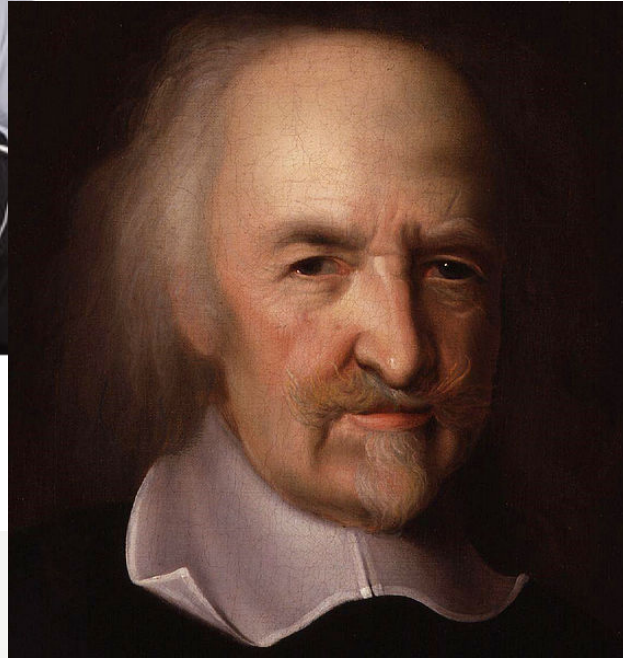


# What develops in moral development?

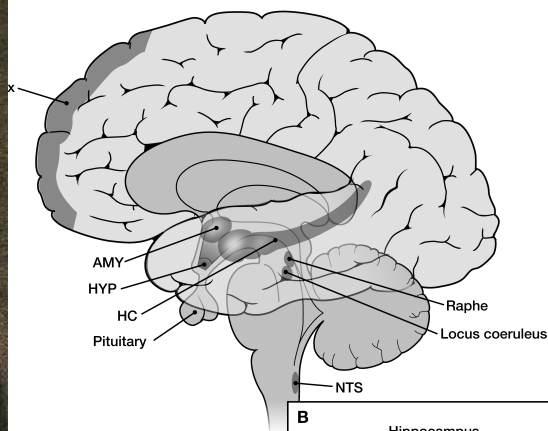
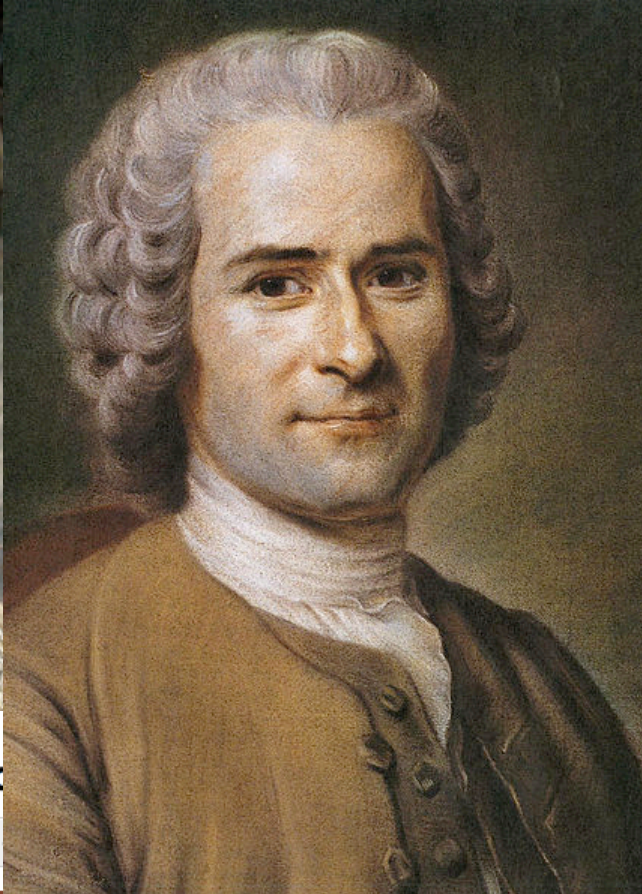


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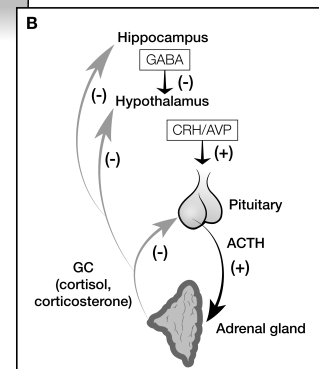






Babies help unlock the c

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## A new developmental perspective

- early social-cognitive understanding provides the basis for a primitive premoral sensibility that underlies social evaluations and motivates prosocial behavior and socially constructive actions
- these "moral primitives" develop further in the context of parent-child interaction, particularly the sensitivity and warmth of care
- conversational discourse linking the child's intuitive premoral sensibility to broader values is important to the growth of sociomoral motivation
- the early growth of the "moral self" through these influences also contributes to developing moral identity



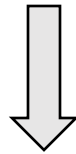
## developing an early premoral awareness ...

- understanding of another's intentions and goals

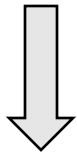


## developing an early premoral awareness ...

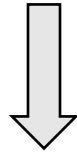
- understanding of another's intentions and goals



*shared intentionality*: intersubjective participation in activity involving shared mental states (pointing, collaborative problem-solving, cooperative social play)



*helping*



*responses to helpers  
and hinderers*



*sensitivity to morally  
relevant intentions*



# Fairness judgments of helpers and hinderers in 3½-year-olds:



(Baumard, Mascaro, & Chevallie, 2012)

## developing an early premoral awareness ...

- understanding of another's intentions and goals
- emotion understanding
  - Emotions are an important entrée into the psychological experience of another person (e.g., desires, evaluations, expectations, beliefs)





## developing an early premoral awareness ...

- understanding of another's intentions and goals
- emotion understanding
  - Emotions are an important entrée into the psychological experience of another person
  - There is evidence for early resonant or empathic responding to the sight or sound of another's emotions
  - But others' negative emotions are conceptually and motivationally complex events for young children
  - Adult guidance is necessary to help children understand others' emotional expressions and enlist this understanding into constructive social responding

## developing an early premoral awareness ...

- understanding of another's intentions and goals
- emotion understanding
- self-regulation
  - developing executive functions are important to children's ability to respond constructively to another person, especially in a context of competing interests
  - temperamental effortful control is also important
  - **But** the growth of self-regulation is slow and has an extended developmental course



## 2 ½ years: Mother-child conversation elements during conflict episodes in the lab

Talking about rules

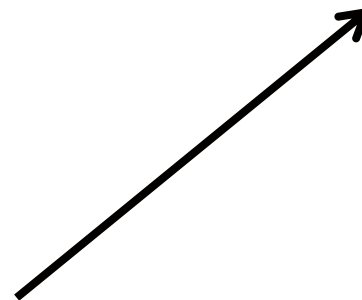
Talking about the consequences of actions

Talking about people's emotions

Moral evaluative statements ("good girl!")

Compromising or bargaining

Justification and reasoning /  
Low use of threats, teasing or insistence



Conscience  
Development  
age 3



- You didn't like that he was bouncing your guy off the game, and that made you really mad.
- It's hard when you feel so angry. You're going "AAAH, she's bouncing my guy off there!" Right?
- How did the other kids feel when you turned off the game? Did they want to play more?
- You know, after you stopped the game, the other guys said, "Joey wasn't really doing so bad." You thought you were losing, but you weren't.
- I wonder what you could do differently if something like this happens again.



- You didn't like that he was bouncing your guy off the game, and that made you really mad.
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- I wonder what you could do differently if something like this happens again.

autobiographical memory

"moral self" in early childhood



moral identity in adolescence and adulthood



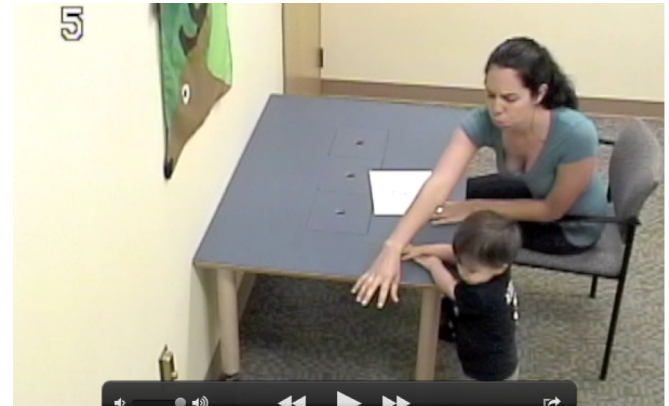
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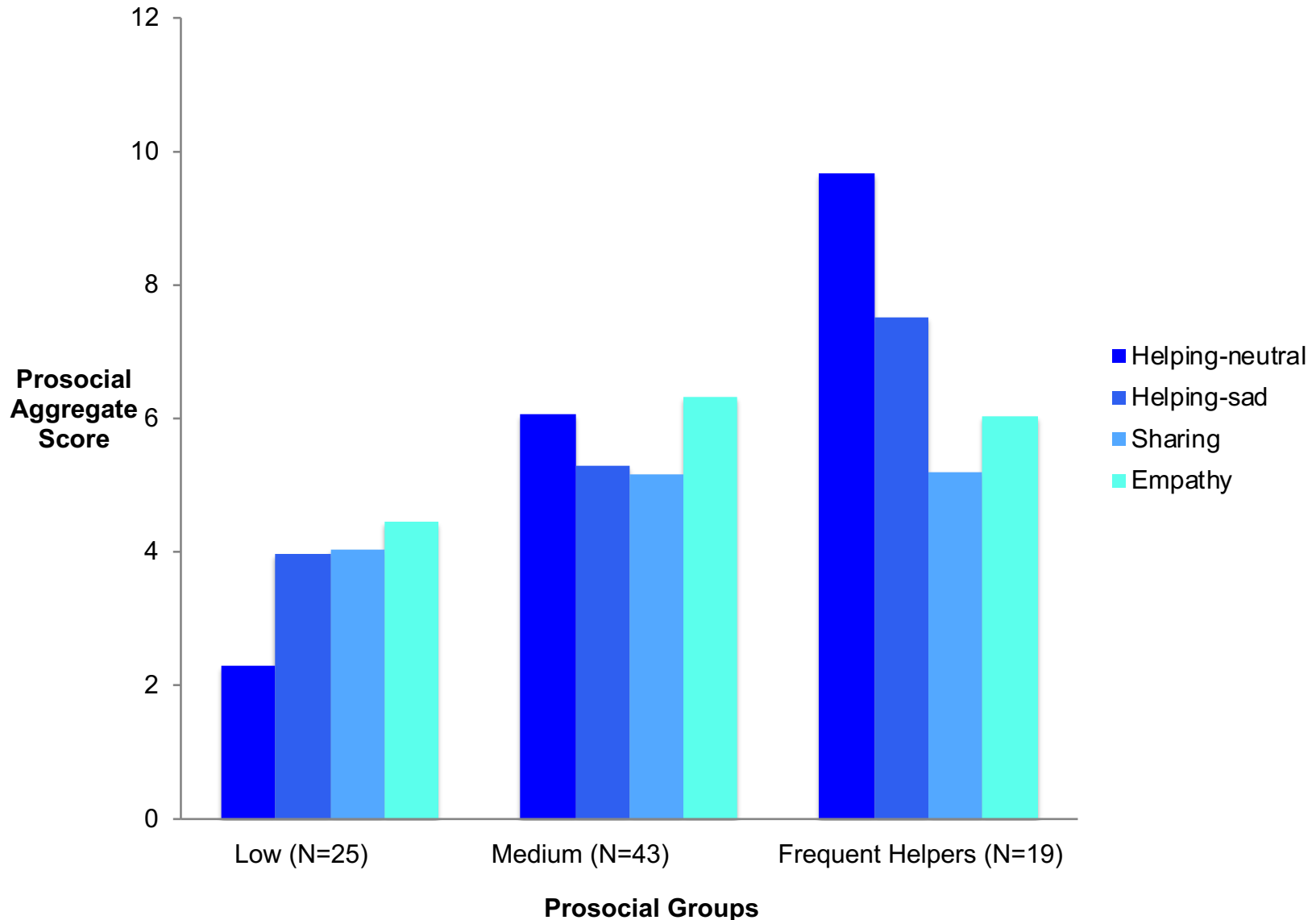


## Prosocial measures ...

- Helping (neutral experimenter)
- Helping (sad experimenter)
- Sharing
- Empathy (repair)



## Are there reliable individual differences in prosocial responding by toddlers?



# How are individual differences in prosocial behavior associated with mother-child interaction?

## Logistic Class Regression Analysis

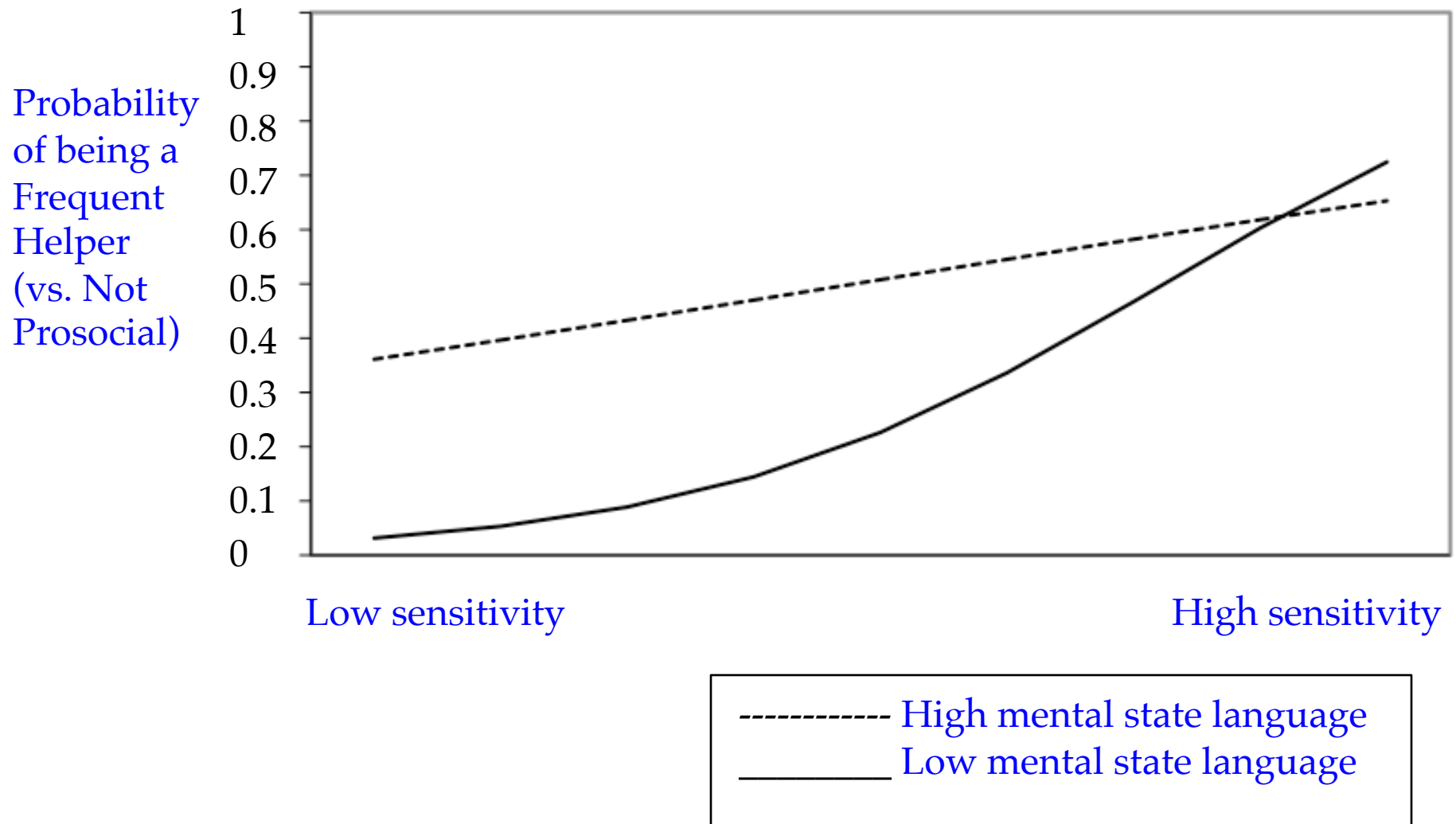
Variables	Class 1 vs. Class 2 OR (95% CI)	Class 2 vs. Class 3 OR (95% CI)	Class 1 vs. Class 3 OR (95% CI)
Child Sex	0.58 (0.20-1.68)	1.77 (0.50-6.22)	1.03 (0.27-3.93)
Child Age	1.02 (0.99-1.05)	0.99 (0.95-1.02)	1.01 (0.97-1.05)
Maternal Sensitivity	1.39 (0.85-2.27)	<b>2.49 (1.17-5.31)*</b>	<b>3.45 (1.63-7.33)***</b>
Maternal Mental State Language	0.95 (0.86-1.03)	<b>1.17 (1.02-1.33)*</b>	1.10 (0.96-1.27)
Sensitivity x Language	0.99 (0.92-1.05)	0.91 (0.81-1.01)	<b>0.89 (0.80-1.00)*</b>

\* $p < .05$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

Class 1 = Not Prosocial, Class 2 = Moderately Prosocial, Class 3 = Frequent Helpers; OR = odds ratio



# Interaction between maternal sensitivity and maternal mental state language in predicting children's prosocial class membership (LCRA)





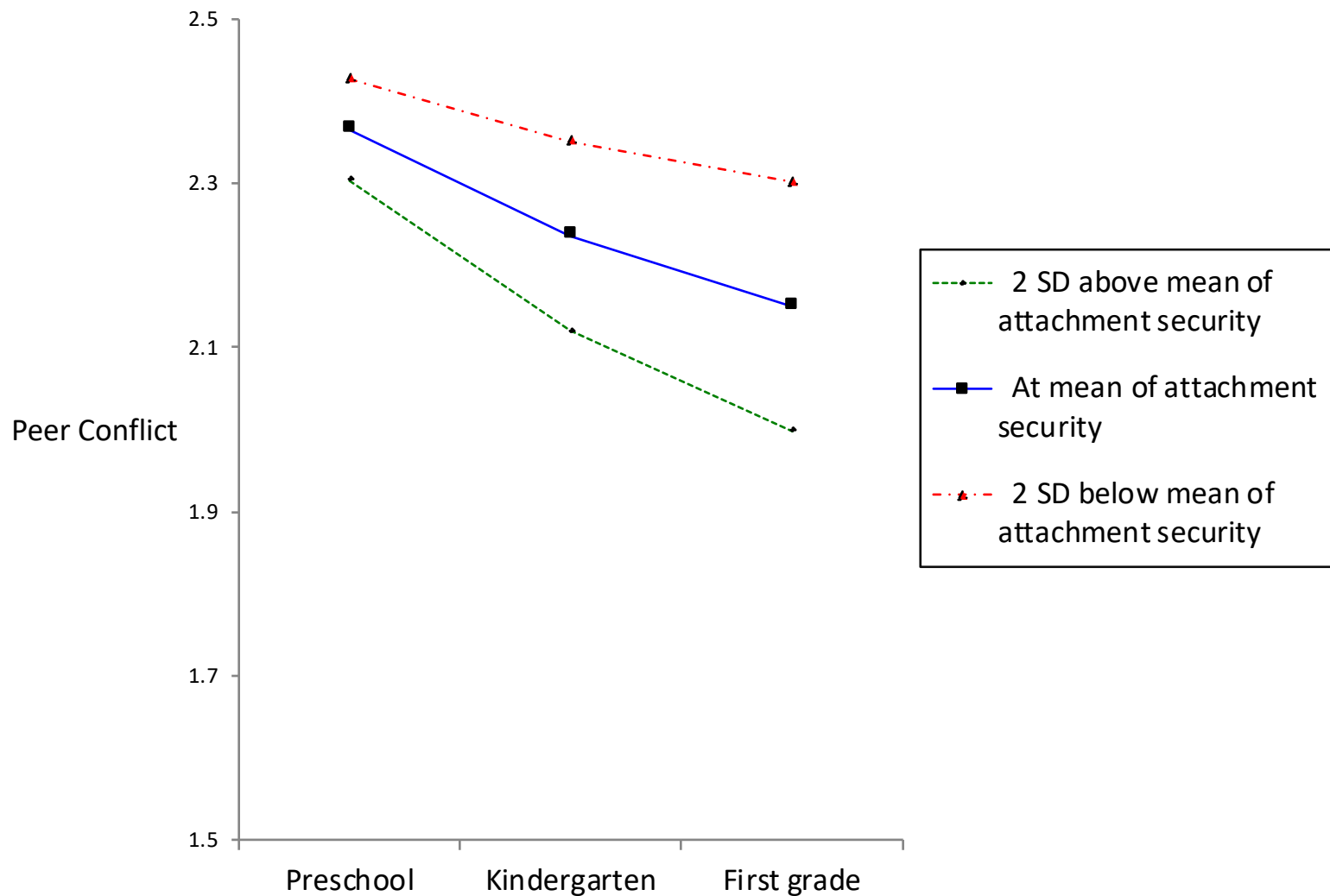
Is attachment theory  
a moral development theory?



# Morally-relevant correlates of secure attachment

## Social problem-solving, conflict avoidance with peers

- Securely-attached children show greater social competence with peers (Groh et al., 2014 meta-analysis)
- Securely-attached children (assessed at 24 and 36 months) show:
  - lower negative attribution bias at 54 months
  - lower negative attribution bias at first grade
  - a greater number of socially competent solutions to social problems at 54 months  
(all with controls for early maternal sensitivity)
  - fewer aggressive solutions to social problems at first grade  
(Raikes & Thompson, 2008)
- Securely-attached children show lower levels of peer conflict in first grade, and steeper declines in peer conflict from preschool to first grade (Raikes et al. 2013)



### Security of attachment at 24 months and peer conflict trajectories in early childhood



# Morally-relevant correlates of secure attachment

## Emotion understanding and empathy

- Securely attached children show deeper emotion understanding, especially of negative emotions  
(Laible & Thompson, 1998; Steele et al., 1999; Raikes & Thompson, 2006, etc.)
- Securely attached children show greater empathy in response to distress cries  
(Murphy & Laible, 2013; Panfile & Laible, 2012, 2013)
- Mothers in secure relationships talk about emotion in a descriptively richer, more elaborative manner with their children  
(Laible, 2004; Laible & Thompson, 2000; Ontai & Thompson, 2002; see Reese, 2002)
- Mothers in secure relationships are more likely to accurately perceive and interpret their children's emotions (Waters et al., 2010)

# Morally-relevant correlates of secure attachment

## Conscience development

- Secure attachment is associated with greater compliance and cooperation with mothers; so also is a mutually responsive orientation between mothers and children  
(Kochanska et al., 2005; Laible & Thompson, 2000)
- Maternal references to emotions (never to rules / consequences) in conflict episodes predicts conscience development  
(Laible & Thompson, 2002; see also Laible & Thompson, 2000)
- Security of attachment moderates the association between the quality of early parenting and children's later conscience or antisocial outcomes  
(Kochanska, Aksan, et al., 2004; Kochanska, Barry, et al., 2009; see also Kochanska, Woodard, et al. 2010; Kochanska & Kim, 2012)

## Securely-attached children (assessed at 14 months):



**No association for insecurely-attached children**

(Kochanska et al., 2004)

---

## Insecurely-attached children (assessed at 15 months)



**No association for securely-attached children**

(Kochanska et al., 2009)

# Morally-relevant correlates of secure attachment

## Prosocial behavior

- Are securely-attached more prosocial than insecurely-attached children? Research studies with children from infancy through childhood yield a very mixed picture  
(Shaver, Mikulincer, Gross, Stern, & Cassidy, 2016)
- One reason may be that "prosocial behavior" is heterogeneous, varying by the target, cost, and complexity of prosocial responding – and attachment security may be differentially associated with different forms of prosocial behavior
- Nevertheless, attachment theory can helpfully inform studies of the origins of early differences in prosocial motivation



## Is attachment theory a moral development theory?

- The characteristics of mother-child interaction contributing to secure attachment also contribute to the growth of a **humanistic connection** to others: sensitive responsiveness; attention to and understanding others' mental and emotional states; cooperation with others
- This portrayal of moral development situates it in the context of **early close relationships**, the growth of an intuitive **premoral sensibility**, and emergent representations (or **internal working models**) of others' needs and feelings rather than self-interested opportunism or coercion.
- Although not a formal moral development theory, an attachment perspective has much to offer the field

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# Is attachment a moral development theory?



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