CHAPTER

10

Understanding Values in Relationship: The Development of Conscience

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Conscience consists of the cognitive, affective, relational, and other processes that influence how young children construct and act consistently with generalizable, internal standards of conduct. Conscience development in the early years was not, until recently, of central interest to students of moral development. Traditional approaches to moral growth (such as those of learning theory and the cognitive–developmental view pioneered by Piaget and Kohlberg) portrayed young children as egocentric and preconventional thinkers and as self-interested moralists who respond to the incentives and sanctions provided by other people. By contrast with older children who are concerned with maintaining good relations with others, and with adolescents who consider moral issues within a broader ethical framework, the morality of young children was viewed as an authoritarian, instrumental orientation guided by rewards, punishment, and obedience. In this regard, morality in early childhood was sharply distinguished from the morality of values, humanistic regard, and relationships of later years.

But as developmental scientists have reexamined traditional conclusions about thinking and reasoning in early childhood, they have also taken a fresh look at moral understanding. Young children are no longer regarded as egocentric but instead as being intensely interested in the thoughts, feelings, and beliefs of other people, and research on developing theory of mind has revealed the sophistication of young children's inferences about

different mental and emotional states (Wellman, 2002; Wellman, Cross, & Watson, 2001). Young children's sensitivity to standards, developing conceptions of others' desires, intentions, and rules, and representations of behavioral expectations each contribute, beyond punishment, to the motivational bases of compliance and cooperation. And developmental relational theory, particularly the contributions of attachment theory, has shown how significantly young children's experience in close relationships shapes their views of themselves, conceptions of morality, and motivation to cooperate with others (Kochanska & Thompson, 1997; Maccoby, 1984; Thompson, Laible, & Ontai, 2003). Taken together, it is now becoming clear that conscience development in early childhood shares much in common with later moral development: the foundations for a relational, humanistic, and other-oriented morality are emerging in the preschool years.

New research on early conscience is important for another reason. By contrast with studies of moral development in later years, which sometimes focus narrowly on children's social-cognitive judgments about wrongdoing, research on conscience development is conceptually and methodologically multifaceted (e.g., Kochanska, Aksan, & Nichols, 2003; Laible & Thompson, 2002; Smetana, 1997; Zahn-Waxler & Robinson, 1995). Research in this area explores, for example, the development of moral affect (particularly the conditions eliciting salient feelings of guilt or shame, as well as empathy), the emergence of behavioral self-control, relational influences on the motivation to cooperate, the emergence of a "moral self" (and the facets of self-awareness that contribute to the growth of conscience), temperamental influences, as well as cognitive achievements in the representation of behavioral standards. By studying young children's moral judgments, affect, and behavioral compliance, students of conscience development bring much-needed breadth to the study of early moral development (see, e.g., Grusec, Goodnow, & Kuczynski, 2000; Harris & Nunez, 1996; Kochanska, Gross, Lin, & Nichols, 2002; Lagattuta, 2003; Thompson et al., 2003). Doing so has required methodological creativity. Studies in this field enlist laboratory procedures to assess young children's compliance with a parent's requests, observations of children's behavioral and emotional reactions to rigged mishaps and resistance to temptation tasks, responses to hypothetical stories involving moral violation and compliance, parental questionnnaires of early conscience, parent–child conversations about misbehavior and good behavior, and a variety of other procedures to elucidate how young children understand, feel, and respond as intuitive moralists. The study of early conscience has required conceptual breadth and methodological creativity to examine the foundations of morality in the early years.

Our goal is to profile these new discoveries and to suggest directions for future inquiry. The first section is devoted to the conceptual foundations of early conscience. We consider how young children become intuitive moralists in their initial learning about behavioral expectations, their representations of behavioral standards, and their sensitivity to the violation of standards. One conclusion emerging from these literatures is that young children are attuned to behavioral expectations as part of their representations of what is expectable and normative in the world, but that moral standards pose special conceptual challenges for them. Because emotion is a potent motivator of moral understanding and compliance, the affective side of conscience development is considered in the section that follows. This includes influences on developing self-understanding and self-regulation, the development of moral emotions, and the importance of temperamental individuality and its relation to conscience development. The account that emerges from these literatures is that rather than having to be tutored in morality by the incentives and sanctions of parents, young children are attuned to moral issues because of the incentives that arise from developing self-awareness and children's emotional connections to others.

Thus the third section profiles relational contributions to conscience development. We consider the importance of the affective quality of the parent-child relationship and the significance of the security of attachment to a young child's motivation to cooperate with parental expectations. Then we unpack relational influences further to consider parental strategies of control and discipline and other influences that shape the development of conscience in the early years (e.g., Holden, Miller, & Harris, 1999; Kochanska, Aksan, & Nichols, 2003; Kuczynski, Marshall, & Schell, 1997). The conclusion that emerges from these literatures is that far more important than rewards and punishments are the relational incentives that exist within the family, including the young child's desire to maintain an environment of cooperation with each parent and to be perceived by the adult as a good (and competent) person. In turn, the parental strategies that contribute to conscience development are far more than the reliable enforcement of consistent behavioral standards, and involve also affection, conversation, and proactive efforts to help children develop as naive young moralists.

In a concluding section, we consider more broadly what these new perspectives to early conscience development mean for moral development theory and research.

CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS OF CONSCIENCE

The study of moral development has always been closely tied to children's conceptual development because morality involves reasoning of various kinds. Morality entails understanding behavioral standards, for example, and their applications to personal behavior. Morality involves generalizing context-specific and act-specific sanctions and rewards into broader rules of conduct. Morality requires understanding others' needs, desires, and interests and relating them to one's own. It also requires anticipating the responses of others to one's actions. Morality involves many domains of understanding, and thus the study of conscience development is closely tied to research examining children's conceptual growth.

Learning About Behavioral Expectations

Conscience development has its origins in infancy, when the sanctions (and rewards) of adults in response to the child's actions have emotional and behavioral consequences (Kochanska & Thompson, 1997). A 12-month-old may avoid prohibited acts (such as touching forbidden objects), for example, because of simple associative learning or a conditioned response to past disapproval and the feelings of uncertainty or anxiety with which it is associated. The child quickly learns that certain actions are routinely followed by disapproval and anxiety. As a result, he or she feels uncertain in similar situations and tends to inhibit prohibited actions. During the second year, a toddler may also resist acting in a disapproved manner because of imitative learning from another who has been punished. In these instances, however, the young child's behavioral compliance arises from prior reward and punishment and not from an internal obligation to a generalized value, and these behaviors thus cannot be really considered "moral." Although infants and toddlers are beginning to develop the conceptual foundations of conscience, as we show next, these foundations are not sufficiently well developed to motivate genuinely moral conduct.

These experiences of disapproval and reward are important, however, because disapproval comes from an adult to whom the child has developed a close emotional attachment. Thus a parent's disapproval is a salient experience that elicits attention and efforts to comprehend. Moreover, the infant's experience with the behavioral sanctions of parents increases markedly by the end of the first year, especially with the growth of self-produced

locomotion. As Campos, Kermoian, and Zumbahlen (1992) have found, once infants be-gin crawling or creeping they become more capable of goal attainment but also of acting in a dangerous or disapproved manner and of wandering away from the parent. Conse-quently, parents report that they more actively monitor the child's activity, increasingly use prohibitions and sanctions, and also expect greater behavioral compliance from their locomotor offspring (Biringen, Emde, Campos, & Appelbaum, 1995; Campos, Anderson, Barbu-Roth, Hubbard, Hertenstein, & Witherington, 1999; Campos et al., 1992). Thus, during the same period (9 to 12 months) that a secure or insecure attachment to the parent is becoming consolidated, infants increasingly find that their actions and intentions are being frustrated and disapproved by the attachment figure. From the beginning, therefore, young children learn about behavioral expectations in the context of salient relational incentives for doing so, and the manner in which parents monitor and guide the behavior of offspring is likely related to their broader relationship quality.

These experiences are important for conscience development because they are also occurring at a time that infants are developing a dawning awareness that others have intentional and subjective orientations toward events that may differ from the child's own (Tomasello, 1999; Tomasello & Rakoczy, 2003). In their communicative gestures, efforts to achieve joint attention with another, and imitative learning, 12-month-olds reveal their awareness that others are deliberate and subjective partners. One of the most widely studied manifestations of this awareness is the emergence of social referencing by the end of the first year (Baldwin & Moses, 1996; Feinman, Roberts, Hsieh, Sawyer, & Swanson, 1992). Social referencing is commonly observed when infants respond to novel or uncertain situations based on the emotional expressions they detect in others; young children respond with cautious wariness to a novel situation when a caregiver appears anxious or frightened, for example. Although it is unclear whether social referencing reflects self-initiated information seeking or is instead a correlate of affective sharing, comfort seeking, or other facets of secure-base behavior (Baldwin & Moses, 1996), the emergence of social referencing as another intersubjective capacity by the end of the first year suggests that infants are good consumers of emotional information from others and can use it to guide their own actions (Thompson, 1998a).

Social referencing is important to learning about behavioral expectations because par-ents signal anxiety or disapproval in circumstances when young children may be unaware or uncertain of dangerous or prohibited acts. A mother whose imperative "ahhh!" and anxious facial expression when the baby crawls toward the cat's litter box in another's home is endowing this activity with affective valence for the infant, and this becomes even more influential when the parent's emotional cues are accompanied by imperative language and action. Moreover, at somewhat older ages, social referencing may become deliberately enlisted by the child as part of the nonverbal negotiation between a parent and a toddler over permitted and prohibited actions through their exchange of looks, expres-sions, and gestures. A toddler who progressively approaches the VCR with sticky fingers while glancing back toward the parent is enlisting the parent's expressions in clarifying or confirming the child's expectations about sanctioned conduct (Emde & Buchsbaum, 1990). According to Emde and his colleagues, this kind of checking and rechecking the parent's emotional expressions is an important avenue toward the growth of self-control as young children compare their contemplated behavior with an external emotional cue before the behavioral standard has become fully internalized. Subsequently, as children progres-sively remember and internalize the parent's approving or disapproving expressions when considering acting in the parent's absence, they are "referencing the absent parent" as an avenue toward conscience development (Emde, Biringen, Clyman, & Oppenheim, 1991; Emde & Buchsbaum, 1990).

Much more research should be devoted to elucidating the influence of this kind of emotional cuing on the behavioral regulation of infants and toddlers. For example, although considerable research indicates that infants inhibit activity in the presence of a parent (or another trusted caregiver) who expresses fearful or anxious affect, many behavioral expectations are conveyed in the context of an angry, "warning" tone. It is less clear how very young children respond to the prosody of adult voice and facial expressions signaling angry affect, even though these are likely to be evoked discriminatingly to contexts involving the violation of the parent's behavioral expectations. There is also much more to be learned about how the adult's emotional cues have the influence they do on young children, including the frequently debated issue of whether they alter behavior through the information inherent in the caregiver's emotional display, or through the arousal of resonant affect in the child that facilitates or inhibits ongoing activity, or both.

By the first birthday, therefore, infants are learning about behavioral expectations within a relational context in which the caregiver's emotional cues, together with the child's awareness of the adult as a subjective, intentional agent, endows the adult's disapproval with normative informational value and behavioral incentive. But until the child begins to adopt behavioral standards as internalized rules within a broader understanding of expectations and values, it is difficult to regard the child's compliance as truly moral in nature.

Representing Behavioral Standards

As constructivist theorists argue, children are active interpreters of experience. This is true of children's encounters with the rules and values communicated to them by parents. As Grusec and Goodnow (1994) have noted, for example, whether children internalize the values conveyed in discipline encounters with parents depends significantly on how children perceive the appropriateness and relevance of the adult's intervention, the clarity of the parental message, the emotional effects of the parent's behavior on the child (e.g., threats to security or a sense of autonomy), as well as the general quality of the parent–child relationship. Although their analysis focused on older children (who have been the traditional focus of moral socialization studies), the same is true of young children. As we shall see, for example, a child's temperamental qualities can mediate the impact of parental discipline practices. Some children respond emotionally and behaviorally to specific disciplinary interventions, whereas other children respond to the broader quality of the parent–child relationship. In addition, developmental changes in how young children reason about desires, beliefs, and intentions in relation to external standards are important influences on how they mentally represent behavioral expectations.

Research on children's developing understanding of people's internal states, or "theory of mind," indicates that young children achieve significant insight into the psychological causes of behavior during the first 5 years of life (Wellman, 2002; Wellman et al., 2001). Theory of mind begins with the dawning realization that intentions, desires, and emotions underlie actions, which emerges during the first 18 months of life (e.g., Repacholi & Gopnik, 1997; Woodward, 1998). This is the basis for the development of a "desire psychology" that involves a richer understanding of the mental world. By age 3, therefore, children understand that people behave according to their intentions, desires, and feelings. At this age, however, children have still not yet grasped the representational nature of mental events and, as a result, cannot easily conceive how beliefs about events would be inconsistent with reality. By age 5, however, children have reconstructed a more adequate "belief–desire" theory of mind that incorporates an understanding that behavior can be motivated by false belief (e.g., mistakenly searching in a drawer for pencils that have

been taken by someone else). Children of this age also begin to grasp corollary concepts of emotional display rules (producing mistaken beliefs in others about one's feelings) and social deception. There are further achievements in developing theory of mind after age 5. As Flavell, Miller, and Miller (2002) note, for example, a constructivist theory of mind likely emerges around age 6 when children appreciate how mental processes (like expectations and biases) shape knowledge and understanding, and somewhat later children become aware of how individual differences in background and experience shape psychological traits that, in turn, affect mental states. Nevertheless, the first 5 years witness the emergence of young children as naive psychologists who understand the mental origins of self-determined behavior in other people.

The problem is that much behavior is not self-determined: choices are constrained by rules, obligations, and prohibitions imposed on people. In an intriguing recent analysis, Wellman and Miller (2003) have argued that *deontic reasoning*—thinking concerning what someone may, should, or may not, should not do—is another important facet of psychological understanding related to theory of mind reasoning in early childhood. Like theory of mind, they argue, young children demonstrate an early grasp of obligation. In one study, for example, Harris and Nunez (1996) showed that 3-year-olds are highly accurate at appropriately applying a prescriptive rule (i.e., "Mom says if Cathy rides her bike she should put her helmet on") to different scenarios, even though children of the same age are not as skilled at applying a similar descriptive, but not prescriptive, maxim ("when Cathy rides her bike, she always wears her helmet"). The differences between the two situations not only involve whether an authority is involved, but also whether forbidden and permitted actions—rather than typical and atypical actions—are delineated. Obligations are especially salient to young children for these reasons, and Wellman and Miller (2003) argue that they are likely to have an imperative quality that is comparable to the compelling truth of reality that causes 3-year-olds to have difficulty conceptualizing false belief. In the case of obligation, they suggest, young children are prone to assert that rules cannot be broken and obligations must necessarily be discharged, which is similar to the moral absolutism observed in young children long ago by Piaget (1965). As Piaget himself noted, children's construal of rules as obligatory develops regardless of the manner in which these rules are conveyed by parents because they enlist young children's capacities for intuitive reason about compelling social realities (beliefs about events) and obligations (beliefs about rules).

Young children also conceptually distinguish between different obligatory domains. Adults readily differentiate moral rules (which are applicable in all situations and cannot be abrogated) from social-conventional rules (which are applicable in some locales but not others, and can be changed by parents and other authorities). Both are obligatory, in some sense, but differ in the origins, generality, and strength of the obligation. In a series of studies, Smetana has shown that even young children make such conceptual distinctions among domains entailing social regulation (Smetana, 1981, 1985; Smetana & Braeges, 1990). In her studies, children from age 2 through age 4 described as "bad" the violation of moral and social-conventional rules with which they were familiar. But although 2-year-olds did not distinguish between different kinds of violations, 3- and 4-year-olds viewed moral violations as more serious and less revocable (e.g., "Would it be OK if there was not a rule about it here?") than social-conventional violations. Smetana has shown that such domain distinctions are also incorporated into parents' socialization strategies at home (Smetana, 1989, 1997; Smetana, Kochanska, & Chuang, 2000). Young children are, in short, sensitive to obligatory expectations and distinguish between different obligatory domains in their thinking about the social world.

Remarkably, young children also make sophisticated judgments about the interplay between moral and social conventional standards in complex social situations. Killen, Pisacane, Lee-Kim, and Ardile-Rey (2001) and Theimer, Killen, and Stangor (2001) each assessed how preschoolers would evaluate common gender-based social exclusion probes in peer play (e.g., girls excluding a boy from doll play). They found that although preschoolers recognized that gender exclusion occurs based on conventional stereotypes, they also gave priority to fairness considerations in rejecting gender-based exclusion. In short, they appreciated both social-conventional norms and the moral imperative for equal treatment.

Conscience and morality are not, of course, merely cognitive capacities. They involve salient emotions evoked both by compliance and transgression. Lagattuta (in press) explored children's understandings of the emotions that are elicited when one complies (but resists fulfilling one's desires) or when one transgresses (to satisfy desire). Children ranging in age from 4 to 7 and adults were interviewed about how a story character would feel who wanted to act in a certain way (e.g., running into the street to retrieve a ball) that conflicted with a prohibitive rule (e.g., "You should not run into the street"). By contrast with the younger children, the majority of 7-year-olds and adults predicted that the story character would feel positive or mixed emotions when complying, and that the story character would feel negative or mixed emotions when transgressing. In each case, of course, the story character is responding emotionally in a manner inconsistent with the satisfaction of their underlying desire to retrieve the ball. By contrast, young children attributed more negative emotion to the compliant story character, and more positive emotions to the one who transgressed. Younger children had more difficulty looking beyond the satisfaction or frustration of personal desires to consider the future consequences of desire-related moral action. Such a view is consistent with the conclusions of Arsenio and his colleagues that children perceive victimizers as feeling positively about their misconduct because of their focus on the satisfaction of the victimizer's desires, not the victim's distress (Arsenio & Kramer, 1992; Arsenio & Lover, 1999). As Lagattuta notes, considering the future consequences of fulfilling present desires is a conceptual challenge for preschoolers when considering moral obligation and other activity, particularly when later consequences may conflict emotionally with the satisfaction of present desires. Such a conclusion is consistent with many observations of young children's difficulty in denying present pleasures to pursue long-term goals or obligations.

It is apparent from studies such as these that young children think deeply and with considerable insight about the rules and obligations that characterize everyday life. They not only make conceptual distinctions between different obligatory domains, but they do so within the context of representations of other people's desires, intentions, and beliefs that develop significantly in sophistication and scope. Obligations, in the form of rules, expectations, and standards, seem to have special salience to young children as part of their understanding of how the world normatively functions, even though they often have difficulty applying such rules consistently to their own actions or resisting the tendency to violate such rules when doing so enables the satisfaction of salient, present intentions and desires. Nevertheless, rules are conceptually compelling constructs to them, and their emergent conceptualization of rules in these ways inaugurates the transition from the behavioral compliance of the infant to the internalized conscience of the preschooler.

Children's developing representations of behavioral standards are also likely to be embedded within broader prototypical knowledge structures by which young children represent and understand common, recurrent experiences as well as predict their outcomes. These "scripts" constitute a foundation for event representation by enabling young children to inclusively represent familiar experiences and integrate them with other knowledge

systems (Hudson, 1993; Nelson, 1978). Many of the moral and conventional standards affecting young children are related to routine events and are repeatedly conveyed in these contexts, whether consisting of prohibitions from touching dangerous objects at home; avoiding making messes and breaking things; self-control with respect to waiting, sharing, aggression, and eating; simple manners; self-care; and participation in family routines (Gralinski & Kopp, 1993; Smetana et al., 2000). Thus, behavioral expectations are likely to become incorporated into young children's early prototypical knowledge systems and assume normative value as a result. Young children's understanding of how things are done (mealtime, bedtime, daytime routines) includes standards for how one should act in these and other situations. Moreover, to the extent that young children use event scripts to represent novel as well as routine situations (such as using the mealtime script to describe the specific activities that happened at dinner last night), their understanding of behavioral standards is likely to be implicit in their memory and representation of many events of personal significance to them. Taken together, therefore, another reason why behavioral standards are salient and assume normative value to young children (i.e., Piaget's moral absolutism) is that early understanding of behavioral expectations becomes incorporated into children's developing representations of the normative structure of routine events. Expectations for how one acts may become perceived as normative and obligatory just as are expectations for how others will act in these prototypical situations.

As the studies described in this section illustrate, there is a considerable research agenda remaining for scientists interested in elucidating the nature of young children's representations of behavioral standards. In particular, it will be important to understand how young children think about behavioral norms by comparison with other normative events with which they are familiar (including events of the natural as well as the social world), and to explore further their conceptions of moral and conventional obligations by comparison with social events that are consistent but not necessarily obligatory (e.g., daily routines). It will be especially important to study young children's conceptions of normative obligations in a relational context, taking into account how these standards are conveyed to young children and the emotional incentives for compliance that inhere in parent–child interaction. As Smetana's research indicates, children likely appropriate considerable knowledge of the domains of social obligation in their interactions with caregivers. But do caregivers convey their behavioral expectations to young offspring in ways that also contribute to children's beliefs in their normative, obligatory quality?

Sensitivity to Standards

If young children are creating mental schemas for what is normative in their worlds, including the obligations that underlie behavioral standards, this tendency should also be apparent in other ways. Kagan (1981, in press) has argued that young children develop a heightened sensitivity to the standard violations they encounter late in the second year, which is apparent in their responses to obviously marred or disfigured objects. During this period (but not before), he argues, children become concerned when standards of wholeness and intactness have been violated, such as when they notice missing buttons from garments, torn pages from books, trash on the floor, broken toys, or misplaced objects. In his research, Kagan found that 19-month-olds, but not 14-month-olds, expressed concerned over broken toys either vocally (e.g., "It's yukky") or with a despondent expression and obvious concern (see also Lamb, 1993). Kagan has interpreted this phenomenon as an emerging moral sense because each event violated the implicit norms or standards that are typically enforced by parents through sanctions on broken, marred, or damaged objects. In a sense, children of this age have created an internal norm that is generalized from the

specific standards they have received from parents. In addition, children of this age also spontaneously attribute human intentionality to these violations—inferring that someone is responsible for the disfigurement—that also contributes to the moral relevance of these reactions (Kagan, April 3, 2003, personal communication).

Kochanska, Casey, and Fukumoto (1995) explored this view further in a study with somewhat older children (26- to 41-month-olds). Children were presented with pairs of toys, with one toy intact and the other flawed (e.g., torn stuffed bear; torn or stained blanket), and their responses were observed. Kochanska and her colleagues reported that children were highly interested in the flawed objects, commenting on them (e.g., "broken," "I don't like it," "fix it") and trying to repair them. Several weeks later, children were observed in the laboratory in a series of rigged mishaps for which children believed they were responsible, and their subsequent emotional and reparative responses were observed. Girls who had earlier shown greater sensitivity to the flawed objects also responded with greater concern and distress to the mishaps, and the same association was apparent more weakly for boys. These findings led Kochanska and her colleagues to conclude that these responses reflect an emerging system of internal standards leading to a sense of right and wrong.

Thus young children's sense of obligation to normative behavioral standards may be part of a broader sensitivity to normative standards with respect to the integrity of common objects. The same tendency may also be apparent, furthermore, in self-recognition: children at 18 or 19 months respond with embarrassment to a spot of rouge on their noses whereas younger children do not, reflecting an internal standard for their normative physical appearance (Lewis, 2000; Lewis & Brooks-Gunn, 1979). Further research is needed, however, to confirm whether the sensitivity to standards identified by Kagan reflects a truly moral sense, or instead the application of normative standards that are not necessarily moral in nature. Although it is apparent that young children are interested and concerned with objects that have been damaged (especially when a comparable, intact object is presented alongside), no researchers have yet examined young children's evaluative responses to other objects that are different from the norm but are not damaged. To do so, it would be important to compare children's responses to intact and damaged objects with their reactions to objects that are deviant but not damaged (e.g., comparing whole and broken cups to a cup with a finished hole at the bottom; comparing intact and torn blankets with a blanket that is octagonal rather than square). Children as young as 2 years are highly sensitive to these differences in functional design (Kemler Nelson, Herron, & Morris, 2002; Kemler Nelson, Holt, & Chang Egen, 2003), although their emotional and evaluative responses have not yet been assessed. If 2-year-olds respond with "yukky" and emotional concern to objects that are not damaged but simply atypical, then it is possible that their early sensitivity to standards reflects their preoccupation with what is normative in the objects with which they are familiar. This may not become a distinctly moral sensitivity until later in the preschool years, as suggested by the findings of Kochanska and colleagues (1995).

Summary

In their search for predictable constancies in a world of changing experience (a search that Piaget argued characterizes much of early cognitive growth), young children learn about behavioral expectations from attachment figures. As soon as young children are locomotor, these expectations become conveyed through physical interventions, emotional expressions, and words that are incorporated into daily experience and are likely to be incorporated into children's prototypical event representations. If the contemporary account of young children's deontic reasoning (Wellman & Miller, 2003) and the traditional portrayal

of the preschooler's moral absolutism (Piaget, 1965) are correct, young children begin to view these expectations and standards as normative obligations. In much the same way that young children respond emotionally to violations of personal appearance (rouge on the nose) and expectations concerning the integrity and intactness of objects, they view behavioral standards as describing normative reality and thus being compelling and obligatory, and violations are sources of concern. This is especially so for moral obligations, which young children early distinguish from social–conventional norms. Even so, young children are conceptually challenged by deontic obligations because of the difficulties of conceiving behavior in future as well as present context (i.e., later consequences as well as present outcomes), and understanding the desires that motivate multiple actors in moral conflicts.

Another challenge is that nascent deontic understanding does not readily translate into moral compliance. The young intuitive moralist daily confronts the reality that obligation is not necessarily accompanied by compliance, despite the child's strong effort to understand the behavioral expectations of those who matter and (at times) desire to cooperate. And the consequences of failure are significant, including disapproval from attachment figures that may threaten self-esteem. Because these emotional dimensions of moral compliance are significant incentives to acquiring and complying with parents' values, therefore, we turn next to considering the affective influences on conscience development.

CONSCIENCE AND EMOTION

Although there has been considerable interest in the development of moral judgment in older children, researchers recognize that conscience development is more than just conceptual understanding (e.g., Barrett, 1998; Kochanska, 2002a; Laible & Thompson, 2002; Stipek, 1995). Morality involves self-understanding, and the incentives for cooperation and compliance that arise from how a developing child perceives herself or himself and wants to be seen by others. Moral compliance also enlists powerful moral emotions like pride, guilt, shame, and empathy that motivate cooperation, sometimes to avoid the affects that arise from parental disapproval. And temperamental individuality is an important mediator of children's susceptibility to these emotional influences on conscience development.

Developing Self-Understanding and Self-Regulation

Young children cannot act morally until they understand the self as a causal agent and can view the self as an object of evaluation. Moreover, moral development advances in concert with the child's developing self-regulatory capacities and desire to be viewed as acceptable in the eyes of others. Indeed, Kochanska (2002a) has proposed that a developing moral self guides moral conduct in early childhood. In this manner, the growth of conscience is closely associated with the development of self-understanding and self-regulation.

Even infants can experience themselves as causal agents, but the advances in self-understanding most relevant to morality occur during the second and third years. Late in the second year and early in the third, for example, toddlers exhibit many indications of emergent self-representation, such as in their verbal self-referential behavior ("Me big!") (Bates, 1990; Stern, 1985), efforts to assert competence and responsibility as independent agents by refusing assistance (Bullock & Lutkenhaus, 1990; Heckhausen, 1988), identifying simple emotions in themselves (Bretherton, Fritz, Zahn-Waxler, & Ridgeway, 1986), describing the self by gender and in other ways (Ruble & Martin, 1998), and growing interest in how their behavior is regarded by others (Emde & Buchsbaum, 1990; Stipek, Recchia, & McClintic, 1992). Young children are beginning, in other words, to regard

themselves in more multidimensional and evaluative ways, and are developing an interest in understanding how others regard them as objects of evaluation (William James self-as-object) as they are striving to be perceived as competent and responsible. These emergent features of self-representation cause young children to be sensitive to the evaluations of others and to the feelings (such as pride and guilt) deriving from such evaluations, and contributes to their motivation to act in ways that others approve of.

Somewhat later, in the fourth and fifth years, young children begin to perceive themselves in more explicitly characterological terms. To be sure, young children often rely on concrete, observable features and action tendencies in their spontaneous self-descriptions (e.g., "I am big, I can run fast") (Harter, 1999), but they can also use psychological trait terms appropriately as personality self-descriptions (e.g., "I am naughty sometimes, but good with adults") (Eder, 1989, 1990). This suggests that, contrary to earlier portrayals of young children's self-regard, preschoolers think of themselves in personological ways by which they compare themselves with others and from which self-understanding arises. Although it is reasonable to assume that young children's self-descriptions derive, at least in part, from how they are perceived and described by their parents, more study of the nature and influences on preschool children's psychological self-attributions is needed (see Eder & Mangelsdorf, 1997). This is especially important in relation to conscience development because how children perceive themselves as naughty or nice is likely to be motivationally important in morally relevant behavior, and linked in significant ways to the parent–child relationship and the parent's evaluation of the child (Kochanska, 2002a).

These advances in self-understanding not only contribute to the development of the child as a moral being, but also provide a foundation for the growth of self-control and self-regulation (Kopp, 1982, 1987; Kopp & Wyer, 1994). As Kopp has noted, the development of self-regulation is a painstaking process in the early years. *Self-regulation* entails the development of capacities for remembering and generalizing behavioral standards learned from caregivers; the growth of self-awareness as an autonomous, agentic individual; developing a capacity for self-initiated modifications in behavior resulting from remembered parental guidelines; and the growing ability to continuously monitor one's behavior according to these guidelines in diverse circumstances. These are complex achievements and, consistent with the foregoing review, the capacity for competent self-control is, according to Kopp, an achievement of the third year, with self-regulatory capacities emerging somewhat later. This view is consistent with considerable research on behavioral, emotional, and attentional self-regulation, together with allied literatures in developmental neuroscience, suggesting that foundational capacities for self-regulation emerge during the preschool years concurrent with maturational advances in frontal areas of the brain (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). Although many achievements in self-management have yet to develop, a 5-year-old is considerably more capable of focusing attention, controlling impulses, and enlisting strategies for managing emotion than is a 2-year-old. This means, of course, that a young child's capacities to comply with external or internalized standards of conduct also develops significantly in early childhood, at the same time that the preschooler's motivation to cooperate and to please people who matter is also growing.

Development of Morally Relevant Emotions

One of the strong motivators for morally compliant behavior is the salient emotion that arises from cooperative and uncooperative conduct. During the second and third years of life, concurrent with other advances in self-representation described, young children also begin to exhibit psychologically self-referential emotions: pride, shame, guilt, and

embarrassment (Barrett, 1998; Barrett, Zahn-Waxler, & Cole, 1993; Lewis, 2000). Guilt has been studied most extensively. In an important study, Kochanska and associates (2002) observed children's affective and behavioral responses at 22, 33, and 45 months to experimental situations involving rigged mishaps in which children believed they had damaged the experimenter's special toy. Children exhibited concern and distress at each age, and individual differences in these responses were stable over time and were modestly predictive (especially at 45 months) of a battery of assessments of conscience at 56 months that included compliance with rules, moral themes in story-completion responses, and the child's self-reported moral behavior (Kochanska's moral self). Moreover, children who displayed more guilt at each age were found to be temperamentally more fearful, and their mothers used less power assertion in discipline encounters. These developmental findings are consistent with maternal reports concerning the development of guilt in offspring, which also report significant growth in the affective and behavioral manifestations of guilt over this period (Kochanska, DeVet, Goldman, Murray, & Putnam, 1994; Stipek, Gralinski, & Kopp, 1990; Zahn-Waxler & Robinson, 1995).

Just as the simple joy of success becomes accompanied by looking and smiling to an adult and calling attention to the feat (pride), therefore, so also a toddler's upset at an adult's disapproval grows developmentally into efforts to avoid the caregiver's approbation (shame) or make amends (guilt). As these examples illustrate, these morally relevant emotions are socially evoked in the early years and, as Stipek (1995; Stipek et al., 1992) has noted, the reactions of parents to the child's behavior are crucial. In their responses to the successes and failures of their offspring to comply with behavioral expectations, parents not only provide salient expressions of approval or disapproval but also cognitively structure the young child's interpretation of the event. They do so by explicitly linking their response to the standards that the parent has previously conveyed ("You know better than to hit your sister!"), invoke salient attributions of responsibility ("Why did you hit her?"), and often directly induce the self-referent evaluation and affect ("Bad boy!"). This is important because the causal associations between a child's behavior, consequences to other people, the parent's response, and the experience of moral affect are psychologically complex and are thus not always conceptually clear to young children. By inducing salient feelings of pride, shame, and guilt (and other emotions) and providing a verbal response that makes these causal associations explicit, considerable moral and emotional socialization occurs in parent–child discourse during the early years.

The parent's cognitive structure is important because the parent may provide an interpretation of the event that is different from the child's own. A 4-year-old's struggle with a sibling over a valued toy is a dispute over whose desire will prevail, and to each child the violation of personal rights is salient. But when the parent sanctions the conduct of one or both children the dispute assumes broader moral dimensions, and the parent's construal of the event is likely to be significantly different from the child's own. Although the heightened emotions that accompany discipline encounters like these may undermine either child's depth of processing and understanding of the parent's message, the difference between the child's experience of the event and the adult's communicated interpretation of it is likely to be conceptually provocative to young children. In figuring out what happened (sometimes in the context of subsequent conversation with the parent), young children not only confront inconsistent mental representations of the same event, but also acquire greater insight into the attributions and evaluations that underlie the adult's moral judgments. As we shall see, the manner in which parents discuss misbehavior with young offspring—long after the event has occurred—is associated with the growth of conscience and emotion understanding in young children (see Thompson et al., 2003). In these

conversations, furthermore, parents are enlisting their young offspring into a system of cultural as well as moral interpretations of behavior because of how they represent events to which they have responded with approval or disapproval. According to Peggy Miller and her colleagues, for example, Chinese and American mothers describe their children's misbehavior much differently in the presence of the child. American mothers tend to attribute child misconduct to spunk or mischievousness, but Chinese and Chinese-American mothers emphasize much more the shame inherent in misbehavior, each consistent with their cultural values (Miller, Fung, & Mintz, 1996; Miller, Potts, Fung, Hoogstra, & Mintz, 1990).

Although the emergence of moral emotions like guilt, shame, and pride is contingent on the growth of representational self-awareness in young children, therefore, the social contexts in which these emotions are evoked shape the growth of self-understanding (Barrett, 1995; Dunn, 1987). In particular, powerful parental messages of responsibility and the consequences of behavior, together with the salient self-referential emotions with which they are associated, are significant and memorable experiences for young children. As these experiences become incorporated into the child's autobiographical memory and self-referent beliefs, moral evaluations are likely to become part of how children view themselves, and conceive how to relate to others and their relationships with people who matter.

Empathy is another emotional resource for moral conduct that also emerges in early childhood. Consistent with other advances in intersubjective understanding, an empathic capacity emerges during the second year and continues to unfold with growth in emotion understanding in early childhood (Thompson, 1998b; Zahn-Waxler, 2000; Zahn-Waxler & Radke-Yarrow, 1990; Zahn-Waxler & Robinson, 1995). But the sight and sound of another person's distress, fear, or anger is a motivationally complex event for young children. It may lead to sympathetic feelings and prosocial initiatives, but young children may also ignore, laugh at, or aggress toward another in distress, or seek comfort for themselves because of threats to their own emotional security as well as limited social understanding (see Cummings & Davies, 1994; Davies & Cummings, 1994). Consequently, when adults can provide a cognitive structure to assist the child's understanding of the emotions they are witnessing in another, especially by clarifying causality and responsibility, raw empathic arousal can become enlisted into prosocial initiatives toward another person, and into guilt when the child is the perpetrator of another's distress (Zahn-Waxler, 2000; Zahn-Waxler & Radke-Yarrow, 1990; Zahn-Waxler, Radke-Yarrow, Wagner, & Chapman, 1992). Viewed in this light, empathy in itself may not reliably elicit moral responding in young children. But experiences of empathic arousal in the context of the adult's communicated construction of causality and responsibility can be an elicitor of the young child's moral affect and prosocial responding.

Temperamental Individuality

Temperament has a potentially significant developmental influence on conscience that illustrates the different motivational avenues underlying early moral compliance. The realization that young children with different temperamental profiles develop internalized behavioral controls suggests, in other words, that the incentives and sanctions contributing to conscience development may vary for different children in ways that illustrate the multidimensionality of early moral socialization.

This view has been most strongly expressed in the work of Kochanska (1993), who proposed in a theoretical review that conscience development may assume two developmental

pathways: first, through the motivation to avoid the affective discomfort and anxiety associated with wrongdoing, and second, through the motivation to maintain good relations with caregivers by exercising behavioral self-control. A child's temperamental profile is influential in shaping which developmental pathway predominantly contributes to the growth of conscience. This view was subsequently elaborated in two studies that showed that for temperamentally fearful young children, measures of conscience were predicted by maternal control strategies that deemphasized power and instead enlisted nonassertive guidance and "gentle discipline." These children are naturally likely to feel upset and anxious after wrongdoing and to become concerned about its negative consequences, Kochanska reasoned, and thus parental practices that enlist the child's preexisting worry without creating overwhelming distress are likely to contribute best to moral internalization. By contrast, for children who were temperamentally relatively fearless, conscience was not predicted by maternal discipline techniques but rather by the security of attachment and maternal warm responsiveness. For these children, the relational incentives of the mother–child relationship motivated cooperation and compliance (Kochanska, 1991, 1995). These associations were partially replicated in a longitudinal follow-up study in which maternal socialization and children's temperament were assessed at age 2 to 3 years, and measures of conscience (assessed via resistance to temptation tasks and responses to semiprojective stories) were obtained at ages 4 to 5 (Kochanska, 1997a). These findings were not replicated, however, in an independent study by Kochanska and associates (2002), nor in a study with much younger girls by van der Mark, Bakermans-Kranenburg, and van IJzendoorn (2002). Taken together, however, the balance of the empirical evidence suggests that temperament may mediate the influence of early parental practices on the development of conscience in young children, although further study is warranted to clarify whether this model is applicable to conscience development beyond early childhood.

Another developmental pathway in conscience development proposed by Kochanska (1993) is also temperamentally mediated. Young children who are high on effortful (or inhibitory) control are capable of exercising self-restraint to resist a forbidden impulse, and it is reasonable to expect that such children would also be more morally compliant. She has confirmed this association in studies showing both contemporaneous and longitudinal associations between early inhibitory control and later measures of conscience in early childhood and school age (Kochanska, Murray, & Coy, 1997; Kochanska, Murray, Jacques, Koenig, & Vandegeest, 1996; see also Kochanska & Knaack [2003], and Kochanska et al. [1994]). In this view, temperament has a direct influence on conscience development, making some young children more capable of exercising self-control with respect to behavioral expectations.

A third portrayal of the role of temperament and conscience development derives from studies that examine individual differences in children's negative reactivity. Children who are temperamentally high in negative emotion, irritability, and difficulty may be more prone to noncompliance, although they may also be more susceptible to guilt because of their sensitivity to disapproval and criticism. Thus predictions concerning the influence of temperamental reactivity on conscience development are somewhat mixed. In one study, Kochanska and colleagues (1994) reported that preschool girls who were high in temperamental reactivity obtained higher scores on a maternal-report dimension of conscience called "affective discomfort," which encompasses guilt, remorse, and efforts to restore good relations with the parent after wrongdoing. Kagan (in press) has reported somewhat similar findings (see also Lehman, Steier, Guidash, & Wanna, 2002).

Another study, however, offers a very different portrayal of the influence of negative reactivity on conscience development. Children's uncooperative behavior during laboratory

tasks at 30 months was predicted by the interaction of temperamental reactivity with the child's self-regulatory capabilities (Stifter, Spinrad, & Braungart-Rieker, 1999) and maternal control strategies (Braungart-Rieker, Garwood, & Stifter, 1997). Children high on negative reactivity were more likely to be uncooperative, although this was mediated by the exercise of maternal control or the child's own self-regulatory capabilities. These findings are consistent with Eisenberg's (2000) view that the effects of temperamental reactivity must be viewed in the context of regulatory processes that may enlist this reactivity in constructive or unconstructive directions. The manner to which temperamental negative reactivity influences conscience development—either by heightening children's proneness to misbehavior or their sensitivity to the affective discomforts of noncompliance—clearly requires further exploration.

Taken together, these findings profile multiple developmental pathways to early conscience development, and also highlight the adaptive and maladaptive motivational foundations of moral behavior. As these studies suggest, different young children may be morally compliant for somewhat different reasons. For some, cooperation springs predominantly from the broader capacities for self-control and self-management that are likely to be exhibited in many situations (such as in learning and self-care). For others, maintaining good relations with caregivers—and the threat to relational harmony that accompanies misconduct—is the primary motivator of cooperative behavior. Other children are dispositionally prone to fearful and anxious affect, especially in circumstances associated with prior parental disapproval, and thus moral compliance derives from efforts to avoid these aversive feelings. Research on temperament and conscience shows that the most effective parental strategies to socialize moral compliance in young children depend, in part, on the child's temperamental profile. This is another example of the importance of nonshared environmental influences on early socialization, and is complicated, of course, by the realization that parenting practices are themselves affected by the young child's temperamental profile (Clark, Kochanska, & Ready, 2000).

Furthermore, this research suggests that each temperamentally associated motivational orientation has its strengths and weaknesses. Temperamentally fearless children who comply to maintain good relations with the parent may, for example, be prone to misbehave when they can escape detection. Temperamentally fearful children who readily experience anxious fear when misbehaving may become guilt prone and morally inflexible as a result. The realization that alternative pathways to conscience development arise, in part, from temperamental individuality suggests that these pathways may have far-reaching influences on moral development, an issue that requires further research exploration with children of older ages.

Summary

Young children fail to act consistently with expectations they regard as obligatory because self-control is limited, self-regulation is nascent, and immediate desire often outweighs future consequences in their representation of moral dilemmas. Even so, the consequences of failure are significant: disapproval from attachment figures is accompanied by verbal explanations that clarify responsibility and causality, and the arousal of salient self-referential moral emotions. Temperament mediates these social and emotional processes, but primarily by defining the constellation of intrinsic vulnerabilities and resources that become enlisted into conscience development. One must feel sympathy with young children who are so conceptually attuned to deontic obligations but vulnerable to the emotional consequences of their inability to consistently comply.

Fortunately, young children are assisted by caregivers who convey and enforce behavioral standards and contribute to early moral development through proactive as well as reactive strategies, and support the young child's conceptual foundations for moral understanding. Because young children do not navigate the world of morality by themselves, we turn now to consider the relational influences on conscience development.

RELATIONAL INFLUENCES ON CONSCIENCE DEVELOPMENT

Parents are central figures in the moral world of the young child. They articulate and explain behavioral standards, provide salient attributions of causality and responsibility for misbehavior, elicit moral emotions like empathy and guilt, disapprove and sanction misconduct, and provide some of the most important incentives to compliance. Their influence occurs via at least two avenues: through the broader quality of the parent–child relationship that embeds behavioral compliance within the network of good relations that they share, and through specific proactive efforts and reactive practices by which parents respond to misbehavior and compliance.

Relational Quality

Although moral socialization is often discussed in relation to specific parenting practices (e.g., discipline techniques), the temperament research profiled suggests that these practices are influential because of the broader relationship context in which they are exercised. Young children are motivated to cooperate with the expectations of parents, for example, to maintain the positive affectionate relationship that they enjoy. Viewed in this light, the parent–child relationship in early childhood can be conceived of as the young child's introduction into a relational system of reciprocity that supports moral conduct by sensitizing the child to the mutual obligations of close relationships. Although the mutual obligations of parents and offspring are certainly not equal in early childhood, the young child is nevertheless motivated by the parent's affectionate care to respond constructively to parental initiatives, appropriate parental values, and maintain and value a positive relationship. Such a mutually responsive parent–child relationship orients children to the human dimensions of moral conduct (e.g., consequences for another) and, more generally, makes the child more receptive to the parent's socialization initiatives, and provides experience with the kinds of "communal" relationships that children may also share with other partners in the years that follow (Kochanska, 2002b; Maccoby, 1984, 1999; Waters, Kondo-Ikemura, Posada, & Richters, 1991).

To Kochanska (2002b), a mutually responsive orientation between parent and child encompasses two features: mutual responsiveness and shared positive affect. In several studies in which these relational qualities were assessed in multiple lengthy home observations of parents with young children, assessments of their mutually responsive orientation were found to predict measures of the child's conscience development both contemporaneously and longitudinally (Kochanska, 1997b; Kochanska & Aksan, 1995; Kochanska, Forman, & Coy, 1999; Kochanska & Murray, 2000). In these studies, for example, children in relationships characterized by high mutual responsivity acted with *committed compliance* (cooperation without reminders) to the parent's requests at 26 to 41 months, and greater *internalization of rules* (compliance when alone or with a peer) in toddlerhood, preschool, and school-age assessments. Similar findings have been reported by Laible and Thompson (2000).

The warmth and responsiveness of the parent–child relationship is thus an important relational incentive for young children's moral compliance, as Kochanska (2002b) has argued. But these studies also reveal additional reasons why a mutually responsive orientation is associated with early conscience development. Mothers in mutually responsive relationships use less power assertion in their interactions with offspring, for example, which may reflect their use of gentler, less coercive influence techniques (Kochanska, 1997b; Kochanska et al., 1999). Children in mutually responsive relationships also show greater empathic responsiveness to simulations of distress enacted by their mothers, and mothers themselves are also more empathic, which may reflect a deeper emotional engagement in their relationship (Kochanska, 1997b; Kochanska et al., 1999). In a behavioral genetic study, Deater-Deckard and O'Connor (2000) concluded that the child's genotypical characteristics help to account for dyadic mutually responsive orientation, and this is an example of evocative gene–environment correlation. A mutually responsive orientation is thus likely to be associated with several other features of the parent–child relationship, which, as Kochanska's other research on the influences of child temperament and gentle discipline suggests, also have important influences on early conscience development. It remains for future research to elucidate these correlates and their developmental consequences.

Kochanska's measures of mutually responsive orientation have been found to be consistent across different situations and stable over several years, suggesting that they capture a rather robust feature of early parent–child relationships. Another index of early relational quality that may also be related to early conscience development is the security of attachment. Like mutually responsive orientation, attachment security is also founded on a positive parent–child relationship based on the parent's sensitive responsiveness to the child's signals and needs (Thompson, 1998a). Attachment theorists have argued that a secure attachment in early childhood creates a more supportive, harmonious parent–child relationship that makes a young child more compliant, cooperative, and responsive to the parent's socialization initiatives (Waters et al., 1991). There is some evidence for this. Londerville and Main (1981) found that infants who were deemed securely attached at 12 months were more cooperative and compliant and less disobedient (but more "troublesome") in play sessions at 21 months, and their mothers were warmer and gentler in their interactions with the toddler. Other studies have also found that securely attached infants were more compliant and positive, and their mothers more supportive and helpful in problem-solving tasks (Bates, Maslin, & Frankel, 1985; Matas, Arend, & Sroufe, 1978). As noted, Kochanska (1995) found that security of attachment was associated with measures of conscience for temperamentally fearless young children, and Laible and Thompson (2000) also noted that the security of attachment predicted measures of early conscience development. These findings are consistent with broader conclusions in the attachment literature that a secure attachment inaugurates a more positive, harmonious relationship to which mother and child mutually contribute (Thompson, 1999). Interestingly, however, neither Laible and Thompson (2000) nor Kochanska have found a significant association between measures of the security of attachment and mutually responsive orientation between parent and child, despite their apparent conceptual overlap.

Attachment theory takes the additional step of proposing that based on experiences of sensitive care, securely attached young children create mental representations of relational experience ("internal working models") that influence their understandings of themselves, relational partners, and how to engage in other close relationships. In this respect, the concept of internal working models provides a conceptual bridge from the processes of behavioral compliance that are motivated by a positive parent–child relationship to the processes of behavioral internalization that provide a foundation for the growth

of conscience. In relational experience with the parent, young children create mental representations of many social and psychological processes relevant to conscience: understandings of emotional experiences and their causes and consequences; representations of rules and standards and the reasons they exist; conceptions of the self and its moral dimensions; and understandings of relationships and of relational processes (such as reciprocity, kindness, and fairness) that relate to moral behavior. These representations change considerably with increasing age, of course, and it is likely that the conceptions derived from insecure relationships are somewhat different from those of secure relationships.

There has been little systematic, empirical exploration of the quality of the internal working models of early childhood derived from relational experience that are conscience related, however, partly because defining and assessing *internal working models* is difficult (Thompson, in press; Thompson & Raikes, 2003). Developmental scientists have found that securely attached preschoolers have a more sophisticated understanding of emotion—particularly negative emotions—than do insecurely attached young children (Laible & Thompson, 1998), and secure children also regard themselves more positively than do insecure children (Cassidy, 1988; Verschueren, Marcoen, & Schoefs, 1996). In light of the fact that attachment security predicts individual differences in early conscience development, a better understanding of the relevance of these and other potential features of the internal working models generated by secure and insecure relationships is needed. One approach to addressing this issue is based on the quality of open discourse about emotion and morality fostered by secure parent–child relationships discussed next (see Thompson et al., 2003). Other approaches to elucidating the associations between attachment security, parent–child interaction, children's working models from close relationships, and conscience development also merit exploration.

Relational Processes

The general quality of the parent–child relationship is an important contributor to early conscience development but, as we have seen, it is necessary to conceptually unpack relational quality to understand the specific influences by which relational experience shapes conscience development. Besides parental warmth and responsiveness, two other kinds of relational processes have been studied most extensively: parental discipline practices and proactive strategies, and conversational discourse.

Discipline practices and proactive strategies.   The influence on moral development of the parent's disciplinary approach has been extensively studied. Research findings with toddlers and preschoolers are consistent with those of older children in concluding that interventions that are power assertive and coercive elicit children's situational compliance, but also the child's frustration and occasionally defiance. However, discipline that emphasizes reasoning and provides justification is more likely to foster internalized values in young children, even though children may also assert their autonomy through negotiation (Crockenberg & Litman, 1990; Kuczynski & Kochanska, 1990; Kuczynski, Kochanska, Radke-Yarrow, & Girnius-Brown, 1987; Power & Chapieski, 1986). These findings are consistent with the studies reported earlier in this chapter, and underscore the importance of parents' interventions for clarifying issues of causality, responsibility, and obligation that may be unclear in the minds of young children as they are caught up in conflicts involving salient emotions and desires. Young children who witness another's distress, for example, respond more helpfully and prosocially when their mothers also provide emotionally powerful explanations concerning the causes of the person's distress

(Zahn-Waxler, Radke-Yarrow, & King, 1979; Zahn-Waxler et al., 1992). Even with young children, therefore, verbal explanations of the causes and consequences of wrongdoing contribute significantly to moral understanding and the growth of conscience. Not surprisingly, therefore, parents increasingly rely on verbal strategies over physical interventions for eliciting children's compliance beginning in the second year (Dunn & Munn, 1987; Kuczynski et al., 1987).

This straightforward account of the effects of discipline on moral internalization is complicated in several ways, however (Grusec et al., 2000; Kuczynski, Marshall, & Schell, 1997). First, child compliance and moral internalization are not always the central goals in parents' socialization efforts, and thus parents' disciplinary efforts and their impact on the child vary in different domains and circumstances (Grusec & Goodnow, 1994; Holden & Miller, 1999). Encouraging self-assertion, fostering choice, and enhancing parent–child communication and understanding are goals that may compete with values transmission in many everyday conflicts over misbehavior, especially when conflicts concern social– conventional and personal issues rather than moral dilemmas (Dawber & Kuczynski, 1999; Hastings & Grusec, 1998; Nucci, 1996; Nucci & Weber, 1995). This means that discipline encounters are not consistently forums for the internalization of values, and the relation between alternative parental goals, disciplinary interventions, and the development of conscience in these circumstances remains to be better understood. In particular, how can a more acute appreciation of parents' goals in disciplinary encounters clarify the strategies that parents use and, in turn, their influence on the child's developing conscience?

Second, children are themselves influential, not only in the discipline encounter, but also in the construction of values that they appropriate from discipline events (Kuczynski et al., 1997; Lollis & Kuczynski, 1997). Holden, Thompson, Zambarano, and Marshall (1997) reported, for example, that maternal attitudes and discipline practices varied as a function of the child's reaction to her practices, and outcome expectancies are significant influences on parents' use of most child rearing practices, especially spanking (Holden & Miller, 1999; Holden et al., 1999). The reasons for child misbehavior are also an important influence on the child's reactions to parent discipline efforts and their effects, particularly whether children perceive the adult as acting fairly and appropriately in these circumstances. Moreover, how children evaluate and interpret parents' communication of values and standards, which is influenced by their social–cognitive capabilities and preexisting working models, significantly influences the values and rules that the child appropriates from discipline encounters (Grusec & Goodnow, 1994; Kuczynski et al., 1997).

Third, specific parental practices interact with general relationship quality in shaping early conscience, as we describe later concerning parent–child conversations. In other words, children in warm, secure relationships may be more responsive to parental disciplinary practices than children in insecure or harsh relationships. Evidence for this hypothesis has recently been reported by Kochanska, Aksan, Knaack, and Rhines (2004), who assessed attachment security at 14 months, parental discipline practices at 14 to 45 months, and conscience at 56 months. For securely attached children, there was a significant positive longitudinal association between gentle discipline/responsiveness and later conscience; for insecure children, there was no association. Further exploration of the interaction between general relationship quality and specific parenting practices in early conscience development is clearly warranted.

Finally, it is important to note that children appropriate values also when parents act proactively to avert potential misbehavior before it occurs. With younger children, proactive strategies consist largely of attention distraction, providing alternative activities, and

other diversionary tactics (Holden, 1983; Holden & West, 1989). But as children mature, parents increasingly enlist conceptually proactive strategies by providing children with an understanding of parental values to prepare them for encounters with conflicting values that may occur outside the home (Grusec et al., 2000; Padilla-Walker & Thompson, in press). Although proactive efforts of this kind become more important when children are exposed to peers, media, community, and other extrafamilial influences (e.g., violent or sexual content on the Internet; peer enticements to underage smoking or drinking), parents are also likely to conceptually prearm younger children against comparable values challenges, such as advertising on children's television or family rules in the homes of peers. Research with immigrant and minority families has shown how significant parental proactive strategies are for maintaining ethnic and cultural identity in the face of the strong contrary values of the dominant culture (e.g., Nanji, 1993; Thornton, Chatters, Taylor, & Allen, 1990), but there has been little inquiry into such conceptually proactive strategies for values socialization in children from the majority culture (see, however, Padilla-Walker & Thompson, in press, for an exception). It is likely that as such proactive conversations occur with greater frequency in early and middle childhood, they provide significant forums for children's developing understanding of values and appropriation of them.

Parent–child conversational discourse.   Conversations about values outside of the discipline context may, indeed, be important for several reasons. In the heated emotions of the discipline encounter, which occur whenever a parent confronts a child, however gently, in a conflict of wills about the child's behavior, young children may hear the parent's message but not analyze or understand it deeply (Thompson, 1998a). Depth of processing is not likely to be consistent with a child's disagreement with parental authority, especially if the young child is mobilizing cognitive resources for negotiation or bargaining (Crockenberg & Litman, 1990; Kuczynski et al., 1987). Instead, values are more likely to be discussed and understood outside of the discipline encounter, in conversations when the adult seeks to proactively prearm children against challenges to parental values from extrafamilial sources (as discussed earlier), or in discussions about past events when misbehavior occurred. In these contexts, the child's cognitive resources can be more focused on understanding the parent's message with less competing emotional arousal. Even when parents are not explicitly intending these conversations to be a means of transmitting moral values, the inferences, assumptions, judgments, and other interpretations that parents incorporate into their narrative rendition of past events makes such conversations potent forums for early moral understanding and conscience development.

There is increasing evidence that the content and style of parental discourse during conversations about past events significantly influences conscience development in young children (see Thompson et al., [2003] for a review). Laible and Thompson (2000) focused on parent–child conversations about past events in which the child either misbehaved or behaved appropriately. In these conversations, mothers who more frequently referred to people's feelings had children who were more advanced in conscience development. Even though maternal references to rules and their consequences were also coded in these conversations, it was only maternal references to emotions that predicted conscience development. These findings were replicated in a prospective longitudinal study in which maternal references to feelings (but not references to rules and moral evaluations) during conflict with the child at 30 months predicted the child's conscience development 6 months later (Laible & Thompson, 2002). Similarly, in another study, 2- to 3-year-old children whose mothers used reasoning and humanistic concerns in resolving conflict with them were more advanced in measures of moral understanding in assessments in kindergarten

and first grade (Dunn, Brown, & Maguire, 1995). These findings suggest that one of the most important features of parent–child conversations about moral behavior is how they sensitize young children to the human dimensions of misbehavior and good behavior, and help young children to comprehend the effects of their actions on how people feel. Young children are early acquiring behavioral standards with consideration of the humanistic dimensions of wrongdoing.

Other features of parent–child conversational discourse concerning misbehavior are also important. When they are in conflict with their young offspring, mothers who take the initiative to resolve conflict, using justifications to explain and clarify their expectations, and who manage to avoid aggravating and exacerbating tension (such as through threats or teasing) have young children who are more advanced in later assessments of conscience development (Laible, 2004a; Laible & Thompson, 2002). By contrast, mothers who are conversationally "power assertive" when recounting the child's misbehavior in the recent past—conveying a critical or negative attitude, feelings of disappointment or anger, or involving reproach or punishment—had preschool children who obtained lower scores on measures of moral cognition that assessed children's story-completion responses to moral dilemmas (Kochanska, Aksan, & Nichols, 2003). Taken together, these character-istics of maternal conflict-relevant discourse suggest that early conscience development is fostered when mothers provide young children with a richer understanding of the causes and consequences of interpersonal conflict without unduly arousing the child's feelings of defensiveness or threat. Maternal justifications offer many lessons in psychological understanding, of course, as mothers constructively explain their expectations, convey their feelings, and clarify their perceptions of the situation (which usually differ from the child's own). These conclusions are consistent, of course, with the well-documented effects of inductive discipline practices on moral internalization with older children. But these conclusions indicate that these influences are important for younger children also, and are apparent in situations independent of the discipline encounter, such as during their shared recounting of past misbehavior and in family conflict situations when mothers often convey their behavioral expectations before offspring have misbehaved.

More generally, researchers have also found that mothers who use a more elaborative style of discourse, characterized by rich embellishment of the narrative structure of shared recall, have offspring who are more advanced in conscience development than the children of mothers with a more sparse, pragmatic discourse style (Laible, 2004b; Laible & Thompson, 2000). It is likely that the elaborative detail and background information provided by these mothers contributes additional psychological depth to maternal explanations of behavioral standards and reasons for the child's cooperation. Equally important, these ele-ments of maternal discourse—particularly specific references to feelings interact with the warmth and security of the parent–child relationship in their association with conscience development (Laible & Thompson, 2000; Thompson et al., 2003). Thus broader relational quality interacts with specific features of parent–child discourse to shape young children's earliest understandings of morality and themselves as moral beings.

These conclusions concerning the importance of parent–child conversational discourse in the context of a warm, secure relationship are important not only for understanding conscience development, but also for conceptualizing the developmental influence of the working models inspired by secure or insecure parent–child attachments (Thompson, 2000). Mothers in secure attachments with offspring tend to use a more elaborative style (Reese, 2002), which is consistent with the expectations from attachment theory of the more open, candid communicative style shared by parents and offspring in secure re-lationships (Bretherton & Munholland, 1999). In relationships of trust and confidence,

attachment theorists predict, children can talk openly about feelings, conflicts, and prob-
lems with the expectation of an accepting, helpful response. The research reviewed in this
section suggests that an elaborative discourse style is one feature of the open commu-
nicative style described by attachment theorists and that, in shared communication with
such a parent, young children develop mental representations (or working models) of the
psychological world that are richer as a result of the adult's discussion of psychological
themes. These representations foster the development of a conscience that embeds issues
of moral compliance in humanistic respect for others' feelings and well-being, using the
example of a parent who take the initiative in resolving conflict through reasoned expla-
nations, and for whom the motivation for moral behavior is the maintenance of a positive
relationship of trust with the parent.

There is much more to be learned about the influence of conversational discourse on
conscience development in early childhood. The manner in which discourse references and
style are embedded in a rich vocabulary of nonverbal behavior—facial expressions, vocal
tone, affective gestures, postural cues—that provide added social and emotional meaning
to the adult's words remains to be explored. So also does the style of other conversational
forums for parents with young children, especially conversations about future events in
which the anticipation of potential misbehavior, and efforts to avert it, may influence the
adult's discourse. We are especially interested in another form of moral socialization that
may also be conveyed in parent–child conversations: obligatory morality. How do young
children learn, in other words, about the moral obligations that are incumbent on them as
people, by contrast with the moral prohibitions that so often constitute the corpus of early
moral socialization? Do everyday parent–child conversations incorporate values about
the obligation to help others in need, to be concerned for distressed individuals, and to
contribute to the well-being of others?

Another important field for further research inquiry concerns parents who provide neg-
ative or mixed moral messages to their young children. It should be clear from this research
review how parents whose conversations with offspring incorporate negative, denigrating,
or otherwise unsympathetic portrayals of others' needs or motives, or who emphasize
the importance of moral compliance for authoritarian reasons, or who scare or threaten
offspring, or who convey self-interested moral orientations, or who seek to justify lying,
cheating, or treating others unkindly are likely to instill similar values and dispositions in
young children. Moreover, in parent–child relationships of distrust or insecurity, young
children are likely to be inclined toward moral dispositions that are more self-protective
and perhaps less other oriented than those inspired by caregiving relationships of security
and warmth. These negative or mixed moral messages are likely to be apparent in parent–
child relationships characterized also by harsh or punitive parental discipline practices
and may, in fact, help to account for the more external, punishment-oriented moral values
adopted by the offspring of such parents. In short, there is much to be learned by concep-
tually and empirically exploring the multidimensionality of parent–child relationships in
the development of conscience: we can learn about the growth of humanistic, relational
values in young children, and about the emergence of self-interested, exploitative moral
orientations.

Summary

Relationships are important to conscience development because of the broad and specific
features of parent–child interaction that shape young children's comprehension of moral
values. The parent–child relationship itself gives credence to these influences. Young

children learn about the importance of others' feelings in their conversations with the adult, and they also witness these emotions directly during conflict with siblings or parents, and then talk about the feelings they observed in later conversation. Children learn to care about how others feel because their own feelings are respected, even during conflict with a parent. There is considerably more to understand about relational influences on conscience development as researchers conceptually "unpack" broad differences in security or mutual responsivity to elucidate the constituent processes by which young children become engaged in a system of reciprocity that sensitizes them to the feelings of others, the associations between their actions and others' well-being, and moral conduct.

CONSCIENCE AND MORAL DEVELOPMENT THEORY AND RESEARCH

The portrayal of conscience development emerging from these research literatures is far richer and more interesting than the traditional view of early morality from learning theorists and Piagetian and Kohlbergian approaches. Rather than being self-interested opportunists with a punishment-and-obedience orientation to moral compliance, conscience is rooted in the efforts of young children to understand the normative consistencies in their world and the desires and interests of other people. The incentives for moral cooperation arise not only from the sanctions of parents and other authorities, but the mutual good will that arises from close relationships of trust that develop between parents and young children (or the insecurity that arises from more conflicted parent–child relationships). Children learn about values from how parents talk about rules and the consequences of violating them, but they learn even more when parents talk about people's feelings and how those feelings are affected by the child's conduct. Young children also learn about conscience from the example of how their parents seek to resolve conflict with them. There are multiple pathways of early conscience development, influenced by temperament, but each involves a warmly responsive parent–child relationship and the parent's use of developmentally appropriate sanctions. Young children acquire values not only in the discipline encounter, however, but in many other forums of everyday family life. These may consist of conversations with the parent about past events (which are likely to include instances of past misbehavior as well as good conduct), or the shared recall of earlier family conflict, or the adult's efforts to proactively equip children with the conceptual skills for confronting challenges to parental values arising from outside the family. Conscience development is closely tied to emotional growth, of course, and to the arousal of self-referential emotions like guilt and shame and other-oriented emotions like empathy that are powerful catalysts for moral understanding as well as self-understanding. In all, conscience development is closely tied to young children's experiences in close relationships, their developing psychological understanding, and their emerging self-awareness as morally responsible individuals.

The time has arrived, therefore, for an updated view of the place of early childhood in moral development theory. Rather than regarding conscience in the toddler and preschool years as distinct from the more reflective, humanistic, relational morality of middle childhood and adolescence, there is value in considering how early childhood provides the basis for the morality of later years. As the work of Kochanska and other scholars has shown, in their developing conceptual skills, relational experiences of security or insecurity, emergence of the moral self, conversations with parents, and other experiences, young children are developing moral orientations that are simpler, but fundamentally similar, to those of older children and adolescents. Understanding how forms of moral judgment, affect, and behavior that are observed in middle childhood and adolescence are rooted in

early childhood influences thus constitutes one of many important research tasks for the future.

Another contribution of the study of early conscience to moral development research is its conceptual and methodological breadth. Researchers have been creative in their efforts to capture the relational, conceptual, emotional, temperamental, and other constituents of early conscience. They have also been innovative in exploring the intersection of these developmental influences, whether it concerns the interaction of temperament and parenting practices for defining multiple pathways for conscience development, or understanding how parent–child conversational discourse interacts with broader relational quality in shaping young children's moral understanding. This breadth of approach is critical for the study of a phenomenon as multifaceted as moral behavior, and research on early conscience constitutes a model for the work of scientists concerned with moral development at other ages.

Perhaps most valuable is the view emerging from this research that young children are intuitive moralists who begin to understand values in the context of relationships of significance to them. Young children are neither autonomous moral theorists nor lumps of clay to be shaped by others. They are instead moral apprentices, striving hard to understand, creating their own intuitive morality but also aided by the sensitive guidance of adult mentors in the home who provide lessons about morality in everyday experiences. Such a portrayal of young children enlivens inquiry into the beginnings of conscience.

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