, et al. (1996) examined the relations of mothers' and fathers' reported emotion-related practices to parents' and teachers' reports of children's social skills, popularity, and coping as well as the quantity and quality of children's comforting of an infant. They found that mothers' problem-focused reactions tended to be positively associated with children's social functioning, whereas maternal minimizing reactions tended to be linked to lower levels of social competence.
Similarly, Eisenberg, Fabes, Shepard, Guthrie, Murphy, and Reiser (1999) examined self-reported parental reactions to children's negative emotions and children's socially appropriate and problem behaviors and found that parental distress and punitive reactions predicted later problem behaviors in children (for e.g., aggressive and disruptive behaviors). Fabes, Leonard, Kupanoff, and Martin (2001) examined the relation between parents' reactions to children's negative emotions, including parental emotional distress, and children’s social competence. It was concluded that distressed parents who use harsh coping strategies (i.e. punitive and minimization) in response to children's negative emotions have children who are less able to behave in socially competent ways. This is supported by Jones, Eisenberg, Fabes, and MacKinnon (2002) who again, found that punitive and minimizing responses were associated with low socioemotional competence.

Finally, Lunkenheimer, Shields and Cortina (2007) looked at the positive emotion socialization practice of parental emotion coaching and the negative socialization practice of emotion dismissing during a family interaction task and examined their effects on children's behavior problems in middle childhood. They found that emotion dismissing was a risk factor, contributing to reports of more behavioral problems. Although emotion coaching did not directly benefit children in terms of their outcomes, it did interact with emotion dismissing such that it protected children from the detrimental effects of emotion dismissing practices. In particular, this protective effect was found for parents' coaching of negative but not positive emotions.

It can be argued that children who are routinely discouraged from expressing negative affect by an ongoing pattern of dismissing, minimizing, and/or punitive maternal reactions learn to hide their expressions of emotions but still become physiologically aroused in stressful situations (see Buck, 1984; Gross & Levenson, 1993). This anxious arousal might
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lead to more intense expressions of emotion that are likely to manifest in less adaptive behaviors, such as aggression or withdrawal. Some support for this comes from Eisenberg and Fabes (1994) who found that maternal minimizing and punitive responses to children’s negative emotions were associated with children’s tendencies to inhibit emotions and with avoidant coping strategies in anger-eliciting contexts.

A high level of emotional arousal might also impede a child’s ability to consider the experience of others, leading to less empathic and prosocial responding. In support of this, researchers have shown that parental encouragement and support of children’s expressions of negative emotions is related to children’s perspective taking and empathy (Bryant, 1987, Denham & Grout, 1993, Denham et al., 1994), and to greater emotion understanding in others (Halberstadt, 1986). Also, in the Laible and Song (2006) study described earlier, mother child open discussion of negative emotion was associated with fewer reports of young children’s aggressive behavior. These researchers attributed this to the role that discussion of negative emotions plays in assisting a child to regulate his or her own negative affect, which in turn was associated with increased social competence. Others have also documented empirical links between parental acceptance and encouragement of children’s emotions and decreased child aggression (Gottman et al., 1996; Ramsden & Hubbard, 2002).

In none of the studies described above were mothers’ responses to their anticipated children’s emotions examined. Thus, in the current study, I looked at the ways in which mothers reported responding to children’s expressions of emotions pertaining to future-oriented stressful experiences and the relation of this responding to their children’s social competence, as assessed by prosocial behavior, social withdrawal, and aggression. I predicted that mothers who, by various means, encourage and support the expression of children’s negative emotions when faced with an upcoming stressful event, will have children who are
better equipped at managing their emotions and maintaining a sense of intrapersonal emotional control, both of which would facilitate effective coping, problem-solving, and more adaptive behaviors in social interactions. By virtue of being able to articulate an anticipated emotional experience with a supportive parent, the child’s ability to regulate and contain the negative emotions that might be aroused would be increased. In turn, the child would be less likely to act out in aggressive ways with peers, and would be less withdrawn from their peers. Finally, a better-regulated child would exhibit more prosocial behaviors with peers, in part due to having a greater understanding and capacity to tolerate their own and other’s emotions. On the other hand, mothers who, by various means, discourage their children’s expressions of negative emotions will have children who need to resort to less constructive and maladaptive modes of dealing with stressful peer interactions, such as aggression, withdrawal from others, and difficulty behaving in prosocial ways.

The Role of Child Temperament in Emotion Socialization

It is not only parents who contribute to children’s outcomes. It is well accepted that children themselves, by virtue of their developmental status, their sex, and their personalities, also contribute to some degree to their own socialization (see Bell & Chapman, 1986; Collins, Maccoby, Steinberg, Hetherington, & Bornstein, 2000; Grusec & Goodnow, 1994). In the present study, the role of child temperament was considered a potentially influential factor in the socialization process.

The term “temperament” generally refers to a constitutionally based, relatively stable behavioral style (Thomas & Chess, 1977). Both temperament and parenting can contribute to children’s adjustment in direct or even additive ways (Bates & Pettit, 2007), however perhaps a more intriguing and fruitful inquiry is into how parenting and temperament interact. Indeed,
specific child temperament characteristics are increasingly being incorporated into socialization models as moderators of parenting effects on child adjustment (see Bates & Pettit, 2007; Gallagher, 2002; Kochanska, 1997; Kochanska, Aksan, & Joy, 2007; Rothbart & Bates, 2006). In this study, child temperament, specifically negative emotionality or affect, was considered as a moderating factor.

Negative emotionality refers to individual differences in thresholds of reaction, latency, intensity, and recovery time; that is how easily and how intensely emotions are aroused (Rothbart, 1989). The trait of negative emotionality or affect includes irritability, frustration, and tendencies to discomfort and sadness (Rothbart & Bates, 1998). This particular behavioral trait was included as a factor in the present study because it is often regarded as the core or hallmark of “difficult” temperament (Bates, 1980) and it has been related to both internalizing and externalizing behavior problems (Rothbart & Bates, 1998; Sanson, Hemphill, & Smart, 2004; Seifer, 2000). In general, high negative affect and poor regulation have been associated with both externalizing and internalizing difficulties in children. Conversely, low levels of negative affect and high regulation have been associated with social competencies such as prosocial behaviors and peer popularity (e.g. Cole, Zahn-Waxler, Fox, Usher, & Welsh, 1996; Cole, Zahn-Waxler, & Smith, 1994; Eisenberg & Fabes, 2006).

Eisenberg and Fabes (1994) investigated the relation between mothers' reactions to their 4 and 6 year-old children’s negative emotions (using the CCNES), children's temperament, and children's anger behaviors (observations of children’s coping with negative emotion in social interactions at school). They found that maternal minimizing and punitive responses were associated with maternal perceptions of children's low attentional control and high negative affect, as well as with children's tendencies to escape rather than vent emotion.
when angered. Maternal distress reactions were also correlated with ratings of children's high emotional intensity, negative affect, and low levels of venting when angered. They concluded that mother’s reports of how they react to child’s displays of negative emotion were related to their perceptions of child temperament. Although in the Eisenberg and Fabes (1994) study, the interest was in how temperament affects parenting, whereas in the present study, the focus was on temperament by parenting interactions.

The literature is somewhat mixed and inconsistent with respect to negative emotionality by parenting interactions, however a general pattern does emerge in which negative emotionality exacerbates the effects of negative parenting on child behavior problems (Bates & Pettit, 2007). There is some empirical support for the idea that children with difficult temperaments are more susceptible to the effects of parenting than those children with easier temperaments (e.g. Belsky, 2005, Kochanska, 1995, 1997; Morris, Silk, Steinberg, Sessa, Avenevoli, & Essex, 2002; Rubin, Burgess, & Hastings, 2002; Stright, Gallagher, & Kelley, 2008). In other words, relations between parenting and child outcomes might be stronger for those children who are seen as more “difficult” or sensitive to parenting interventions.

In the present study, it was predicted that the temperamental trait of negative affect would moderate the effect of maternal emotion socialization on children’s social adjustment. In other words, the way in which mothers respond to the anticipation of children’s negative feelings will be particularly important or significant for children who are high in negative affect. I predicted that these children would require greater assistance and support by the mother. Thus mothers who demonstrate acceptance and tolerance of their children’s heightened affect, and who encourage their children’s expressions of their negative emotions, will have children who are better able to cope with this negative arousal in certain, stressful,
circumstances like peer interactions in a school context. Similarly, mothers who punish or minimize (in effect, discourage) the expression of their highly reactive children’s negative emotions will have children who cannot regulate their arousal and in turn, will exhibit maladaptive peer behaviors.

Some support for this hypothesis comes from Morris et al. (2002) who examined the effects of child temperament and negative mothering on children’s adjustment. In this study 7 and 8 year-old children were assessed regarding maternal psychological control and hostility. Mothers completed temperament scales and teachers provided information on child adjustment. Results showed that among children high in irritable distress, maternal psychological control was associated with internalizing problems, and maternal hostility was associated with externalizing problems. Among children with poor effortful control, maternal hostility was associated with externalizing behaviors. These researchers concluded that the effects of negative parenting are accentuated among children with temperamental vulnerabilities.

The Future Scenarios Questionnaire: A New Measure

Development of the Future Scenarios Questionnaire (FSQ). There are few measures available to measure emotion socialization and even fewer, if any, to measure future-oriented emotion socialization. Given this, a primary purpose of this study was to develop and to begin initial validation of a new self-report instrument, The Future Scenarios Questionnaire (FSQ). To date, there is no instrument available that looks at the strategies or behaviors parents employ in response to children’s negative emotions (such as anger, fear, or sadness) that they anticipate will be felt or experienced by their children in the near future. The FSQ was designed to fill this gap in the literature.
Examples of existing emotion socialization measures include Halberstadt’s (1986) Family Expressive Questionnaire (FEQ) which measures emotions expressed by one’s family and Saarni’s (1990b) Parent Attitudes Toward Children’s Expressiveness Scale (PACES) which examines the degree to which parents are accepting and permissive or controlling and restrictive towards children’s emotional expressiveness. However, both of these instruments focus on whether or not a parent is either encouraging or restrictive of their children’s expressions and neither one provides information on the range of specific strategies or behaviors by which parents go about encouraging or discouraging emotional expressions.

There is one existing measure which does reflect different ways that parents respond to young children’s negative emotional displays. The Coping with Children’s Negative Emotions Scale (CCNES; Fabes, Eisenberg, & Bernzweig, 1990; Fabes et al., 2002) measures the extent to which mothers exhibit six qualitatively different responses to children’s negative emotional expressions: personal distress reactions, the use of negative control strategies such as punishing or minimizing negative emotions in their children, and the extent to which they encourage expression of, comfort, and help their child deal with the stressor. The FSQ was modelled to a large extent on this measure, however it is different in that it looks at how parents (mothers in this study) respond to negative emotions they anticipate will be experienced and/or expressed by their children in response to a stressful event in the future. Although it is very likely (and predicted) that there will be considerable overlap in maternal styles of addressing emotional events (be they in the past, ongoing, or in the future), there are also reasons to believe that differentiating between in-the-moment responding and anticipatory responding is useful.

When considering events that have yet to happen, there is a certain amount of “what if” thinking that occurs, which is usually accompanied by feelings of uncertainty and worry
(see Lagattuta, 2007). People differ in how they deal with these feelings and the extent to which they plan or prepare for preventative action. A mother’s anticipation of the impact a future event will have on her child will influence if and how she talks to her child about it, which in turn, will influence her child’s representation of the upcoming experience, and his or her ability to cope with it. I now turn to a discussion of the specific ways in which mothers might talk to their children about potentially stressful future events. Many of these ways come from the thinking of researchers who have directed themselves to the issue of maternal discourse about emotion.

Thompson (1990) speculates on various ways in which verbal discourse or conversations might contribute to emotion regulation, for example, when parents talk about their own feelings or when parents manage or filter what information is given to a child about potentially emotional events. For example, they can strategically omit or de-emphasize certain pieces of information, and as a result, redefine or reshape an experience for a child. It has also been proposed that conversations about internal states are more helpful if they are reflective (i.e. about other persons or about past events) as opposed to about one’s own current emotionally laden interactions (Brown & Dunn, 1991; Fivush, et al., 2000).

The “meta-emotion” work of Gottman, Katz, & Hooven (1996; 1997) is also relevant. Gottman and his colleagues contrast an emotion-coaching parental philosophy with an emotion-dismissing philosophy. Emotion-coaching parents see their children’s emotional expressions as opportunities to help them deal with them, can talk about emotions in a differentiated manner, and can assist children with their negative emotions. Emotion dismissing parents, on the other hand, minimize, deny, and ignore emotions in their children and are unaware of how to effectively deal with negative emotions. In various studies, these researchers have found that emotion-coaching parents have children with better-regulated
physiological reactions to emotion, greater attention abilities, and more sophisticated social skills and more positive peer relations.

Concerning talking with children about emotions, emotion coaches will help a children label their emotions, will educate children about the nature of emotion, and will teach children strategies for dealing with intense emotions. Dismissing parents, in contrast, will not be inclined to talk to children about emotions and if they do, it will not likely be in a supportive way. For example parents who perceive children’s negative emotions as aversive or harmful tend to punish children or trivialize the negative emotion in order to quickly halt its expression (Gottman et al., 1997).

Extrapolating from and expanding on some of these suggestions, I speculated that there are several different approaches parents might take when discussing imminent emotional events with their children. The FSQ attempts to capture these different approaches in a self-report format, which theoretically fall under two broad categories: strategies that encourage children’s expressions of emotion, and strategies that inhibit or restrict children’s expressions of emotion.

First, I will discuss possible approaches that fall under the category of encouraging children’s emotion expression: (1) Acknowledging and labelling the anticipated emotion. In addition to teaching the child about emotions by assigning meaning, this strategy would also convey maternal acceptance and support of the emotion; (2) Helping the child feel more in control of the situation by instilling a sense of mastery or by helping him/her generate explicit strategies that might be effective in a particular situation (e.g. coaching or problem-solving); (3) Actively encourage the child to express and talk about the emotion in a direct way; and finally, (4) Using strategies that help the child mentally reframe an upcoming stressful event. This could involve distancing from the emotional event without taking the
child away from his or her feelings, for example, via storytelling, drawing pictures or some other abstract, creative strategy.

There are also several possible strategies that would likely serve to restrict or discourage a child’s expression of emotion. These include: (1) Refrain from any discussion of the emotional content of the event or even the event itself, perhaps in an attempt to avoid creating feelings of anxiety or distress in a child (or the mother); (2) Discuss the event, but downplay or minimize the negative emotions that might be aroused; (3) Deceive the child about what he or she will likely feel (e.g. denial of the emotion) or distort the meaning of the emotional experience in some way (e.g. by providing inappropriate attributions about the cause of the emotion); (4) Shame or lecture a child about expressing the emotion perhaps in order to pre-empt an emotional display; (5) Use external contingencies such as threats or bribes in order to try to halt their children’s expression of negative emotion. These could take the form of either material tangible contingencies (e.g. a treat) or a more “psychological” contingency, such as explicit maternal approval or disapproval; and finally, (6) Focus on the negative aspects of the situation by exaggerating or overestimating the severity, consequences, or the uncontrollability of the stressful event. This could be due to mothers becoming over-aroused themselves when faced with the thought of the child experiencing or displaying a negative emotion. Their focus on their own personal distress or discomfort would make it difficult to focus on the emotional needs of the child and support him/her through the emotional experience.

Similar to the CCNES, in the FSQ, mothers were presented with hypothetical everyday scenarios in which they anticipate their child will be upset, angry or afraid. They are then asked to rate the likelihood of responding to the scenario in ten possible ways, each
of which reflects one of the strategies described above which serve to either encourage or discourage their child’s expression of the negative emotion.

**Validation of the Future Scenarios Questionnaire (FSQ).** In mother-child conversations about the past, maternal styles of reminiscing do not appear to be situation-specific but rather, seem to reflect a consistent attribute of the mother (Reese & Fivush, 1993). Additionally, Kuersten-Hogan and McHale (2000) found a striking level of stability in mothers’ use of emotion talk as children progress from the toddler years to the preschool years. In other words, mothers’ tendencies to use either high or low levels of emotion talk when their children were toddlers continued as their children became preschoolers, despite significant changes in children’s abilities to both verbally express emotions and understand parents’ explanations of emotions. These authors suggest that this consistency in emotion talk is due to other, enduring parental variables such as awareness of, interest in, and experience and comfort with emotional events.

Consistent with these ideas, I predicted there would be other, more stable, maternal characteristics or traits that would relate in meaningful ways to mothers’ response styles on the FSQ. In other words, the extent to which children’s emotional expressions are encouraged or discouraged is likely to some extent indicative of more generalized maternal mindsets or internal schemas around emotions and relationships. These implicit, or to some extent unconscious, schemas would guide how mothers react and respond to their children’s behaviors and emotional displays (Bugental & Happaney, 2002; Bugental, Johnston, New, & Silvester, 1998). Examples of some of these mindsets include maternal attachment representations, maternal mind-mindedness, and maternal perceptions of control in relationships. In the present study, each of these was assessed. In addition, a measure of maternal alexithymia, a personality construct, was included in order to assess mothers’
potential deficits in the ability to describe, process, and regulate emotions. I will briefly
discuss the rationale behind using each of the above measures to begin validation of the FSQ.
The CCNES was also included in the battery of validation measures in order to ascertain the
overlap in responding between these two related emotional socialization measures.

**Maternal attachment representations.** With respect to emotion socialization, maternal
practices are often rooted in their own attachment histories and experiences (Cassidy, 1994).
Haft and Slade (1989) argue that a mother’s internal working model of attachment helps her
to organize, interpret, and sometimes even distort or avoid emotionally tinged or attachment-
relevant information. Thus, mothers who are dismissing with respect to attachment might
limit or discourage children’s expression of negative emotion to pre-empt the need to comfort
and nurture, in effect to minimize attachment behaviors in children. Conversely mothers who
are preoccupied with respect to attachment might encourage or heighten children’s emotional
expressiveness or maximize attachment behaviors in children. Secure/autonomous mothers
are likely to be mothers who are open and willing to discuss emotions, in particular negative
emotions, in a balanced, moderated way.

In empirical support of this argument, DeOliveira, Moran, and Pederson (2005)
examined associations between maternal representations of attachment and mother’s thoughts
and feelings about their own emotions and emotions emerging in their toddlers. They found
that autonomous mothers demonstrated the most open and flexible mindset around a variety
of emotions in themselves and in their toddlers; dismissing mothers exhibited a tendency to
minimize internalizing emotions in themselves and their children, while unresolved mothers
described the most emotion-regulatory difficulties. In general, “secure” or “insecure”
representational models relate in meaningful ways to child outcomes (e.g. George &
Various research groups have developed different ways of assessing mothers’ internal working models of caregiving or attachment, for example the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI; Main & Goldwyn, 1984; Main, Goldwyn, & Hesse, 2003) or the Parent Development Interview (PDI; Aber, Slade, Berger, Bresgi, & Kaplan 1985). In the present study, mothers’ representations of attachment were assessed via their ability to produce a “secure base script” or narrative (see Waters & Waters, 2006). Specifically, I expected that mothers who have greater access to and can generate a “secure base script” will endorse strategies on the FSQ that encourage or permit a child’s expressions of negative emotion, whereas mothers lacking or with limited access to a secure base script will be more likely to endorse strategies that disavow or limit the child’s expressions of negative emotion.

**Maternal mind-mindedness.** Maternal mind-mindedness is defined as the proclivity to treat one’s child as an individual with a mind from an early age, rather than merely an entity with needs that must be satisfied (Meins, Fernyhough, Fradley, & Tuckey, 2001; Meins & Fernyhough, 1999; Meins, et al., 2003). The construct of mind-mindedness is premised on a tradition of research that attributes caregivers’ tendencies to treat infants as intentional agents and the role of this tendency in children’s own mental or emotional development (e.g. Bruner, 1981; Fonagy, Steele, Steele, Moran, & Higgit, 1991). In various research programs, it has been found that a mother’s capacity to represent her child’s mental states and to reflect upon her child in terms of his or her thoughts and feelings relates to maternal sensitivity, secure mother-child attachment, the development of “theory of mind”, and children’s self-regulatory capabilities (e.g. Fonagy, Gergely, Jurist, & Target, 2002; Fonagy, et al., 1991; Fonagy & Target, 1997; Meins, et al, 2001; Meins & Fernyhough, 1999; Meins, et al., 2003; Koren-Karie, Oppenheim, Dolev, Sher, & Etzio-Carasso, 2002; Oppenheim & Koren-Karie, 2002).
In the present research, it was predicted that mothers who think about their children as thinking, feeling beings (i.e. having greater “mind-mindedness”) will be more likely to endorse strategies on the FSQ that include acknowledgment and discussion of the child’s emotions and their causes and consequences. Those mothers with less “mind-mindedness” will be more inclined to avoid discussing the emotional-salient aspects of events or if they do so, they will minimize or ignore the role of their child’s emotions.

In some support of this prediction, Bretherton, Golby, and Cho (1997) describe an aspect of maternal insensitivity as the tendency to ignore feelings of sadness or hurt in their child when he or she engaged in an aversive behavior. They suggest that these mothers, in their focus on the actual child behaviors, seemed not to think about the source of the child’s actions (i.e. the emotions underlying the behavior). Thus, in their discipline attempts to “make their child understand another perspective” they neglected the child’s own experience of the situation.

**Maternal perceptions of control.** Another relational schema used to validate the FSQ concerns the amount of interpersonal power or control that one has relative to others, in this case, that mothers have relative to children (see Bugental & Shennum, 1984; Bugental, Blue, & Cruzcosa, 1989). Mothers with “high power” schemas believe they can effectively influence parent-child interaction whereas mothers with “low power” schemas believe the child has more control than they do. “High power” mothers do not see children’s behaviors as threatening and they are able to confidently engage in constructive, solution focused, reflective appraisal and action when faced with challenging caregiving situations (Bugental, 1992).

Bugental and her colleagues have shown that adults who think they lack control over children show heightened arousal and reactivity in their interactions with them which can
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lead to maladaptive parenting actions. Further, there is some evidence that mothers with low perceived control or power use derogatory communication patterns as a means of power assertion with their children as a means of power repair (Bugental & Happaney, 2002). In the current study, I predicted that “low power mothers” would be impaired in their ability to effectively coach and support their children in emotional situations. Specifically, it was hypothesized that these mothers would be more likely to exhibit personal distress responses and to endorse shaming, minimizing, and distorting strategies, perhaps in their attempts to restore feelings of control in what might feel like uncontrollable situations. “High power mothers” on the other hand, would be less likely to feel threatened in anticipation of emotional situations for their children and would thus be more likely to engage in strategies that would support and encourage their children’s expressions of negative emotion.

Maternal alexithymia. Alexithymia is a relatively stable personality construct that is characterized by the following two core features: a) difficulty identifying one’s feelings and distinguishing them from bodily sensations and b) difficulty communicating one’s emotions to others (Taylor, Bagby, & Parker, 1997). There has been very little research linking alexithymia and parenting and in what does exist, the link of interest has been between emotional socialization practices and alexithymia as a child outcome measure. For example, Berenbaum and James (1994) found that individuals who retrospectively reported growing up in environments in which family members were not permitted to act openly and express their feelings directly, or in which they felt emotionally unsafe, had higher alexithymia levels than did individuals who reported having grown up in more emotionally open and safe family environments. In the present study, it was predicted that mothers with higher levels of alexithymia would respond in less supportive ways to their children’s anticipated negative emotions because of deficits in their own abilities to describe, process, and regulate...
emotions. These deficits would translate into strategies on the FSQ that would serve to
discourage children’s expressions and communications about negative emotions.

The Present Study and Summary of Hypotheses

The purpose of the present study was twofold. Its primary purpose was to examine the
effects of maternal emotion socialization on children’s social competence. Second, it was
intended to develop and begin validation of a new self-report measure of emotion
socialization, the FSQ, which assesses how mothers respond to their anticipated children’s
negative emotions. This measure was validated with additional maternal self-report
questionnaires and interviews. Child outcomes were measured with teacher reports of
children’s social behaviors with their peers. Child temperament was measured by mother
report.

With respect to prediction of child outcomes, it was hypothesized that:

1) mothers who encourage the expression of their anticipated children’s negative
   emotions would have children who would be rated as less aggressive, less asocial,
   and more prosocial with peers. Similarly, mothers who discourage the expression
   of their children’s emotions would have children who would be rated as more
   aggressive, more asocial, and less prosocial with peers; and that

2) the relation between the FSQ and children’s adjustment would be moderated by
   children’s negative affect. In other words, it was predicted that the hypothesized
   relations described above would be stronger for children (or significant) for
   children rated high in negative affect than for those children rated low in negative
   affect.
With respect to the validation of the FSQ, it was hypothesized that:

1) maternal styles of responding on the FSQ would be significantly correlated with maternal responses on the CCNES, such that mothers with higher scores on the supportive scales of the CCNES would be more likely to encourage the expression of their children’s emotions and mothers with higher scores on the non-supportive scales of the CCNES would be more likely to discourage the expression of their children’s emotions;

2) maternal styles of responding on the FSQ would be significantly correlated with maternal attachments representations, such that more “secure” mothers would be more likely to encourage the expression of their children’s emotions and less “secure” mothers would be more likely to discourage the expression of their children’s emotions;

3) maternal styles of responding on the FSQ would be correlated with maternal mind-mindedness, such that mothers with higher mind-mindedness scores would be more likely to encourage the expression of their children’s emotions and mothers with lower mind-mindedness would be more likely to discourage the expression of their children’s emotions;

4) maternal styles of responding on the FSQ would be significantly correlated with maternal perceptions of control, such that “high control” mothers would be more likely to encourage the expression of their children’s emotions and “low-control” mothers would be more likely to discourage the expression of their children’s emotions; and that

5) maternal styles of responding on the FSQ would be significantly correlated with maternal alexithymia, such that mothers with lower levels of alexithymia would
be more likely to encourage the expression of their children’s emotions and mothers with higher levels of alexithymia would be more likely to discourage the expression of their children’s emotions.

Method

Participants

Ninety-two mothers of preschool-age children (43 boys and 49 girls) participated in the study. Mothers’ mean age was 39.0 years (SD = 4.8, with a range of 22.2 - 47.8). The mean age for both boys and girls was 61.5 months (SD = 6.9) (with boys ranging from 50 to 73 months with SD= 6.9, and girls ranging from 48 to 74 months with SD= 7.0). Eighty-four mothers (91%) reported being married or living in a common-law relationship, and 8 mothers (9%) reported being either single, divorced, or separated. Twenty-one mothers (23%) reported having one child, 52 mothers (57%) reported having two children, and 19 mothers (20%) reported having more than two children.

Overall, mothers were well-educated, with a majority of mothers (54%) having completed college or university and an additional 26% having completed (or being in the process of completing) graduate school. Fifty-seven mothers (62%) reported working full-time outside the home. Sixty-seven mothers (73%) mothers were born in North America, and the sample was fairly homogeneous with respect to cultural identification, with 49 mothers (53%) identifying themselves as coming from Anglo-Canadian and/or British cultural backgrounds. The remainder of the mothers identified themselves as coming from various cultural backgrounds, including European (18%), Jewish (13%), Asian (8%), and Other/Did not Identify (8%).
Eighty-six of the mothers (93%) gave the researchers permission to contact the study child’s teacher to obtain information about the child’s behavior at school. Of the teachers that were contacted, 69 of them (80%) completed and returned the questionnaire package they were sent, thus, teacher ratings were available for 75% of the entire sample.

The majority of the participants (84%) were recruited by phone from a research database, which lists families who had previously agreed to be contacted for potential participation in research on child development being conducted at the University of Toronto. The remaining participants were recruited via networking. All mothers received a $5.00 Starbucks gift certificate as a token of appreciation for their participation.

**Measures and Procedures**

This study was part of a larger study, which included several additional measures and procedures. Only those measures and procedures that are relevant to this study will be described here.

**Mother Measures**

**Future Scenarios Questionnaire (FSQ).** The Future Scenarios Questionnaire (FSQ) is a self-report questionnaire that was developed by the author for this study. The questionnaire includes nine future-oriented scenarios in which mothers anticipate that their child will experience a negative emotion (e.g. nervous about upcoming show and tell day at school, scared about an upcoming flu shot at the doctor’s, sad about a favourite friend moving away, angry or disappointed because of a change in family plans). Mothers were asked to read each of the scenarios and indicate the likelihood from 1 (not at all likely) to 7 (very likely) that they would say or do each of ten listed suggestions in order to help their child deal with or emotionally prepare for the situation. The listed suggestions included the following: (1)
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Acceptance: conveying acceptance, understanding, and tolerance of the child’s negative emotion (e.g. “tell him/her that it can be really hard when a good friend moves away and he/she might feel sad”); (2) Mastery: invoking child’s feelings of mastery or control over the situation by suggesting different ways of handling the situation (e.g. “role play with a toy Doctor’s Kit about what will happen and what he/she can expect at the doctor’s office”); (3) Abstraction: using creative, abstract ways of talking about the situation or emotion (e.g. drawing a picture of reading a storybook about a similar event); (4) Encourage Expression: encouraging the child to explicitly talk about his or her negative feelings (e.g. “encourage him/her to talk about what he/she feels when he/she thinks about friend moving away”); (5) Shaming: responding in a way that shames, judges, or ridicules the child (e.g. “tell him/her not to act like a baby by crying at the doctor’s office”); (6) Minimizing: responding in a way that minimizes, dismisses, or downplays the emotion (e.g. “tell him/her that it won’t be a big deal”; “tell him/her that there’s no reason to be scared and not to overreact”); (7) Distortion: denying or distorting the emotional experience of the child (e.g. “tell him/her that he/she won’t be that scared” or “tell him/her that the shot won’t hurt”); (8) Contingencies: taking away something from the child or “bribing” the child to conform to maternal expectation of how the child should feel (e.g. “telling him/her that if he/she is really brave at the doctor’s, s/he’ll get a new toy”); (9) Maternal Distress: responding in a way that is overly intrusive often with an exaggerated focus on mother’s upset or concerns (e.g. “let him/her know how upset it makes me for him/her to have to miss the party”); and (10) Avoidance: not doing or saying anything beforehand. Internal consistencies for the different subscales were acceptable with Cronbach’s alphas ranging from .67 (Maternal Distress) to .94 (Encourage Expression). Additional information regarding the psychometric properties of the FSQ can be found in the
Results section. The FSQ Questionnaire as well as a guide to responses can be found in Appendix A.

**Coping with Children’s Negative Emotions Scale (CCNES).** Maternal responding to children’s negative emotions was measured with the Coping with Children’s Negative Emotions Scale (CCNES; Fabes et al., 1990). This is a parent-report questionnaire that outlines 12 scenarios in which children are likely to display distress and negative affect (e.g., being teased by friends, being scared of injections, etc.). For each situation, mothers were asked to rate, on 7-point scale, the likelihood that they would respond in each of the following six ways: (1) **Distress Reaction:** react with feelings of personal distress when child expresses negative emotion (e.g., “feel upset and uncomfortable because of my child’s reaction”); (2) **Punitive Reaction:** respond with verbal or physical punishment to control children’s negative emotional displays (e.g., “tell my child that if she starts crying then she’ll have to go to her room right away”); (3) **Minimization Responses:** dismiss or discount the seriousness of the child’s emotional reaction (e.g., “tell my child that he is over-reacting”); (4) **Expressive Encouragement:** respond with acceptance and encourages the child to express the negative emotion (e.g., “encourage my child to talk about her fears”, “tell him it's ok to cry when you feel unhappy”); (5) **Emotion-Focused Reactions:** respond with strategies that are intended to help the child feel better, either through distraction or comforting (e.g., “comfort my child and try to make him/her feel better”, “distract my child by talking about happy things”); (6) **Problem-Focused Reactions:** respond with strategies to help the child solve the problem or cope effectively with the stressor (e.g. “help my child think of places she hasn't looked yet [for her lost toy]”).

Cronbach’s alphas for the subscales were as follows: .65 (Distress Reaction), .78 (Punitive Reaction), .83 (Minimization), .90 (Expressive Encouragement), .77 (Emotion-
Focused Reactions), and .80 (Problem-Focused Reactions). The average of the three non-supportive subscales (Distress, Punitive, and Minimization Reactions) was calculated to form a Non-supportive Score and the average of the three supportive subscales (Expressive Encouragement, Emotion-Focused, and Problem-Focused Reactions) was calculated to form a Supportive Score. These latter two scores were used in the data analysis. Additional evidence for the scale’s reliability and validity can be found in Fabes et al. (2002).

Secure Base Scripts Task. Maternal cognitive representations of attachment were measured with the Secure Base Scripts (SBS) task which assesses both the content and quality of a “secure base script”. (For a detailed description of the task and scoring, see Waters and Waters, 2006). Mothers were presented with a series of six word-prompt outlines that were designed to elicit a sense of a story. Four of the outlines were attachment-relevant in that they were designed to prime a secure base script. Of these four outlines, two involved a mother/child dyad (Baby’s Morning, Doctor’s Office) and two involved adult couples (Jane and Bob’s Camping Trip, Sue’s Accident). The remaining two stories were filler stories and were not scored. The six outlines were presented in a counter-balanced order. Mothers were asked to read down each column from left to right and to use the prompts to tell a story. They were told that the stories would be audio-taped and should they choose to stop and start the story again, they were permitted to do so. All stories were transcribed verbatim prior to scoring. Two coders read each story and rated it for secure base scriptedness using a 7-point scale with higher numbers indicating higher scriptedness, or the extent to which the story passage is organized around a secure base script. (Appendix B contains examples of narratives (Baby’s Morning) with different degrees of secure base scriptedness.) Both of these coders had received extensive training in coding the transcripts from H. Waters. Percent agreement (within 2 points, as per H. Waters) between the two coders for the four stories was
91% (Baby’s Morning), 86% (Doctor’s Office), 88% (Camping Trip), and 93% (Sue’s Accident). The scores for each story were averaged except in those cases in which score discrepancies were greater than 2 points. These stories were discussed and a final score was decided upon by the two coders. A final score was derived by taking the average of the scores across the four attachment-relevant stories. SBS scores have been correlated with the Coherence scale score of the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI) (Waters & Rodrigues-Doolabh, 2001), with children’s classifications in the Strange Situation (Tini, Corcoran, Rodrigues-Doolabh, & E. Waters, 2003), and with children’s secure base behaviors across diverse ethnic and cultural groups (Vaughn et al., 2007).

**Maternal Mind-Mindedness Interview (MMM).** Maternal mind-mindedness was measured with a single-question interview that was developed by Meins et al. (1998). Mothers were asked “Can you describe [their child’s name] for me?” Mothers were told that there were no right or wrong answers and they were free to talk about any of their child’s characteristics for as little or as long as they wished. Mothers’ responses were audio-taped and transcribed verbatim prior to coding. Mothers’ descriptions were coded for mind-related or “mental” attributes which included any reference to children’s mental life, such as their mind, imagination, will, intellect, interest, etc. Attributes relating to emotions were also placed in this category. A mind-mindedness score was obtained by calculating the proportion of mental attributes to the total number of attributes mentioned by the mother. (Proportions were used to control for maternal verbosity.) Higher scores indicated greater mind-mindedness. All transcripts were coded by one primary coder and a second, reliability coder who coded a subset of 25 interviews (27% of N = 92). The percent agreement between the two coders was 82% (kappa = .64). This measure has established validity and reliability (see Meins et al., 2003).
Maternal perceived control (PAT). Maternal perceived control was measured with the Parent Attribution Test (PAT; Bugental, et al, 1989), a self-report instrument that asks the respondent to rate the importance she or he attributes to potential causes of caregiving success and failure, in order to ascertain the perceived balance of control between caregiver and child. Mothers were asked to read a hypothetical babysitting scenario in which the interaction did not go well. Mothers were then asked to rate each of 12 factors (on a 7-point scale from “not at all important” to “very important”) as possible reasons for such an experience. The factors included six child-attributed reasons, three of which were controllable and three of which were uncontrollable factors (e.g. how unpleasant a disposition the child had; whether or not this was a bad day for the child) and six caregiver-attributed reasons, three of which were controllable and three of which were uncontrollable factors (e.g. whether or not she really enjoys children that much; what kind of mood she was in that day). Adult Control over Failure (ACF) and Child control over Failure (CCF) scores were obtained by taking the mean of the relevant factors for each subscale. A final Perceived Control over Failure (PCF) score was obtained by subtracting the CCF score from the ACF score for each respondent. In previous studies, parents with a low perceived balance of control have been found to differ in systematic ways from parents with a relatively equivalent or greater perceived balance of control for example, low control scores have been associated with child abuse status (Bugental, et al., 1989), negative reactivity to ambiguous or unresponsive child behavior (Bugental, Blue, & Lewis, 1990; Bugental et al., 1993), assertive control in response to child fearfulness (Mills, 1998), and maternal attachment styles (Grusec and Mamone, 1995). The PAT has established psychometric properties (see Bugental et al., 1989) and has the advantage of being fairly immune to self-presentation bias (Bugental et al, 1998), to maternal education, and maternal affect (Lovejoy, Verda, & Hays, 1997).
Maternal Alexithymia (TAS). Mothers’ emotional functioning was measured with the Toronto Alexithymia Scale (TAS-20; Bagby, Taylor, & Parker, 1994), a self-report instrument designed to measure difficulties in identifying and describing emotions. The TAS-20 is assumed to measure three facets of emotional functioning: 1) difficulty identifying emotions and distinguishing them from bodily sensations (7 items; e.g. “I have feelings I can’t quite identify”), 2) difficulty describing emotions to others (5 items; e.g. “It is difficult for me to find the right words for my feelings”), and 3) and externally oriented style of thinking (8 items; e.g. “I prefer talking to people about their daily activities rather than their feelings”). Mothers were presented with 20 statements and were asked to rate on a 5-point scale from 1 (“Strongly Disagree”) to 5 (“Strongly Agree”) how much they agreed/disagreed with each of them. In the current sample, Cronbach’s alphas for the three subscales were .78 (Identifying), .66 (Describing), and .65 (External Thinking). The TAS-20 has established validity and reliability (e.g. Bagby et al., 1994; Parker, Taylor, & Bagby, 2001; 2003; Taylor, Bagby, & Parker, 1997; 2003; De Gucht, Fontaine, & Fischler, 2004).

Child Measures

Child adjustment. Teachers completed the Child Behavior Scale (CBS; Ladd & Profilet, 1996) which assesses the behavior of young children in peer contexts. The CBS is comprised of six subscales which represent: Aggressive with Peers, Prosocial with Peers, Excluded by Peers, Asocial with Peers, Hyperactive-Distractible, and Anxious-Fearful. Teachers were asked to rate each listed behavior in terms of how characteristic or applicable it is for the child using a scale ranging from 1 (does not apply to the child) to 3 (certainly applies to the child). Subscales scores were created by averaging the scores across the items included in each subscale, with higher scores indicating more frequent displays of rated
behaviors. Three of the six subscales were used in the present study. These were: Aggressive with Peers (7 items; e.g. fights; bullies; threatens), Prosocial with Peers (7 items; e.g. helps; recognizes feelings; concerned about distress), and Asocial with Peers (6 items; e.g. prefers to play alone; keeps peers at a distance; avoids peers). These subscales were chosen because behavior patterns which include aggressive, withdrawn, and prosocial behaviors have been the strongest identified predictors of later adaptation (Ladd & Profilet, 1996). Cronbach’s alphas for these subscales were .85, .84, and .83 respectively. The CBS has been evaluated with children from diverse backgrounds and has established psychometric properties (see Ladd & Burgess, 1999; 2001; Ladd & Profilet, 1996).

**Child temperament.** In order to measure their child’s dispositional negativity, mothers were asked to complete the Child Behavior Questionnaire (Very Short Form) (CBQ, Rothbart, et al., 1994; Rothbart, Ahadi, Hershey, & Fisher, 2001). This is a well-established parent-report measure of three aspects of temperament for children aged 3 – 8 years (Negative Affect, Surgency/Extroversion, and Effortful Control). Mothers were presented with 36 statements that describe children’s reactions to different situations and were asked to rate how “true” the statement was of their child’s reaction within the past six months. Ratings were made on a 7-point scale from 1 (extremely untrue) to 7 (extremely true). Only the Negative Affect subscale was used in this study (Cronbach’s alpha was .73). This subscale included statements such as “Gets quite frustrated when prevented from doing something s/he wants to do”; “When angry about something, s/he tends to stay upset for ten minutes or longer”; “Is very difficult to soothe when s/he has become upset”. The CBQ Very Short Form has demonstrated satisfactory validity and acceptable internal consistency (Putnam & Rothbart, 2006).
General Procedure

Recruitment and home package. Potential participants were contacted by telephone and were given a brief explanation of what the study entailed. Upon agreeing to participate, arrangements were made to send a questionnaire package home (either by email or by regular mail, depending on the mother’s preference) that was to be completed by mothers and returned in advance of the lab visit. A date for the lab visit was also scheduled at that time. This home package included the Children’s Behavior Questionnaire (CBQ), the Toronto Alexithymia Scale (TAS-20), the Coping with Children’s Negative Emotions Scale (CCNES), and the Parent Attribution Test (PAT) as well as detailed instructions for completion of these questionnaires. Informed consent forms were included in the home questionnaire package. (A copy of the consent form as well as the instructions can be found in Appendix C.)

Interviewers. There were eight mother interviewers who conducted the study (all female). These included the author, and seven undergraduate psychology students, all of whom were thoroughly trained by the author.

Lab visit. Upon arriving at the lab, mother and child were greeted by two interviewers and given a brief explanation about what the lab visit involved. Only the mother portion of the lab visit will be described here as the child portion was not used in this study. It was explained that there were no right or wrong answers to any of the questions they would be asked, their responses would be confidential, and they were free to refrain from answering any questions they did not wish to answer. Mothers read and signed an informed consent at this time as well (a copy of which can be found in Appendix D). Mothers were then asked to provide demographic information. Following this, mothers were administered the Secure Base Scripts task and the Maternal Mind-Mindedness Interview, both of which were audio-
recorded. Finally, mothers were asked to complete an additional questionnaire package, which included the Future Scenarios Questionnaire (FSQ). Following this, mothers were asked for their agreement to have researchers contact their child’s teacher for additional information about their child’s behavior with peers and a copy of the teacher questionnaire was shown to them. Mothers were also asked for their permission to be contacted in the future in the event of a follow-up study and were asked if they wished the results of the study to be communicated to them upon completion. At the end of the study, mothers were debriefed and were given the opportunity to ask any questions they might have about the study. They were also given a Starbucks gift card (in the amount of $5) as a token of appreciation.

Teacher package. Shortly after the lab visit, questionnaire packages were sent to the teachers of the children whose mothers had given permission to do so. This package included the Child Behavior Scale (CBS) and instructions on completion in a cover letter (attached in Appendix E). Teachers were asked to return the questionnaire in stamped return envelope, which was provided. For those teachers who did not return the questionnaire, a second follow-up request was sent several months later.
Results

Overview of Analysis

Data screening. Ranges, means, and standard deviations for all of the measures included in the study are presented in Table 1. Prior to data analysis, all variables were screened for normality by looking at skew values, box-plots, and normality statistics. All variables conformed to normality except for two child outcome variables: Aggression and asocial behavior were both quite positively skewed. Various transformations were attempted to bring these variables closer to normality, however these transformations failed to satisfactorily improve their distributions. Thus, these two variables were dichotomized by establishing a cut-point for each variable and coding “0” for those values below this point and “1” for those values above this point. For aggressive behavior, the cut-point was 1.43, scores below which represented a higher likelihood of verbal aggression (for e.g., argues) relative to physical aggression (for e.g., kicks, hits). For asocial behavior, the cut-point was 1.17, scores below which represented a tendency towards a child’s preference for being alone (for e.g., prefers or likes to play alone) compared to more active rejection of peers (for e.g., avoids peers, keeps peers at a distance). For all analyses involving these two variables, the dichotomized variables were used.

Interviewer effects. In order to examine the possibility of interviewer effects, a series of ANOVAs was conducted using the identity of the mother interviewer as the independent variable and each mother measure collected during the lab visit as the dependent variable. None of these ANOVAs was significant, thus the identity of the interviewer did not have a significant effect on mothers’ responses on the Future Scenarios Questionnaire, the Secure Base Scripts Task, or the Maternal Mind-Mindedness Interview.
Missing teacher data. Of the ninety-two participants in the study, teacher data was available for sixty-nine of them. In order to examine potential differences between the mothers and children for whom teacher data was available and those for whom it was not available, a series of t-tests was conducted using teacher data available (yes/no) as the grouping variable and each mother measure, as well as child’s temperament (mother report) as the test variable. None of these tests was significant. Thus, mothers and children without teacher data did not differ significantly from those with teacher data available.

Analytic plan. One main purpose of this study was to develop and begin validation of a new questionnaire, the Future Scenarios Questionnaire (FSQ), which was intended to tap mothers’ styles of responding to anticipated children’s negative emotions. First, the underlying structure of the FSQ as well as its psychometric properties was examined. Additionally, the pattern of relations between the FSQ and several maternal characteristics was examined in order to demonstrate concurrent and construct validity. The relations between the FSQ and child temperament and child adjustment measures were also examined. Finally, a moderation model of emotion socialization was tested in which maternal responding on the FSQ interacts with temperament to predict child adjustment outcomes.
Table 1:

Descriptive Statistics of All Variables in the Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mother Variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSQ – Encourage Expression (EEE)*</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>6.92</td>
<td>5.45</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSQ – Discourage Expression (DEE)*</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCNES – Supportive Responses</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>6.47</td>
<td>5.12</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCNES – Non-supportive Responses</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure Base Scripts (SBS)</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>6.50</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal Mind-Mindedness (MMM)</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Control over Failure (PCF)</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>-1.67</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal Alexithymia (TAS)</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>35.78</td>
<td>8.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child Variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBQ – Negative Affect (mother report)</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>5.58</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBS – Aggression (teacher report)</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBS – Prosocial Behavior (teacher report)</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBS – Asocial Behavior (teacher report)</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>.34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: FSQ-EEE and FSQ-DEE are summary score means that were derived in the way described below.
Psychometric Properties of the Future Scenarios Questionnaire.

Factor analysis. The FSQ originally consisted of ten subscales which were previously described in the Method section. The Avoidance subscale (which comprised Item #10 for each of the scenarios – “I would say or do nothing”) was not used in the calculation of the final score because of a significantly skewed distribution and restricted range of endorsement. The remaining nine subscales were then subjected to a principal components analysis with Varimax rotation. Eight of the nine subscales clearly loaded on one of two factors, however one subscale, Maternal Distress, cross-loaded positively on both factors. In addition, the Cronbach’s alpha for this subscale was .67. These two indications suggested that Maternal Distress, as measured in this sample, is likely not a single construct, thus a decision was made to drop this subscale from all further analyses. The remaining eight subscales were then subjected to another principal components analysis with Varimax rotation and the results indicated a clear two-factor solution (i.e. two factors with Eigenvalues greater than 1.0). Cumulatively, these two factors accounted for 67.2% of the variance. The factor loadings for each subscale are shown in Table 2.

The first factor had an Eigenvalue of 3.42 and accounted for 42.71% of the variance. This factor was labeled Discourage Emotion Expression (DEE) and consisted of Minimizing, Shaming, Distortion, and Contingencies. Cronbach’s alpha for this subscale was .91. The second factor had an Eigenvalue of 1.96 and accounted for 24.48% of the variance. This factor was labeled Encourage Emotion Expression and consisted of Acceptance, Mastery, Abstraction, and Encourage Expression. Cronbach’s alpha for this subscale was .93. Cronbach’s alphas for each of the final eight subscales of the FSQ are also shown in Table 2 and indicate good internal consistency.
Table 2:
Factor Loadings and Cronbach’s Alphas for the Two-Factor Solution to the Future Scenarios Questionnaire (N = 92)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FSQ Subscale</th>
<th>Factor Loading</th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaming</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimizing</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distortion</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contingencies</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td></td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mastery</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstraction</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage Expression</td>
<td></td>
<td>.79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Relation of the FSQ to mother and child demographics. To examine whether the two factors of the FSQ (EEE and DEE) related to mother and child demographics, correlations were conducted with maternal age, maternal education, child age, child sex, marital status, and number of children in the family. These correlations are presented in Table 3.
Maternal Responses to Anticipated Children’s Negative Emotions

Table 3:
Correlations between the FSQ and Maternal and Child Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FSQ Encourage Emotion Expression (EEE)</th>
<th>FSQ Discourage Emotion Expression (DEE)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maternal Age</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.33**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(91)</td>
<td>(91)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal Education</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>-.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(92)</td>
<td>(92)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Age</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(92)</td>
<td>(92)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Sex</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(92)</td>
<td>(92)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(92)</td>
<td>(92)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Children</td>
<td>-.28**</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(92)</td>
<td>(92)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N’s vary due to missing data and are in brackets.

* p < .05    ** p < .01

As can be seen in Table 3, the only significant (negative) correlation with EEE was number of children. Thus, mothers with more children reported being less likely to employ strategies that encourage a child’s expression of emotion on the FSQ. On the other hand, the only significant (negative) correlation with DEE was with maternal age. Thus, mothers who were older tended to report being less likely to employ strategies that discouraged a child’s
expression of emotion on the FSQ. No other demographic variables were significantly correlated with either EEE or DEE.

**Relation of the FSQ to additional maternal characteristics.** Additional maternal characteristics that were measured were: CCNES (Supportive and Non-supportive), Secure Base Scripts (SBS), Maternal Mind-Mindedness (MMM), Perceived Control over Failure (PCF), and Maternal Alexithymia (TAS). Intercorrelations among these variables are presented in Table 4.

Inspection of the pattern of correlations in Table 4 reveals some evidence of construct validity for the FSQ scale. First, Encourage Emotion Expression (EEE) was significantly positively correlated with the Supportive subscale of the CCNES and Discourage Emotion Expression (DEE) was significantly positively correlated with the Non-supportive subscale of the CCNES. These correlations were expected given the theoretic similarity between these two measures. The EEE subscale and the DEE subscale of the FSQ were significantly negatively correlated ($r = -.24$), and EEE was significantly negatively correlated with the Non-supportive subscale of the CCNES ($r = -.35$); however, these correlations were moderate. The DEE subscale was unrelated to the Supportive subscale of the CCNES ($r = -.11$).

Significant correlations with additional mother variables hypothesized to be related to modes of responding on the FSQ also provided some validity evidence. For the Secure Base Scripts (SBS), and consistent with predictions, there was a moderate significant positive correlation with the EEE subscale ($r = .30$). Thus, mothers who had greater access to a “secure base script” were more likely to report encouraging their children’s expression of emotion on the FSQ. There was no significant correlation with the DEE subscale.
Table 4:

Intercorrelations Among Mother Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FSQ-EEE</th>
<th>FSQ-DEE</th>
<th>CCNES-Support</th>
<th>CCNES-Nonsupport</th>
<th>SBS</th>
<th>MMM</th>
<th>PCF</th>
<th>TAS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FSQ – EEE</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSQ – DEE</td>
<td>-.24*</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(92)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCNES – Support</td>
<td>.71***</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(86)</td>
<td>(86)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(86)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCNES – Nonsupport</td>
<td>-.35**</td>
<td>.67***</td>
<td>-.28**</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>(86)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBS</td>
<td>.30**</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>-.19†</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(91)</td>
<td>(91)</td>
<td>(85)</td>
<td>(85)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMM</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>.30**</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(92)</td>
<td>(92)</td>
<td>(86)</td>
<td>(86)</td>
<td>(91)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCF</td>
<td>.19†</td>
<td>-.27*</td>
<td>.22*</td>
<td>-.32**</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(86)</td>
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<td>(85)</td>
<td>(86)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAS</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>.23*</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>--</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(86)</td>
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<td>(86)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N’s vary due to missing data and are in brackets. All correlations are zero-order.

† p < .10  * p < .05  ** p < .01  *** p < .001

Also consistent with predictions, maternal perceptions of control, as indexed by the PCF score, was significantly negatively related to the DEE subscale (r = -.27). Thus, mothers who perceived themselves as having more control relative to the child in a challenging situation were less likely to discourage or suppress children’s expression of emotion with strategies such as shaming and minimizing. Additionally, the positive correlation between EEE and PCF almost reached significance (r = .19, p = .07) suggesting that these higher
control mothers are also more likely to report encouraging children’s expression of negative emotion. In addition, maternal alexithymia, as measured by the TAS, was significantly positively related to the DEE subscale of the FSQ ($r = .23$). Thus mothers who report difficulties understanding, processing, or describing emotions were more likely to report employing strategies that discourage children’s expression of emotions. The correlation between EEE and TAS was not significant. Finally, and unexpectedly, maternal mind-mindedness was completely unrelated to both components of the FSQ ($r = .09$ for EEE and $- .06$ for DEE).

**Child Temperament and Child Adjustment**

Relation of negative affect and child adjustment variables to maternal and child demographics. Correlations were conducted to examine whether any of the maternal or child demographic variables was related to the measures of negative affect, aggression, prosocial behavior, and asocial behavior. These correlations can be seen in Table 5.

As can be seen in this table, child age (in months) and child sex were unrelated to all child variables except for asocial behavior, which approached significance ($p = .06$), with girls being rated by teachers as slightly more asocial with peers. With respect to maternal variables, maternal education was significantly positively correlated with child aggression, with mothers who reported more years of education having children who were rated by teachers as more aggressive with peers. Maternal education and maternal age were unrelated to all other child variables.
Table 5:

Correlations between CBQ, CBS, and Maternal and Child Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CBQ Negative Affect</th>
<th>CBS - Aggression</th>
<th>CBS - Prosocial Behavior</th>
<th>CBS - Asocial Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child Age</strong></td>
<td>.04 (86)</td>
<td>.00 (69)</td>
<td>-.06 (69)</td>
<td>-.10 (69)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child Sex</strong></td>
<td>.10 (86)</td>
<td>-.06 (69)</td>
<td>-.04 (69)</td>
<td>.22† (69)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maternal Age</strong></td>
<td>.01 (85)</td>
<td>.17 (69)</td>
<td>-.20 (69)</td>
<td>.17 (69)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maternal Education</strong></td>
<td>.11 (86)</td>
<td>.24* (69)</td>
<td>.08 (69)</td>
<td>.09 (69)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N’s vary due to missing data and are in brackets.

† p < .10    * p < .05

Relation of the FSQ to child temperament and child adjustment variables.

Correlations between the EEE and DEE subscales of the FSQ, and child negative affect, aggression, prosocial behavior, and asocial behavior are shown in Table 6. Correlations are presented separately for boys and girls, and also for the total sample.

As can be seen in this table, the FSQ subscales were unrelated to the Negative Affect component of temperament. This was the case for both boys and girls, and for the entire sample. With respect to child adjustment indices (as measured by the CBS), surprisingly only one significant relation was found. For boys (but not for girls), DEE was significantly negatively correlated with asocial behavior (r = -.44). Thus, contrary to expectation, mothers with higher DEE scores had boys who were rated by teachers as being less asocial with peers. This relation also came close to significance for the entire sample (p = .09).
Table 6:

Correlations between the FSQ and Child Variables for Boys, Girls, and Total Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FSQ - Encourage Emotion Expression</th>
<th>FSQ - Discourage Emotion Expression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBQ-Negative Affect</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(40)</td>
<td>(46)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBS – Aggression</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(30)</td>
<td>(39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBS – Prosocial</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior</td>
<td>(30)</td>
<td>(39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBS – Asocial Behavior</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(30)</td>
<td>(39)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N’s vary due to missing data and are in brackets. All correlations are zero-order.

† p < .10    * p < .05

Moderation Model of Emotion Socialization.

A principal aim of this study was to test a model of emotion socialization in which maternal responding to anticipated negative emotions in children interacted with child temperament (in this case, negative affect) in the prediction of child adjustment. To test this hypothesized model, a series of hierarchical regression analyses was conducted (see Aiken & West, 1991). Separate equations were computed to predict each of the various indices of adjustment (e.g. aggression, prosocial behavior, and asocial behavior) from each of the two predictor variables, Encourage Emotion Expression (EEE) and Discourage Emotion
Expression (DEE). Thus, six regressions were conducted in total. For the two dichotomized variables, aggression and asocial behavior, logistic regression was employed, whereas for prosocial behavior, linear regression was employed.

In all cases, the predictor, moderator, and outcome variables were standardized prior to being entered into the regression equations. The control variables were entered first and consisted of child sex and maternal education. These control variables were chosen because of their significant (or almost significant) correlations with the child outcome measures of asocial behavior and aggression respectively (see Table 5). The predictor variable (either EEE or DEE) was entered in the second step and the moderator variable, Negative Affect (NA), was entered in the third step. In the final step, the two-way interaction terms were entered which were represented by the products of EEE x NA and DEE x NA. The results of each of the regressions can be seen in Tables 7, 8, and 9. The β’s presented are from the final step (step 4) of each of the regressions. (Three-way interactions with sex and negative affect were also tested for each outcome variable, and none of these was significant.)

As can be seen in Table 7, a significant interaction was found between DEE and negative affect in the prediction of aggressive behavior. This indicated that the relation between Discourage Emotion Expression and aggressive behavior varied significantly as a function of the child’s negative affect, as reported by the mother. This interaction was statistically explored with simple slope analysis using -1 S.D. below the mean (low) and +1.0 S.D. above the mean (high) as levels of negative affect. The results are shown in Figure 1. For children rated (by mothers) high in negative affect, high maternal DEE scores significantly predicted less aggressive behavior (rated by teachers) (p = .01). This relation was not significant for children rated low in negative affect (p = .26). With respect to EEE,
there was no significant interaction with negative affect in the prediction of aggressive behavior ($p = .68$).

However, as seen in Table 8, EEE significantly interacted with negative affect in the prediction of asocial behavior. This can be seen in Table 8. The results of the slope analysis can be seen in Figure 2. For children rated high in negative affect, high maternal EEE scores significantly predicted more asocial behavior ($p = .01$). Again, the relation was not significant for children rated low in negative affect. Rather, for these children, there was a trend towards high maternal EEE scores predicting less asocial behavior ($p = .08$). With respect to DEE, there was no significant interaction with negative affect in the prediction of asocial behavior ($p = .15$).

Finally, as seen in Table 9, the interaction between EEE and negative affect in the prediction of prosocial behavior approached significance ($p = .10$). This interaction can be seen in Figure 3 and suggests that for children rated high in negative affect, high maternal EEE scores predicted less prosocial behavior ($p = .10$), a relation that did not hold for children rated low in negative affect ($p = .41$). Again, with respect to DEE, there was no significant interaction with negative affect in the prediction of prosocial behavior ($p = .85$). In sum, the results of the moderation analyses provided some support for the hypothesis that maternal responding on the FSQ interacts with negative affect in the prediction of children’s aggressive, asocial, and prosocial behaviors.
Table 7:

Results of Logistic Regression Analyses Predicting Aggression (N = 69)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Wald</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Exp(B)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Control Variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.80</td>
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<td>.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maternal Education</td>
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<td>1.92</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.20</td>
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<td><strong>Predictor</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discourage Emotion Expression</td>
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<td>.50</td>
<td>3.61†</td>
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<td>.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Moderator</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Negative Affect</td>
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<td>.47</td>
<td>3.76*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interaction</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEE x NA</td>
<td>-1.21</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>7.93**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

χ² (5) = 16.58**

Nagelkerke R² = .37

-2 log likelihood = 45.60

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Wald</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Exp(B)</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.76</td>
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<td>Maternal Education</td>
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<td>4.10*</td>
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<td>1.25</td>
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<td><strong>Predictor</strong></td>
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<td>Encourage Emotion Expression</td>
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<td>.37</td>
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<td>1.70</td>
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<td>.64</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>EEE x NA</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

χ² (5) = 7.48

Nagelkerke R² = .18

-2 log likelihood = 54.71

† p < .10    * p < .05    ** p < .01
Table 8:

Results of Logistic Regression Analyses Predicting Asocial Behavior (N = 69)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Wald</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Exp(B)</th>
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<td>.84</td>
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<td>2.06</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

χ² (5) = 9.63†
Nagelkerke R² = .19
-2 log likelihood = 78.61

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Wald</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Exp(B)</th>
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<td></td>
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<td><strong>Predictor</strong></td>
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<td>.37</td>
<td>7.77</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.82</td>
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</table>

χ² (5) = 16.20**
Nagelkerke R² = .30
-2 log likelihood = 72.04

† p < .10 * p < .05 ** p < .01
Table 9:

Results of Regression Analyses Predicting Prosocial Behavior (N = 69)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>B</th>
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<td>-.06</td>
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<td>.04</td>
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<td>-.49</td>
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<td>-.08</td>
<td>-.63</td>
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<td><strong>Interaction</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>EEE x NA</td>
<td>-.20</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>-.21</td>
<td>-1.65</td>
<td>.04</td>
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</table>

† p < .10
Figure 1. Interaction between DEE and Negative Affect in predicting Aggression.
Figure 2. Interaction between EEE and Negative Affect in predicting Asocial Behavior.
Figure 3. Interaction between EEE and Negative Affect in predicting Prosocial Behavior.
A primary purpose of the present study was to examine the possible effects of one kind of maternal emotion socialization, namely how mothers respond to anticipated children’s negative emotions, on children’s social competence. In doing so, I developed and provided initial support for the validity of a new self-report measure, the Future Scenarios Questionnaire. I will discuss the construct validity of the FSQ, as well as review the patterns of association with child outcome measures of aggressive, asocial, and prosocial behavior. Contrary to my expectations, I found that the FSQ did not directly relate to child outcomes, however, when a model that included child negative affect as a moderator was tested, relations between the FSQ and child outcomes were revealed. The theoretical and practical implications of the main findings are discussed below.

Validation of the Future Scenarios Questionnaire

The results of this study provided some preliminary support for the FSQ as a valid, new instrument for assessing the ways by which mothers respond to their children’s negative emotions when faced with upcoming stressful situations. In particular, the pattern of correlations among the two factors of the FSQ - Encourage Emotion Expression (EEE) and Discourage Emotion Expression (DEE) - and several additional mother measures demonstrated some evidence of construct validity. For the most part, this pattern was consistent and in accordance with my predictions.

In responding to the items on the FSQ, mothers were required to draw upon conscious appraisal processes, which lend towards self-presentation or response style bias in a way that instruments that access more implicit, or even unconscious schemas (for example, Secure
Base Scripts, PAT) likely do not. Thus, I chose to correlate the two subscales of the FSQ questionnaire with measures of more generalized maternal schemas in order to attenuate the effects of shared method variance. Indeed, the pattern of correlations among the FSQ subscales and these measures largely supported my hypotheses that maternal schemas (for e.g., pertaining to security/attachment and control) would relate to how a mother might address or prepare her child for an upcoming stressful situation.

With respect to attachment representations, mothers who were rated as more “secure” were more likely to report encouraging their children’s expression of negative emotions on the FSQ. This is consistent with prior attachment-related research that has shown that secure or autonomous mothers are more open and willing to approach and discuss negative emotions than mothers who are more “insecure” (see Laible & Panfile, in press). Unexpectedly however, mothers’ security (as assessed by the SBS measure) was unrelated to the Discourage Emotion Expression subscale of the FSQ. This suggests that perhaps the relation between a mother’s security and the extent to which she might either encourage or discourage emotion expression is not so straightforward, and that additional factors, such as individual differences in children, might need to be considered. This suggestion is also somewhat in accordance with Berlin and Cassidy’s (2003) conclusion that mothers of secure children neither heighten nor suppress children’s negativity, but rather accept and are moderately controlling of it.

Additionally, and consistent with predictions, mothers who perceived themselves as having more control relative to a child in difficult caregiving situations were less likely to discourage (and more likely to encourage) children’s expression of negative emotions in anticipation of stressful events. This is likely due to these mothers being more confident and efficacious in their ability to tolerate and deal with negative emotions in their children, and
perhaps being less likely to become dysregulated themselves in the face of a perceived power imbalance.

There was one maternal mindset I assessed, maternal mind-mindedness, that contrary to prediction, did not correlate with either factor of the FSQ. One possible explanation for this finding is that the mind-mindedness interview involved asking a mother to produce a narrative about her child as opposed to endorsing how she would respond directly to her child in a particular circumstance (i.e. what the FSQ requires). One difference between the mind-mindedness measure and the other two measures included to assess maternal schemas (i.e. the SBS and the PAT) is that the mind-mindedness measure requires that a mother still keep her particular child in mind, rather than generating fictional stories based on word-prompts (e.g. SBS) or giving likely reasons for a difficult encounter with an imaginary or hypothetical child (e.g. PAT). For these latter two tasks, a mother’s responses might be more removed from her actual past experiences and relationship with her own child, so thus might be more “projective” or more representative of qualities within herself, independent of qualities in her particular child. And indeed it was found that these maternal qualities did relate to the subscales of the FSQ in anticipated and meaningful ways. The mind-mindedness construct, on the other hand, although functioning at a level of mind states (e.g. the degree to which a mother considers her child as having a “mind”), might be quite distinct from the actual maternal behaviors or strategies which are accessed by the FSQ. In other words, there might be a difference between what a mother carries in her head about her child, assessed through an analysis of maternal language (i.e. MMM interview), versus how she interacts with her child, as assessed by the FSQ (see Meins, et al., 2001).

I also looked at the relation between the FSQ and the personality trait of alexithymia, and found that as predicted, mothers who rated themselves as more alexithymic, were more
likely to report strategies that disavowed or discouraged their children’s expressions of negative emotions. This is consistent with the idea that these mothers have inherent difficulties understanding, processing, and in particular, communicating about emotions in general.

Finally, the strong correlations between the EEE and the DEE subscales of the FSQ and the supportive and non-supportive subscales of CCNES respectively were not surprising given the similarity in the development and intent of the two measures. These correlations provide some indication that the FSQ is in fact measuring the ways by which mothers do respond to children’s negative emotions. On the other hand, these high correlations might also suggest that these scales are both measuring the same construct, that is, the ways in which mothers respond to negative emotions in general, regardless of their past, present, or anticipated orientation. This of course, needs to be clarified in future studies. Further, with respect to the principal components analysis of the FSQ, it is recognized that the sample size is small, and the subject to variable ratio is minimal, limiting firm conclusions about the scale’s validity.

The above findings cumulatively point to the FSQ as a potentially valid instrument. However, additional and more extensive examination of the psychometric properties is certainly needed in order to establish stability, reliability, and discriminant validity, with larger samples and over time. Also, relating mothers’ responses on the FSQ to observations of their actual parenting behaviors and to additional child outcomes is an important next step in extending and establishing the validity of the FSQ.
Discussion of Findings with Child Outcomes

Surprisingly, almost no direct associations were found between the two FSQ subscales and child outcome measures of aggressive, asocial, and prosocial behavior. In fact, and contrary to prediction, DEE was negatively correlated with asocial behavior, and this finding was significant for boys only. It seems that boys in this sample were less withdrawn when mothers were more discouraging of emotion expression. This might have to do with differential expectations for boys and girls with respect to their expressions of negative emotions. Casey and Fuller (1994) for example, found that mothers encourage sons to control emotions like fear and sadness, but not anger. And Fivush and her colleagues (e.g. Fivush, 1989; 1991; Fivush et al., 2000) found that mother-child conversations about sadness were more elaborative and more concerned with comfort with daughters than with sons. In contrast, conversations about anger were longer with sons, and mothers accepted anger and retaliation as a resolution more with sons.

One possibility is that in this study, when boys’ expressions of negative emotions, including sadness or fear, were more controlled or restricted by their mothers, these boys might be less inclined to express these kinds of emotions at school, leading to teacher perceptions of more outgoing behaviors. It is difficult to disentangle the precise relations in this study because of the aggregated way in which the FSQ groups responses across different emotions (i.e. anger, fear, sadness).

The paucity of direct effects with children’s social competence was unexpected and somewhat surprising. However, one central hypothesis of this study was that the temperamental trait of negative affect would moderate the link between maternal responses on the FSQ and child adjustment. In particular, in keeping with prior suggestions in the literature that “negative” parenting would have a greater impact on children with
temperamental vulnerabilities and less of an effect on those children who are more temperamentally resilient (see Bates & Pettit, 2007; Belsky, 2005), I predicted there would be positive relations between DEE and children’s social maladjustment indices (e.g. aggression) and this relation would be stronger among children high in negative affect. Conversely, I predicted that the relation between EEE and children’s social adjustment indices (e.g. prosocial behavior) would be stronger for children rated high in negative affect. In other words, more supportive or empathic parenting would matter more for these children.

Instead, I found that DEE predicted more positive child adjustment, a relation that was moderated by child negative affect. Specifically, for high negative affect children, DEE predicted less aggressive behavior (a relation that did not hold for children rated low in negative affect). Similar unanticipated findings were revealed for EEE. Specifically, for children rated high in negative affect, EEE predicted more asocial behavior and a trend towards less prosocial behavior (with neither relation being significantly supported for children rated low in negative affect).

Idea of “goodness of fit”. One way of interpreting this interesting result might be in terms of “goodness of fit”. In other words, DEE, although being often associated with negative outcomes, may not necessarily be a form of “negative” parenting in all circumstances and for all children. Thus, it might not be that useful to consider that the same parenting intervention will necessarily work for all children; rather, different children might be differentially impacted by, or might even require, different kinds of parenting. What might matter more is how well a certain intervention works for a particular child, in a certain context.

The child outcomes that were the focus in this study - aggressive, asocial, and prosocial behavior - depend to a large extent on children’s ability to control their expressions
of emotion. Thus it appears that discouraging further expression of negative emotion in an already highly emotional child might serve that child well in environments that require a high level of regulation and control. For example, in a school context, children need to demonstrate high levels of cooperation and self-control with peers, perhaps much more so than in the context of the parent-child relationship at home. Children lacking a certain degree of self-control, both emotionally and behaviorally, will undoubtedly be challenged, both academically and socially (Stright, et al, 2008).

In support of this suggestion, Katz and Windecker-Nelson (2004) found that aggressive children whose mothers were high in emotion coaching displayed more problematic peer interactions than aggressive children whose mothers were low in emotion coaching. These researchers explained their unanticipated finding in that coaching encourages conversations about both positive and negative affect, so those children who are exposed to coaching may learn that the expression of both positive and negative affect is acceptable and in the short term, are more expressive of negative affect during peer play.

Related to “goodness of fit” is the notion of optimal challenge or arousal. Eisenberg et al. (1998) and others (e.g. Arcus, 2001), have suggested that parental socialization behaviors that are moderately, but not overly arousing provide the optimal context for learning. Therefore, a parent who rarely displays or attends to emotions or alternatively, who manifests frequent displays or attention to intense emotions, will presumably be creating contexts of under-arousal or over-arousal respectively, neither of which is conducive to learning. In support of this suggestion, Denham, Renwick-DeBardi, and Hewes (1994) found that mothers who were skilled at regulating their own emotions had children who were more likely to attend to peers’ emotions and engage in helping behavior, whereas children whose mothers exhibited intense, long-lasting negative emotions were less likely to respond
prosocially to their mothers’ or their peers’ emotions. Perhaps over time, these children became more than sufficiently aroused via emotional contagion such that they were unable to understand, tolerate, and respond empathically to the emotions of others.

If we take this idea to the socialization milieu of mothers’ verbally preparing children for upcoming stressful events, there might be some danger that too much discussion about the negative or anxiety-provoking aspects of an event might frighten or overwhelm a child, undermining his or her ability to learn about emotions and how to manage them. This is likely particularly relevant for children who are temperamentally prone to negative affect. For example, it has been found that mothers who focus too much on negative emotions in stressful situations with children who are prone to over-arousal or have too much empathy have children who experience self-focused personal distress (Trommsdorff, 1995). In the present study, it might be that mothers who focused on negative emotions with children who typically cannot cope with emotions were over-stimulating to their children. Consequently, these children did not learn how to regulate their distress, something that is especially important for highly emotional children, both in the prevention of subsequent behavior problems and in the development of social competence.

Perhaps children who are high in negative affect do not have the minimum amount of regulation that may be required to engage the child in talking about the emotion in the first place. Alternatively, these children might experience emotions at a greater intensity, and thus have more to regulate. Either way, high negative affect children might be in a chronic state of over-arousal, which likely interferes with their ability to listen and to process any kind of discussion or elaboration about negative emotions. The results of this study suggest that perhaps what these children need is a dampening of emotional experience, which might be achieved through downplaying or minimizing the negative emotion.
There is some evidence that mothers are in fact more controlling with more reactive children. Casey and Fuller (1994) described a study in which mothers reported on how they would intervene in various emotion-eliciting situations in order to see the extent to which mothers regulate children’s emotional responses. They found that high negative temperament appeared to elicit more regulation of all types of expressive behavior, but especially for anger. And Brophy and Dunn (2002) found that mothers used higher levels of negative control (which included threats of aversive consequences, sarcasm, humiliation, little praise or explanation, etc.) and lower levels of positive control (which included praise, explanations, teaching) with “hard to manage” preschoolers.

There is some empirical support for the suggestion that parenting behaviors that might typically be considered “negative” can sometimes produce effects that are considered desirable. One pattern suggested is for controlling, somewhat negative parenting, as long as it is not too negative, to make child negative emotionality less likely to develop into internalizing problems. For example, Belsky, Hsieh, & Crnic (1998) found that father’s intrusive and negative behavior in children’s second and third years predicted less inhibited child behavior at age 3 years for temperamentally negative infants, whereas for those infants low in negative emotionality, father behavior was not associated with later inhibition.

Additionally, Arcus (2001) found that infants high in negative emotion were less likely to show behavioral inhibition at 14 months if their mothers were high in limit setting. He suggested that mild frustrations and challenges might facilitate the development self-regulatory abilities among emotionally reactive children. Again, this interpretation resonates with the notion of optimal challenge for a given child in a given situation. In Roberts’ (1999) meta-analysis, although most of the associations were consistent with the importance of non-punitive, tolerant responsiveness to children’s emotional distress, there was also evidence
that parenting practices that encouraged emotional control and regulation of emotional expression were sometimes positively related to measures of competence, such as prosocial behavior and ego resilience. Perhaps ignoring or minimizing low or moderate levels of distress enables a child to acquire self-regulating techniques (in absence of the parent) and thus enhances competence in peer contexts (Roberts, 1999).

More closely related to the findings in the present study, Lagace-Seguin and Coplan (2005) found that emotion dismissing was positively associated with anxiety for children who were well-regulated but this relation was not found for children who were dysregulated. They concluded that an emotion dismissing parenting style for dysregulated children is not necessarily linked with augmented maladjustment. They also found that emotion coaching was associated with increased anxiety for children who were high in emotion regulation and it was unrelated to anxiety for children with lower levels of emotion and behavior regulation. The authors suggested that emotion coaching may not be the optimum style for socializing emotions for all children under all circumstances. Perhaps “emotion coaching” parenting for well-regulated children represents an ‘over-focus’ or over-management of emotion; which interferes with children’s development of emotion coping skills.

In this study, there were differential interactive effects of DEE and EEE, depending on the particular child outcome. For aggression, DEE interacted with negative affect, whereas for asocial and prosocial behavior, it was EEE that interacted with negative affect. One possible explanation for this might have to do with the multifaceted nature of negative affect, which, in this study, encompassed several components of negative emotionality. The extent to which mothers encourage or discourage the expression of emotion and the various means by which they do so, might have differential effects depending on whether a child is more temperamentally angry versus sad, or fearful. For example, a mother might use more
controlling strategies with an “angry” child (for e.g., DEE), which could result in less aggressive peer interactions. On the other hand, if a mother uses strategies that serve to heighten an already anxious child’s fear, he or she might be less able to inhibit feelings of self-focused anxiety in order to act socially or prosocially. It would be useful to examine some of these relations with negative affect further broken down into more refined components of emotionality, for example, anger, irritability, fear, or sadness (Rothbart, et al., 1994) in order to more precisely determine the relation of internalizing components (e.g. fear and sadness) to prosocial traits and the relation of the irritable components (anger, discomfort) to antisocial traits (Rothbart, et al, 1994).

**Alternative Interpretations**

*Attachment status of mother.* There are some potential confounds in this study that might have influenced the findings. One possible confound is the attachment status of the mother, particularly with respect to “insecure” mothers. This is an important variable because of the significance attributed to attachment in maternal responding to children’s distress. Mothers’ attachment representations as assessed by the Secure Base Scripts task provided a measure of “security” or “secure base scriptedness” (which did relate to the FSQ) but did not provide distinctions within “insecurity”. In other words, it is unknown if mothers who were rated insecure were more avoidant or more preoccupied. Avoidant mothers might be more inclined to minimize emotions or even avoid discussions of emotions altogether, whereas preoccupied mothers might encourage expressions of emotion but might also overemphasize or ruminate on the negative emotions without providing ways for their children to resolve or cope with them. In other words, it is unknown how adequately mothers in this study were able to contain negative emotions once they were evoked or heightened through discussions.
Mother-child observations and more fine-grained analyses of what mothers actually say and do to manage their children’s negative emotions or reduce them to more functional levels are necessary to better answer this question.

**Age of children.** The age of the children in the study (4 to 6 years old) also might have contributed to the unexpected results. The opposing strategies of either approaching emotion or avoiding emotion may be more or less adaptive depending on the age of the child and his or her level of competence in executing different forms of responding. For example, Creasey, Mitts, & Catanzaro (1995) found that with very young children (i.e. kindergartners), the use of avoidant strategies was associated with better behavioral adjustment, contrary to what is generally found with older children, adolescents, and adults. Related to this is the amount of control young children have in future stressful situations, which are often determined for them by their parents. In the coping literature, it has been shown that not focusing on certain aspects (i.e. negative aspects) of a stressful situation may be more useful and adaptive when the situation is personally uncontrollable. However, when a situation is to some degree controllable, then perhaps more direct strategies for facing the emotion may be more effective (Altschuler & Ruble, 1989; Compas, 1987; Forsythe & Compas, 1987).

**Focus on the future.** One unique contribution of this study was its focus on future-oriented socialization. This focus on the future might have also contributed to the surprising results. In mother-child talk about past emotional events, a child has already experienced the emotion, in other words, the stressful event is over. In contrast, when contemplating a pending stressful event, more anxiety might be aroused because of the inherent degree of uncertainty involved in the future. Thus, an anticipation of an upcoming unpleasant experience may require more control or regulation than the emotional processing of an
Maternal Responses to Anticipated Children’s Negative Emotions

emotional episode that has already taken place, and this control might even lead to beneficial outcomes.

It is likely that maternal goals come into play here. In other words, a mother’s goals might be to teach the child about emotions through elaborative discussions (i.e. emotion understanding) or alternatively to encourage regulation or control over emotional behaviors. In Lagace-Seguin and Coplan’s (2005) study described above, the researchers also explored the relations between emotion coaching and emotion dismissing styles and maternal goals in response to positive and negative child behaviors. They found that emotion coaching was positively correlated with empathic goals (i.e. a greater concern for the child’s point of view and emotional equilibrium) and emotion dismissing was positively correlated with parent-centered goals (i.e. those that pertained to child compliance versus meeting the emotional needs of the child).

These goals might interact with maternal expectations based on mothers’ knowledge of their child’s temperament. For example, in preparation for future stressful events, a mother might expect her child to become negative, thus her goal might be to protect her child from experiencing more negative affect in challenging situations. In this regard, maternal pre-emptive strategies are important, especially in response to children who are emotionally reactive (see Spinrad, Stifter, Donelan-McCall, & Turner, 2004). Certainly, the results of this study point to the need for additional research examining the types of behaviors mothers might use to prevent children from experiencing negative affect and how these behaviors reflect mothers’ perceptions of their child’s temperament.

Focus on negative emotion. It is generally accepted that learning to cope with negative affect is a more difficult developmental task than learning to manage positive affect. Thus, the present study, like many studies focusing on emotion socialization, emphasizes negative
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emotion over positive emotion. This might also have contributed to the findings in that encouraging the expression of negative emotion is not always conducive to adaptive peer relations.

Thus, the results of this study can be looked at from the perspective of “emotion framing”, which occurs in the context of mother-child emotion talk and refers to the emotional valence with which one approaches a situation and the propensity to augment positive emotion or alternatively to surrender to negative emotion (Thompson, 1994). It has been suggested (and found) that children who approach and respond to situations positively are better adjusted, better liked by peers and show more prosocial behavior. For example, Mize and Pettit (1997) found that children of mothers who framed social problem situations more positively (i.e. emphasizing a more resilient, “bounce back attitude” as opposed to focusing on negative, sad, or angry reactions) were better liked by their peers and were rated by teachers as more socially skilled and less aggressive. Similarly, Meece, Colwell, and Mize (2007) recently found that positive emotion framing was linked to less withdrawn behaviors with peers and conversely, more negative emotion framing was linked to children’s displays of more withdrawn behaviors.

Perhaps children who are more prone to experiencing negative emotion combined with mothers who focus too much on negative emotion perseverate on bad feelings without the concomitant skills at regulating and containing the negative emotion. This might translate into greater difficulties with peers, be they aggressive interactions, empathic difficulties with peers, or social withdrawal.

Child effects on parenting. Because of the correlational design of the study, it is possible that children high in negative affect are eliciting differential response from parents rather than parenting having different effects depending on the temperamental status of the
child. However, in this study, neither of the FSQ subscales was correlated with negative affect, suggesting that this interpretation is unlikely. Interestingly, this lack of correlation does not coincide with prior research that has demonstrated links between mothers’ perceptions of their children’s temperament and mother’s reactions to their children’s negative emotions (e.g. Eisenberg & Fabes, 1994; Eisenberg, et al. 1996).

Strengths and Contributions of the Present Study

This study contributes to the advancement of knowledge in the parenting and socialization field in several ways. With respect to new directions, it examines future-oriented emotion socialization which to date, has not been investigated. It also introduces a method for assessing this construct, the Future Scenarios Questionnaire, which offers the potential to be a valid and reliable self-report measure. Finally, the results of the regression analyses add to the increasing body of literature asserting that child temperament is an important moderator of the links between parenting and child adjustment.

This study also has some methodological strengths. For example, when studying temperament and emotion regulation, there is often the inherent difficulty in methodologically separating emotional reactivity (temperament) from emotion regulation (outcome). For this reason, I used children’s social behaviors with peers (i.e. the CBS) as the child outcome measure (versus a measure of children’s emotion regulation, which is more likely to have overlapping features with measures of temperament). In addition, the use of teacher reports of child outcomes is advantageous. First, teachers are perhaps more likely to see the child’s behaviors with peers than are the parents and have a larger comparison base of children. Thus, teachers are important source of “real life” information. Additionally, Winsler and Wallace (2002), in comparing mother and teacher reports of children’s behavior, found
that in general teacher reports, but not parent reports, were significantly associated with observations of children’s behavior in the classroom (e.g. inappropriate behavior, peer affiliation, expressed negative affect).

With respect to reports of child temperament, mothers were the only source in this study. Although there is some debate in the literature about the validity of mother reports, Rothbart and Bates (1998) point out that mothers often see children in greater range of contexts and thus have a wider base of knowledge about their children’s reactions, and are thus “experts” on their children. Also there is substantial evidence that parents’ reports of child temperament converge moderately with other kinds of measures, such as observer’s ratings (Bates & Pettit, 2007). Finally, because the outcome measure is based on teacher reports (and not on mother reports), there is less likely common source bias.

Limitations of the Present Study

The present study does have several limitations. First, the sample was relatively homogeneous, being primarily middle class and Anglo-European. It is likely that findings might differ for other ethnic and socioeconomic groups. However, given that one purpose of this study was the development of a new self-report measure, the homogeneity of the sample might have been necessary to avoid introducing confounding demographic variables. In validation studies in the future, it would be useful to assess the similarities and differences in parental responding among different cultural groups. Also, the findings were limited to mothers, so it remains unclear as to the role of paternal socialization of children’s emotions pertaining to future-oriented stressful events or to the role of joint mother and father socialization.
Perhaps the most serious drawback is that the study was correlational and examined concurrent associations between variables, limiting inferences about causality and age-related change. Thus, there is a need for longitudinal research to clarify the direction of effects, but also to assess longer term outcomes or consequences of certain types of emotion socialization. There is some suggestion that emotional suppression increases emotional arousal and anxiety over time and that the maladaptive effects of suppressive strategies intensify over time (Buck 1984; Roberts & Strayer, 1987). For example, Krause, Mendelson, and Lynch (2002), in a retrospective study with adults, found that chronic emotional inhibition fully mediated the relation between childhood history of emotional invalidation (e.g. parental punishment, minimization, and distress in response to negative emotion) and adult psychological distress (e.g. depression and anxiety). They concluded that childhood emotional inhibition might be functional in the shorter term and for the parent in that it reduces parental distress but might have longer term negative consequences for the child (Krause, et al, 2002).

Nevertheless children do also need to learn how to manage or control emotional expression to meet short-term goals in situations that demand it or in which expression might be inappropriate (Eisenberg & Fabes, 1992; Kopp, 1989). More research is needed to understand the complex interplay among more immediate and longer term consequences with respect to both emotional and social adjustment.

Conclusions

This study highlights the need to examine individual differences in children in the relations between maternal socialization and the development of social competence. It seems there is no optimum style for all children under all circumstances and that the route to social
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competence might take different forms depending on a child’s level of negative affect. For example, children who are temperamentally negative may benefit from greater emphasis on parenting strategies that emphasize emotional control versus expression. More generally, this study also emphasizes the importance of knowing one’s child and tailoring socialization approaches accordingly. Additional research, especially of a longitudinal nature, will help to clarify and expand upon these interesting findings.
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Oxford University Press.


APPENDICES

A. Future Scenarios Questionnaire (FSQ) and Guide to Responses
B. Examples of Secure Base Scripts (SBS) Narratives
C. Instructions to Mothers and Consent Form for Home Package
D. Consent Form for Lab Visit
E. Cover Letter and Instructions to Teachers
APPENDIX A:

Future Scenarios Questionnaire (FSQ) – Son Version

Instructions:

Please read each of the following scenarios and indicate the likelihood that you would say or do each of the listed suggestions in order to help your son deal with the situation. As you are considering each scenario, please think about the child who is participating in the study with you today. Please respond as honestly and sincerely as you can. Remember there are no right or wrong answers. For each item, please circle a number from 1 (not at all likely) to 7 (very likely). If you would do or say something that is not listed, please write this in the space marked “Other”.

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<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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<td><strong>Not at all Likely</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td><strong>Somewhat Likely</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td><strong>Very Likely</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
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1. If I suspect my child is feeling nervous about an upcoming show and tell day in his classroom, I would:

- a. tell him that it won’t be a big deal - show and tell is a lot of fun
  - Not at all Likely: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- b. talk to him about what he wants to bring and suggest he practice with our family
  - Not at all Likely: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- c. tell him that if he’s really too scared, I’ll call the teacher and tell her he doesn’t have to take his turn
  - Not at all Likely: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- d. point out that other kids in the class are probably really excited about it
  - Not at all Likely: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- e. tell him about something I once brought for “show and tell” when I was his age
  - Not at all Likely: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- f. tell him that when his turn comes, I’m sure he won’t be that scared
  - Not at all Likely: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- g. encourage him to talk about what he’s feeling about show and tell day
  - Not at all Likely: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- h. tell him that because he would make me so proud, I would get him a special treat after school that day
  - Not at all Likely: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- i. discuss a TV show or book about a favorite character having show and tell at his school
  - Not at all Likely: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- j. not do or say anything about it beforehand
  - Not at all Likely: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
2. If I have learned that my child’s favorite school friend is moving to a different neighborhood and will soon be leaving my child’s class, I would:

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<th>Option</th>
<th>Not at all Likely</th>
<th>Very Likely</th>
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<tr>
<td>a. tell him that it can be really hard when a good friend moves away and he might feel sad</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. tell him that people move all the time and it’s not a big deal</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>c. read him a storybook about a similar situation and talk about what the characters in the story feel</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
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<td>d. talk to him about the different ways the two of them can stay in touch even though they won’t be in the same class anymore</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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<td>e. tell him that he won’t be that sad because he has lots of other friends in his class</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
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<td>f. express to my child my own feelings of upset about the situation</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>g. tell him that it will make me sad if he’s feeling too sad about it</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>h. tell him that it’s silly to get really upset because it won’t change anything</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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<td>i. encourage him to talk about what he feels when he thinks about his friend moving</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>j. not do or say anything about it beforehand</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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3. If I have just realized that due to a scheduling conflict, my child is not going to be able to attend a birthday party that he has really been looking forward to, I would:

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<th>Option</th>
<th>Not at all Likely</th>
<th>Very Likely</th>
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<tr>
<td>a. tell him that if he acts mad all afternoon, he will lose a privilege</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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<td>b. ask him to talk about what he’s feeling about having to miss the party</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. tell him that it won’t be a big deal to miss the party</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>d. tell him that I want him to act like a “big boy” and understand why he won’t be able to go</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>e. suggest he draw or paint a picture about what he’s feeling</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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<th>Help Him Brainstorm Some Other Ideas About Things to Do to Still Make the Day Fun</th>
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<th>Tell Him That the Party is Cancelled Because the Birthday Boy is Sick</th>
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<th>Tell Him I’m Sorry He Will Miss the Party and I Understand If He Feels Mad About It</th>
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<th>Let Him Know How Upset It Makes Me for Him to Have to Miss the Party</th>
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<td>i.</td>
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<th>Not Do or Say Anything About It Beforehand</th>
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<tr>
<td>j.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. If it is the beginning of flu season and I have made an appointment to take my child to the doctor for a flu shot, I would:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not at All Likely</th>
<th>Very Likely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>Read Him a Storybook About a Favorite Character Going to the Doctor</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>Tell Him That If He’s Really Brave at the Doctor’s, I’ll Buy Him a New Toy Afterwards</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>Insist That Although the Shot Might Really Hurt Him, He Must Have It So He Won’t Get Sick</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>Tell Him That There’s No Reason to Be Scared and Not to Overreact</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.</td>
<td>Tell Him the Shot Won’t Hurt</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.</td>
<td>Tell Him That I Know He Might Be Feeling a Little Bit Scared and That I Don’t Like Getting Needles Either</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g.</td>
<td>Encourage Him to Talk About What He’s Feeling About Going to the Doctor</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h.</td>
<td>Role Play with a Toy Doctor’s Kit About What Will Happen and What He Can Expect at the Doctor’s Office</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i.</td>
<td>Tell Him That I Don’t Want Him to Act Like a Baby by Crying at the Doctor’s Office</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j.</td>
<td>Not Do or Say Anything About It Beforehand</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. If my child isn’t feeling well and I have made arrangements for him to stay home with a babysitter while the rest of the family attend a relative’s wedding, I would:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not at all Likely</th>
<th>Very Likely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. help him brainstorm ideas of fun activities that he and the babysitter can do together</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. suggest he draw a picture to give to the bride and groom</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. tell him that I understand it’s hard to be left out from something and it’s ok to feel sad</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. tell him that he’s old enough to deal with these things</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. tell him that there’s no reason to be upset, sometimes these things happen</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. tell him the wedding won’t be much fun for him and he won’t be missing anything</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. tell him I feel horrible that he will be missing out on the family event</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. tell him that if he cries and doesn’t behave himself with the sitter, he will lose a privilege</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Encourage him to talk about what he’s feeling</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. not do or say anything about it beforehand</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. If one of my closest friends is coming over to visit for the afternoon and she is bringing her child, with whom my child doesn’t really like to play and share, I would:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not at all Likely</th>
<th>Very Likely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. tell him how upset I am that he doesn’t get along with my friend’s child</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. tell him that if he doesn’t play nicely and share his toys, he will lose a privilege</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. tell him that I want him to be a good boy and not embarrass me</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. encourage him to talk about why he doesn’t like to play with this child</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. tell him that I understand how hard it can be to share his toys with someone he doesn’t really like</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. tell him it’s not a big deal to play with this child for one afternoon</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
g. tell him a funny make believe story about a similar circumstance

h. ask him to try to come up with ideas of activities that he might enjoy with the other child

i. tell him that this child is really fun to play with

j. not do or say anything about it beforehand

7. If my child has been invited over to a friend’s house for a play date and he doesn’t want to go because the last time he was there, his friend’s dog jumped up on him and scared him, I would:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not at all Likely</th>
<th>Very Likely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. encourage him to ask for help from his friend or his friend’s parent if he’s scared</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. tell him that it will make me really happy if he is brave and goes over to play</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. tell him that I understand he might be feeling a little bit scared of the dog</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. tell him that he needs to be really careful and make sure he doesn’t bug the dog</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. read him a storybook about a favorite character who is afraid of dogs</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. encourage him to talk about what he’s worried about</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. assure him that there’s nothing to be afraid of and the dog just wants to play with him</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. tell him not to be silly and pet the dog</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. tell him that the dog probably won’t be around</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. not do or say anything about it beforehand</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. If I am going out of town for the weekend and I will be leaving my child at home, I would:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not at all Likely</th>
<th>Very Likely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. tell him that it might be hard to be away from each other but we will both be thinking of each other</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. encourage him to talk about what he feels about me leaving for a few days</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. talk to him about where I’m going, when I’m coming back and</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Maternal Responses to Anticipated Children’s Negative Emotions 108

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>what will happen the days I’m away (who will take care of him, how things will be different in his day, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. tell him that when I leave, I don’t want him to act like a baby and start to cry</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. suggest we draw or paint pictures together so that we can each have one while we’re apart</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. tell him that if he’s a good boy, I’ll buy him lots of presents when I’m away</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. express my own feelings of distress and worry about leaving</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. tell him not to worry about it, I’ll be home before he knows it</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. tell him he’ll be having so much fun, he won’t miss me at all</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. not do or say anything about it beforehand</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. If I had promised my child that I would take him to the zoo on Saturday but something has come up and I know I won’t be able to keep my promise, I would:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Not at all Likely</th>
<th>Very Likely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. tell him that I just found out the zoo is closed for the day so we won’t be able to go</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. express my own disappointment and anger over the situation</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. suggest we gather up all his toy and stuffed animals and “play” zoo at home</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. encourage him to talk about what he’s feeling</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. help him to brainstorm some other ideas about things to do to still make the day fun</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. tell him that if he acts mad all day, he will lose a privilege</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. tell him I’m sorry I’m breaking my promise and I understand if he feels mad about it</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. tell him that I want him to act like a “big boy” and not to be mad</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. tell him not to overreact about not going to the zoo because it’s not a big deal</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. not do or say anything about it beforehand</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Responses that Encourage Emotion Expression (EEE)

1) Acceptance – Conveying acceptance, understanding, and tolerance of the child’s negative emotion (q1e, q2a, q3h, q4f, q5c, q6e, q7c, q8a, q9g)

2) Mastery – Invoking child’s feelings of mastery or control over the situation, often by suggesting different ways of handling or coping with the situation (q1b, q2d, q3f, q4h, q5a, q6h, q7a, q8c, q9e)

3) Abstraction - Using creative, abstract ways of talking about the situation or emotion (q1i, q2c, q3e, q4a, q5b, q6g, q7e, q8e, q9c)

4) Encourage Expression of Emotion – Encouraging the child to explicitly talk about his or her negative Feelings (q1g, q2i, q3b, q4g, q5i, q6d, q7f, q8b, q9d)

Responses that Discourage Expression of Emotion (DEE)

5) Shaming – Responding in a way that shames, judges, or ridicules the child (q1d, q2h, q3d, q4i, q5d, q6c, q7h, q8d, q9h)

6) Minimizing – Responding in a way that minimizes, dismisses, or downplays the emotion (q1a, q2b, q3c, q4d, q5e, q6f, q7g, q8h, q9i)

7) Distortion – Denying or distorting the emotional experience of the child; includes inappropriate labeling of the emotion (q1f, q2e, q3g, q4e, q5f, q6i, q7i, q8i, q9a)

8) Contingencies – Taking something away from the child or bribing the child to conform to maternal expectation of how the child should feel; includes psychological contingencies like parental approval/disapproval (q1h, q2g, q3a, q4b, q5h, q6b, q7b, q8f, q9f)
9) Maternal Distress – Responding in a way that is overly intrusive often with an exaggerated focus on parent’s upset or concerns; includes overly managing the situation for the child (i.e. not allowing child to participate in his/her own coping)
(q1c, q2f, q3i, q4c, q5g, q6a, q7d, q8g, q9b)

10) Avoidance – Do or say nothing beforehand (q1j, q2j, q3j, q4j, q5j, q6j, q7j, q8j, q9j)
APPENDIX B:

Examples of Secure Base Script Narratives (Baby’s Morning) with Varying Levels of Scriptedness

Low Level of Scriptedness (Score = 2)

Once upon a time there was a mother and a baby playing on a blanket and they were sort of wrestling and having fun and the mom gave the baby a little hug and that made the baby smile. So the mom decided to tell the baby a story. And the in the story she was pretending that the baby’s teddy bear was lost in the woods and the big bad wolf was chasing the teddy bear but the teddy bear was a super teddy bear and so the teddy bear climbed up a tree and jumped from tree to tree and got away from the big bad wolf and he found his mommy and daddy and they lived happily ever after. With that the baby fell asleep and had a nap.

Medium Level of Scriptedness (Score = 4)

Wanda and her baby were outside on a beautiful Sunday morning. They were in the park on a beautiful blue blanket, playing. The mother was making all sorts of funny faces at her baby and he was just smiling back and laughing at his mother. When she looked at her watch, she realized it’s almost baby’s nap time. She tried to put the baby down to sleep, but the baby just cried and cried and cried. He would not go to sleep. She realized that he was missing his teddy bear. She opened up her bag to get out the teddy bear, but it was gone. She didn’t know what to do, the teddy bear was lost. She searched and searched inside her bag, took out everything until she realized that she left it in the car. She picked up baby and went back to the car to get the teddy bear. When the baby saw the teddy bear, he was so happy, he took the teddy bear, put it in his arms, and fell right asleep.
High Level of Scriptedness (Score = 7)

Once upon a time there was a mother who had a little baby. The baby was so cute, although she just a few months old, she really liked to play. Most of all when her mommy tickled her, she giggled a lot. Her favorite toy was her little blanket. She used to like to hold the little blanket in her arms until she fell asleep. Her mommy loved her very much, and she used to give her a lot of hugs and kisses, all the time. And the baby would smile back at her mommy. One day the mommy asked the doctor, “How come the little baby smiles a lot?” And the doctor said, “Because you smile at her, she smiles back at you. That’s how she learned how to smile.” Mommy liked to read a lot of books to her to baby. The funny thing is that the baby used to be so quiet and listen to the story as if they really understood. But the mother had such a soothing voice that the baby would sometimes feel so calm and peaceful that they fell asleep while the mother was reading the story. The baby also had a beautiful teddy bear in her bed. It was pink. And one day, the teddy bear was not there any more. It’s probably that the mother was cleaning the bed, and the sheets, and she forgot to put the teddy bear back in. The baby thought that she lost the teddy bear. And she kept moving around her crib, and her mommy knew that she was looking for the teddy bear. Her mommy went and looked for it, and she finally found it. And when she brought it back, she could see that the baby was really happy to see the teddy bear because she started moving her hands and her feet, wanting the mommy to give her the teddy bear. It was time for the baby to take a nap. So her mommy gave her the blanket. She held on tight to it. The mommy started reading the story, and the baby fell asleep.
APPENDIX C:

Mother Consent Form for Home Package

The study you will be participating in concerns what mothers think about different situations involving parenting, and how children and their mothers talk about events together. It also concerns how children feel and act in different types of situations. Your participation today involves completing the attached questionnaires. This should take about 45 - 60 minutes. Your and your child’s upcoming visit to the Child Studies Center, as well as your partner’s questionnaire data (if he is participating), are also part of this study.

When you and your child visit the Child Studies Center, you will be asked to talk with your child about some situations that your child will encounter in the future. After this, your child will stay with one interviewer, who will do various activities with him/her. This will include asking your child to complete stories using props and dolls, and answering some questions about him/herself. Your child will be given a short snack break during this time. During the time your child is with one interviewer, you will go to a nearby room with another interviewer who will ask you some general questions about your family, conduct some short interviews, and ask you to complete some additional questionnaires. Your visit to the lab should take about two hours. As a token of our thanks, your child will receive a prize (i.e. a toy) at the end of the study. During your visit, some parts of the study will be videotaped or audiotaped, so that the interviewers do not need to take notes throughout the study. At the end of the study, we will discuss the study with you in detail and answer any questions you might have at that time.
Your participation, as well as that your partner (if applicable) and child, is completely voluntary, and you may stop doing the study at any time if you wish to. You may also refrain from answering any of the questions if you don’t want to answer them. Also, there are no right or wrong answers to any of the questions you will be asked in this study. The information you provide will assist researchers in finding out more about the different ways that parents and children think and feel in different situations.

The information given by you, your child and your partner (if applicable) will be kept strictly confidential. The information you provide will not be discussed with your child or your partner (if applicable), and the information your child provides will not be discussed with you. Your name will not appear on any of the answer sheets, so that you remain anonymous, and only persons authorized by the researcher will have access to the data. Ultimately, we intend to publish the results of this study in an academic journal and in reporting these results, participants will not be identified in any way.

If you are certain you would like to participate in this study, please sign and date this form in the space provided below. Please return this form with your questionnaires.

If you have any questions after you have completed the study, you can contact the researcher at (416) 978-5373 (lab) or (416) 487-5888 (home). The researcher’s name is Leah Lundell. You can also contact Professor Joan Grusec, the research supervisor, at (416) 978-7610.

Signing this form indicates that you have given your consent to participate in this study.

Signature:

Date:
The study you will be participating in today concerns what mothers think about different situations involving parenting, and how children and their mothers talk about things together. It also concerns how children feel in different types of situations, and how they interact with others. The information that you and your child provide will assist researchers in finding out more about the ways that mothers and children deal with certain situations. For the first part of the study, you and your child will be together. You will be asked to talk about some incidents that your child will encounter in the future. After this, your child will stay with one interviewer, who will do various activities with him/her. This will include asking your child to complete stories using props and dolls, and asking him/her some questions about him/herself. Your child will also be given a short snack break. During this time, you will go to a nearby room with another interviewer who will ask you some general questions about your family, and who will interview you, and then ask you to complete a couple of additional questionnaires. Your visit here today should take about two hours. As a token of our thanks, your child will receive a prize (e.g. toy) at the end of the study.

Participation for both of you is completely voluntary, and you may stop doing the study at any time if you wish to. You may also refrain from answering any questions or doing any of the activities if you don’t want to. There are no right or wrong answers to any of the questions you will be asked in this study. Parts of the study will be videotaped or audiotaped, so that the interviewers will not have to take notes throughout the study. The questionnaires that you and your child’s father (or step-father) completed at home are also part of this study.
At the end of the study, we will be asking you if you would you give us your permission to contact your child’s teacher in order to obtain his/her input about some of your child’s behaviors and interactions at school with his/her friends. Because teachers get a lot of chances to see how children behave with their peers, they are good people to ask about children’s interactions with others. So their input can make a very important contribution to this study. We know that your child’s teacher’s time is valuable so the questionnaires we would send him/her require very little time. Also, his/her answers would remain confidential so they will not be made known to you. If you choose not to have your child’s teacher contacted, it is still possible to participate in the study, and your contribution will still be valuable.

We believe that participating in this study should be an interesting and enjoyable experience for you and your child. At the end of the study we’ll be happy to discuss it with you in more detail. All the information given by yourself, your child and your child’s father (or step-father) will be kept strictly confidential. The information you provide will not be discussed with your child or your partner, and the information your child provides will not be discussed with you. Your name will not appear on any of the answer sheets, so that you remain anonymous, and only persons authorized by the researcher will have access to the data. Ultimately, we intend to publish the results of this study in an academic journal and in reporting these results, participants will not be identified in any way. In the unlikely event that there is information revealed that leads the researcher to be concerned about possible child abuse, the researcher has an obligation to disclose that information to a child welfare authority.

If you have any further questions or concerns, please share these with the interviewer before the study begins. If you have no further questions or concerns and are certain you
would like to participate in this study, please sign and date this form in the space provided below. If you have questions after you have completed the study, you can contact the researcher at (416) 978-5373 (lab) or (416) 487-5888 (home). The researcher’s name is Leah Lundell. You can also contact Professor Joan Grusec, the research supervisor, at (416) 978-7610.

Signing this form indicates that you have given your consent to participate in this study.

Name (PRINT): ___________________________________________________

Date: ___________________________________

Signature: ________________________________________________________
APPENDIX E:

Cover Letter and General Instructions to Teachers

Dear __ (Teacher’s name) __,

Your student, __ (Child’s full name) __, and his (her) mother recently participated in a study on child development, being conducted at the Child Studies Centre at the University of Toronto. This is part of an ongoing research project funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

__ (Child’s name)’s __ mother has given us permission to contact you in connection with this study (see attached page).

As __ (Child’s name)’s __ teacher, you are probably one of the people who know him (her) well, and can provide objective and accurate information about him (her). Your input would therefore make a very important contribution to the study. We would be extremely grateful if you could help us by rating __ (Child’s name) __ behavior at school on a few scales.

We know you are busy and that your time is valuable, and so we have designed the materials so that they will require as little of your time as possible, while at the same time provide a great deal of valuable information for the study. Your part in the study, should you choose to help us, involves rating __ (Child’s name) __ on the two attached scales. The scales are quite short (one is 30 items; one is 59 items; 89 items in total). Once you complete the ratings, please discard this cover letter, and send the completed scales back to us using the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope. Your ratings will be kept completely confidential and will not be made known to the child’s family at any point. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me: 416-978-5373 (ask for Leah). Thank you again for your valuable time and for your help.

Sincerely,

Leah Lundell
PhD Candidate
Department of Psychology, University of Toronto

and

Joan Grusec
Professor
Department of Psychology, University of Toronto
Teacher Rating Scales – General Instructions

Please detach this page. Return only the attached pages.

Name of child you are being asked to rate:  _(Child’s full name)_

Attached are two questionnaires. Each questionnaire includes a list of statements about attributes or behavior which may be shown by a child during the day at school. Based on your knowledge of the child over the last few months, please rate how characteristic each statement is of the child. Please note that each questionnaire has its own instructions and rating-scale.

It is important to try and answer each question as objectively and independently as possible. In rating each statement, please disregard your ratings for that child on every other statement. Try not to let general impressions color your judgments about specific aspects of the child’s behavior.

Please be sure to mark every statement.

If you feel that there are any difficulties in rating this child for whatever reason on a particular item, please feel free to write your comments in the space provided at the bottom of the questionnaire.

Again, if you have any questions please call Leah at 416-978-5373.

Many thanks for your time and effort in completing these scales!