
Symposium SA-2
Saturday, July 29, 2006

Dominance in preschool classrooms: Change across a school year

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We examined the ways in which preschool children's agonistic and cooperative behaviors related to their social dominance. First, two common assumptions associated with theories of social dominance were tested. We hypothesized that directly observed agonistic interactions would decrease across the school year and that same-sex agonism would be greater than cross-sex agonism. Both of these hypotheses were supported. The relation between agonistic behaviors, affiliation (cooperation and reconciliation), and social display variables (physical size and peer visual regard) and "wins" in agonistic bouts was also examined. Agonistic and cooperative behaviors and social display variables related to "wins" in resource contests. Physical size and "wins" were inter-correlated in predicting social dominance but cooperation and physical size made unique and significant contributions. Results are discussed in terms of the ways in which contests for resources were affected by the school, and the concept of RHP.