

Exploring the Phenomenon of Teasing:
A Collective Case Study of Three Sibling Dyads

by

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B.A. Brock University, 1989
M.Ed. University of Victoria, 2000

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

In the area of Early Childhood Education
Department of Curriculum and Instruction

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Supervisory Committee

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Abstract

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Abstract

This study explored, through naturalistic observations and interviews, the teasing experiences of three dyads of preschool age siblings. The purpose of the study was to gain an understanding of the nature, form, intent, and responses of young children to experiences of teasing within their sibling relationship. Participants in this study included two brother dyads and one male-female twin dyad. The mothers from all three families also participated in the study. During the 50 hours of observation, 54 incidences of teasing were recorded between the siblings.

The sibling dyads tended to utilize teasing in a distinctive manner, with teasing having both a role in playful interactions and creating an invitation for play while also being a source of hurtful and mean behaviour. The form of sibling teasing noted throughout this study included components not identified in previous research. The sibling teasing behaviours observed were also distinct from teasing more typical of

peers. Taunting and more physical forms of teasing were more prevalent than verbal teasing.

Results of the interviews of adults indicate that parents perceive a social and cognitive function for sibling teasing, and that schooling and early childhood programs both facilitate and address teasing and teasing prevention within their programs. Results of the interviews with the children indicate that siblings perceive teasing to have both a playful component as well as hurtful elements.

The results of this study hold implications for the understanding of child development. Teasing may function to limit or enhance social skill development as children balance and negotiate aspects of pretense, non-literal communication, and facets of the social context in order to tease and formulate responses to teasing. The results of the study might also hold several implications for educators, parents, and training programs. The parents of this study often felt ill prepared or over-burdened in addressing their children's conflicts, teasing, and aggression. This finding highlights the need for intervention and education on teasing that targets the home environment, early childhood programs, and schooling. Additionally, resources on the subject of teasing and young children need to be developed.

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Acknowledgements

I wish to thank and gratefully acknowledge the many individuals who have provided support and assistance in the journey to completing this dissertation. I am greatly indebted to Dr. Margie Mayfield who has provided guidance, encouragement, support, mentorship and a variety of learning opportunities over the past several years. Dr. Alison Preece who paid great attention to details and graciously championed for the essence of the dissertation. Dr. Robert Fowler who steadfastly provided insight and supportive comments throughout the process. Dr. Lily Dyson for her extraordinary insights and perspectives. I wish to also thank Dr. Nina Howe for her participation as the external examiner.

My sincere appreciation is extended to the children and families who graciously allowed me into their homes each week to conduct this research. I am also grateful to the staff and management of the Ontario Early Learning Years Centre who kindly provided support and assistance in the recruiting of participants for the study.

I want to also recognize the support of my mother and father whose motto of perseverance provided me the strength and determination needed to complete this endeavour. Ultimately, I wish to thank my husband and two children who have been exceptionally patient and encouraging as I pursued this path.

Chapter 1 ~ Overview of the Study

Teasing is often regarded as a normal and common activity of childhood, a rite of passage. Yet, teasing is a complex relational issue involving many elements such as intent, verbal utterances, nonverbal behaviour, meaning, interpretation, and emotional affect.

The spectrum of teasing incidents can range from prosocial affects (such as give-withdrawal games between an infant and mother) (Eisenberg, 1986) to hostile intent (such as name calling, tormenting, harassing, or verbal bullying) (Freedman, 2002). Teasing has also been previously described as a form of play where the “metacognitive aspect of the message often communicates the non-seriousness of the moment, context, or purpose” (LeBlanc, 1997, p. 5). From this perspective, teasing within play frames may positively affect the continuation of the interaction between the instigator and the recipient.

The construct of teasing lacks a definitive definition. However, it is a phenomenon experienced by many young children and can be a source of great stress with “lasting emotional scars” (Freedman, 2002, p. xiii). Despite the prevalence of this common childhood experience, research addressing children’s teasing is lacking. Studies of how young children experience, resist, and internalize childhood teasing in various contexts are noticeably absent from the research literature. The purpose of this research was to investigate the experience of teasing within three dyads of young siblings to gain a better understanding of how teasing functions within the relationship, specifically unearthing the characteristics and constraints inherent to the sibling context that impact teasing.

Rationale for Exploring Siblings' Experiences

Early childhood is a critical period for the development of children's understanding of the social world around them, with the family context as a primary site in fostering children's perceptions of "moral and conventional rules" (Dunn & Munn, 1985, p. 481). The significance of early close relationships has a history of being couched as an effect on the child's social and emotional development (e.g., Bowlby, 1982; Freud, 1949). How a child perceives and categorizes experiences are affected by the cultural world in which they are embedded. Contexts shift and vary and are *relational* in nature, that is "they shape and are shaped by individuals, tools, resources, intentions, and ideas in a particular setting, within a particular time" (Graue & Walsh, 1998, p. 11). Recognizing the importance and influence of the ecology in which each child develops is an essential consideration (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Bee (1997) cited the sibling dynamic as one such element of this complex social context that influences child development.

The sibling relationship provides an important long lasting context for friendship, conflict, emotional and social development (Newman, 1994). These relationships are embedded in a larger social context both within and outside the family unit. The interaction between siblings within the home environment provides the "first extensive social experience" of a child's life (Abramovitch, Corter, & Lando, 1979, p. 997). This interaction has been described as both "rich and varied" as young siblings can behave with both aggression and prosocial actions toward each other (Abramovitch et al., p. 1003). The sibling relationship thus affords a "salient, long lasting and influential socialization environment" (Newman, p. 119), yet a general lack of research exists addressing the understanding of this dynamic kinship.

Great variability and individual differences exist in describing the relationship across sibling pairs (Dunn, 1993). Various sibling dyads have depicted their relationship as ‘best friends’, ‘little mother’, or ‘worst enemies’. The sibling relationship has several unique elements in that it evolves and fluctuates over the lifespan. For example, play between siblings is evident during the preschool years with the younger sibling becoming increasingly more active in this play as language skills and cognitive understanding develop (Dunn, 2002). Another fluctuation in the sibling relationship was noted by Buhrmester and Furman (1990) who found the balance of power between siblings becomes increasingly more egalitarian during middle childhood. Additionally, some research has found that during adolescence there is a marked decrease in the warmth that siblings express toward one another. Each child in the sibling relationship will grow and mature over the long term of the bond, with developmental changes in social cognitive skills, emotional control, verbal ability, and perception (Newman, 1994). The sibling relationship is not static as changes in the child’s individual development directly impact the nature of the bond between siblings.

The intense, complex, and emotional relationship of the sibling bond can provide a window through which to examine the child’s developing emotional and social understanding. Dunn and her colleagues (Dunn, 1988b; Dunn & Brown, 1994; Dunn & Hughes, 1998; Dunn & Kendrick, 1982b; Dunn & Munn, 1985, 1986b; Dunn & Plomin, 1990) have provided much of the longitudinal research that exists on the relationship between siblings. In general, these researchers have characterized the sibling relationship as a mutually influential bond where learning to interact, imitate, play, converse, and engage in conflict is routine. Teasing is “an attempt to

manipulate what another thinks” and young siblings demonstrate a mature real world understanding of others with whom they have a close relationship (i.e., parent, sibling, friend) (Dunn, 2005).

A sibling relationship can be distinguished from a peer relationship in that it involves both elements of reciprocity and complementary features (Newman, 1994). A *reciprocal* relationship, more typical of the peer relationship, is one where the roles are matched, balanced, and equitable (Dunn, 1993). A *complementary* relationship is more typical of a parent-child relationship where there exists a hierarchy and imbalance of power (Newman). Siblings are often expected by their parents to be playmates. Additionally, parents often expect the younger sibling to ultimately adhere to the caregiving role and authority of the older sibling. These expectations are often incompatible and can result in sibling conflict and rivalry. The sibling dyad also can be impacted by several family characteristics, such as parental expectations, family constellation variables (e.g., spacing between children, size of family, gender of children), parental style, preferential treatment, family affect, and family interaction (Hinde & Stevenson-Hinde, 1988; Newman, 1994; Sanders, 2004).

Why Sibling Teasing?

Teasing has been described as a common mode of interaction between siblings (Dunn & Munn, 1985), yet the nature of its use and the effects are largely not understood. Teasing between siblings tends to emerge early, as children’s understanding of “how to annoy [their] sibling in family disputes” emerges around age two (Dunn & Munn, 1985, p. 485). Yet, the experience of teasing within the sibling dynamic is often overlooked in the research literature.

When I asked my 3-year-old child, “What does your sister mean when she calls you a baby?” she most often responded, “That means she doesn’t like me.” When I directed the same question to my 5-year-old daughter, she would most often respond, “Oh, she just wants my attention.” This diverging childhood understanding is a possible window to examine the multiple meanings, and interpretations of teasing episodes between siblings within the family context. Thus, the central research question that guided this research was: How do young siblings (ranging in age from approximately 2.5 to 6 years of age) experience the phenomenon of teasing within their relationship, and what function(s) do these experiences serve in relation to the child’s developing social-emotional understanding? Several other research sub-questions were utilized to structure and guide the inquiry and provided further insight and understanding of *the nature, form, intent of, and response* to childhood teasing.

The questions are:

Nature and form.

1. What is the *nature and form* of the tease?
2. What are the propositional attitudes of the instigator and recipient of a tease?

A propositional attitude determines “what is it about people that causes them to perceive and respond to teasing in contrasting ways” (Bollmer, Harris, Milich, & Georges, 2003, p. 560).

3. What are the possible positive/negative contributions of sibling teasing in facilitating emotional, social, and cognitive understanding?
4. What are the possible effects of gender on the above questions?

Intent of.

5. What does the instigator of the tease *intend, propose, or mean* to say?

6. What are the perceptions of the siblings (instigator and recipient) and parent of the functions of a tease?

Responses.

7. To what part of the teasing message does the recipient attend?
8. How is this message interpreted? What emotional meaning(s) do the children ascribe to the tease?
9. How do the perceptions of the parent either converge with, or diverge from, or influence the experiences of the child?

Searching for a Definition of Teasing

Although the word *teasing* is readily used in everyday conversation, little agreement exists in the research literature on the definition of teasing (Keltner, Capps, Kring, Young, & Heerey, 2001). Any approach to research on teasing must first address this issue of defining and operationalizing the word.

The word “teasing” is broadly characterized and incorporates a spectrum of definitions such as to playfully make fun of; bait; torment; taunt; ridicule; tease playfully, and banter (Soanes, 2003). The etymology of the word “teasing” is derived from two contrasting origins; that is, from the Anglo-Saxon origin of *taesan* meaning to tear apart, and the French origin of *attiser*, meaning to stoke furnace fires and make warm (Pawluk, 1989). Teasing has been found to encompass diverse behaviours across a breadth of contexts, adding to the difficulty of synthesizing extant literatures. The spectrum of defining and operationalizing the word teasing has included research that has examined hostile aggression (Olweus, 1969), give-withdrawal games between mother and infant (Keltner et al., 2001), code-switching

(Seigel, 1995), language socialization (Eisenberg, 1986), and prosocial affects of humour or play (Dunn & Munn, 1986b).

Teasing is a paradoxical, complex relational issue involving many elements such as intent, verbal utterances, nonverbal behavior, meaning, interpretation, and emotional affect. Teasing can be contradictory in that it can criticize and compliment, attack and bring people closer, humiliate and be affectionate (Keltner et al., 2001). For children, teasing is often relegated to a facet of 'growing up'. Parents and teachers of young children will often dismiss teasing and advise recipients of a tease to 'just ignore it'. Ignoring a tease may not validate the effect of the tease for a child (Lightner, Bollmer, Harris, Milich, & Scrambler, 2000). Perhaps the concept of teasing has received little systematic study because of the complexity and paradoxical nature of the phenomenon itself.

Yet, teasing can be viewed as an "important mode of interacting for...its effect on relationships, [and] for what it shows about the understanding of others' minds" (Reddy, 1991, p. 144). Teasing is thus considered an important element of the sibling relationship and not simply a particular pattern of behaviour. In previous studies, sibling teasing has been examined as a subset of conflict or rivalry (Abramovitch et al., 1979; Dunn & Munn, 1985). However, the complex mingling of verbal and behavioural cues, of affection and aggression, and the defensive behaviours involved in teasing may have specific characteristics and constraints inherent to the sibling context, thus deserving of the distinct focus granted in this research.

To capture the diverse range of possible behaviours from young siblings' teasing episodes, a broad and encompassing definition was adopted. In this study,

teasing was defined as “an intentional provocation accompanied by playful off-record markers that together comment on something relevant to the target” (Keltner et al., 2001, p. 234). This established the constructs on which the definition of teasing was applied. Intentional provocations were either *nonverbal* (e.g., physical imitation or making faces) or *verbal* (e.g., name calling, explicit statements, taunts). An off-record marker is a term used to describe the signals that the tease is intended to be non-serious (e.g., singsong chants, laughter, or facial expressions) (Keltner et al.).

Ecological Approach and ‘Theory of Mind’

An ecological perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and a perspective of family social influences (Hinde & Stevenson-Hinde, 1987; Minuchin, 1974) are two approaches that grant recognition to the unique insights provided by the specific context of siblings’ play, conversations, and disagreements (Peterson, 2000). These two perspectives highlight the importance of understanding the context in which the child is embedded as an important influence on development. In this study on sibling teasing, the context was examined to gain insight into how teasing manifested itself between the siblings, ultimately affording a greater understanding of the complexity of children’s social lives and the influence of the sibling relationship on mental state understanding (Dunn, 2005).

“Theory of mind” (ToM) recognizes the importance of understanding one’s own mind and the mind of others as fundamental to understanding the social world (Wellman, 1990). In general terms, ToM is defined as the development of the ability to attribute mental states to oneself and others (Pembrack & Woodruff, 1978). The theory predicts that the child comes to understand that overt actions are products of

internal mental states, and can distinguish between intent and accident, wishes and reality, plans and outcomes, truth and deception on a basic level at the preschool age (Wellman, 1990). In this research, I aligned myself with the theoretical construct labeled ‘social constructivist ToM’ to help frame my inquiry and analysis of sibling teasing (Carpendale & Lewis, 2004; Chapman, 1991; Wellman, 1990). The complexity of the phenomenon of teasing dictated the use of an encompassing theoretical construct. The social constructivist theory of mind framework was utilized to avoid some of the “theoretical sectarianism” inherent with cognitive theories (Seifert, 2002, p. 15). Various perspectives on children’s learning and development tend to be categorized in distinct theories (e.g., cognitive theories, social learning theory, psychoanalytic theory) and provide often-polarized accounts of how children learn and develop. As others have noted, “the desire for a one-size-fits-all child development theory” (Mayfield, 2001, p. 224) may be unrealistic. More rationally, the various theories may each provide partial insights and the synthesizing of theories may more accurately reflect the complexities of learning and development. Since the contexts of a tease are inseparable from the affects, the mutual influences of the cognitive, emotional, and social world all appear relevant to the child’s experience with teasing.

Theory of mind shares this perspective of embeddedness, and construes behaviours as constructed and resulting from an individual’s “beliefs, wishes, thoughts, wants, fears, and ideas” (Bartsch & Wellman, 1989, p. 946). Social interaction is granted a formative role in making children aware of others’ perspectives and beliefs (Chapman, 1991). It is through these social interactions that children are exposed to others’ beliefs and are challenged to coordinate and integrate

these often differing beliefs into a construction of a more complete social understanding. The underlying theoretical construct of the social constructivist model of theory of mind emphasizes the “need to explore the matrix of social relationships involving transactions between the child and others and in which the child constructs social understanding” (Carpendale & Lewis, 2004, p. 95).

The sibling who has a basic understanding of the self and a real world understanding of mental states may be quite adept at utilizing teasing behaviour. Bee (1997) further emphasized, that it is “an individual’s interpretation of the experience, the meaning the individual attaches to it, rather than any objective properties of the experience” (p. 9) that is of theoretical importance for understanding the child’s perspective of the experience of teasing. The emotional bond figures prominently in young children’s relationships (Dunn, 2005). Thus, children’s various social contexts are an important consideration in understanding the processes of influence on development.

Statement of the Problem

This study addressed the following question: How do preschool siblings (approximately ranging between 2.5 to 6 years of age) experience the phenomenon of teasing within their relationship, and what function(s) do these experiences serve in relation to the child’s developing social-emotional understanding? Teasing can be an exchange between young children that is cloaked in nuance and subtlety, often unnoticed by adults. The nature, form, intent of, and response to childhood teasing tends to have properties distinct from the more playful teasing typical of adults (Keltner et al., 2001). The ‘sticks and stones’ or ‘just ignore it’ approaches typical of parental advice may not validate the emotional experience of the child.

The persistence of a teaser, as well as the coping skills of the recipient often impacts the hurtful nature of teasing and the repeated and prolonged exposure of a child to teasing (Freedman, 2002). At the extreme end of the continuum is hostile teasing that is cruel and persistent over time, differentiated from bullying “as only a matter of degree” (Freedman, p. 5). As with bullying, children exposed to persistent, hostile verbal teasing are at greater risk of exclusion, social rejection, and internalizing difficulties (e.g., depression, loneliness) (Rubin, Coplan, Nelson, Cheah, & Lagace-Seguin, 1999). The nature and form of young siblings’ teasing has yet to be examined systematically and exhaustively in the research literature. Yet the pragmatics, characteristics, and social context of the sibling relationship (like the family context in general) may act as a significant training ground for positive and negative social skill learning (Olweus, Block, & Radke-Yarrow, 1986).

This study regarded the specific contextual variables inherent in the sibling relationship as an important influence on the interpretation and understanding of teasing. Teasing was regarded as being specific to the dynamic interaction of two siblings, and thus greater understanding was gained by exploring “a complete episode of teasing” (Pawluk, 1989, p. 156).

Purpose of the Study

This study examined the dynamics of naturally occurring teasing incidents within and across three dyads of siblings to illuminate the child’s experiences, understanding, and meaning(s) made from these social interactions. The naturalistic occurrences of sibling teasing were explored to gain a greater understanding of the nature, form, intent of, and responses of young children to experiences of teasing within their sibling relationship. Additionally, the study highlighted several

differences between the experience of teasing and being teased from a child's perspective and the perceptions held by the parent. The parent's perceptions were included to provide clarifications of and possible contrasts with the child's experiences, ultimately providing enrichment to the observational data.

Teasing is "central to social life" (Keltner et al., 2001, p. 1231). The spectrum of teasing incidents can range from prosocial affects to hostile intent. How a tease is situated on this spectrum is impinged upon by several possible factors, such as social status, relational satisfaction, personality, role of teaser or target, and gender of the teaser and recipient. The specific research literature that exists on the phenomenon of teasing is sparse, with most of the studies relying on laboratory manipulation or self-report methods with older school children and adults. Given the ubiquitous and salient nature of teasing within social interactions (particularly at the school age level) and the potential long-term emotional and social effects, this research helps to fill the void by focusing on preschool age children's experiences with teasing. Understanding the elicitors, form, content, and emotional meaning inherent in teasing across different developmental levels and within various contexts has not been fully addressed by previous research.

By examining the phenomenon of sibling teasing, greater insight into children's developing understanding of their own and another's internal mental states ('theory of mind') can be realized. This study was aligned with a social constructivist perspective and predicted that young siblings' thinking and understandings of teasing incidents would be situated and contextually impinged (Dunn, 2005). I employed a qualitative multiple case methodology to explore the phenomenon of sibling teasing, because "the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident"

(Yin, 2003, p. 13). This dissertation provides a description and analysis of the teasing experiences I observed over a five-month period as a participant-observer with three sibling dyads. The three sibling dyads were observed interacting during their daily lives at home and consisted of two male siblings (Family A), a male and female twin dyad (Family B), and the two youngest male siblings from a three male sibling set (Family C). Each of these three instrumental cases depict the naturalistic teasing experienced within the sibling relationship in terms of the nature, form, and function of that experience.

Summary of Chapter 1

The young sibling relationship is often characterized as complex, pluralistic, and marred by conflict and rivalry (Newman, 1994). Siblings tend to develop the ability and mentalistic understanding needed to tease and taunt each other at a young age (Dunn, 2005). Teasing within the sibling relationship has received little research attention thus far, leaving many unanswered questions, such as the nature of its use, the function and experience of sibling teasing, and the impact on children's development.

The nature, form, intent, and experiences of preschool siblings with teasing within their relationship are not readily understood. A qualitative multiple case design was used in this study to explore these naturalistic episodes of sibling teasing. A presentation and discussion of the research and literature relevant to the experience of sibling teasing will be addressed in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 will provide a detailed account of procedures and methodology that were used to illuminate the experience of teasing between siblings. The results of this study will be presented in Chapter 4.

Chapter 5 details the general conclusions found in the study and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2 ~ Literature Review

The literature reviewed concentrates on a discussion of the theoretical frameworks and specific research studies that pertain to three general areas. These three areas are considered interdependent and significant to understanding the phenomenon of childhood teasing within the sibling relationship and include: (a) teasing as a dance between participants, (b) the nature of siblings' interactions, and (c) developing a 'theory of mind' of emotions and intentional understanding.

Teasing is a complex relational phenomenon that is often nuanced and secretive, an intricate dance by specific individuals within a particular context. A tease must involve at least two partners (although spectators are often welcomed by the instigator), and hinges on the ability of those involved to understand intent, non literal communication, pretense, and the social context in which the tease is embedded (Keltner et al., 2001).

Elements of the Dance of Teasing

The literature and research on teasing are plagued with problems of ambiguity, definitional and methodological irregularities, and polarized theoretical constructs. In general, teasing is rarely pursued as a coherent topic of research interest. Teasing is often "subsumed under, and at times conflated with, humour, irony, sarcasm, and bullying" (Keltner et al., 2001). A research study focusing on teasing must first address the complicated issue of defining the term.

Defining 'Teasing'

Historically, the concept of teasing has been explored across multiple disciplines, such as developmental psychology, social psychology, clinical

psychology, anthropology, sociology, and discourse analysis (Keltner et al., 2001). These varied disciplines have defined and operationalized teasing in a variety of ways. Despite this variability in the definition, it is useful to note a common idiom that recognizes teasing as a “relational process, ideally requiring the study of individuals in the stream of their spontaneous interactions” (Keltner et al., p. 229).

Varied Definitions

Teasing is complex and ambiguous, relying on both the intent of the teaser and the recipient’s interpretation and reaction to the tease. Shapiro, Baumeister, and Kessler (1991) provided a three-component model of teasing that defined the elements of a tease as containing aggression, humour, and ambiguity. Teasing has also been termed a conflict strategy, that is, “turns in which either serious or playful teasing was used as a strategy, including rudeness, insults, or bravado, and sarcasm” (Dunn & Herrera, 1997, p. 348). Warm (1997) focused on the aggressive nature of teasing, and defined it as “a deliberate act designed by the teaser to cause tension in a victim such as anxiety, frustration, anger, embarrassment, humiliation, etc.” (p. 98). Furthermore, Warm distinguished teasing from the term “verbal aggression”, by the availability of an “escape” afforded to the recipient of a tease (i.e., recipients could view the tease as a distortion and meaningless).

In the study of Lightner, Bollmer, Harris, Milich, and Scrambler (2000), teasing was narrowly defined as a “subtype of bullying and provocation” (p. 405). The study of teasing within the context of bullying highlights the possible antisocial affects of social rejection, and victimization that can result (Gropper & Froschl, 2000; Olweus, 1969). Aho (1998) also highlighted the negative aspects by defining teasing as “a repeated, intentional and conscious inclination to subordinate, hurt,

threaten, force, damage or frighten someone...either mental or physical, a direct or indirect action” (p. 310). However, by focusing the definition solely on the aggressive nature of teasing, several prosocial benefits may be discounted (Barnett, Burns, Sanborn, Bartel, & Wilds, 2004).

Prosocial outcomes of teasing have been emphasized by researchers studying language socialization practices across various cultures (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986; Seigel, 1995). Eisenberg (1986) defined a teasing sequence as “any conversational sequence that opened with a mock challenge, insult, or threat” (pp. 183-184). Furthermore “a key feature was that the teaser did not intend the recipient to continue to believe the utterance was true” (Eisenberg, p. 184). Dunn and Munn (1986) proposed that teasing among siblings is an attempt to provoke or upset the other, and an attempt to manipulate what the other thinks (Dunn, 2005). Thus, the term teasing has been used to refer to a diverse range of behaviours.

A Broad Conceptual Definition of Teasing

In Keltner et al.’s (2001) review of the teasing literature, several of these previous approaches were criticized as ambiguous and limiting. These scholars noted that previous definitions of teasing have often been limited to a specific context (e.g., teasing as a verbal insult), or have included ambiguous references to aggression, play, or humour (e.g., simple role playing would not be considered teasing, however a game of ‘king of the castle’ could be defined as teasing). Additionally, Keltner et al. pointed to the lack of differentiation between bullying behaviour and teasing as another limitation of previous research. In these instances, the variability of teasing behaviour may be constrained by the “almost certainty that teasing perpetrated by bullies is almost [assuredly] to be only one variant of teasing” (Keltner et al., p. 232),

thus highlighting only the antisocial outcomes of teasing. The previous approaches to studying teasing have tended to polarize the definition, either emphasizing the prosocial benefits (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986) or the antisocial outcomes (Olweus, 1978).

Keltner et al. (2001) proposed a broad definition of teasing to encompass the diverse range of behaviours associated with teasing, specifically defining teasing as ***“an intentional provocation accompanied by playful off-record markers that together comment on something relevant to the target”*** [italics and emphasis added] (p. 234). These researchers provided a definition of teasing to delineate clearly between aggression and teasing, as well as provide a broad definition that could be applied across various contexts. Based on the theoretical tradition of “face-concerns” (Goffman, 1967), teasing can impact and be impacted by the concern for one’s own and others’ social esteem. Teasing can be viewed as a means of saving face, a form of indirect behaviour used in social interactions. For example, the child who has witnessed his friend embarrassingly trip on the sidewalk laughingly says, “I guess with those clown feet of yours, you always do that.” This example highlights the many aspects that define a tease, intentional provocation, playful off-record markers, and relevance to the target. Keltner et al.’s definition established the constructs on which the definition of teasing was applied throughout this study.

Just Teasing?

Is there any such thing, as *just teasing*? The definition provided Keltner et al. (2001) provided an encompassing framework to explore the phenomenon of teasing. Linguistic off-record markers can provide the cues to the non-serious nature of the action or language (of the tease) and may include such indicators as humorous

phrases rhythmically placed in social routines (Drew, 1987), exaggerated characterization (e.g., calling a child Pinocchio) (Kowalski, 2000), implausible claims (Abrahams, 1962), or mock scolding (Rogoff, 1990). In general, off-record markers provide the contextualization cues to help discriminate a tease from other forms of behaviours (e.g., laughter, saying the opposite of what is true, escalating the offensive behaviour). Intentional provocations may be nonverbal (e.g., physical imitation, making faces, singsong chants) or verbal (e.g., name calling, explicit statements). Defining the specifics of what constitutes teasing behaviour is the first important element in studying teasing among children. Additionally, examining the role played by social understanding, intentional understanding, nonliteral communication, pretense, and the social context in teasing behaviours is equally significant.

Social Understanding and Teasing

The ability to tease and interpret a tease requires a certain level of social understanding (Heerey, Capps, Keltner, & Kring, 2005). Teasing incorporates abilities in the understanding of intention, nonliteral communication, pretense, and a grasp of the social context of the teasing situation.

Understanding of intention. A tease can be both critical and playful, requiring both the transmission and interpretation of conflicting intentions. The degree of offence of the tease is determined by the recipient's perception and its relevance (Drew, 1987). LeBlanc (1997) utilized the term, interactive teasing, to denote teasing that is playful, "serious but not serious" (p. 5). A teasing message is incumbent upon how the intended recipient responds. Thus, only in situations where the recipient 'plays along' with the teaser does teasing in fact occur.

Nonliteral communication. The teasing child must be able to convey a mixed message that is both disparaging and playful. The ability to decipher teasing messages is also impacted by the nonliteral content that accompanies playful teasing. Idiomatic language is a common form of nonliteral communication used in teasing such as the use of nicknames or name-calling (Bell & Healey, 1992). Idiomatic communication refers to the unique “word, phrase, or gesture that has evolved unique meanings within a specific relationship” (Bell & Healey, p. 309). In this study, the twins in Family B often referred to each other as “Duffus.” Despite the lack of a literal definition for “Duffus”, the twins’ utilized the label in name-calling incidents of teasing to mean the recipient was acting goofy, silly, or unintelligent.

Other forms of nonliteral communication, such as playful content (a smile, laughter, making faces, or exaggeration), sarcasm, voice tone and prosody often mark teasing (Heerey et al., 2005). Thus, nonliteral communication can provide the off-record cues to indicate a tease. The ability to utilize and understand a tease requires the ability to “infer the implied meanings based on the juxtaposition of the literal provocation and the nonliteral meaning in a set of subtle paralinguistic acts” (Heerey et al., p. 56).

Pretense. Pretense also appears to play a vital role in the social understanding required to tease and understand teasing (Heerey et al., 2005). Pretense play involves the child’s engagement with “object substitution, attribution of pretend properties, and imaginary objects” (Leslie, 1987, p. 414). In teasing situations, like pretense, a child must be able to purposefully distort reality while retaining the ability to discern reality from pretense.

Social context. Teasing is often embedded within the social context of a particular situation. Violating social norms, that is the “set of expectations that govern behaviour and interactions both among group members and between the group and the outside world” (Heerey et al., 2005, p. 56), will often be the basis for teasing (Keltner, Young, Heerey, Oemig, & Monarch, 1998; Shapiro et al., 1991). Thus, instigating a tease based on social norms requires the child to both understand those norms and the behaviours that contravene those expectations. The ability to tease and discern teasing episodes requires a set of abilities that are all aspects of theory of mind (Heerey et al., 2005) (a more detailed discussion of theory of mind begins on page 50). In addition to defining the word teasing and recognizing the complex abilities required in teasing situations, there are several other aspects of teasing that are significant to the discussion (i.e., understanding why teasing occurs, the content and perceptions of teasing, and the recipients’ responses).

Why Does Teasing Occur?

The most commonly cited reasons in the literature for teasing among children are norm deviations and interpersonal conflict (Keltner et al., 2001; Shapiro et al., 1991). School-age children, especially boys, are often teased by other playmates for off-gender play or play with the opposite sex (Thorne, 1993). For example in Thorne’s research, school-age boys would label each other with girl names in their teasing episodes to dissuade cross-gender interaction. Thus, children can utilize teasing as a means of controlling other people’s behaviour and gaining their compliance with cultural expectations of what is deemed ‘appropriate’.

Parents have been found to use teasing episodes to underscore children’s transgressions of possessiveness, selfishness, sulking, and aggression (Dunn &

Brown, 1994; Miller, 1986; Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986). Among indigenous Fijians, code-switching was a common technique in teasing episodes of older children (Seigel, 1995). Code-switching in this context refers to the practice of “addressing a target by using linguistic practices of an undesirable group” (Keltner et al., p. 237). Playful teasing has also appeared as a mode of negotiating family conflict increasingly favoured by young children (Dunn & Munn, 1985). Dunn and Munn found in their observational study of family conflict, an increase in teasing episodes as 1-year-old to 2-year-old children engaged in more conflict with their sibling and parents.

Specific insights into why children tease were provided by the 68 eighth grade children of Shapiro et al.'s (1991) exploratory study. Younger children's (2.5 to 6-year-olds) perceptions of teasing have not been adequately addressed by any research thus far. Shapiro and his colleagues found the most commonly cited reasons for teasing provided by school age children was reciprocation (35%), and playing or joking around (16%). Other reasons provided by the children of this study in response to '*why teasing occurs*' included dislike of the target, bad mood, taking part in a group teasing situation, and teasing members of the opposite sex.

School children also provided several additional examples of teasing that the researchers themselves had not considered in their original definition (Warm, 1997). Two hundred and fifty children from 1st, 3rd, 6th, 8th and 11th grades were questioned and asked to write narratives to develop a framework of the form, motive and reaction of victims to teasing incidents. The difference between children's perceptions of teasing incidents and those of an adult also were highlighted. The examples of teasing cited by the children surveyed included cruel insults, insulting

profanity, or taunting a child who was being punished. These three forms were added to the original definition, which was adapted to include *hurtful* teasing that contained elements of physical aggression, *mean* teasing to refer to insults or profanity, and *symbolic* teasing to refer to incidents defined by the original definition. Warm's research was also significant in highlighting the potential impact of developing social understanding on the use and form of teasing.

Teasing may also occur as a result of the physical space provided for children. In the research by Voss (1997), teasing was found to be related to a restriction in the amount of space available for children in an after-school child care program. As a participant observer, Voss focused her observations on cross-gender interactions of teasing, disputing, and playing amongst the children in two classrooms (grade one and grade three class).

This research highlighted both developmental and gender differences in teasing. For the third grade children, teasing occurred when boys and girls came together in a restricted space while disputing was found to result from incidents when boys invaded the girls' space (Voss, 1997). The researcher also found that cooperative cross-gender play was controlled primarily by the boys and occurred when girls joined boys in their play space. Conversely, teasing, disputing, and playing were not as closely related to the use of space among the first graders, although the researcher noted "similarities clearly exist" (Voss, p. 254).

The literature on *why teasing occurs* recognizes teasing as a salient form of behaviour among diverse groups of people with varied intended uses. However, a dearth of research exists on the phenomenon of teasing between siblings, specific to the preschool age group.

Content of and Perceptions of Teasing

Across several studies of older children's perceptions of teasing, physical appearance was cited as the most common content of teases (Mooney, Creeser, & Blatchford, 1991; Scrambler, Harris, & Milich, 1998; Shapiro et al., 1991; Warm, 1997). From Shapiro and his colleagues' survey study with 3rd, 5th, and 8th grade children, the most common themes cited were (in decreasing order of frequency) physical appearance, being fat, intellectual performance, physical performance, family, interest in the opposite sex, hygiene, race, being afraid, promiscuity, effeminate behaviour in males, psychological problems, and being a "goody-goody" (pp. 462-463). They also found one form of teasing had no content (i.e., "nya, nya, nya") and simply revealed the intent to tease.

Martlew and Hodson (1991) also reported that school children that appeared *different* are often the targets of teasing. The type of 'humour' often associated with childhood teasing is frequently hostile in its intent and for the amusement of bystanders. It is this component of hostility within teasing that is the most concerning, because this element may escalate the response from the recipient (i.e., a hostile tease may invoke a hostile response and intensify the teasing and this may lead to aggression).

The Role of Social Understanding in Teasing

Teasing behaviours tend to demonstrate a developmental trajectory that parallels the development of social understanding. Teasing tends to become more symbolic and playful and less hurtful as children mature into adolescence (Warm, 1997). The younger children in Warm's study tended to use hurtful teasing most often (such as frightening another, taking away possessions, spitting) while symbolic

teasing became increasingly more prevalent with older children. The form of teasing that was defined as *mean* (e.g., insulting words, name-calling, emphasizing another's shortcomings) tended to escalate between grade 1 and grade 6, reaching its peak during this final year of elementary schooling. However, by grade eleven 68% of all teases were symbolic in nature. The playful nature of teasing also steadily increased between grade 1 and grade 11. Possibly the development in the capacity of the older child's understanding of the nonliteral use of words as well as the increased ability for abstract thinking accounts for this shift in the form of teasing (Heerey et al., 2005; Warm, 1997).

Additionally as teasing increasingly becomes more playful and symbolic, there is a tendency for teasing to be more focused on norm violations (Keltner et al., 2001). As children become increasingly aware of the subtleties of the social context and expected behaviour within that context, so too increases their abilities to exploit one another's deviations from what is deemed acceptable behaviour. For example, let us consider the teasing of a three-year old boy who is trying to learn to skip. At this age, he may consider it *hurtful* when a playmate labels his behaviour as "girlish", relying solely on the literal message. The instigator's intent at this age may be more critical in nature. However, if the boy were six years in age he may rely more on the social cues of the situation and have a greater understanding of the more playful, prosocial components of the teasing scenario. The older instigator in this case may indeed be motivated to tease based on the violation by the boy who engages in inappropriate 'girl-play'.

Interpreting teasing also appears to change with increased social understanding (Lightner et al., 2000). Older children (children 10 to 12 years) were

more able to rely on their own established beliefs and make inferences about the feelings of others in teasing scenarios examined in Lightner et al.'s study. Children who experience difficulties in interpreting social cues may face additional challenges in understanding and using teasing as a means of social interaction (Heerey et al., 2005). Heerey and her colleagues examined the recalled past experiences and parent-child teasing interaction of 23 children with autism and 20 typically developing children. All children were between the ages of 8 and 15 years. These researchers found that the children with autism "tended to neglect two crucial components of teasing: (1) the playful behaviours that mitigate the seriousness of a tease and (2) the idea that teasing is a social commentary about the behaviour of another individual" (Heerey et al., p. 65). Not only were the teasing behaviours of the autistic children less playful, but they also tended to be less focused on social norms. The children with autism experienced difficulty with the theory of mind abilities that underpin teasing, making it a challenge for them to understand the social intentions of others. Thus, social understanding appears to play a significant role in the function, form and interpretation of teasing. Equally significant to the discussion of teasing are the specific responses and strategies recipients use in teasing scenarios.

The Partner in the Dance—Recipients' Responses to Teasing

An important aspect of teasing is the recipient's response to the interaction. Behavioural and emotional responses to teasing appear to be impacted by one's teasing history and personality (Bollmer et al., 2003). How a child responds to a tease may directly impact subsequent teasing episodes and provide cues to a child's developing mentalistic understanding. Mentalistic understanding is a broad term and

generally refers to how children come to understand the social and psychological world around them (Carpendale & Lewis, 2004).

In the work of Shapiro and his colleagues (1991), 97% of the children reported negative emotional responses to teasing (across all grade levels). These emotional responses included, anger, embarrassment, hurt and sadness. This contrasted with the playful or joking intent of teasing cited by the instigators as one motive for teasing. The most popular behavioural responses to teasing episodes reported by the 8th grade children were reciprocating with a verbal comeback (39%), ignoring (24%), laughing (12%), fighting (10%), and telling the teacher (4%). The 11-year-old children in Mooney et al.'s (1991) survey study reported the most common responses to teasing were retaliation, ignoring it, and telling the teacher. Similarly, Warm's (1997) survey found the most preferred responses cited by children were ignoring and walking away, reassuring themselves, and retaliation.

The 'just ignore it' appeared to be the most favoured response proposed by adults as an effective response strategy (Shapiro et al., 1991). Ninety-one percent of the teachers surveyed in Shapiro et al.'s study indicated ignoring was the most effective response strategy. Yet 65% of the children from this study employed different response strategies, highlighting a discrepancy between the children and adults' perception of the most constructive response strategy for teasing incidents. Additionally, the proportion of children seeking help from an adult in teasing situations steadily declined with higher-grade levels (i.e., 18% of first grade children sought help, while by third grade only 9% sought help) (Warm, 1997). One potential interpretation is that children perceive the adults' ignore response to be ineffective. Possibly, some adults may be exposed to more benign experiences with playful adult

teasing. Additionally, adults may base their perceptions more on their own personal history with teasing and inadvertently minimize the emotional intensity of the hostile types of teasing that are more typical of children's experiences until the 6th grade.

Studies on children's perceptions of teasing are often hindered by methodological limitations (i.e., the self-report method that is frequently utilized) and children's social desirability concerns (Lightner et al., 2000). Other studies have empirically investigated children's responses to teasing in an attempt to improve upon and overcome some of the limitations of earlier studies (Irvin, Walker, Noell, & Singer, 1992; Scrambler et al., 1998; Walker, Colvin, & Ramsey, 1995).

Videotaped simulations of teasing situations, and focus groups were employed in the studies of Irvin et al. (1992), and Walker et al. (1995) to gain insight into children's perceptions. Walker and his colleagues found that social status effected school age children's responses and use of successful strategies to teasing. Specifically, children of low social status and popularity deemed aggressive responses as the more appropriate response to teasing incidents. Overall these children rated the teaser as more hostile and were incapable of generating as many effective responses as their more popular counterparts. Given that the recipients of teasing are most likely to be those children who are perceived of as *different*, and these socially unpopular children receive the bulk of the teasing attention, the ineffective response strategies favoured by this group may help fuel further teasing incidents. Thus, the dance of teasing is further complicated by the recipients' popularity, social status, perceptions, and responses to teasing episodes.

The study by Scrambler et al. (1998) empirically demonstrated "the perceived efficacy of various teasing responses...and that the victim response and teasing

history can affect an individual's perceptions of the teasing incident" (Georges, Harris, Milich, & Young, 1999, p. 1255). However, Scrambler et al.'s study was limited by the "potentially artificial" videotape staging of one teasing scenario with three specified response strategies (p. 248). Additionally, it is unclear if the participants would have perceived other responses (such as empathy, or telling an adult) as more effective.

Lightner et al.'s study (2000) examined the evaluations of responses to videotaped teasing episodes of 117 parents and 147 children (children ranged from 8 to 12 years of age). Similar to Scrambler et al. (1998), the "ignore" condition, a "humorous" condition, and a "hostile" condition were manipulated by the researchers in a prepared videotape scenario of teasing. However, an "empathy-inducing" condition was also introduced.

The considerable differences between parental and child perceptions are most noteworthy of this study (Lightner et al., 2000). Children's self-reports of teasing incidents indicated teasing occurred much more often than what parents estimated, indicating that adults may be unaware of the extent of teasing situations. Additionally, adults were generally more lenient in their evaluation of the teaser, and rated the target more likeable (regardless of the response condition). The children were more affected by what was said by both the teaser and the target.

Lightner et al. (2000) and her colleagues also found that children evaluated the efficacy of responses to teasing based on their own teasing experiences. Children who experienced teasing frequently rated the empathetic response to teasing less favourably than children who were not often victims of teasing. As these researchers

hypothesized an empathy response may be more appropriate for children who are not victims of teasing than for those who experience teasing frequently.

Again, this study's results can be criticized for the reliance on the videotaped model and the possible failure to "capture the emotion inherent in an actual threatening teasing situation" (Lightner et al., 2000, p. 423). The evaluated effectiveness of any response to teasing may be content and context specific, and research on teasing would benefit from a study of the phenomenon from a naturalistic perspective.

Model of Family Social Influences

Young children's social lives are complex. The sibling relation is recognized as one form of social interaction that is significant as children "construct an understanding of mind within social interaction" (Carpendale & Lewis, 2004, p. 79). A systems perspective views the family as an open system that is "a complex, integrated whole, with organized patterns of interaction that are circular rather than linear in form" (Minuchin, 1974, p. 8). Thus, the individual child is conceived of as part of a network of relationships, being "formed by and forming part of this network" (Hinde & Stevenson-Hinde, 1987, p. 1). The family unit is construed as a multifaceted system with multiple levels of complex relationships. A systems model also recognizes that there exists an influence from not only the "components of the system" but also from the "relationship between components" (Sanders, 2004, p. 31). From this systems theory perspective, the sibling subsystem is viewed as one of the social systems that add to the complexity of children's lives.

The sibling subsystem is the third subsystem in Minuchin's (1974) family systems model. This third subsystem is established after the birth of the second child

into a family resulting in six interacting social systems at play. As more siblings are added to the family mix so does the complexity of the relationships within that family increase. Sanders (2004) clarified Minuchin's model by labeling these three subsystems as: the parent-parent subsystem, the parent/child subsystem(s), and the child/child subsystem(s). Sanders construed that there are bi-directional and reciprocal influences between these subsystems within the family. Thus, the age of the second sibling is irrelevant in recognizing that child's influence within a systems model. The sibling subsystem has been described as "the first laboratory in which children can experiment with peer relationships. Within this context, children support, isolate, scapegoat and learn from each other. In the sibling world children learn how to negotiate, cooperate, and compete" (Minuchin, 1974, p. 59).

Bronfenbrenner's (1977; 1979) social ecology model of human development is also based on a systems model approach (Sanders, 2004). The child is the center of four interacting systems that expand outward from the child. These four systems are:

- The *microsystem* (e.g., the child's home and school)
- The *mesosystem* (e.g., the interrelations among the many microsystems)
- The *exosystem* (e.g., the social structures that do not contain the child but affect him/her such as the mass media)
- The *macrosystem* (e.g., culture, economic, social, education, legal and political systems).

Bronfenbrenner (1977; 1979) emphasized the importance of the context and the significance of the interrelationship between the various systems within which a child is embedded. Traditional developmental psychology has generally focused on

the behaviour of the individual (with some exceptions, as in attachment theory research, and marital discord effects), and not on the perceptions, affects, and expectations that stem from relationships (Radke-Yarrow & Ritchers, 1988). However, the mutual and bi-directional influences of children's close relationships within the family context has become the focus of recent research (Dyson, 2003; Eisenberg et al., 2003). There is a long tradition of theoretical discussions that explore the role of peers in the development of socio-emotional understanding (Hartup, 1983; Piaget, 1932; Sullivan, 1953) yet less emphasis on the role of the sibling relationship. Elements of familiarity, reciprocity, sharing and helping have been identified as central tenets of peer relations and significant contributors to the child's ability to interpret another's internal mental state. Thus, it can be argued that the sibling relationship, which affords an extreme degree of familiarity, will play a considerable role in this development as well. The nature of children's experiences within their sibling relations can provide an important window to understanding individual differences in children's thinking and development. The role played by sibling teasing in a child's developing social-emotional understanding is even less understood.

Describing the Sibling Relationship

The sibling relationship of young children has the distinguishable element of children "forced to remain in an intense, long-term relationship at a time when they are socially incompetent" (Newman, 1994, p. 120). As new dance partners, young siblings will clumsily establish their relationship through a trial and error process of interactions. Toes will be stepped on as these young siblings have yet to fully integrate intention and outcome, so friction and conflict will occur.

Sibling relationships can be described as developing and changing over the lifespan in stages (Sanders, 2004), although the quality of those relationships is affected by a multitude of factors beyond one's stage in life. Sanders summarized the sibling relationship from birth to adulthood and provided a global basis for viewing the relationship and how it changes over time. The period of interest to this research, early childhood, was described as having the following salient characteristics:

As young baby grows to toddlerhood, becomes more oriented towards older sibling(s); older siblings respond more positively towards younger siblings; [become] playmates. Aggression reduces. But 'playmates' may bicker and squabble...frequently. (p. 53)

Saunders (2004) was quick to emphasize that there are many additional complex factors that affect the quality of the sibling relationship within families. This complexity is highlighted by the levels of intrafamilial influences that affect the sibling relationship and were identified by Saunders as:

- First order relationships (e.g., individuals influence, and are influenced by, other individuals)
- Second order relationships (e.g., the relationship between two individuals influences and is influenced by other individuals within the family)
- Third order relationships (e.g., the relationship between two individuals influences and is influenced by another relationship between two individuals within the family) (p. 32).

Thus the sibling role is complex, requiring children to maintain a reciprocal relationship (often used in characterizing peer relationships) while at other times a

complementary relationship (hierarchical and unequal) (Piaget, 1932; Sullivan, 1953). These roles may be incompatible as siblings are expected to be playmates and simultaneously adhere to the authority of the eldest child. The behavioural expectations inherent within gender roles of siblings, social comparison between siblings, and competition between siblings are all facets that also impact the complexity of the relationship (Newman, 1994). Factors such as status, responsibility, assertiveness, competence, or achievement may be impacted by gender role expectations and ultimately affect the nature of the sibling relationship.

Mothers' Influence on Sibling Relations

The role of the mother as a potent influence on the child's development of concern for others' emotional distress has been the subject of interest since Zahn-Waxler, Radke-Yarrow and King's 1979 study. These researchers found that empathic caregiving (i.e., conveying of concern and modelling altruism) by the mother were associated with children's reparations and prosocial behaviour. The communication pattern by the mother that included messages concerning what is socially responsible behaviour while focusing on the emotional stimulus events (e.g., "Look how you hurt Amy!") was particularly potent in determining future responses of reparative and altruistic behaviour in the child (Zahn-Waxler, Radke-Yarrow, & King, p. 327).

Recent research has also examined many aspects of the emotional climate of a family, specifically parental style (i.e., maternal emotional expressivity and parental warmth), and its impact on the development of socio-emotional understanding in young children (Eisenberg et al., 2001; Eisenberg et al., 2003; Zhou et al., 2002). This research highlights several important elements: firstly, the

importance of familial interactions on children's emotion regulation and socioemotional understanding; and secondly, the legitimacy of family context as a research site.

The different processes involved in the sibling-child relationship and how those processes operate (as distinct from mother-child relationships) was the focus of Dunn's early work (1988b). The quality of sibling relationships was found related to the "connections between the mother-child relationship at the time of the arrival of the sibling" (Dunn, p. 170). Children who became *withdrawn* and interacted less frequently with the mother (after the birth of the second child) demonstrated more hostility and negativity in their relations with younger siblings one year after the younger child's birth than in families where mother's mediated the birth of the second-born with conversations about the new baby as a person with wants, needs, and feelings. Although the author of the study did not make any causal claim between conversations and the quality of sibling interactions, it is evident that young children monitor the interactions between their mother and sibling quite closely. Additionally, children are capable of discerning and attributing wants, needs, and feelings of another person at a young age (with the help of the mother's construction).

Dunn (1988b) also found that firstborn girls who enjoyed a relatively high frequency of play and attention with the mother, prior to and immediately following birth of the sibling, were reported as more likely to exhibit hostile behaviour toward her 14-month-old sibling. Siblings were more likely to be friendly toward each other in families that had a relative high frequency of confrontation between mothers and first-born girls. Dunn and Munn (1986b) also indicated that it is "the individual

differences in friendly behaviour by the older sibling that are linked with the development of relatively mature behaviour by the second born in conflict incidents and in cooperative exchanges” (p. 282). Similarly, the prosocial behaviour of the older sibling was largely dependent on the friendly behaviour of the younger sibling. In follow-up observations, the younger sibling was more likely to demonstrate a higher proportion of co-operative behaviour, teasing behaviour, and conciliatory behaviour during conflicts depending on the nature of the previous interactions with the older sibling. Thus, Dunn surmised that the sibling, like the mother, can “contribute greatly to the emotional life of the child” (1988b, p. 172) at times as a source of hostility as attention is supplanted, or as a source of affection and attention for children with more distant relationships with their parents. The study indicated that the degree of maternal attention and involvement with either child seems to directly impact the quality of the interaction between siblings.

Siblings’ Mutual Influence—Imitation and Affect

Psychoanalytic theory and family constellation models have historically tended to dominate studies on sibling relationships (Sanders, 2004). Early psychoanalytic thinking was inclined to highlight the sibling as an opponent for the mother’s attention (Freud, 1955) where dethronement of the eldest sibling was inevitable (Adler, 1964). The introduction of the term *sibling rivalry* in Levy’s (1936; 1937; 1943) work brought the systematic study of siblings to the forefront of research. Family constellation variables such as birth order, gender, and age gap/family size have been equally dominant in the research on siblings (for example the work of Toman, 1969 who suggested the child's family configuration figured prominently in the development of personality characteristics). However, studies of

sibling relationships have emphasized increasingly the complexity and intricate subtleties that are inherent within this bond and greater effort has been made to explore the *quality* of the sibling relationship.

Several researchers have demonstrated the importance of sibling relationships and development (Dunn, 1983). Siblings can contribute to each other's prosocial skills and development of social understanding (Bryant & Crockenberg, 1980; Dunn, Brown, & Maguire, 1995; Youngblade & Dunn, 1995). As young siblings often spend large amounts of time together it is not surprising that siblings effect each other's acquisition of both prosocial and agonistic behaviours. Agonistic behaviours are negative interactions between siblings and includes such behaviours as physical aggression, object related struggles, insults, and threats (Abramovitch et al., 1979).

A foundational study on the quality of sibling interactions in the home environment was conducted by Abramovitch and her colleagues in 1979. This study added to, and provided contrasting results to, the previous laboratory based findings of Lamb (1978) and Samuels (1980). The general conclusion of both (Lamb and Samuels) of these laboratory-based studies was that siblings tended to interact minimally with each other. In Lamb's research, toddler and preschool age sibling dyads were studied during free play. Here, the researcher included same and mixed gender sibling dyads, and despite the relatively little interaction observed, the researchers found that gender had little effect while age differences were evident. In general, the older siblings provided an important role of modelling appropriate behaviour to younger siblings as many interactions between younger siblings and older siblings have been found to be imitative (Dunn & Kendrick, 1982b; Pepler, Abramovitch, & Corter, 1981) as well as mutually pleasurable. In a series of studies,

Abramovitch and her colleagues (Abramovitch, Corter, & Pepler, 1980; Abramovitch et al., 1979; Abramovitch, Corter, Pepler, & Stanhope, 1986; Abramovitch, Pepler, & Corter, 1982; Pepler et al., 1981) emphasized that the context of sibling interaction was an important consideration in examining the relationship. In contrast to previous laboratory studies, Abramovitch, Pepler, and Corter (1982) found high levels of interaction between siblings in observations of children conducted in the home environment.

The descriptive data provided from the outset of their naturalistic study demonstrated that the interactions between siblings tended to be “rich and varied” (Abramovitch et al., 1979, p. 1003) and included both prosocial and agonistic (combative) behaviours. The original study consisted of 34 pairs of same-gender preschool siblings categorized by either a large interval (i.e., children were spaced 2 ½ to 4 years apart) or small interval (i.e., children were spaced 1 to 2 years apart). Overall, these sibling pairs were found to interact in a positive manner toward each other most often, with older children instigating the bulk of the initiated acts of aggression. The study found that, unlike interval (the age gap between siblings), the specific age and gender of siblings was a determinant of the type of behaviour initiated and response generated. For example, males engaged in significantly more physical aggression than females and older children initiated more agonistic and prosocial behaviours than the younger sibling. Abramovitch and her colleagues provided distinctive definitions for agonistic behaviours, distinguishing between physical aggression, object related struggles, and verbal aggression (under which teasing was subsumed).

The issue of gender. The addition of mixed-gender sibling dyads was equally informative and became part of subsequent studies by Abramovitch and her colleagues (Abramovitch et al., 1980; Abramovitch et al., 1986; Abramovitch et al., 1982; Pepler et al., 1981). The gender composition of the sibling dyads was found to be a contributing factor in the patterning of sibling interaction, but the sex difference effects were not stable across time. Abramovitch, Corter, Pepler, and Stanhope (1986) examined the pattern of results found in their initial study with a follow-up study conducted 18 months after the original. At this follow-up, the researchers found few (and weak) effects for sex composition of the sibling dyads on the play behaviours and agonistic behaviours observed, and cited a more positive or close relationship between same-sex pairs as the only “weak tendency” to emerge from the analysis (p. 227).

Other studies have found that gender impacts the type of sibling interactions, with more positive interactions occurring between same-sex siblings (Dunn & Kendrick, 1981). However, this finding has not been consistent across all research (Lamb, 1978). The expectation that sibling conflict would be greater for mixed gender dyads may be inferred by several researchers’ choice to limit the participants of their studies to same-sex pairs (Azmitia & Hesser, 1993; Brody, Stoneman, & Burke, 1987; Brody, Stoneman, & MacKinnon, 1982; Brody, Stoneman, & McCoy, 1992; Brody, Stoneman, McKinnon, & MacKinnon, 1985). The gender composition of sibling pairs has generally been found to influence the level of conflict, although the nature of the conflict was inconsistent. In general, past research has demonstrated a pattern of increased negative interactions over time between mixed gender dyads of

siblings (Newman, 1994). However, conclusive results of the impact of gender on sibling conflict and rivalry have not been consistently achieved.

The role of a sibling—measuring the quality of the relationship. The quality of sibling relationships has been somewhat neglected by researchers of sibling relationships. Buhrmester (1992) described the tendency of research to focus on the influence of one sibling on another with the following statement:

In fact, most of the literature on ‘sibling relationships’ did not examine sibling relationships at all, but rather examined whether constellation variables like birth order and age-spacing were related to the assessments of individual personality. (p. 30)

Increasingly in the last twenty years, the quality of the sibling relationship has gained prominence as a research focus (Sanders, 2004) with the sibling context being found to contribute uniquely to children’s self-concepts (Dyson, 2003), and cognitive and psychosocial competence (Brody, 1998). Furman and Buhrmester (1985) were two of the first researchers to address the quality dimension of sibling relationships. They developed the *Sibling Relationship Questionnaire* from their analyses of open-ended interviews with the 11- to 13-year old children of their study. These children cited most frequently companionship (93%), admiration of the sibling (81%), prosocial behaviour (77%), and affection (65%) as the most positive qualities of their sibling relationship. Conversely, the most frequently cited negative aspects were antagonism (91%) and quarrelling (79%).

Based on the children’s responses and follow-up, Furman and Buhrmester (1985) devised four significant factors to describe sibling relationship quality: warmth/ closeness, relative status/power, conflict, and rivalry. These researchers

stressed that research of siblings needed to move beyond examining family constellation variables and include an assessment of these factors.

There are other aspects of the quality of the sibling relationship that are significant to the discussion of siblings, including the elements of sibling attachment, connectedness, shared fantasy, and reciprocity and balance (Dunn, 1993). Dunn and Kendrick's longitudinal study (1982b) cited the sibling relationship as a fundamental foundation of secure attachment. In their study, mothers reported that siblings "miss each other" when apart. Additionally, siblings were reported as providing a supportive role for a child to explore novel situations. Siblings also connect in distinctive patterns of self-disclosure and humour (Dunn, 1993). Ritual word play, verbal chants, jokes, and verbal insults have been found to have distinctive patterns among some sibling pairs. The use of 'bathroom humour' is an example of shared humour often displayed between young siblings.

Sibling relationship quality and individual temperament. Several research studies have addressed the question of the influence of individual temperament on sibling relationship quality (Brody, Stoneman, & Gauger, 1996; Munn & Dunn, 1989; Stocker, Dunn, & Plomin, 1989). Temperament can be defined as "an individual's behavioral style as he or she relates to other persons and the inanimate environment" (Brody, 1998, p. 3).

A child's temperament can influence individual responses to the arrival of a second child and may be a contributing factor to the quality of sibling relationships from the outset of the bond. Several researchers have reported that children with more negative moods displayed greater stress at the arrival of a sibling (e.g., more withdrawn, experience disruptions to their sleep patterns, regress to younger

behaviours such as using a soother, or became a ‘clinger’ to a parent) than children with easier temperaments (Dunn, Kendrick, & MacNamee, 1981; Legg, Sherick, & Wadland, 1974; Thomas, Birch, & Robins, 1961).

Temperament appears to continue to influence the sibling relationship as the sibling bond develops. Specific variances to aspects of the sibling relationship can be accounted for by differences in temperament (Brody et al., 1996; Stocker et al., 1989). For example, in Brody et al.’s study an association was found between parent-child and sibling relationship quality in cases where the older sibling was described as having a *difficult* temperament (i.e., “children with highly active and emotionally intense temperaments”) (Brody et al., p. 1290). Additionally, Brody et al. (1987) found that sisters (both older and younger) with temperaments of high activity, high emotional intensity, and low persistence levels tended to have greater sibling conflict within their relationship, whereas for boys, sibling conflict was predicted most reliably when these temperamental characteristics were found in the younger brother. However, as Stocker, Dunn and Plomin highlighted “different dimensions of temperament in older and younger siblings were associated with [various] relationship measures” (Stocker et al., p. 725). Thus, the specific influence of temperament on the quality of sibling relationships is unclear, as two hypotheses tend to dominate the literature. The *similarity hypothesis* proposes that siblings with similar temperaments will experience less conflict and a more harmonious relationship (Munn & Dunn, 1989). Munn and Dunn found that preschool siblings that were temperamentally dissimilar experienced the highest levels of conflict, and this “lack of fit” between temperaments placed siblings at greater potential for conflict (Hinde, 1979). However, it is less clear how individual temperaments are

related to more positive aspects of the sibling relationship. The competing hypothesis, the *buffering hypothesis* predicts that a sibling with a more adaptive temperament can *buffer* the negative impact to the quality of the sibling relationship (in terms of conflict and dissention) when the other sibling's temperament is difficult (Brody et al., 1987; Stoneman & Brody, 1993). In summary, the general hypothesis from the various researchers can be stated as: "such a [difficult] temperament in any sibling would be associated with higher levels of conflict and lower levels of positivity in sibling relationships" (Brody, 1998, p. 3). However, not all children with difficult temperaments have conflicted sibling relationships and other influences may contribute to ameliorating the impact of temperamental characteristics (i.e., family processes).

The relationship of family processes and sibling relationship quality. The impact of various factors on the quality of the sibling relationship has also been assessed by several research studies (Bryant & Crockenberg, 1980; Dunn & Kendrick, 1982b; Hetherington, 1988). For example, many studies have addressed the *compensatory hypothesis* (i.e., inadequacies in the parent-child relationship are compensated for by the child-child relationship) or the *congruence hypothesis* (i.e., where a strong parent-child relationship promotes a strong child-child relationship) (Sanders, 2004). Several research studies have found that a positive parent-child relationship was linked to high levels of positive affectations and prosocial behaviour between siblings (Brody et al., 1992; Dunn & Kendrick, 1982b; Hetherington, 1988; Stocker et al., 1989). Conversely, controlling, negative, and intrusive relationships between the parent-child were more often linked to aggressive, self-protective behaviour between siblings.

The intrafamilial environment and its influence on the individual development of siblings has also been the focus of previous research (Sanders, 2004). These effects refer to the ‘nonshared’ influences within a family that are experienced by individual members differently and ultimately influence development in distinct ways (Plomin, Chipuer, & Neiderhiser, 1994). Factors such as the children’s gender, their ordinal position, the significance of the child’s gender to the parent, the fluctuating life course of the family, and the possible reconstitution of the family all may impact the influence and affect on individual family members (Sanders).

Differential treatment by parents can be a major influence on children’s development (Volling, 2003). Brody et al., (1992) examined the significant influence of parental differential treatment and the relation to the quality of the sibling relationship. Differential treatment by parents can be in the form of placing specific children in favoured family roles, inconsistency in the parents’ approach to the children, or split-parent identification (i.e., children identify with one parent or the other) (Schachter, 1982). Differential treatment by parents has been found to affect the quality of sibling relationships. Specifically, Brody and colleagues (Brody & Stoneman, 1994; Brody et al., 1992) found that the differential treatment by fathers was particularly poignant in affecting the sibling relationship quality. Here, siblings were more likely to engage in negative behaviours with each other when fathers treated them differently.

As Brody and Stoneman (1994) noted “it is impossible for parents to treat their children completely equally; even if it were possible, it would not be desirable” (p. 140). However, young children monitor their parents’ interactions with a sibling

very attentively and are aware and compare their own interactions with their parents to those of their siblings (Dunn & Munn, 1985). Thus, it is the extent of the differential treatment and how children perceive that treatment that is particularly significant. Thus, the quality of the sibling relationship as well as individual adjustment may be greatly impacted by parental differential treatment.

Parental management of conflicts between siblings has also been found to influence the variations in the quality of sibling relationships (Brody, 1998). Whether or not to intervene in children's squabbles is a question that plagues most parents. Parental management of siblings' conflict can foster or hinder children's development of prosocial skills, emotion regulation, conflict resolution skills, and socialization abilities that will ultimately govern their behaviour (Brody, 1998). Intervening too quickly in sibling disputes may hinder children's abilities to negotiate and find solutions. Conversely, studies have found that when parents fail to intervene, older siblings tend to dominate and coerce their younger siblings (Dunn & Munn, 1985, 1986b; Ross, Filyer, Lollis, Perlman, & Martin, 1994). Finding a balance in the parental management of conflict is difficult in light of the numerous conflicts young children engage in with their sibling. Dunn and Munn (1986a) found that siblings engaged in 8 incidents per hour of conflict when the youngest sibling was 18 months in age (7.6 per hour when the youngest sibling was two years in age). Thus, intervening in each sibling squabble is not feasible for a parent. And answering the question of *how to intervene* can be just as important as finding the balance of when to intervene.

Once parents become aware of sibling conflict, the question becomes how to intervene. Tattle-telling is common among children (Sanders, 2004). Younger

children typically tattle to enlist parents in helping to solve or negotiate a solution to the conflict. Physical aggression and property damage are cited as the two most frequent reasons why children tattle (den Bak & Ross, 1996). Parents typically punish children for these behaviours.

The pattern of parental punishment also tends to have an impact on sibling aggression (Felson & Russo, 1988). Felson and Russo found in their survey study with 22 fourth-through seventh graders and their parents, that punishment tended to have some unintended consequences. These researchers found that parents tended to support the weaker child in sibling aggression, and typically this was the youngest child. Additionally, older siblings were more likely to be punished than younger siblings, especially if the transgressions occurred between an older male and a younger female sibling. However, this pattern of punishing the more powerful sibling actually increased the frequency of aggression. Felson and Russo also found that the greatest frequency of aggression occurred between siblings closely spaced in age (less than four years apart), and who were the same-sex. Interestingly, girls were found to be just as physically and verbally aggressive as boys, and younger siblings were just as likely to initiate conflict despite their disadvantage in power.

Ross et al. (1994) also observed parents' intervention strategies in conflicts between siblings aged 2 to 4 years. This observational study found that siblings engaged in 6.4 conflicts per hour with the most frequent rule violation concerning the possession rights of the eldest child. For the eldest sibling, physical aggression, bossing, verbal aggression, tattling, nagging and excluding were also frequent. The younger sibling often interfered with the older sibling's activities, and engaged in physical aggression. However, it was the eldest sibling who violated the rights of the

youngest sibling most often. Parents were found to intervene in 45% of sibling conflicts. However, not all conflict issues were treated equally. Parents encouraged prosocial and cooperative strategies emphasizing sharing in property entitlement disputes (e.g., who had the rights to a specific toy). In resolving disputes children focused on determining who owned the disputed item. Rules that prohibited aggression were also strongly upheld in parental conflict resolutions. More often than not parents failed to respond to tattling, nagging, physical control, and verbal aggression between siblings. Ross et al. noted that “when parents do not intervene, rules are often contravened, and older children dominate their younger siblings” (p. 272).

To summarize, it would appear that sibling relationship quality is both influenced by and a cause of several factors such as the parent-child relationship, the ‘non shared environment’, differential treatment, and parental management of conflicts (Sanders, 2004). Brody et al. (1998) highlighted this reciprocal nature of these influences in the provision of a heuristic model of the various family processes and mediators that ultimately affect the quality of the sibling relationship. These influential family processes are mediated through experiences within the family and help to explain the variation of quality in sibling relationships. The role of teasing within the sibling relationship can also be added to this conceptual framework with the expectation that teasing will impact both the mediation of family experiences and the quality of the sibling relationship itself.

Aggression, Conflict, and Teasing in the Sibling Relationship

Teasing in the sibling relationship has not been the sole focus of research studies thus far, but rather it generally appears as an element of examining sibling

rivalry, conflict, aggression, or verbal aggression (Abramovitch et al., 1979; Dunn & Munn, 1985, 1986a; Martin, Anderson, Brurant, & Weber, 1997; Newman, 1994; Stoneman & Brody, 1993). In Newman's (1994) review of several observational studies of siblings, the general finding was that conflict was commonplace yet positive and prosocial interactions between siblings dominated the nature of interactions. Additionally, several other studies have noted an age effect of sibling conflict, that is the younger sibling was generally the target of conflict more often than an older sibling (Abramovitch et al., 1979; Berndt & Bulleit, 1985; Dunn & Kendrick, 1982a).

Siblings appear to have a socializing influence on the development of childhood aggression (Patterson, 1986; Patterson, Dishion, & Bank, 1984). Patterson's *coercion theory* posits that older siblings can train younger siblings to be coercive (i.e., oppositional and aggressive) by modeling and reinforcing such behaviour. Aguilar, O'Brien, August, Aoun, and Hektner (2001) also found that greater conflict and coercive interactions occurred between aggressive siblings. Moreover, these pairs of siblings rated their sibling relationship at lower levels of positive features (e.g., warmth). And although the work of Patterson and Aguilar et al. was conducted with clinical samples of 'aggressive siblings' the findings suggest that siblings may contribute to the development of antisocial behaviours.

The research on the nature of sibling negative interactions also demonstrates the effect of age-related developmental changes in sibling dyads (Abramovitch et al., 1986; Dunn & Munn, 1985). For example, Dunn and Munn reported an increase in the frequency, use, and understanding of negative affect, physical aggression, and teasing and annoying behaviours between siblings as they aged from 14 to 24

months. Moreover, Dunn and Munn (1986a) found that physical aggression of one sibling was positively related to the development of aggression in the other sibling six months later (while negatively related to conciliation strategies).

Despite the frequency of teasing and aggression found among sibling pairs, Dunn and Munn (1985) speculated that one possible positive contribution of sibling conflict is the provision of valuable feedback on the consequences of such behaviour that in turn may facilitate socio-cognitive understanding. For example, a sibling may provide a 'practice ground' for social exchanges and a safe outlet for emotional exchanges and learning. However, the frequency of preschool siblings' conflict is not directly related to the quality of their relationship (in terms of affection, cooperation, and support of each other) (Dunn & Munn, 1986b). As Dunn and Munn's longitudinal study indicated, despite the high proportions of conflict, conciliation and cooperative behaviour among siblings was also apparent.

The research on sibling teasing is meager, as the phenomenon has been subsumed in research studies with sibling rivalry and conflict. Sibling teasing, or teasing among preschool aged children for that matter, is not a topic generally covered in popular Early Childhood Education text books (Kail & Zolner, 2005). However, young preschool age siblings demonstrate early a keen ability to tease and manipulate each others' thinking (Dunn, 2005). The young child demonstrates a heightened sensitivity to the emotions of their sibling and attends closely to the language and contextual variables of the social interactions within that relationship. However, little is known of the functions of teasing within the sibling relationship and the potential impact on the young child's developing social-emotional understanding. Thus, Dunn supports the contention that an understanding of the

child's experiences may be realized by attending to the interrelated aspects of the child's life, that is the quality of the sibling relationship, the child's motivation and emotions, and the child's developing mentalistic understandings.

'Theory of Mind', Emotional Understanding and Intentional Understanding

Many researchers view early childhood as a critical period for the development of social cognition (e.g., Dunn, 1991a; Dunn, 1991b; Lewis & Carpendale, 2002; Piaget, 1932). Social cognition is a broad construct that incorporates several related theoretical aspects, including emotional understanding, theory of mind abilities (ToM), and moral sensibility (Dunn, Cutting, & Fisher, 2002). How children develop an understanding of the intentions and mental states of others is referred to as "theory of mind" (Premack & Woodruff, 1978). In general terms, ToM provides a structure in understanding how the gradual differentiation of self and other is rooted within the social context (Muller & Runions, 2003).

The understanding of emotions is viewed as central to the development of friendships, the quality of parent-child attachment, and social success (Dunn & Hughes, 1998). Theory of mind (ToM) is a theoretical construct that construes individuals as "psychological beings, interactors, and selves" (Wellman, Cross, & Watson, 2001, p. 655). From this perspective, behaviours are interpreted as resulting from an individual's mental states, such as "beliefs, wishes, thoughts, wants, fears, and ideas" (Bartsch & Wellman, 1989, p. 946).

The ToM paradigm employs a scheme of related constructs, such as perception, physiology, and emotions impacting on mental states of belief and desire to ultimately effect an action and reaction. Beliefs and desires are described in terms of "prepositional attitudes", while the overt action is viewed as the "intended

products of internal mental convictions and dispositions” (Bartsch & Wellman, 1989, p. 946). A prepositional attitude determines “what is it about people that causes them to perceive and respond to teasing in contrasting ways” (Bollmer et al., 2003, p. 560).

The constructs of ToM were utilized in this study as a heuristic to examine the phenomenon of teasing. For example, a young child calls to her playmate “Hey Red, come here” referring to the friend’s hair colour. The teaser in this instance has made the presumption that the term ‘Red’ is meaningful to this child and may also believe that name-calling is a desirable mode of interacting with a friend and thus reasons that it is an acceptable mode of behaviour. Note that the theory distinguishes between implicit and explicit knowledge, in that the three-year old child has an implicit theory of mind, meaning they have a “presumption and use of others’ mental states without the ability to attribute them” (Reddy, 1991, p. 153). The very definition of teasing implies that something meaningful to the recipient is said or enacted (such as making fun of a child’s name or hair colour). Thus, this form of real world understanding is more likely better understood than perceiving another’s more abstract intentions and beliefs (i.e., the recipient of a tease may not understand the playful and fun intent of the instigator but may understand that the instigator holds a belief in opposition of what has been said).

Theoretical Debate

When and how children develop mentalistic understandings is a source of debate and there is little agreement in the literature. Jean Piaget was one of the earliest researchers interested in exploring children’s understandings of the mind (Astington, 1993). Piaget (1950) considered the child to be mostly *egocentric* in their

thinking until around age six or seven. Piaget (1929) noted “the child knows nothing of the nature of thought, even at the stage when he is being influenced by adult talk concerning ‘mind’, ‘brain’, ‘intelligence’” (p. 37). Therefore, from a Piagetian perspective the young “child cannot distinguish a real house, from the concept or mental image or name of a house” (p. 55).

However, researchers such as Donaldson (1978), Wellman (1990), and Dunn (1988a) have argued that much younger children can demonstrate competence in their thinking and reasoning when the assessment is conducted within a context relevant to them. Piaget has also been criticized for the reliance on children’s ability to verbalize their understandings. This leads to an important question concerning method, that is, How should researchers investigate children’s understandings of the mind (Astington, 1993)?

The false-belief paradigm. The preschool child has a basic notion of the mind and can understand and distinguish thoughts from action, beliefs (thinks a snack will relieve his/her hunger) from desires (wants an apple) (Wellman & Woolley, 1990). This fundamental framework of belief-desire reasoning has been demonstrated in research with young 3-year-old children (Bartsch & Wellman, 1989; Wellman & Woolley). The traditional ToM perspective holds that there is an evident developmental shift in children’s thinking around the age of four to five (Wellman et al., 2001). The false-belief paradigm is typically tested in laboratory settings and employs either a *transfer* or *unexpected contents* task.

In Wellman et al.’s (2001) meta-analysis of ToM development, the researchers found that a developmental shift in children’s mentalistic understanding was evidenced by the success many 4-year-olds and 5-year-olds experienced on

standard false-belief tests. False-belief tasks involve deceptive tasks such as the ‘*Unexpected Transfer*’ test or the ‘*Deceptive Box*’ (Lewis & Carpendale, 2002). The *Unexpected Transfer* test involves a character (Maxi) placing a chocolate bar in one location, only to have that object moved to another location by a second character while Maxi remains unaware (Wimmer & Perner, 1983). A child’s mentalistic understanding is a measure of “the discrepancy between the child’s own knowledge of the object’s location and the actor’s false-belief that the object is at the original place [which] is tested when the actor returns” (Lewis & Osborne, 1990, p. 1514). Thus, when a child is asked where another person would look for the chocolate and answers that they would look in the last place seen by the character, then the child is said to have false-belief understanding.

The general conclusion from Wellman et al.’s (2001) meta-analysis stated that 3-year-old children generally fail these standard tests. The shift in mentalistic understanding became evident in 4-year-olds, in that the majority of the children at this age were able to realize consistently that “people have and acted on a false-belief” (Lewis & Carpendale, p. 377). The age when children develop a mental understanding, as well as the reasons why the 3- to 4-year-old shift occurs are sources of disagreement in the literature. The traditional perspective has consistently relied on experimental research that typically has involved assessing children’s understanding of the feelings, beliefs, and intentions of hypothetical characters in stories, or puppets. The use of false-belief testing has dominated recent research studies of children’s mentalistic understanding (Dunn, 2005). Increasingly, arguments have called for the inclusion of naturalistic studies to reveal children’s understandings (Dunn, 1996b, 2005; Hughes & Dunn, 1997).

The dominant perspectives on theory of mind have traditionally focused on “the cognitive architecture of mental state reasoning” (Carpendale & Lewis, 2004, p. 84) with marginal consideration of the impact of social and emotional interactions. An alternative perspective based on a reformulation of Piagetian (1965/1995) and Vygotskian theories (1962; 1978) was coined *social construction of theory of mind*. Here, the concept that “children gradually construct social understanding through the regularities they experience in interacting with others” was supported (Carpendale & Lewis, p. 84). Advocates for more situated and contextual measures of children’s mindfulness also uphold that children much younger than four are capable of demonstrating mentalistic understanding, particularly when the situation is of interest to them (such as shared fantasy play or teasing) (Dunn, 2005).

Social constructivist perspective of TOM. A social constructivist approach to theory of mind is touted as a possible solution to the individual-social dichotomy that exists in the literature, as it stresses the need to explore the “triadic interactions through which children gradually construct knowledge of the world as well as knowledge of other people” (Carpendale & Lewis, 2004, p. 79). The important role of relationships in fostering social cognition is emphasized by Carpendale and others (Dunn, 1996a; Muller & Runions, 2003) in underscoring the need for “a theoretical explanation of how relationships operate as a vehicle for the child’s construction of mind” (Carpendale & Lewis, p. 92).

It is through social interactions that children are exposed to others’ beliefs and feelings and are challenged to coordinate and integrate these often differing beliefs into a construction of a more complete social understanding. My study is based on this relationships framework (Dunn, 1996b) to facilitate gaining a deeper

understanding of the interrelatedness of the triadic components in children's development (see Figure 1), and the potential effects of siblings' experiences with teasing within their relationship on this development.

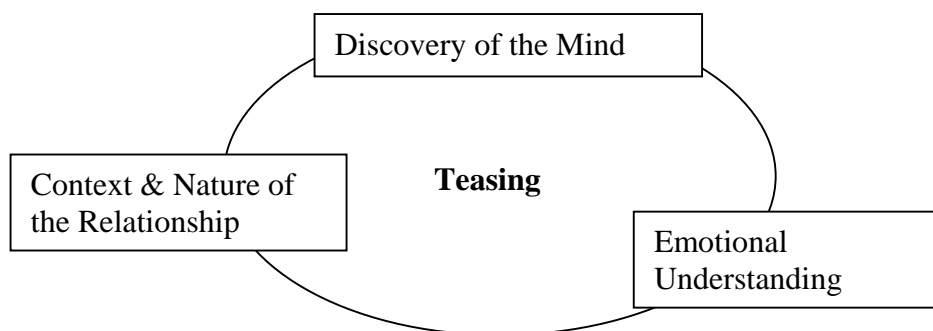


Figure 1. Triadic components influence on development

Siblings and ToM. I aligned this study, *Exploring the Phenomenon of Teasing: A Collective Case Study of Three Sibling Dyads*, to the theoretical construct of theory of mind (ToM) to gain a better understanding of the unique role provided by the specific context of play, conversing and disagreeing amongst sisters and brothers in the development of social cognition (Peterson, 2000). Young children have demonstrated a real world understanding within the sibling relationship of the others' inner mental states and a keen ability to manipulate the thinking of their brother or sister (Dunn, 2005). At the outset of my study, the youngest participant at 27 months of age demonstrated a perceptive capability to taunt his older sibling with much desired and sought after toys. In addition to this observation, other naturalistic descriptions of teasing garnered throughout the study offered insights into the quality of the sibling relationships and the influence of that dimension of the relationship on the children's mentalistic understandings.

There have been numerous studies examining the potential link between siblings and ToM abilities, with mixed results. Some studies have found positive

effects for both older and younger siblings (Jenkins & Astington, 1996; Perner, Ruffman, & Leekam, 1994; Peterson, 2000) while others report only an effect for the older sibling (Lewis, Freeman, Kyriakidou, Maridaki-Kassotaki, & Berridge, 1996; Ruffman, Perner, Naito, Parkin, & Clements, 1998). Additionally, some studies have found no connection between the presence of siblings and ToM abilities (Cole & Mitchell, 2000; Cutting & Dunn, 1999; Peterson & Slaughter, 2003).

Perner et al. (1994) found that the number of siblings in a family was positively related to young children's performance on ToM tasks. Specifically, children from larger size families were found to score higher on false-belief tests than children from smaller sized families, indicating a correlation between the number of siblings and TOM understanding. Jenkins and Astington (1996) also found that family size, and not birth order, was a better predictor of young children's performance on false-belief understanding.

More recently, children with siblings were found to outperform children without siblings on ToM tests (Peterson, 2000). Peterson found that children between 3 and 5 years with a sibling aged 12 months to 12 years outperformed children without siblings in a series of ToM tasks. She also found that having a very young infant (less than 12 months) or teenager or young adult as a sibling had no benefit in measures of ToM tasks. Younger siblings were just as beneficial as older siblings in conferring a benefit to the child's performance on ToM tasks as long as those siblings were not less than one year or older than 13 years in age. As Peterson indicated rather than the absolute age or relative birth order of a sibling, it is the "opportunity to play, converse, and disagree in distinctively childish ways with brothers and sisters [that] provides unique insights into the working of the human

mind” (p. 435). However, this sibling effect has only been partially supported or not found at all in several other studies, and mentalistic understanding may be more dependent on the *quality* of siblings’ interactions rather than on the number of siblings (Cutting & Dunn, 1999).

Ruffman et al. (1998) reanalyzed Perner’s et al.’s (1994) and Jenkins and Astington’s (1996) results and noted that “the linear effect for total number of siblings might have been accounted for entirely by older rather than younger siblings” (p. 162). Ruffman and his colleagues went on to examine older versus younger siblings across two cultures (Western and Japanese). These researchers found that only the presence of an older sibling facilitated false-belief understanding, and this finding was consistent across both cultures. Additionally, the youngest group of children (aged 27 to 38 months) showed no benefit from having an older sibling on false-belief tasks. Interestingly, the results also demonstrated an advantage in false-belief performance in sibling pairs with a mismatch of gender. Again, the results of this study indicate that it may be access to a variety of perspectives different from one’s own (either by a sibling of the opposite gender or an older sibling) that may facilitate and enhance ToM abilities.

However, several studies have found no evidence of the sibling effect on competence of ToM tasks (Cole & Mitchell, 2000; Cutting & Dunn, 1999; Peterson & Slaughter, 2003). The separate studies of Cole and Mitchell and Cutting and Dunn both failed to find a correlation between children’s ToM abilities and siblings. Peterson and Slaughter found no statistically significant correlation in their study between false-belief understanding and the number of siblings. These researchers proposed that the failure to observe a sibling effect was a result of the homogenous

sample. Their sample consisted of very few only-children groups and no groups of children with a large age gap to an older sibling (e.g., an adolescent) or to a young infant (under 6 months). Thus, again it would appear that the influence of a sibling on mentalistic development is more a factor of the quality of the relationship and the quality of the interactions within that relationship than merely a factor of the number of siblings a child has.

How Might Siblings Influence ToM?

Presuming there is an influence, how might siblings influence ToM abilities? Having a sibling may confer opportunities for specific kinds of conversations, type of play, and conflict that may positively impact ToM abilities (Wright Cassidy, Fineberg Shaw, Brown, & Perkins, 2005). Brown and Dunn (1992) noted children discussed feelings of the sibling in much greater frequency than the feelings of parents, thus potentially providing “an important forum for learning” (Dunn, 1993, p. 48).

Another feature of the sibling relationship is that it affords an opportunity for social pretense play (Dunn, 1993). Social pretense involves communication between children as they share ideas, negotiate, and coordinate different perspectives to create a common theme of play (Garvey, 1990). Research on the pretend play between friends has demonstrated a link between the use of mental state talk among children who engage frequently in this form of play (Hughes & Dunn, 1997). Additionally, pretend play between siblings has been correlated with the use of internal state language (Howe, Petrakos, & Rinaldi, 1998; Howe, Petrakos, Rinaldi, & LeFebvre, 2005; Howe, Rinaldi, Jennings, & Petrakos, 2002) and an increased sophistication in use of mental state language may enhance ToM abilities. Internal state language

refers to children's use of references to another individual's feelings and thoughts (Dunn, 1988a).

Howe et al. (2005) investigated the relationship between the construction of shared meanings in play, pretense enactment, internal state language, and sibling relationship quality of 40 kindergarten children with an older or younger sibling. She and her colleagues found that some siblings' propensity to construct shared meanings helped to highlight the interplay between aspects of children's social development and cognitive development. The researchers found that sibling dyads that used a variety of strategies to create shared meanings (e.g., introducing a new play theme, imitating others, adding new elements to the play, clarifying strategies, or making prosocial statements such as "let me help you") were more likely to engage in pretend play with each other. Conversely, the siblings who engaged infrequently in pretense play were more focused on control issues and engaged in more actions that disrupted play. Additionally, the frequent pretense group was also more likely to employ internal state language in comparison to the infrequent pretense players. As children constructed their shared meanings within a play frame they displayed their thinking about their own and others' mental and emotional states, a critical component in the development of sociocognitive skills (Dunn et al., 2002).

Slomkowski and Dunn (1996) also found that preschool friends who demonstrated stronger social understanding skills displayed greater connected communication during play. These researchers emphasized that children's abilities to 'read each other' during play interactions and coordinate and integrate various perspectives may enhance children's social skill development. Youngblade and Dunn (1995) also found that siblings engaged in frequent and sustained joint fantasy play

more so than with other family members. The results of this study with 33 to 40 month old preschoolers also confirmed “early pretend play was significantly related to the child’s developing understanding of other people’s feelings and beliefs” (Youngblade & Dunn, p. 1472). The mere act of joint fantasy play requires a partnership between players and a sophisticated understanding of the “framing” of the shared make-believe world (Dunn, 1993, p. 48). Yet, despite this connectedness, siblings often engage in conflict.

However, sibling conflict may also contribute to the development of socioemotional understanding and ToM abilities by providing an important forum to explore the perspectives of others (Howe et al., 1998; Wright Cassidy et al., 2005). Slomkowski and Dunn (1992) found that children’s use of other-oriented explanations (e.g., “negotiation or reasoning made in the interest of both conflict partners or the other conflict partner” (p. 920)) in arguments with a sibling was positively associated with performance on perspective taking. Interestingly this correlation was not found for arguments between the mother and child. Foote, and Holmes-Lonergan (2003) also replicated these findings and found the 3 to 5 year old participants in their study that used other-oriented arguments in sibling conflict scored higher on false-belief tasks. Thus, it would appear that the sibling relationship presents a different and independent context for children’s development of social understanding. However, as Cassidy Wright et al. (2005) highlighted “sibling interactions does not occur in a vacuum” (p. 98) and there are a variety of other influences, such as family talk, and family background that may contribute to the individual differences in children’s social-emotional understanding.

Individual Differences

Individual differences greatly impact children's understanding of mind and emotion, with these differences thought to influence children's pretend play (Hughes & Dunn, 1997; Youngblade & Dunn, 1995), interactions with friends (Dunn & Cutting, 1999), social skills (Watson, Nixon, Wilson, & Capage, 1999), and moral reasoning (Dunn et al., 1995; Dunn, Cutting, & Demetriou, 2000). Between the ages of 3 and 6 years, major developmental changes occur in the child's understanding of emotions and mental states (Bartsch & Wellman, 1989; Wellman, 1990; Wellman et al., 2001). Several processes have been found to predict individual differences in theory of mind and emotional understanding (Dunn, 1996b). The processes of interest to this study include: family talk about inner states (Dunn, Brown, Slomkowski, Telsa, & Youngblade, 1991), family background (Cutting & Dunn, 1999), and as discussed previously, sibling conversations, conflicts, and joint fantasy play.

Family talk. Researchers have found that variations in family conversational patterns contribute greatly to individual differences in children's development of theory of mind (Cutting & Dunn, 1999; Dunn et al., 1991). Several longitudinal studies conducted by Dunn and her colleagues have reported that the frequency and context of discussions within families about the inner mental states of others directly impacted the development of theory of mind abilities (and specifically such measures as false-belief understanding and emotional understanding) (Cutting & Dunn, 1999; Dunn et al., 1991; Dunn & Hughes, 1998; Dunn & Munn, 1985). Thus, the ability to be 'in tune' in understanding the emotions of those with whom the child has a close

relationship is related to the quality of these connected conversations (Dunn & Hughes).

Peterson and Slaughter (2003) also found great diversity in their study on the links between maternal input and ToM development in young children. Across an array of family situations, the mothers reported several differences from one another in their preferences for discussing the mental states of others and their use of elaboration and clarification strategies to discuss the representational nature of mental states (i.e., conversational strategies highlighting the differences between mental and physical life). The researchers found that children of mothers who favored detailed and explicit mentalistic explanations scored higher on false-belief tasks. However, there was not an association between mothers who mentioned mental state concepts frequently (but without an explanation or clarification) and their children's mental state understanding. Additionally, mothers who avoided talking about mental states did not benefit their children's false-belief understanding and these children scored significantly below the others on the emotion understanding tests. However, Peterson and Slaughter failed to find a sibling effect and attributed this to the homogeneous sample of children used in the study. The study's significance lay in highlighting the importance of specific styles of family talk that influence children's development of social-emotional understanding. In other words, mothers who favored explaining and elaborating upon mental state concepts during spontaneous social interactions with their preschoolers facilitated their children's false-belief understanding performance.

Family background. The evidence on the role of family background in influencing theory of mind development is not conclusive, as "the majority of

published studies of theory of mind development have investigated the abilities of middle-and upper-middle-class children” (Cutting & Dunn, 1999, p. 855). Some studies report a negative effect on scores on false-belief tests for children from a lower socio-economic population (i.e., children from Head Start programs in comparison to levels reported in the literature in the study by Holmes, Black, and Miller in 1996; and affluent Indian children compared to deprived counterparts in the study by Wahi and Johri in 1994). In previous studies, emotional understanding has also demonstrated a tendency to be impacted by family background variables such as the level of deprivation (Saarni & Harris, 1989), the father’s occupational status (Dunn et al., 1991), level of education, and occupational class (Dunn & Brown, 1994).

Variations in family background have been found to contribute uniquely to false-belief abilities, suggesting that understanding of false-belief and understanding of emotion are related but may be distinct aspects of social cognition (Dunn, 1995; Dunn et al., 1991). One possible interpretation of these results (put forward by these authors) is that the influence of family background on emotional understanding may entirely overlap with the influence of other factors such as the nature of interactions and family conversations. Dunn and Cutting’s (1999) findings were correlational and the important question of *how* family background affects children’s understandings remains unanswered. However, clearly family background is an important consideration to be included in examining the individual differences of children’s theory of mind and emotional understanding.

Emotional Understanding

Emotional understanding is cited as a key component of social cognition (Denham, Zoller, & Couchod, 1994). Emotional understanding involves “the ability to discern and understand others’ emotions, using situational and expressive cues that have some degree of cultural consensus as to their emotional meaning” (Saarni, 1999, p. 106). When children develop emotional understanding and the means of assessing this understanding is unclear.

The 4- and 5-year-old children of Denham, Zoller, and Coucho’s study (1994) provided situational elicitors of happiness and fear in explaining the mental states of hypothetical characters (or puppets) in one part of their study. Levine (1995) found that only older children between 6 and 7 years of age could distinguish hypothetical situations that evoked anger from those that induced sadness. Other researchers have also upheld the view that emotional understanding is impacted by major developmental changes, particularly between the ages of three and six (Wellman, 1990). At the younger end of the age range, children have demonstrated difficulty distinguishing among different emotions (particularly anger and sadness) and rely more on situational elicitors (Denham et al.). However, much of this research has centred on interpreting the feelings, beliefs and intentions of hypothetical characters. How children come to understand and interpret the emotions of other individuals with whom they have a close relationship (such as a friend, sibling, or parent) was the focus of the study of Dunn and Hughes (1998).

Young children’s heightened sensitivity to the emotions of their family members is well reported in the literature (Harris, 1994). Dunn and Hughes (1998) proposed that the nature of understanding others’ emotions is intricately linked to a

developing theory of mind. Emotional understanding implies a capability of an individual to discern the mental state of oneself and others. Children as young as two have been found to demonstrate a heightened sensitivity to the emotional states of friends, parents, and siblings with whom they have a close bond (Dunn, 2005; Dunn & Hughes).

Dunn and Hughes (1998) suggested that careful consideration is needed to comprehend children's developing emotional understanding in relation to specific relationships. Here, the researchers found that young children's understanding of emotions demonstrated distinctive patterns across relationships. Fifty-five 4-year-old children from a deprived urban area participated and provided different accounts of emotional causes for themselves, a friend, and their mother when interviewed. These accounts differed in relation to theme (of the situation to which the children attributed the emotion) and the causal agent. Children were quite capable of citing concrete accounts of "what affected their mother's emotional states" as well as their own (Dunn & Hughes, 1998, p. 183). Interactions with the mother were cited most often as sources of their own happiness, anger, and sadness. Children cited 'themselves' most often as the causal agent of maternal anger and friends' happiness. Fathers were mentioned only twice as sources of happiness (this may reflect the experience of the participants chosen), and siblings were most frequently held responsible for the child's anger. However, children were less likely to attribute causes of their friend's anger with 40% responding "don't know" to the question, "what makes your friends angry"?

This study conducted by Dunn and Hughes (1998) was limited in the ability to assess developmental changes and children's changing beliefs of emotions over

the long term (i.e., seven months). The distinctive accounts of emotional understanding varied according to the relationship, thus the question of whose emotions are being assessed appears paramount in researching this construct. Additionally, unlike the earlier studies of Denham, Zoller, and Coucho (1994), these children did not confuse the causes of anger and sadness in relation to people with whom they had a “real life relationship” (Dunn & Hughes, p. 188). This study underscored the importance of considering the specific context of a relationship as an influence on the child’s developing emotional understanding. The emotion a child experiences, “and which emotion they attribute to others, may depend upon the aspects of the situation to which they attend” (Levine, 1995, p. 698) and thus studying children in context is significantly important.

Intentions and Intentionality

The very nature and definition of teasing implies a level of intentional understanding. The development of intentional understanding in children is debated among philosophical and psychological scholars (Malle, Moses, & Baldwin, 2001). Several questions arise from this literature such as: Does the young child have the ability to make distinctions of intent based on their own or another’s actions? And if intentions refer to concrete things (i.e., doing something on purpose) how can the intentions of preverbal children be assessed? Answers to these questions largely rest with the acceptance of a liberal definition of intentional understanding.

Defining intentional understanding of the young child. If the definition of intentional understanding is limited to “(1) desires and goals that are (2) internal psychological states that underlie and are separate from overt movements or from objective features of the world, and that (3) connect with other mental states and

experiences” (Wellman & Phillips, 2001, p. 127), then 2-year-old and 3-year-old children can be viewed as having this ability. For example, Wellman and Woolley (1990) in their study with 2 ½-year-old children found that these youngsters were capable of making judgements about and predicting the actions of a character in a story. The children demonstrated an understanding of the character’s desires, and were successful in predicting the appropriate emotional response of the character (e.g., 91% predicted the character would be unhappy if nothing was found inside a box).

Bartsch and Wellman (1989) elicited responses regarding an actor’s mental states from 3-year-old children in response to a familiar question (i.e., “Jane is looking for her kitten under the piano, why is she doing that?”) Some children were capable of providing explanations related to beliefs, emotions or perceptions (i.e., “She misses her kitty.”). Similar results were found in the examination of everyday conversations of young children (Bartsch & Wellman, 1995). Here, the utterances of 2-year-old children in their everyday conversations were examined over approximately three years. Over 5000 instances (out of 200,000) of references to desire were made by the 10 children and expressed in terms of *wants* (e.g., “I wanna come out, you wanna come too.”). However, children used terms such as *intend*, *on purpose*, or *mean to* at a later age (between the ages of 3 to 5 years).

Studies on children’s intentionality underscore that young children are capable of reporting mentalistic-intentional explanations rather than simply situational explanations for another’s behaviour. Although intentional understanding is not complete or largely developed in the 2-year-old or 3-year-old child, it is significant to note that this developing sense of perception and emotional states has

its beginning at this early age (Wellman & Phillips, 2001). By applying the definition of intention as *a developing sense of perception and emotional states* in the current study on sibling teasing, the constructs for exploring the phenomenon of teasing are established. The conceptualization of teasing as employing ToM ability, emotional and intentional understanding has been discussed to highlight the complexity of teasing interactions. These facets of teasing were utilized to guide my exploration of the phenomenon of teasing within the three sibling dyads of Family A, B and C.

Summary of Chapter 2

Teasing is apparent in the child's interactions at home and school, in both intimate relationships and among friends. Young children tease, taunt, goad, 'poke-fun', name-call, and mock each other both with the intent to hurt or invite affectionate play. The very definition of teasing alludes to the complexity of researching such a construct. Teasing is a complex relational issue that evokes strong emotions on the part of the elicitor and recipient, simultaneously requiring a developed theory of mind, emotional understanding, and intentionality.

The elusive nature of teasing may be one of the factors inhibiting research. The few laboratory based or self-report research studies that do exist highlight the schism between children's and adults' perceptions of why and how teasing occurs, as well as the emotional impact of teasing incidents. This research on sibling teasing addressed and adds to the current literature on the usage, form, intent, experience, and emotional understanding inherent in teasing situations between young siblings.

Many individual differences exist within sibling dyads in terms of the degree of reciprocity and complementary features (Dunn, 1993). At times, siblings hold different but dependent roles. During pretend play, siblings can have balanced and

equitable roles. The balance of these contrasting roles influences the quality of the relationship. Siblings often perceive great differences in common experiences (Dunn & Plomin, 1990). Siblings have demonstrated different perceptions from each other and from their parents on aspects of the level of friendliness, hostility, and affection of their shared sibling relationship. Understanding these individual differences becomes central in any research study of sibling dyads.

The social behaviours developed within the context of the sibling relationship may generalize and endure. Siblings may offer a unique window into the internal mental states of others as they ‘practice the dance’ of relating to each other. Teasing is one element of the sibling relationship, and understanding the potential functions of teasing on social-emotional understanding and the quality of the sibling relationship was the main premise that was addressed throughout this research. This study investigates the potential nexus between teasing, sibling relationship quality, and ToM.

Chapter 3 ~ Methodology

This research study was a qualitative exploration to address the central research question: How do preschool age siblings experience the phenomenon of teasing within their relationship, and what function(s) do these experiences serve in relation to the child's developing social-emotional understanding? This section presents the methodology and procedures utilized to collect the observation and interview data of three sibling dyads and their parents. Chapter 3 is divided into the following major sections: (a) an overview of the general characteristics of qualitative design, (b) the specifics of the case study approach that were applied, (c) the specific elements of the study, (d) the processes utilized for data analysis, and (e) the strengths and limitations of this study.

Methodological Stance

A qualitative approach to research aims to understand the meaning or significance of a phenomenon to an individual or group of people (MacNaughton, Rolfe, & Siraj-Blatchford, 2001). The qualitative researcher approaches the inquiry by adopting an interpretivist worldview and explores the participants' sense making and understanding of an issue rather than collecting information on the topic itself (Wolcott, 1995).

Throughout this study, the primary aim was to gain insight into children's experiences with the phenomenon of sibling teasing. At the outset of the study I was not sure what I would find. Would siblings engage in teasing behaviour at this young age? Would they be comfortable with my presence to tease each other in a natural fashion? These questions lent themselves to a naturalistic orientation (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1996) which enabled me through the use of fieldwork to immerse myself

with a weekly visit (over five months) in the daily lives of the children and families. Fieldwork allowed me to study the phenomenon of teasing “as it exists and evolves...[and as such] the researcher... ‘takes up residence’ on site” (Goodwin & Goodwin, p. 109). Throughout the study I sought to gain the *emic* perspective of teasing, that is the subjective meanings of the experiences that the participants themselves held. Thus, a qualitative paradigm afforded me, the researcher, the opportunity to gain this insider’s view of the complex “choreography” (Janesick, 2003, p. 47) of sibling teasing and parents’ reactions and perceptions of teasing among their children.

Research Decisions

The research explored the experiences of three sibling dyads with teasing within their relationships. This exploration of the sibling relationship afforded greater insight into the social construction of mentalistic understanding and how “[those experiences] and contexts arise together as part of a single bio-social-cultural process of development” (Cole, 1996, p. 136). The research entailed giving children a voice for “that meaningful understanding of the worlds the child has constructed through her culturally mediated experience with it” (Graue & Walsh, 1998, p. 3), and immersing myself as a participant-observer into the contexts of the participating children’s lives.

The participant-observer relationship, where the researcher becomes “a friend to one’s subjects and interacts with them in the most trusted way possible” (Fine & Sandstrom, 1988, p. 17) is complicated as the very nature of adult-child relationships within society can be characterized as asymmetrical (Hinde & Stevenson-Hinde, 1988). The line between subjectivity and objectivity is blurred in the participant-

observer role, and can be one factor that could potentially constrain the research design. There are several other research decisions that are made throughout the process that can enhance or constrain the research process, such as the degree of structure adopted in observations and the observational setting itself, and the nature of the researcher's role (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000). The next section, on case study research, addresses and outlines the key research decisions made throughout the study.

Qualitative Case Study Methodology

The qualitative case study research methodology employed in this study afforded the use of a multi-methods approach. The case study is situated to support a naturalistic worldview where the aim of the research is to “seek to understand and interpret the world in terms of its actors and consequently may be described of as interpretative and subjective” (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 181).

Case study research is a popular form of qualitative research design, used as a means to answer the question “What is going on here?” (Edwards, 2001, p. 126). The primary purpose of the case study is to “portray ‘what it is like’ to be in a particular situation, to catch the close-up reality and ‘thick description’ (Geertz, 1973) of participants’ lived experiences of, thoughts about and feelings for a situation” (Cohen et al., p. 182). The case study provided a rich and descriptive account of relevant events, as well as an in-depth analysis to “get below the surfaces” and explicate “the complexities of social worlds” involved in sibling teasing (Edwards, p. 126). . In this sense, the case report is not meant, “to represent the world” of teasing, but rather to “provide an extension of the experience” from the child’s experiences (Stake, 2003, p. 156).

Defining the Case Study

There are various definitions and little agreement throughout the research literature on what constitutes a *case study*. A case study can investigate a “unit of human activity embedded in the real world” of an individual, group, institution, or community (Gillham, 2000, p. 1). Yin (2003) defined a case study as a method of inquiry “that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (p. 13).

The *case study* was adopted in this study to address the question of ‘how’ or ‘why’ in examining the contemporary phenomenon of sibling teasing, recognizing that little is known of the nature of teasing between siblings and the child’s experiences with these occurrences, as well as the fact that the researcher would have little control over events (Yin, 2003). Thus, the objective throughout the collection of data was to grasp the *meanings* of the experience of sibling teasing.

The Case Study Protocol

The initial decisions of the research process are important in bounding the research (Stake, 2003). Merriam (2001) emphasized the importance of “fencing in” or setting parameters for the study, by “conceptualizing the object of study, selecting phenomena, themes, or issues to emphasize, seeking patterns of data to develop the issues, triangulating key observations and bases for interpretation, selecting alternative interpretations to pursue, and developing assertions or generalizations about the case” (Stake, p. 155). Each of these parameters will be addressed in the following sections.

Conceptualizing the object of study. A researcher's conceptualization of the world is the stance that is brought to the study and helps shape the epistemology or set of questions, and the methodology for interpretation of the data. My interpretative stance envisions meaning(s) and knowledge as constructed both individually and through social interaction. This stance was partially formed by my years as an early childhood practitioner, and the import I (and others) accord to the mutual influences of the rational, emotional, relational, physical, and intuitive and spiritual in the development of human capability (Griffin, 2001). However, to allow researchers to interpret and analyze a phenomenon beyond one's personal stance, a particular pre-determined theory aids in the process of 'looking'. I aligned this study with a social constructivist theoretical framework of theory of mind. Here, the process of looking was aided by this broad conceptual framework that recognizes the importance and embeddedness of the social context in understanding the complexity of a phenomenon such as sibling teasing.

Selecting phenomena, themes, or issues to emphasize. Selecting phenomena, themes, or issues involves identifying the research question to be emphasized (Stake, 2003). Yin (2003) suggested that the central research question and guiding questions be framed in relation to the theoretical framework. The use of study propositions in case research is optional, and depends on the purpose of the study (Yin). In this study, the research was exploratory in nature and was guided by the purpose of gaining an emic perspective of sibling teasing, rather than providing definitive propositions at the outset. However, the research was framed by both a central question and several guiding questions.

The central research question was: How do young siblings (ranging in age from approximately 2.5 to 6 years of age) experience the phenomenon of teasing within their relationship, and what function(s) do these experiences serve in relation to the child's developing social-emotional understanding? Several other research sub-questions were utilized to structure and guide the inquiry and provided further insight and understanding of *the nature, form, intent of, and response* to childhood teasing.

The questions are:

Nature and form.

1. What is the *nature and form* of the tease?
2. What are the prepositional attitudes of the instigator and recipient of a tease?
3. What are the possible positive/negative contributions of sibling teasing in facilitating emotional, social, and cognitive understanding?
4. What are the possible effects of gender on the above questions?

Intent of.

5. What does the instigator of the tease *intend, propose, or mean* to say?
6. What are the perceptions of the siblings (instigator and recipient) and parent of the functions of a tease?

Responses.

7. To what part of the teasing message does the recipient attend?
8. How is this message interpreted? What emotional meaning(s) do the children ascribe to the tease?
9. How do the perceptions of the parent either converge with, or diverge from, or influence the experiences of the child?

Unit of analysis—participants. The unit of analysis or ‘the case’ for this study was the sibling dyad. Siblings were defined as two children who cohabitated within a common family dwelling. Conceptually, case study can be viewed as a “set of concentric circles in which the major focus is on the central circle with interest decreasing as one moves towards the outer ring” (Edwards, p. 128). In this study, the sibling dyad was the primary focus of study and represented the inner circle or foreground (Figure 2). The collection of data was centered on the interactions between siblings to gain insight into the phenomenon of teasing. However, parental perspectives were also sought and provided additional insights into the contextual experiences of interactions within the family.

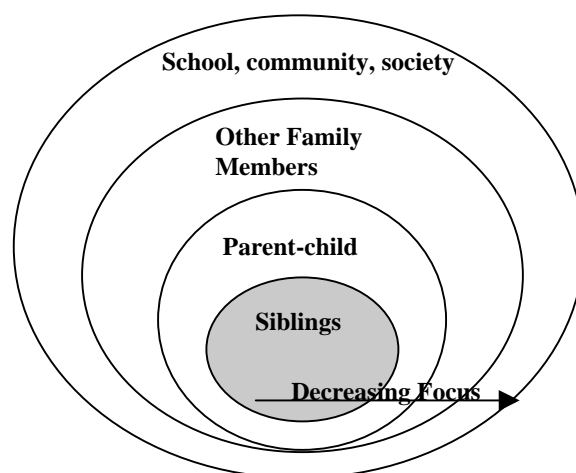


Figure 2. Concentric circles and unit of analysis

Three sibling dyads and their parents were engaged in this study. Logistically, this study was limited to three sibling dyads as data collection involved in-depth collection from multiple sources. (All names of the participants used throughout the research are pseudonyms.)

Seeking patterns of data to develop the issues. The use of multiple sources of evidence, typical of case study design, is advantageous in the “development of

converging lines of inquiry” (Yin, 2003, p. 98). Data triangulation and methodological triangulation were utilized in this study (Denzin, 1989) and involved the use of a variety of data sources and multiple methods to research the one phenomenon of teasing. In general, triangulation through the collection of multiple sources is an avenue to clarify meanings, and ensure observations or interpretations are repeated (Stake, 2003). Triangulation of data sources afforded me the opportunity to examine the phenomenon of teasing from various vantage points.

This research study was naturalistic and included various forms of documentation, observations, and interviews as the sources of converging evidence (Figure 3). By employing a variety of research tools, my interpretation of the information collected involved “drawing meaning from the analyzed data and attempting to see them in the larger context” (Ely, Vinz, Downing, & Anzul, 1997, p. 160). The purpose of the case was not generalization but rather particularization (Stake, 2003), and the multiple sources of evidence provided different *bearings* on the issue of sibling teasing (Gillham, 2000).

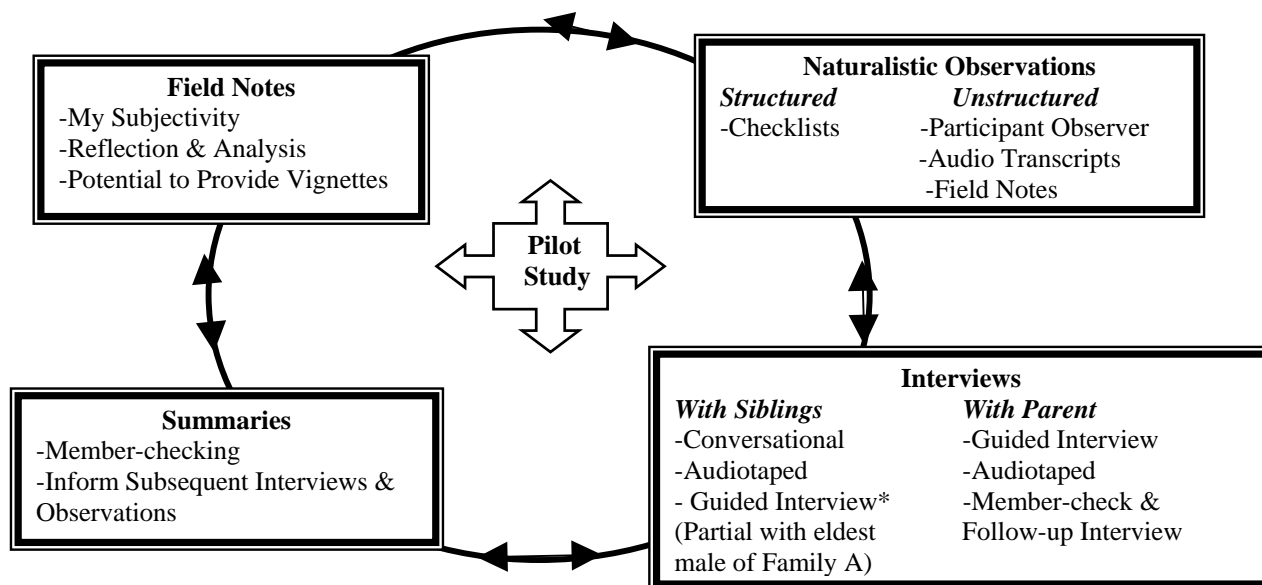


Figure 3. Data collection process

Elements of the Research—Pilot Study

The elements of the research (i.e., observation protocol, interview process, and documentation) were greatly impacted by the pilot study I conducted in the fall of 2005. After gaining permission from the Human Ethics Research Board (Appendix A) and consent of the family members of the pilot case, the pilot study was conducted with one dyad of sisters and their mother who volunteered for the study. I made a total of four visits to the pilot family's home, with visits ranging from 30 minutes to 90 minutes. The eldest sister, Angelica, was six years old and attended first grade. The younger sister, Erica, was four years old and attended a half-day kindergarten program (all names are pseudonyms). Although the sisters attended school for the majority of the day, the mother reported that they were each other's primary playmates as the family was new to the area.

The pilot study allowed me to test the procedures planned for the general observation and interview protocols, as well as establish the legitimacy of the research question itself. The length of the observations for the main study was influenced by the results of the pilot study. In previous research, observations of sibling interactions in the home have been conducted for approximately an hour (with each home visit) (Abramovitch et al., 1979; Abramovitch et al., 1986; Dunn & Munn, 1985, 1986b). However, this amount of time was not sufficient in establishing a rapport with the siblings nor did it allow enough time to capture the complexity of play or teasing in the natural environment. Generally, the children's interest in my presence began to wane after 75 minutes and their body language or requests to their mother indicated that the visit needed to conclude. Thus, 75-90 minutes was deemed

a reasonable estimate for the home visits of the main study (again the time would vary based on the individual needs of the families).

Additionally, the pilot study provided some insight into the time needed for the children to acquaint themselves with my presence and engage with each other rather than *perform* for me. After the first initial home visit to the pilot family, the children appeared relaxed in my presence and quickly engaged me in their play. The pilot case also informed the question of how to balance the role of participant-observer and detached researcher. As my field notes indicated, paying close attention to the children's verbal and non-verbal cues would be significant in the research process.

By attending to children's verbal and physical cues I can gauge my level of participation. For example, the older child expressly invites me to play and assigns me a role. At other times, the youngest child distances herself physically from me and engages in parallel play and self talk. My clue not to enter her world but rather observe.

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Several other insights were gained from the pilot study, such as utilizing toys to bridge the divide between adult and child, the importance of conversational interviewing in context of play with children, and the need to be flexible in the interview with the parent. At the request of the children at the initial home visit, I brought specific toys of interest to the siblings on subsequent visits (e.g., Barbies™, Polly Pockets™). These toys of interest to the siblings enabled me to enter the children's cultural world more easily and I was better able to act in the capacity of "least adult" (Mandell, 1988).

All of the interview questions intended for the main study with children were piloted over the course of the four visits. Although the siblings generated responses

to all the questions, they demonstrated an affinity for the more relaxed conversational interview style. Neither child was interested in separating from the other to be interviewed individually. Additionally, engaging the children in conversations about teasing during the context of play yielded more relevant and insightful information than the more formalized direct interview process. Thus, conversational interviewing within the context of play was deemed a more viable interview method for the children of the main study. It also became evident in the pilot phase that great flexibility would be needed in interviewing the parents. The mother of the pilot study attended to her daughters' requests while also answering interview questions. From the pilot study I gleaned that mothers may prefer the more relaxed conversational style of interviewing that emphasized less formality, focused on children's current behaviours, and included an opportunity to discuss their own experiences with teasing. This was thus determined to be the most fruitful approach for the main study.

Documentation

For the purposes of this study, documentation referred to the field notes I collected during the study, plus my reflections (recorded in a separate *reflective field journal*) and ongoing analysis of those field notes in the form of summaries (Ely et al., 1997). Field notes accompanied all observations and consisted of descriptions of the context and activities, as well as my interpretations and impressions of teasing activities. Graue and Walsh's (1998) recommendations for writing field notes were adopted throughout this study. These suggestions included formatting field notes with ample space; including a running head for observing who, where, when, and what was happening; using a consistent system of notations; and keeping a running

time. Field notes were made during observations and included descriptions, and my interpretations of behaviours and teasing episodes. The field notes included the actual conversations and speech of the siblings and their participating family member, in an effort to avoid losing the *interesting detail* and *local colour* of the context (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983). Additionally, audiotapes were transcribed and added to the field notes to provide a ‘thick description’ (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984) of each home visit. Transcriptions were catalogued based on the family, visit number, and page number of transcription. For example, when direct references to the transcriptions are made in this report the following type of notation will appear, A-3-11 referring to the third home visit made with Family A and the transcription page 11. Alternately, direct citations from the reflective journal will be noted by the date the reference was recorded.

Summaries of the field notes were also created. Similar to what Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) labeled fieldwork journals, these summaries provided “a running account of the research that included a record not only of the fieldwork, but also the [researcher’s] own personal feelings and involvement” (p. 192). Summaries also provided a means of reflecting and analyzing the research choices formulated during the process and made my theoretical assumptions more explicit (Ely et al., 1997). This process of ongoing reflection and analysis provided valuable insights into the structuring process of subsequent observations (e.g., highlighting specific behaviours, time of day, or contexts to focus the next observations on).

Observation

Observation was deemed the crucial research tool to allow myself as the researcher to gain the “here-and-now” experience of sibling teasing (Lincoln &

Guba, 1985, p. 273). Teasing is often inconspicuous and conducted outside of parental (adult) awareness. Qualitative observation was therefore a valuable tool, in that “it enjoys the advantage of drawing the observer into the phenomenological complexity of the world, where connections, correlations, and causes can be witnessed as and how they unfold” (Adler & Adler, 1998, p. 81).

I adopted a degree of freedom characteristic of qualitative observations to “search for concepts or categories that appear meaningful to subjects” (Adler & Adler, 1998, p. 81). However, I included a comprehensive description of the process, and made use of observational notation records that contained explicit references to the siblings’ interactions, routines, rituals, contextual elements, interpretations, and family organization (Denzin, 1989). Additionally, I utilized three different observational checklists at each home visit to help frame the observations. After approval from the Human Ethics Research Board was granted in the fall of 2005, I began the process of recruiting participants.

Gaining Entry

Gaining access to the setting for research can preoccupy a researcher. Fontana and Frey (1998) highlighted the issues of understanding the language and culture of participants, presentation of oneself, locating an informant, gaining trust, and establishing rapport as essential components of accessing the setting. Because of the possibly sensitive nature of the inquiry (how members of a family relate to each other) and the possible emotions inherent with the study, special attention was paid to how I positioned myself and accessed the family setting.

The recruitment of participants was conducted through local presentations to the administrative staff of parent-child programs in an Ontario Early Years Centre

(OEYC) located in a mid-size city in Eastern Ontario. The OEYC provide a variety of services for families (and caregivers) of children under the age of six years, such as learning and literacy programs, parent workshops, toy lending libraries, drop-in and play group programs, and information on programs and services within the community (Ontario Ministry of Children's Services, 2005). Many of the Early Years Centres' programs are oriented toward the age range of interest to this study and involve the primary caregiver (i.e., parent) in the program activities. Thus it was anticipated that recruitment from these programs would provide the greatest potential of attracting participants who have young siblings and the time to commit to the study. The specific OEYC site chosen for recruitment was both large (i.e., a large number of families were served) and located within a diverse neighbourhood of lower, middle, and upper income families.

On two separate occasions and with two levels of management I made a presentation to the staff that consisted of a short introduction of myself and the general purpose of the research, a highlight of the central points of the study and the commitment required from participants, as well as information on the measures that were to be taken to insure families' privacy and anonymity (i.e., these safeguards included the participants' right to opt out of the study at any time, ongoing consent from participants, the use of pseudonyms, and the opportunity to member-check field notes and transcriptions as a measure of control of how the participants wanted to be represented in the study). The presentations also allowed the individuals of the management team to ask questions and receive an information letter (Appendix B). Additionally, the Regional Executive Director of the Board of Directors that was responsible for the governance of the Ontario Early Years Centres was contacted and

I obtained signed permission from the Regional Executive Director to solicit family participants from the specific locale (Appendix C). Information letters (Appendix B) were made available and distributed by the staff of the OEYC to various families that fit the criteria of the study (i.e., two preschool siblings) and attended different drop-in programs within that site. Additionally, those families on a wait list for a *Sibling Rivalry* workshop to be held at the OEYC in the winter of 2005 were also contacted by a staff member of the Centre and informed of my study. All families were given my personal contact information and instructed to contact me if they were interested in additional information or actual participation in the study. Of those ten families who received an information letter five participated in the drop-in programs exclusively, one family was on the list for the workshop, and four families both participated in the drop-in programs and were also on the workshop list. I was contacted directly via telephone and email by three of the families (all of whom were both on the workshop list and participated in the drop-in programs).

A preliminary meeting was scheduled and held at the drop-in program of the OEYC with two of the potentially interested families. The third family conducted this preliminary meeting over the phone as a result of the illness of the children. At these preliminary appointments I met the parent and children, reviewed the general purpose of the research, and the time commitment required. The mothers asked questions regarding the process involved, their role, and scheduling type questions (e.g., What happens if one child is sick? or What if I have to cancel a scheduled visit?). After responding to each concern, I explained the contents and purpose of the letter of consent.

At this point, a letter of consent (Appendix D) was left with one mother with the instructions to contact me if she was willing to participate. One mother opted to sign the consent form at the end of the initial meeting and set a schedule of convenient times for the preliminary home visit. The remaining two families contacted me via telephone to set up the preliminary home visits (at which time the signed consent form was obtained).

The Participants

The composition and ages of the sibling dyads varied across the three families. The age of the children (at the outset of research) as well as their gender are detailed in Table 1. The mother participated in the research from all three families, with the exception of one father participating on one observation day of Family B. All families were English speakers and self-identified as middle income.

Table 1

Sibling Dyad Participants

	<u>Pseudonym</u>	<u>Age(Months)</u>	<u>Gender</u>
Family A	James	51	Male
	Mason	36	Male
Family B	Drake	46	Male
	Brianna	46	Female
Family C	Caleb	46	Male
	Reese	27	Male

Family A. I first met Family A at a drop-in program at an Ontario Early Years Centre (OEYC) after the mother's initial phone call to me at home. The mother was a tall woman with long straight black hair tightly pulled back into a ponytail, giving

her a severe appearance. She was soft spoken and had a quiet friendly manner.

Mother A was very observant and astute, quickly grasping the concept and intent of the research. Initially and on the first few home visits, I was quite intimidated by her quiet reserve. James, the eldest boy at 51 months, with reddish copper hair also had widely spaced piercing blue eyes set in a freckled face. His hair was closely cropped and his watchful eyes scanned the room frequently. James was articulate and well-spoken. He attended kindergarten in the mornings and often proudly discussed the activities of his day. Mason was close in size to his older sibling, but sported dark hair and equally dark eyes. Mason was first to approach me at the OEYC drop-in program with three fingers outstretched and waved in front of my face. When I correctly guessed that he was three years old, I was rewarded by his brilliant smile. Mason bounded into any room and made his entrance and appearance an exciting activity that demanded one's attention. Mason's energy and contagious smile greatly contributed to his infectious personality.

Family B. The mother of Family B was a petite brunette, with an outwardly friendly and welcoming manner. She was energetic and quick in her movements and speech. The mother was expressive and demonstrative with her children and had a free sense of style in her manner and decorum. The father of Family B was tall and lanky with a gregarious manner and weathered hands. His voice boomed throughout a room as he quickly moved about the house. The twins of family B were 46 months in age at the outset of the research. Drake, the male twin, was solidly built with closely cropped sand coloured hair and light blue eyes. He was energetic, demonstrative, and spoke with a slightly garbled lisp in his voice. Brianna, the female twin, was petite and small framed. She had long sand coloured hair and bright

brown eyes with green flecks. Brianna was articulate and well spoken. Her mature mannerisms and conversational abilities clearly outmatched her sibling's. Both children were extremely independent with an intense desire to play.

Family C. The two boys of Family C were the youngest of the three male sibling family. Connor, the eldest at almost 6 years, attended grade 1 all day and was not a participant in the study (although Connor would be present for two of the home visits as a result of bus cancellations). Reese, the youngest, was only 27 months at the start of the home visits. He was a very petite child with dark brown hair and eyes. Reese had very limited speech and relied almost entirely on his mother to interpret his grunts and vocal sounds. His frustration in communicating was seen in his reliance on crying and collapsing to the floor to express himself. Later in the home visits, Reese would be diagnosed with a speech delay and began attending a speech and language therapy program, greatly increasing his ability to communicate with words. Caleb was a large towering boy at 46 months of age. He had tightly curled darkish blonde hair and laughing brown eyes. Caleb was born with an undetected congenital heart defect that greatly impaired his hearing shortly after birth and had emergency surgery to repair the heart defect. His hearing loss was extreme and Caleb wore two hearing aid implants to enhance his remaining hearing capability. As a result, Caleb had a profound speech delay that translated into garbled speech of limited words. He relied heavily on gestures and physical manipulation to make himself understood.

The Setting

The observations of the main study were conducted in the family setting, in the room or area of the home where the siblings typically played together (i.e., the

main living area for Family A and B, and a downstairs family room for Family C). However, the settings for the observations were unique for each of the three families.

Family A's setting. The home of Family A was a white duplex that sat close to a busy road in a lower to middle income neighbourhood. The home was situated in a community of both single and multi-family homes and townhouses as well as businesses and more industrial areas. The home was fronted by a small white picket fence and sided by a large driveway that was shared with the neighbouring home. A small white dog barked noisily at the ring of the front door bell. The terrier dog leaped and bounced excitedly over me when I first entered the home (a pattern that would be repeated throughout the visits). A congested hallway greeted visitors to the front door, ultimately leading to a small kitchen. The hallway was crowded with packing boxes, magazines, laundry bins, coats, boots, and toys. A staircase was on the immediate left of the front door. The opening to the living and dining area was to the right of the front door. A large bookcase filled with children's DVDs and videos narrowed the passage.

The main living-dining area was a long rectangular shaped room. The living room had one large heavily curtained window that faced the busy street. One wall was occupied by a couch and chair, while the opposite wall supported two large shelving units. One unit housed the television and video equipment, while the other brimmed with toys, puzzles, and games. The remainder of the living room was cluttered and littered with toys, books, videos, newspapers, and laundry baskets. A dark green carpet covered the floor of the living room and formed the only open space in the room. The children deemed this space as their play space.

From the living room one could see into the dining area. The dining area had a large window that looked onto a small outside courtyard. A rectangular table and several chairs sat in the centre of the room. A hutch occupied a large portion of one wall with a small child size play table and two chairs sandwiched in the corner. The opposite wall was occupied by shelving. The disarray and clutter in the living and dining area gave the household the appearance of a family in the midst of moving in or out of the home. My description of the setting was captured in my early field notes as I commented:

I can see into the dining area from where I squat on the floor with the boys. It too is littered with old newspapers, flyers, laundry, and so much 'stuff' it is hard to know where the table begins and the 'stuff' ends. A-0-2

The living and dining area was the only play area used during the observations with Family A.

Family B's setting. The home of Family B was a long red brick bungalow fronted by a large semi-circle driveway. The house was approximately 10 to 15 years old and sat in a quiet middle-income residential neighbourhood in the south end of the city. A small cloakroom greeted visitors to the front door. A glass door led from the front vestibule to the hallway of the home and the main living areas. The living room and dining room shared the right side of the home after exiting the front vestibule. This area was a brightly lit large rectangle room separated into a dining area and living area by the allotment of furniture. The large bay window in the living area looked out onto the driveway and street, while an equally large window in the dining area revealed a large backyard and climbing structure. A small square shaped kitchen sat off the dining room and was accessible from the hallway that connected all the front rooms to the back end of the house where there were three bedrooms and

a bathroom. (The hallway ended at a door that led to the basement, an area I did not enter during the home visits.)

A square carpet covered the centre part of the hardwood floor of the living room. A large television cabinet and glass-shelving unit occupied one wall. In the open area between the living and dining areas sat a small child size play table and two child size plush chairs. On my first visit to the home, I noted two abandoned partially eaten breakfasts on this play table as the television played noisily in the background. This ritual of the abandoned breakfast and television playing was repeated for several of the initial home visits. A Little Tykes® play kitchen occupied the corner of the living room that opened onto the hallway. Several large bins of toys were spread throughout the living room area. Additionally, several large pillows and blankets were strewn across the floor. The living room opened directly onto the dining area. The dining room appeared neat and organized with no visible signs that the area was used as a play area.

A long narrow hallway connected the living room, dining room, and kitchen to the remainder of the house. *Brianna's room* sat opposite the bathroom and next to her parent's room. Brianna's room was painted a soft pink with a large bed and dresser occupying much of the space. In the remaining corner sat an antique chair, a wooden toy box, and several plush toys. Additionally, Brianna had a white shelving unit with pink trim that housed several books, small toys and dolls. A double door closet occupied the right front corner of the room. The closet was packed with hanging clothes, a small dresser, and several toys. The motif of Brianna's room included pictures and linens of pink fairies and Barbie™ paraphernalia.

Drake's room was across the hall from his parents on the opposite side of the house to Brianna's room. His single bed occupied the length of one wall. A long low shelving unit rested along the wall across from his bed and a tall shelf sat against the adjacent wall. Trucks, cars, and machinery defined the motif of Drake's room. Drake's shelves were also packed with bins of toys, trucks, action figures, fire engine, and construction like materials.

I described the home of family B in my field notes as "*a fully lived in space with little open space remaining*" (Field Notes, Nov. 7, p. 1). The living-dining area and the children's bedrooms comprised the setting for the observations.

Family C's setting. Family C occupied a middle unit in a block long row of townhouses in the suburbs west of the city. The neighbourhood was a mix of townhouses and single-family homes in a lower to middle income community. The brown brick townhouse faced a quiet residential road and was fronted by a city sidewalk.

The front vestibule of Family C's townhouse opened to a large open space that was sectioned into a living room and dining area. A set of stairs also welcomed visitors at the front door and led to the upstairs bedrooms. Adjacent to the dining area was a small closed in kitchen. The living area was neat, orderly, and sparsely decorated. A sofa, chair, and leather bench (that acted as coffee table) framed the area, with an area rug covering a small section of the otherwise bare hardwood floor. The lone toy in this room, a green wagon, was tucked aside the front window.

A table with six chairs and a large hutch occupied most of the space of the dining area. From this room the small well-organized kitchen was clearly visible. Large sliding glass doors framed the back end of the dining area and looked out onto

the small outside courtyard. Directly in front of the dining table was a steep open staircase that led to the basement.

The stairs to the basement were hardwood with narrow strips of non-slip material at the edge of each riser. A metal railing framed the open side of the steep open stairwell. At the bottom of the stairwell was a small two-piece bathroom with a child's potty seat and bin of books resting on the floor. A utility room was located next to the bathroom. The door to this room was kept closed during my visits and only opened once when the mother accessed her laundry. A short corridor led from the bathroom to the main family room area.

The family room was a carpeted rectangular space that housed two couches, a computer desk, and a television armoire. The room was panelled in dark wood with two windows high along the wall revealing the outdoor wells. The two couches stood opposite to one another along the length of the walls, while the computer desk and television armoire stood along the other opposing walls. A gas fireplace was angled in a corner between the computer desk and one couch. Several bins of toys were neatly organized throughout the room. Toys were arranged by type and stored in specific locations (e.g., there was a specific bin for all toy train parts and a dedicated spot in the room for storing). In one corner of the room, three child-sized plush chairs rested. Under the stairwell, several more bins of neatly organized toys were housed. The downstairs family room was deemed the *play area* and all observations took place here.

Positioning and Establishing a Relationship

One preliminary home visit was conducted to familiarize myself with each family and sibling dyad. At the outset of the research, the number of these visits was

incumbent upon the individual family's need; however all families and children expressed and displayed great ease with my presence in the home and with the overall research process. During the initial preliminary home visit, the mother and siblings were given the opportunity to accustom themselves to my presence, play and examine the features of the audio equipment, and to ask questions before the formal observations commenced (similar to procedures adopted by Dunn et al., 1991).

Deciding on how to present oneself was an important aspect, profoundly impacting the participants' impressions and ultimately influencing the potential success of the study (Fontana & Frey, 1998). Graue and Walsh (1998) suggested presenting oneself as a *learner* alongside children in the research field, and answering the important question of "Who will I be in my relationship to these kids and these adults?" as essential elements (Graue & Walsh, p. 101). The challenge was to demonstrate a 'persona' that was accessible to the families and children while maintaining the role of learner in that context. I was cognizant of my adult-like dress and deportment and opted for casual jeans and a t-shirt and to limit my jewelry. As Greig and Taylor (1999) highlighted the fundamentals of gaining trust with the parents of the child participants are honesty, reliability, and effective communication.

Informed Consent

The issue of informed consent presents special challenges in research with children and thus I remained attentive to this issue throughout the research. Children's participation must be voluntary and thus they were given the opportunity to opt out of the study, specific observations, or interviews with each home visit.

Children's consent was sought both orally and in written form at the start of each visit (Appendix D).

Children were presented with a clean copy of the children's portion of the consent form at the start of each home visit. I would then read the text of the consent form and the verbal assent and invite children to sign. On occasion children would decline to sign (often as a result of being already engaged in play) and thus verbal consent was sought by again reading the consent form and assent form (Drake opted not to sign twice, Brianna opted not to sign once, James and Mason both opted not to sign three times, and Reese and Caleb did not sign during two of the visits). Most often, the children enjoyed the ritual of signing the consent form and even the youngest was capable of making his scribble on the page and proudly indicating his willingness to participate (Hill, Laybourn, & Borland, 1996). The children also indicated their willingness to opt out of participating (in observations and conversational interviews of specific home visits) through physical gestures, such as leaving the room, appearing bored, or asking for another activity such as going outside. Children were offered the "maximum freedom of choice" (Evans & Fuller, 1996, p. 17) with regards to participation, as I attended to their physical cues as well as their verbal and written consent.

Taking Up Residence—My Role

Observations in case study research can be viewed as being located along a continuum from the detached observer to a complete participant role (Cohen et al., 2000). The detached observer is typically hidden from the participants while conversely, the full participant adopts a membership role in the group being studied (Merriam, 1988). In practice, rarely is the researcher's role polarized at either end of

this continuum. Rather as a participant-observer, the researcher more often “participates in a social situation but is personally only partially involved, so that he can [still] function as a researcher” (Gans, 1982, p. 54).

I adopted a flexible role with the children during the course of the study. At times I acted in the capacity of “least-adult” (Mandell, 1988) and participated with children in their play while at other times I adopted a more detached role. The “least-adult” role allowed me to gain greater access to the children’s perceptions and required a “suspension of adult notions of cognitive, social and intellectual superiority and [a] minimization [of] physical differences by advocating that adult researchers follow children’s ways and interact with children within their perspective” (Mandell, p. 464). To limit the obvious differences between myself as the adult and the children I crawled around on the floor with the children, played the role of a cat (and other roles), participated in games such as hide-and-seek, built train track sets at the direction of the children, and laughed at deviant behaviour (such as jumping on furniture, or throwing toys). Additionally, I allowed my actions to be directed by the children and adopted more of a follower role during the home visits. I did not intervene in children’s conflicts and only reluctantly separated or distracted children if extreme aggression (e.g., biting) was taking place and the parent was not present.

I also bridged my entry into the children’s world of play by bringing toys of interest to each sibling dyad in a large orange canvas bag (information on toy interests was provided by the mother at the orientation visit and by my own observations at that time). This orange canvas bag became synonymous with ‘play time’ as each week children excitedly opened the bag to see what I had brought.

Stocker, Dunn, and Plomin (1989) provided specific play themes in their study of mother-sibling triads to highlight particular features of the sibling relationship (i.e., the degree of conflict, cooperation, control, and competition). Although, many of the toys I brought to the participants' homes were cooperative in nature (i.e., train set, puzzle, and dramatic play toys), no expectation was made of the children to play or interact with these toys and they were simply placed amongst the children's own toys. Often, once the *novelty* of the toys wore off the toys were either not used or quickly abandoned. A set of toy telephones accompanied me each week consistently but I varied the other toy options in my orange canvas bag (Family A's toys varied among a train set, puzzle, and book; Family B's toys varied among the train set, puzzle, and dramatic play toys for the theme of office play; and Family C's toys varied among the train set, nesting dolls, etch-a-sketch board, and dramatic toys for the theme of baking).

At times, throughout the observations I was afforded the opportunity to disengage from the children's play and act as a detached observer. Typically on any given home visit children became so engrossed in their play either alone or with each other that either my presence went unnoticed or I was not invited or assigned a role in the play. I took these 5 to 10 minute opportunities to observe the children more objectively, write notes in my field journal, or administer semi-structured checklists of the children's behaviour (i.e., Play Observation Checklist and Nature of Siblings' Interactions in Appendix E and Appendix F).

At the outset of the research, I adopted the role of *learner* and allowed the siblings to "teach me their ways" (Mandell, 1988, p. 438). Fortuitously I quickly gained admittance to their social exchanges and world of play. I was then able to

vary my role between observer and participant, at times participating with the siblings in the events being studied while at other times adopting a more formal detached role allowing me to initiate conversations and record observations.

Observation—Structured and Unstructured

During the observations, children were free to choose any area, toy, or play theme and no attempts were made to restrict their movements. The parent participants were encouraged to adopt their normal routines associated with monitoring their children's activities and freely roam in and out of the play areas.

The observations were conducted in a manner to disrupt the families' daily lives as little as possible (Dunn & Kendrick, 1982b). To minimize the intrusive nature of a 'stranger' in the home, I made an initial home visit to the family and acquainted myself with the family's rhythm and routines. On the initial visit and throughout the research process, children were invited to explore the audio equipment to familiarize and accustom themselves with the presence of this tool. Similar to Dunn and Kendrick, I adopted flexibility in my role as the researcher, and freely conversed and played with the children of the study in an attempt to avoid being solely an 'artificial' and detached presence in the home. This continuum of roles afforded me the greatest opportunity to both maximize the benefits of participant observation while avoiding some of the disadvantages (Graue & Walsh, 1998). At times, as the participant observer I shared in the children's experiences, while at other times, I adopted a more detached stance asking the children questions or writing descriptive field notes.

Observations of the sibling dyads were conducted over a five-month period. I made 37 home visits, spending a total of 50 hours with the families (the pattern of

visits is detailed in Table 2). The five-month timeframe provided some flexibility in arranging observations with interruptions to the visits resulting from children's sickness, scheduling conflicts, and seasonal holidays.

Table 2

Summary of Home Visits

Family/Children	Number of Home Visits	Number of Hours	Range of Visits (minutes)	Average Length of Visits (minutes)	Dates	Time of Day
<i>Family A</i> James & Mason	13	17	55-90	79	07/11/05-28/02/06	Afternoon
<i>Family B</i> Drake & Brianna	13	17	75-100	79	07/11/05-28/02/06	Morning
<i>Family C</i> Caleb & Riley	11	16	70-105	87	16/11/05-01/03/06	Morning
<i>Total</i>	37	50	55-105	81	07/11/05-01/03/06	N/A

The home visits ranged from 55 minutes to 105 minutes. For Family A and Family B the home visits averaged approximately 79 minutes, and 87 minutes for Family C. The flexibility in the time dedicated to observations was required as children's engagement with their sibling varied with each home visit. For example, during some of the home visits siblings engaged minimally with each other or myself, became engrossed with watching television, or were not interested in play. On these visits the observations were shortened. Alternatively, some home visits required additional time as siblings only began to engage with each other after 90 minutes and with parental agreement I remained observing beyond the dedicated time. Family C was particularly content with lengthier visits as the mother expressed on numerous occasions that the respite I provided was greatly valued and

appreciated. The mother of Family C was also in the first trimester of her fourth pregnancy at the outset of this research and suffered with fatigue and nausea.

Observations followed primarily an unstructured format (i.e., field notes) offset with some semi-structured observations (i.e., checklists of observed play behaviours and coding the nature of siblings' interactions) (Cohen et al., 2000). Unstructured observations, as the participant-observer, were typical of naturalistic research and favored discerning ongoing behaviour (Cohen et al.). Naturalistic observations concentrated on each of the sibling's behaviour and conversational turns. A conversational turn was defined as "all of one speaker's utterances bounded by the utterances of another speaker" (Dunn & Brown, 1994, p. 124). The nature of the siblings' interactions, routines, rituals, and contextual elements involved in the interaction were recorded continuously using a variety of data collecting techniques such as field notes, checklists, and audio recordings (Ely et al., 1997; Rolfe, 2001).

Additionally, the use of more semi-structured observations in this study allowed me greater flexibility in the data collection process, and a more comprehensive understanding of sibling teasing from the convergence of multiple sources of data (Yin, 2003). Semi-structured observations involved the use of three checklists: Play Observation Checklist, Nature of Siblings' Interactions, and Teasing Conceptual Framework (see Appendices E, F, and G respectively) and provided quick snapshots of the children's behaviours and interactions. Based on my previous research experience with this young age group, children's movements are quick as they frequently adopt and change their play roles, positions, and activities (Harwood, 2000). As the lone researcher it was difficult to capture the entirety and complexity of children's contexts through the sole use of unstructured observations.

Additionally, at times it was a challenge to attend to both children simultaneously especially with instances where I was the desired object of play for both children.

I administered the three checklists during each of the 12 home visits with Families A and B (the checklists were not used during the first visit as this was primarily an orientation visit to acquaint myself with the families). The three checklists were completed during ten of the visits with Family C. These measures varied in the amount of time to complete (between 3 to 10 minutes) and were dependent on the complexity of the observations and the children's engagement. Overall, the objective measures amounted to 90 minutes of observation time with Families A and B where I was not directly engaged with the children's play, and 80 minutes with Family C. Additionally, I excused myself from direct play with the children to record field journal notes, interview the parents, or allow the tape alone to capture the children's activities (i.e., unattended tape method). Overall, I acted as a participant-observer for approximately 13 of the 17 hours with Families A and B, and approximately 12 hours of the 16 hours spent with Family C (see Appendix G).

The checklists provided a starting point for observations and several additions and/or deletions to these checklists were made possible based on the nature of what was observed. Additionally, the use of more semi-structured observations with each visit helped to offset some of the potential biases inherent with participant observation such as researcher's bias (Becker, 1958).

Additionally, each mother was provided with a vignette three times over the course of the observations. These vignettes provided a one-page summary and example of my observations and audio recordings of the siblings. The mothers were invited to comment or make additions or deletions to the summaries. All mothers

commented on the accuracy of the field notes in capturing the children's behaviours and no requests for changes were made.

Potential Frameworks for 'What' to Observe

Specifying and framing the observations was an important element in preparing for case study fieldwork (Gillham, 2000). In this study, three frameworks facilitated the course of observations and 'fenced-in' the process (Merriam, 2001): (a) the nature of the sibling relationship, (b) the context of their interactions, and (c) the specific characteristics of teasing behaviour.

The nature of sibling interactions. I noted the nature of interaction between the siblings to frame the context of the observations and gain an understanding of the specific dynamics and functions of that relationship. Various features of sibling interactions have been previously evaluated and deemed significant in understanding the nature of the sibling relationship (Dunn et al., 1991; Stocker, Dunn, & Plomin, 1990). The dimensions of conflict, cooperation, control, and competition provided the broadly based constructs that I used to explore the nature of the siblings' interactions, gaining a greater understanding of the impact of the context(s) in shaping the makeup of that relationship.

The Nature of Siblings' Interactions checklist was scored at varied points of each visit (i.e., early half of visit, mid way of visit, and later half of visit) (Appendix F). As the checklist is a measure of interaction, scoring was only completed during episodes where the siblings were engaged with one another (although this level of engagement varied from complete cooperative immersion in play to making critical verbal comments of one another or actively ignoring the play requests of another). Scoring occurred during play episodes where I was not directly involved with the

children as a participant-observer. Every effort was made to ensure the checklist was administered during various times across the visits to avoid recording interactions during one specific time frame (e.g., administering all the checklists soon after my arrival may have yielded atypical interactions as children were often in the 'honeymoon' phase from the excitement of the arrival of a new playmate). Each time the checklist was administered, the date and time of day were recorded as well as a description of the context of what was being observed.

The categories of interaction between siblings were based on Stocker's (1988) rating scale of each sibling's videotaped interactions. Four 5-point scales were used to rate each child's behaviour to his or her siblings. Stocker's scale rated the dimensions of interaction: (a) cooperative/responsive/attentive, (b) control/intrusiveness, (c) competition/rivalry, and (d) conflict. Each of the sibling's behaviours, in my study on teasing, was rated exclusively as 1 to 5 based on the satisfaction of 2 or more of the descriptors used in the definitional scale.

The specific categories and definitional scales on the nature of interaction are detailed in Appendix H. Additionally, I have included examples from the observations to illustrate how I delineated between definitions for each scale. Furthermore, I adapted and made additions to Stocker's (1988) original rating scale of siblings' interactions based on the observations I made with the three sets of siblings. For example, the mother of Family B was not physically present in the room during most of the observations and therefore parent-sibling interaction could not be monitored or assessed as a component of competition/rivalry. Thus, this category was amended to include demands for attention by the parent or researcher, use of

negative attention seeking behaviours (e.g., screeching for a parent), and being critical of sibling's right to play and access to play materials.

The context for sibling interactions—the importance of play. The view that peer interaction greatly impacts the development of social understanding has endured since Piaget's research (Piaget, 1932, 1959). Peer interaction is said to foster perspective-taking skills (Mead, 1934) and is deemed essential to the development of mutual respect, equality, and reciprocity (Sullivan, 1953). Similarly, previous correlational research has indicated that the sibling bond can facilitate the development of social understanding (Perner et al., 1994).

However, it is not simply the mere presence of a sibling that facilitates this development, rather it is the *quality* of that sibling relationship that is essential (Dunn, 1999). The child's experience with cooperative play with their older sibling (Dunn et al., 1991), as well as engagement in joint pretend play with an older sibling (Youngblade & Dunn, 1995) have been found to be key predictors of success on measures of understanding others' feelings and beliefs. Pretend play is a subcategory of play that involves "actions, objects, persons, places or other aspects of the here and now [to be] transformed or treated non-literally" (Hughes, Fujisawa, Ensor, Lecce, & Marfleet, 2006, p. 59). Pretend play also involves "role taking, script knowledge, and improvisation", as well as cognitive strategies such as "joint planning, negotiation, problem solving, and goal seeking" (Bergen, 2002). In general, research on play (especially pretend play) has demonstrated a connection between play and high-order thinking skills, metacommunication, and social competence (Andresen, 2005; Bergen, 2002; Saracho & Spodek, 1998), highlighting the importance of the play context within any research design.

In previous research with siblings, Hughes et al., (2006) found reciprocal play between siblings was closely associated with children's mental-state awareness. Hughes and her colleagues utilized a modified version of the Howes Peer Play Scale (Howes, 1980; Howes & Matheson, 1992) to explore the relationship between the quality of interactions between 2-year-olds with their sibling and inner state talk (i.e., mental-state awareness was indexed by talk about perceptions, desires, feelings, and cognitions). The Howes Peer Play Scale is a developmental cumulative scale of social pretend play where the child progresses through several stages: parallel, parallel aware, simple social, complementary and reciprocal, cooperative social pretend, and complex social pretend play (Howes & Matheson).

In Hughes et al.'s (2006) modified scale, complementary and reciprocal play (i.e., display of role reversal during play) and complex complementary and reciprocal play (i.e., displays of repeated role reversals during continued play with a sibling), are considered more complex forms of play than parallel play and simple social play (i.e., social behaviours such as smiling directed to the sibling). Complementary and reciprocal play and complex complementary and reciprocal play include the addition of meta-communication about play and may require greater social competence to initiate and sustain this form of play. Similar to Hughes and Dunn's (1997) finding, Hughes et al. established that the context of siblings' interactions is significant to inner state talk. Specifically, reciprocal play with siblings was a strong predictor of mental-state awareness. In sum, previous research has established that the sibling relationship can be an important indicator of developing social understanding and mental state awareness, and specifically how siblings interact during naturally occurring play episodes becomes an important context for research.

A 'nested' play behaviour scale was utilized in this study to frame the semi-structured observations of the play episodes between siblings as well as provide a starting point for deciding what to observe in the subsequent home visits. A 'nested' system to categorize play implies the joint use of play scales to provide a more comprehensive and two dimensional system to categorize play behaviors (Rubin, Watson, & Jambor, 1978). All play behaviours were considered relevant in framing the context of siblings' interactions, thus observations of play were not solely restricted to social pretense play. To provide a more inclusive description of play behaviour a comprehensive play behaviour scale was used (Rubin et al., 1978). The Play Observation Scale (Rubin, 1989) is an example of a 'nested' classification system based on three major sources of influence, Parten's (1932) social participation categories of play, Piaget's (1962) cognitive categories, and Smilansky's (1968) elaboration of Piaget's original categories. Despite the criticism of the hierarchal nature of both Parten's and Smilansky's scales, when combined the categorization system forms a "useful developmental and educational heuristic to examine children's play" (Pellegrini & Perlmutter, 1987, p. 89).

Smilansky (1968) described four general categories of cognitive play including (a) sensorimotor or functional play (i.e., repeated movements with or without objects), (b) constructive play (i.e., construction and manipulation of materials and objects to build and construct), (c) dramatic play (i.e., to dramatize life experiences or to animate an object), and (d) games-with-rules (i.e., the agreement and adherence to prearranged rules that governs play). The play behaviour categories, as established by Parten (1932), are functional in categorizing the social dimension of the siblings' interaction. Similar to Wintre's (1989) study, Parten's original definition of

associative group play (loosely organized play of two or more children) and *cooperative play* (organized play among children with common goal or purpose) were collapsed into a single category of *cooperative/group play* (see definitions of play classifications in Appendix I) to alleviate some of the criticism of Parten's play categories and the difficulties in distinguishing between these two categories (Mayfield, 2001).

Rubin's (1989) Play Observation Scale (POS) provided an "observational taxonomy designed to assess the structural components of children's play *nested* within social participation categories" (Rubin & Coplan, 1998, p.147). Additionally, the POS defined and termed several non-play categories, such as exploratory, reading, unoccupied behaviour, onlooker behaviour, transition, active conversations, aggression, and rough-and-tumble play (Appendix J). The POS has been applied in previous research studies with preschool age children and provides a detailed picture of children's free play behaviours (Rubin & Coplan, 1998; Rubin et al., 1978).

In this study, the POS helped structure the observations, and provided a balance to the more unstructured observations conducted as a participant-observer. However, several categories were added to the POS after initial observations of the siblings at play. These additions resulted from the observation of gross motor play in all categories (solitary, parallel, and group), the observation of colouring/writing/art play, and the notation of television watching as a non-play behaviour.

Rubin's (1989) general directions were followed in administering the POS with the target child having been observed for a 10 to 20 second interval. The child's predominant activity was coded in the following 10-second interval. In general, I altered between the two children and targeted the observations so that each child was

the focus for approximately half the time. On average, I was able to randomly record the play behaviour of each sibling three times during each visit. Each of these observations took approximately 30 seconds to complete and record. Overall, 250 POS measures were administered across the three sets of sibling dyads (89, 96, and 65 in Family A, B, and C respectively). The affect of siblings' interactions was also noted as positive (+), negative (-), or neutral (0). Based on Furman, Rahe, and Hartup's (1979) affective categories, Rubin defined a positive interaction as being prosocial in nature such as helping, praising, reassuring, invitation to play, joke telling, etc. Conversely, a negative interaction is defined as an anti-social action (i.e., noncompliance, rejection, teasing, yelling, ignoring, or aggression), while neutral interactions are considered the everyday actions, such as exchanging information, that are not defined by the positive or negative parameters.

Aggression, conflicts and disputes. Previous studies have demonstrated that sibling interactions are often characterized by aggression and conflict (Abramovitch et al., 1986; Berndt & Bulleit, 1985; Furman & Buhrmester, 1992). Moreover, physical aggression by one sibling can significantly predict the future use of aggression by the other sibling (Dunn & Munn, 1986a). Thus, children's conflicts may provide important clues on the nature of the sibling relationship. And children's management of conflict can provide a window of understanding on how children begin to participate in family life and as well as their emotional and cognitive development (Dunn & Munn, 1985). Given the potential significance of conflict and aggression on siblings' relationships, the transcripts of the observations (transcripts were prepared from the audiotapes of each visit to the families) were coded for incidences of aggression, conflict and disputes. The 50 hours of transcripts were

coded based on who initiated the play activity, aggression toward sibling, and conflict or dispute (see Appendix K for illustrative conflict/disputes and aggression coded from transcripts). Episodes of teasing were also coded on a distinct form (Appendix L).

Similar to Vespo and Pedersen's study (1995), aggression was treated as a distinct category and differentiated from conflict. *Aggression* was defined as "assertive physical contact, specifically hit, push, pull, shove, kick, bite, pinch, hair pulling" where the intent was to cause physical harm to the other (Abramovitch et al., 1979, p. 1000). The aggressor also had to demonstrate anger during the physical act for the label 'aggression' to apply. Additionally, I included instances of physical struggles over objects and spitting at another in the category of aggression. *Disputes* or *conflict* (terms are used interchangeably) was identified as "statements of opposition, contradiction or disagreement" (Maynard, 1985, p. 208) either verbally (e.g., explicit statements) or behaviourally (e.g., one child takes object from the other). Conflicts/disputes involved Child A doing or saying something that influences Child B. Child B in turn resists (physically or verbally) and then Child A insists or persists (Shantz, 1987). Although conflicts and disputes are a relational issue between individuals, in this study Child A was scored as the initiator of a dispute (see Example 2 in Appendix K). Disputes and conflicts did not include overt disagreements that involved physical aggression.

Play was identified using Garvey's (1990) categorization: (a) play is pleasurable, (b) play lacks extrinsic goals, (c) play is spontaneous, (d) play involves active engagement, and (e) play is systematically related to what is not play, such as in the development of social roles, language acquisition, and problem solving (pp. 4-

5). From the transcripts, I coded who initiated the playful activity. In instances where both participants initiated a play activity simultaneously, both were given a score for initiation. Conflict/disputes and aggression were also coded based on who initiated the behaviour (see Appendix K).

Characteristics of teasing behaviour. Throughout the study, the focus of observations concentrated on the naturally occurring teasing episodes between siblings, and as such observations specific to this behaviour were recorded in their entirety (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). LeCompte, Preissle, and Tesch (1993) provided a comprehensive list of guidelines to help direct observations of specific events, such as recording who is taking part, what is taking place, what resources are being used, how the participants behave toward one another, who is making decisions, what is being said, what non verbal communication is used, and what meanings the participants attribute to what is happening (pp. 199-200). Given this extensive (yet incomplete) list of elements to attend to, the complexity of trying to capture the phenomenon of teasing presented several challenges. Thus, to help frame and capture the complexities of teasing, the parameters of Keltner et al.'s definition were also utilized.

Keltner et al.'s (2001) broad definition of teasing was implemented throughout this study to help delineate teasing from other forms of behaviour such as aggression and bullying. As well, the constructs of this definition (i.e., intentional provocation, playful off-record markers, and relevance to the target) were applicable across the various contexts and included both prosocial and antisocial outcomes. In Keltner et al.'s review of the research on teasing, the most common constructs used

to measure teasing were elicitors, provocation, off-record markers, target response, context, and audience response.

Informed by several of these studies conducted with children from Keltner et al.'s (2001) review, the specific aspects of the tease that were noted and observed in this study included the provoking behavioural form of the tease (i.e., the type of statement made or the overt behaviour); the off-record markers indicating 'this is a tease' (i.e., laughter, sing song chants); the context; and the recipient's reaction (i.e., the behavioural or emotional reaction of the target) (Dunn & Munn, 1986b; Eisenberg, 1986; Gegeo-Watson & Gegeo, 1986; Miller, 1986; Shapiro et al., 1991; Voss, 1997). The construct of 'audience response' was utilized to refer to any parental response or response from myself that was made during the teasing episodes.

Appendix L was administered and completed for each incident of teasing during the home visit. During the observations I noted all teasing incidents by recording the time, elicitor, provocation, off-record markers, context, and responses. Overall, there were 56 incidents of teasing observed (21 in Family A, 25 in Family B, and 10 in Family C). Following the home visits all audiotapes were transcribed, after which additions and amendments were made to the form used to record the specific teasing events of that day (i.e., the addition or correction of specific phrases that were said by either participant, more specific details were added regarding the context, and the specifics of the audience responses were noted more meticulously). Additionally, the *consequences* of the teasing incident were also coded from the transcripts and added to the teasing form, specifically noting: whether teasing escalated; resulted in aggression by either participant; whether play with the sibling

continued or was abandoned; and the specific strategies used by any adults when interceding in the teasing scenarios (e.g., the mother of Family C used 'time-out' as a consequence of teasing behaviour between the siblings). Overall, I was able to combine the specifics from the audiotape transcriptions with my observational notes on the teasing form to gain a more detailed and accurate picture of the teasing episodes.

Similar to Heerey et al.'s (2005) study of teasing between a parent and child with autism, each tease was also rated from the transcripts according to Warm's (1997) four general categories of teasing:

1. *Social norm violation* for teases that were related to social norms governing behaviour, such as calling a kindergarten boy a 'sissy' for playing with girls or making statements or displaying behaviours that contravene the norms that govern acceptable behaviour (e.g., sticking out one's tongue at another);
2. *Character teasing* are teases that related to a specific aspect of an individual's character, psychological trait, physical trait, or mental characteristic;
3. *Taunting* referred to teasing involving mimicry, mocking, intentional disruption of another's play, and physical teasing (poking, hitting, touching);
4. *Trickery* involved practical jokes, pranks, tricks, white lies, and false descriptions (e.g., getting a sibling to believe their parent is angry with them).

As children become more competent in social understanding, teasing demonstrates a trend toward becoming more symbolic and less hostile (Warm, 1997), more focused on social norms (Keltner et al., 2001), and more positive (Shapiro et al., 1991). Children across varied levels of social understanding tend to recognize the more hostile provocative component of teasing (Lightner et al., 2000). However, the playful prosocial aspects of teasing are not utilized, responded to, nor fully understood by children with deficits in social understanding skills (Heerey et al., 2005). Categorizing the teasing of the young siblings in this study was an important step to understanding the *nature* and *form* of the teasing, as well as the *function* these experiences served in relation to the child's developing social-emotional understanding.

There are vast differences between the experience of teasing and that of being teased. The recipients of teasing generally report teasing in negative terms in comparison to the more benign intentions reported by the teasers (Shapiro et al., 1991). Determining the negative or positive *valence* of the tease may shed light on understanding what aspect of a tease the recipient attends and responds to. Keltner et al. (1998) rated the verbal content of a tease as either positive or negative in *valence*. In this study of sibling teasing, the valence of the tease referred to the intended content of the tease, that is, a tease was classified as positive or negative (or neutral) according to *what the tease contained*. For example, a tease about a child's ability to make the other laugh, a positive characteristic, was rated as positive despite the fact that the teased child may not interpret the tease as positive. Conversely, calling a sibling a brat, a negative characteristic, would be rated as negative irrespective of how the intended target reacts or perceives the tease. Additionally the condition,

neutral valence, was also added in this study for any incidence of teasing that was neither positive nor negative in content. The *valence* of the tease is classified “independently of the child’s interpretation of the tease” (Heerey et al., 2005, p. 61). These two constructs, teasing category and valence, were also included and added to Appendix L.

Audiotapes. I anticipated that my presence could potentially affect the children’s behaviours and I would observe only ‘muted’ episodes of teasing. To help offset this, all observations were audiotaped and this greatly augmented my ability to capture the complexity of the phenomenon of teasing. Additionally the audiotapes and transcriptions were especially useful in analyzing siblings’ interactions at the micro-level (Graue & Walsh, 1998). Similar to the “unattended” camera method Ting (1992) used in her study of young children’s peer groupings in early childhood classrooms, I incorporated the use of a digital mini-audiotape recorder and allowed myself greater flexibility in attending to the observations or participating with the children in their play.

The audiotape recorder was placed near the play of the siblings and left in a stand-alone position. At times, I was able to leave the general play area (of Family B and C) and relied solely on the audiotape to capture children’s behaviours (for safety and ethical reasons I remained close to the children’s play while maintaining the appearance of leaving the room). The physical space of Family A’s play area was the main dining-living area and removing myself from the area was not feasible. Additionally, through most of the home visits with this family the mother remained present and an active player with the children, negating the possibility of capturing the children’s behaviour while unattended. However for Families B and C, I was able

to periodically remove my adult presence from the children's play area and better gauge the potential effects of my presence on the children's naturally occurring behaviour. Overall, I was able to capture approximately 30 minutes of tape of the children while unattended by their parent or myself (i.e., approximately 70% of this time was with Family B and 30% with Family C).

Children were made aware of the audiotape recorder and given an opportunity to explore the equipment before giving their consent to record at each home visit. Children were also free to explore the features of the audio equipment or place it in different positions in the play area on any given visit. Some children continued to express an interest in the device throughout the study and hearing their recorded voices at the end of each home visit became routine. Immediately following each home visit, I downloaded the audio data to create computerized audio files. These audio files were transcribed in their entirety and provided a means of expanding the field notes to create "thick descriptions" (Geertz, 1973).

Interviews

Interviews represent "one of the most important sources of case study information" (Yin, 2003, p. 89). The case study interview is typically open-ended and follows more of a pattern of "guided conversation" (Yin, p. 89). In this study, the qualitative interviews were used to verify and clarify my ongoing observations, ultimately allowing me to gain a better understanding of the experiences of the child. The purpose of the qualitative interview was "to obtain descriptions of the lived world of the interviewees with respect to interpretations of meaning of the described phenomenon" (Kvale, 1996, p. 30).

Interview Protocol

In general, interviews of the parents combined both an informal conversational interview approach and an interview-guided approach (Patton, 1980). I purposefully adopted a less structured approach for interviewing the children to address some of the difficulties associated with formal interviewing of children (Graue & Walsh, 1998) and as informed by the pilot study. The open-ended unstructured format provided a better “fitness of purpose”, in that the objective of the interview was to gain “personalized information about how individuals view [their] world” (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 270). The informal conversational interview approach with the children was more beneficial in allowing questions to emerge from the contexts of what had been observed. Additionally, questions asked during the natural course of events as they unfolded, increased the salience and relevance of those questions. Questions such as, “What are you playing?” or “How did that feel when your sister was just bugging you?” generated more responses from the children and provided more contextual and situated information. Children were more willing to answer and provided more information in response to conversational oriented questions when asked during the course of their play. The mini digital voice-recording device accompanied me on all home visits and was readily accessible in capturing all impromptu conversational interviews of both the siblings and their parent.

The interview-guided approach was utilized with the parents and added to the comprehensiveness and systematic collection of interview data (Patton, 1980). This approach involved outlining thematically the topics and issues to be covered in advance in an interview guide, as well as the more specific dynamic interview

questions to be used (Kvale, 1996). The questions used to guide both the interview with the parents and conversational interviews with the children are listed in Appendix M and Appendix N.

The context of the interview was introduced to the adult participants with a *briefing* session and included a description of the interview process, the purpose of the interview, and the use of the digital audio recorder (Kvale, 1996). Ongoing consent was obtained from both the adult participants and the children. The parent participants were asked for their consent at each of the interviews (and asked to initial and date the original signed copy of informed consent held by me). Ongoing consent of the children was obtained at the start of each home visit by having them sign an additional consent form (exact copy of original) and through obtaining verbal consent.

Interviewing parents. Interviews with the parents were shaped by the interview guide (Appendix M) after first establishing a rapport through a friendly conversation about every day family life. The mothers of Family A and B were both interviewed after the first month of the start of observations, and again in a follow-up interview six weeks following the initial interview. The mother of Family C was interviewed initially two months after the start of observations, and again one month after the initial interview. The fundamental principles established by Spradley (1979) and Kvale (1996) were applied in all the interviews with the adults and included the elements of establishing rapport (during a briefing session), introducing a ‘grand tour’ question followed by more specific questions, and concluding interviews with a debriefing session.

Adult perceptions of teasing have been sought in previous research studies through self-report methods (Bollmer et al., 2003; Georgesen et al., 1999; Gropper & Froschl, 1999; Keltner et al., 1998), narrative accounts and questionnaires (Kowalski, 2000), and checklists (Thompson, Cattarin, Fowler, & Fisher, 1995). Teachers' perceptions of teasing in their classrooms and schools have also been the focus of previous survey studies (Gropper & Froschl, 1999; Shapiro et al., 1991) and interviews (Branvold, 1995). However, experimental research of manipulated teasing incidents has been criticized for potentially capturing only highly constrained forms of teasing behaviour and self-report methods may "over-represent extreme forms of teasing" while discounting nonverbal forms (Keltner et al., 2001, p. 229). Moreover, teachers' and parents' perceptions of teasing may be largely uncorrelated to children's own self-reports (Curtner-Smith, 2000).

Some research studies have sought parents' perceptions of teasing through experimental designs (Lightner et al., 2000), survey method (Gropper & Froschl, 2000), and interviews (Branvold, 1995). However, there is a noticeable gap in research studies that combine naturalistic observations of teasing and interviews with parents and children. Given the limitations of this previous research and the exploratory nature of this study, I devised and utilized questions that were unique to this study. The questions helped orient the interviews and uncover the adult's perception, previous history, and general attitude toward teasing. More specific questions were possible based on examples of the siblings' behaviour from the ongoing observations. Overall the parent interviews added to the understanding of the converging or diverging perspectives between the parent and siblings on teasing in the home environment.

Each interview concluded with a *debriefing session* (Kvale, 1996). The debriefing session included a summary of the main points of the interview and any additional comments the participant wanted to add. All interviews were audiotaped and transcribed immediately following.

The follow-up interview was conducted one month to six weeks after the initial interview. Parent participants received a transcript of the initial interview a week prior to the follow-up interview. I began the second interview by providing an opportunity for the participant to ask questions, add or clarify my interpretations of that initial interview. All parents made comments regarding the accuracy of the transcriptions and no requests were made for additions and/or deletions to the original transcript. The re-interview was an important element in the analysis process (Kvale, 1996), in that it provided an opportunity for the participants to have a voice in how they would be represented (Denzin, 1997). Additionally, it was an opportunity to expand and clarify the parent's perspective, as well as to make improvements to the interview process. For example, I provided a National Film Board video for the children to watch while I re-interviewed the mothers. This alteration in the interview protocol resulted after the initial interview became encumbered by demands for attention by the children.

Interviewing siblings. In relation to interviewing children, Hughes (1988) stated that "the successful interviewer depends more on listening skills than on questioning skills. Through listening, the interviewer shows respect for the child and a genuine desire to listen to the child's ideas. He encourages the child to express herself fully and nondefensively" (p. 105). The sibling interviews in this study were based primarily on an informal conversational interview approach (Patton, 1980).

In interviewing children, *negotiating the process* is identified as the initial step (Graue & Walsh, 1998) and conversational interviews are suggested as a means to bridge some of the power imbalance in research with young participants (Eder & Fingerson, 2002). Similar to the interview techniques employed by Evans and Fuller (1996) and Holmes (1998) I engaged the children in conversations while they were engaged in play. In the role of participant-observer I was afforded greater insights of when to try to engage children in such conversations and often followed their lead of interest in conversing. Additionally, some play opportunities naturally lent themselves to conversing about teasing. For example, the twins of Family B often engaged in sociodramatic play where teasing episodes were revisited and acted out during play. During these naturally occurring play episodes I was able to engage the children in conversations about teasing. By contextualizing the interviews and engaging children while they took part in activities of their day I reduced the potentially artificial nature typical of formal interviews and “elicit[ed] more natural and valid responses” (Eder & Fingerson, p. 184). The interview guideline (Appendix N) framed and guided my general inquiry; however, great flexibility was essential throughout the entire process.

As informed by the pilot study and after failed initial attempts with the children of the main study, the interview-guided approach planned for this study was not used with the children of the main study (Patton, 1980). All children demonstrated reluctance to be removed from the play area to be interviewed individually. The initial attempts to employ a more structured interview format with four of the children produced children who were non communicative and physically

withdrawn. Thus, this more formal interview format was not continued and the conversational approach was utilized and based on the interview guide.

Flexibility in interviews with children. Given the young age of the children interviewed not all the questions (from Appendix N) were utilized for any one child at any one time. In recognizing the importance of giving children the *freedom of choice* to participate (Evans & Fuller, 1996), I used other techniques to accompany the direct questioning method. I made use of props such as talking on a play phone (Garbarino, Stott, & Erikson Institute, 1989), and play themes such as interviewing an office worker about teasing to help prompt verbal responses and recall (Graue & Walsh, 1998).

The use of role play has been a successful technique employed in interviews with young children (Evans & Fuller, 1996). Some early childhood researchers advocate for the use of props (e.g., puppets, dolls, soft toys) to engage children's interest and stimulate conversation as a valuable technique of interviewing children (Brooker, 2001). In this study, I adapted Evans and Fuller's interviewing technique of role playing, talking on telephones, to stimulate children's interview responses. Two unconnected telephones were placed in the room where the siblings typically played together, and I positioned myself next to one of these telephones. Children were free to approach the telephone, at which time I asked, "Do you want to talk to me on the phone?" Before commencing with the conversational interview I asked "Can I ask you some questions about teasing?" Children were also reminded that at any time they could opt out of the interview by saying "goodbye" or hanging up the phone. I transcribed these portions of the audiotapes immediately following each home visit. Additionally, at the conclusion of each conversational interview I

summarized what the child had said in response to my questions. This provided me an opportunity to gain clarification of what a child might have said and often acted as a prompt in continuing the conversation about teasing. On subsequent visits, I began any additional conversational interviews with a summary of what the child had reported in the previous interview. These summaries were read to the child and included the portions of the transcripts from the previous visit that were specific to the subject of teasing.

A play theme to engage the twins of Family B in a conversation about teasing was also utilized. Here, several props were made available to the children relating to an office environment (i.e., telephones, pencils, paper, stapler, tape) and each child had a turn in the role of an office worker. I was then invited to the office and engaged with the child in playing the *interview* theme. The female twin and I also reversed roles and she took the lead in interviewing me about teasing.

The focus of this study was the experience of teasing between siblings. The qualitative interviews with the siblings sought “to describe and understand the meanings of central themes in the life world of the subjects” (Kvale, 1996, p. 31). In recognition of the differences between adult perceptions and children’s experiences with teasing as noted from previous research (e.g., Lightner et al., 2000; Shapiro et al., 1991; Warm, 1997), the parental interviews were used to augment the data.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was integrally linked to the data collection process in this qualitative case design (Merriam, 1988). Data analysis occurred simultaneously as “the steps within the process inform one another so that coherence is achieved

through convergence of concepts and experience” (Graue & Walsh, 1998, p. 159) As Denzin (1998) stated:

In the social sciences there is only interpretation. Nothing speaks for itself. Confronted with a mountain of impressions, documents, and fieldnotes, the qualitative researcher faces the difficult and challenging task of making sense of what has been learned. I call making sense of what has been learned *the art of interpretation*. This may also be described as moving from the field to the text to the reader. The practice of this art allows the fieldworker-as-bricoleur (Levi-Strauss, 1966, p. 17) to translate what has been learned into a body of textual work that communicates these understandings to the reader. (pp. 313-314)

Rather than conceiving data analysis as a linear process, I likened it to that of a Slinky™ toy. The steps in the research process are intertwined, connected, holistic, and each dependent on the other to ‘make sense’ of the data. I revisited the transcripts often throughout the data collection phase, making comments, asking questions, generating ideas, and using those reflections to inform subsequent home visits. Additionally, throughout the process of data collection I questioned my role and subjectivity as the researcher, challenged my own interpretations and used these reflections to shape the ongoing process and interactions with the participating families. The following excerpt from my field notes highlights this reflective practice and how these insights often guided my participation and interaction with the children:

How does one reconcile the many hats I wear in this process, me as a Mom, me as an educator, and me as a researcher? Whose eyes do I view the children’s interactions or do all my inner selves intermingle in providing a

melded perspective. These voices cannot and will not be quelled when the siblings become aggressive toward one another. Remaining aloof does not always seem to be an option. Reflective Field Journal, February 6th

Themes and Metathemes Analytic Approach and Pattern Analysis

I adopted Ely et al.'s (1997) *themed* approach or what Graue and Walsh (1998) refer to as a *pattern* approach for the data analysis. Theme based analysis is cited as one of the “most frequently mentioned analytic approaches used by qualitative researchers” (Ely et al., p. 205). Themes are defined as “brief statements that describe the content of individual units of data text” (Tesch, 1987, p. 231). Themes are often thought to *emerge* from the data (Tesch), but Ely et al. (2001) hold that themes result from the researcher’s thinking and creating the links in the data. Metathemes will refer to “a major dimension, major aspect, or constituent of the phenomenon studied” (Tesch, p. 231). In this sense, metathemes are the overarching themes the researcher draws from the entire body of data (Ely et al.).

Graue and Wilson (1998) utilized the term, *pattern*, to discuss a means of exploring the data to unearth “something that recurs in a predictable pattern” (p. 163). Equally important is examining the data for things that are salient (of importance to the researcher or participant) and discovering the “threads” of coherence in these interpretive elements that are woven through the fieldwork data (Graue & Walsh, p. 163). The analytic technique of pattern-matching is also advocated by Yin (2003) as one of the most desirable procedures for case study analysis.

The theme approach and pattern approach to analysis suggest some common processes or “flow for analysis” (Tesch, 1987, p. 232). The following guidelines were utilized to guide the data analysis process and included:

1. Reading, rereading, and reading again (Graue & Walsh, 1998).
2. Immersion with the data as a whole, including transcripts and protocols.
3. Dividing the data into “meaning units” or tentative categories of possible meanings (Tesch, 1987, p. 232).
4. “Panning and surveying” the text for details. Panning refers to looking for elements or descriptive expressions that are at the core of the experience, “those that address its nature, or directly pertain to the phenomenon (Tesch, 1987, p. 232).
5. Writing analytic memos and reflective memos to help examine the “various vantage points of the objects, articulations, events, and people within the research study” (Ely et al., 2001, p. 30).
6. Surveying refers to going “line by line” or the “highlighting approach” (van Manen, 1984, p. 60) of looking for revealing statements in the text.
7. Refining, and rephrasing themes (Graue & Walsh, 1998).
8. Comparing themes from one protocol (or case) to others to create “clusters” (Tesch, 1987, p. 233), commonalities, patterns, differences, and unique themes.
9. Determining from the process of pattern detection, what story emerges. (Graue & Walsh, 1998)
10. Crafting the narrative that moves from “telling to explaining” (Wolcott, 1990).

An inductive process guided the process of analyzing the data, and as Denzin (1998) stated, “in the social sciences there is only interpretation.” The ‘highlighter approach’ (van Manen, 1984) proved most useful in identifying several themes in the

data in relation to each specific family and some commonalities across the three families. After several readings of the data record, several meaningful and salient units emerged. For example, a pattern emerged regarding the nature and form of teasing, specifically in relation to the play interaction that occurred before and after teasing. Additionally, several control and power issues between the siblings during their play were meaningful and related to the phenomenon of teasing itself. Moreover, in addition to playful encounters, conflict, disputes and aggression among the siblings emerged as a common pattern of interaction. The mother's role, perception, behaviour, and personal experience with teasing were also emerging themes that required close scrutiny and formed a major part of the analysis. As these patterns emerged I re-evaluated, combined, condensed, and reformulated these *interpretive threads* (Graue & Walsh, 1998) into my coherent way of thinking about the phenomenon of sibling teasing that is discussed in Chapter 4.

As with any qualitative research, in case study research there should be 'surprises' along the way (Ely et al., 1997). Case study is an evolutionary process from the beginning to the end phase of writing (Stake, 2003). As Stake emphasized the "case researcher enter[s] the scene expecting, even knowing, that certain events, problems, and relationships will be important, yet they discover that some of them ... will be of little consequence" (p. 144). The basic intent of this research was to draw out the meaning(s) of the child's experience of sibling teasing, and throughout the process I remained open to the surprises (e.g., the naturalness of children's behaviours and ease they displayed in conversing and conflicting with each other while I was present), tensions, literature, and theory that impacted the findings and process.

Validity, Credibility, Generalizability, Reliability

Validity, credibility, reliability, and generalizability are all aspects that must be addressed in any research study (Cohen et al., 2000; Merriam, 1988). The concept of validity in the qualitative domain refers more to the fit of the explanation given by the researcher to the description of the phenomenon of study (Janesick, 2003). Given that the qualitative researcher's stance is one where multiple interpretations are possible for any one study, the validity is measured by the *credibility* of the explanation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Validity is thus similar to the definition of accuracy, in that the researcher must address the question, "Do the explanations accurately describe the phenomenon"? (Cohen et al.). Similarly, the *reliability* of the research is established by the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the data collected (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). The verisimilitude (Denzin, 1988) and dependability (Lincoln & Guba) of this study were addressed through the process of triangulation, member checks, maintaining an audit trail, and naturalistic observations and engagement in the research context (Janesick, 2003; Merriam, 1988; Yin, 2003). Careful piloting at the outset of the study also enhanced the reliability of the interview and observation protocols (Cohen et al.).

Triangulation is generally referred to as "a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation" (Stake, 2003, p. 148). To ensure that I captured as accurately as possible the varying perceptions and experiences of children themselves, I used multiple sources to gather the data. The objective was to develop an emic perspective, employing the children's ways of thinking to describe teasing incidents by acting as a participant-observer. I then supplemented my observations and

interpretations with conversational interviews with the children and guided interviews with their mothers. As Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated, “no single item of information...should ever be given serious consideration unless it can be triangulated” (p. 283).

Member checks were also conducted with both the siblings and their parents to also address this issue of credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). From the data, I created one-page vignettes of my interpretations of the observation data for the adult participants (given to each of the mothers at three points throughout the study). Children were read short vignettes of my interpretations periodically throughout the study. Member checking also occurred at the outset of the follow-up interview (after the mother(s) had received and read a copy of the interview transcript the week prior to interviews) and again at the conclusion of the study with an invitation for input or comments on the two interview transcripts, vignettes, or overall process. Input was also sought from the siblings themselves to verify my interpretations of the teasing incidents.

The audit trail entailed a detailed record of all document sources, including transcripts, audio files, vignettes, field notes, and general evidence of the cases studied (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). This audit trail provided a detailed description of the processes and decisions made regarding data collection, the establishment of categories for analysis, and the general research decisions I made throughout the study. The detail of the methods employed provides a *trail* so “that other researchers can use the original report as an operating manual by which to replicate the study” (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984, p. 216). This audit trail also attests to the credibility,

dependability, confirmability, and transferability of the research method employed (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003).

External validity is generally concerned with the degree to which the research results can be generalized beyond the context of the single case study (Merriam, 1988). However, Stake (2003) holds that the case design is often the study of the particular rather than the generalizable, and the goal of generalizability may be inappropriate for interpretive research in general (Erickson, 1986). Stake (1978) upholds the claim that *naturalistic generalization* is a legitimate form of knowledge “arrived at by recognizing the similarities of objects and issues in and out of context and by sensing the natural covariations of happenings” (p. 6). The case study is particularly well suited as a means to gaining understanding and “thorough knowledge of the particular” as readers seek out patterns and similarities to explain their own experiences, and thus “they establish the basis for naturalistic generalization” (Stake, pp. 6-7).

Based on Stake’s (1978; 2003) notion of naturalistic generalizability the external validity was addressed by providing a rich, thick description as “a base of information” to promote *transferability* (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 124). Additionally, the research examined three cases of siblings, thus cross-case analysis strengthened the generalizability of the study by building “abstractions across cases” (Merriam, 1988, p. 154). The aim of cross-case synthesis (Yin, 2003) is “to build a general explanation that fits each of the individual cases, even though the cases will vary in their details” (Yin, 1984, p. 108).

Threats to Validity, Credibility, Generalizability, Reliability

The very nature of fieldwork suggests several potential threats to the validity and reliability of the research. The data collection process is “socially situated” and as such the relationship between the researcher and participants may directly hinder the research process (e.g., the child participants becoming overly attached to the researcher and this attachment effects their natural behaviours) (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 145). Additionally, the *Hawthorne effect*, can potentially limit the external validity of naturalistic research. The mere presence of a researcher “alters the situation as participants may wish to avoid, impress, direct, deny, influence the researcher” (Cohen et al., p. 156). The siblings in this research at times *performed* in my presence, escalating and exaggerating certain behaviours. The impact of the Hawthorne effect was counterbalanced within this study by remaining in the field for a considerable length of time and observing children’s behaviours over multiple occasions.

In addition, Cohen et al. (2000) outlined several other threats to the reliability and validity of qualitative research including:

1. The ‘*falsely conscious*’ participant who deliberately provides highly selective information that may be distorted or falsified.
2. The *halo effect* may occur where the researcher becomes selective in the data collection process or analysis based on previously given information (i.e., the self fulfilling prophecy).
3. The *implicit conservatism* of interpretative research may result through the acceptance of the participants’ perspectives as the status quo.

4. The focus on the *familiar* within naturalistic approaches may mean that participants and researchers are so close to the phenomenon under study that more tacit and atypical aspects are overlooked.
5. Qualitative research is *open-ended* and *diverse* focusing on specific contexts. This may result in an overemphasis on differences between contexts and regularities and commonalities between contexts may be overlooked.
6. Qualitative research is highly contextual-bound and *wider social contexts* that reflect macro-level currents and factors are often not considered.
7. Given that naturalistic research focuses on the unique, the concept of *generalizability* poses difficulties in applying the research to various contexts and replicating the qualitative studies by future researchers.
8. Qualitative research allows for *multiple realities* and explanations. The difficulty for researchers becomes how to represent these multiple realities and how to address the potential variations that might exist between their interpretations and those of the participants.
9. The question of who *owns the research* may impact the final report and release of the data. (pp. 156-157).

Strengths and Limitations of this Study's Design

Qualitative research is based on the decisions made by the researcher throughout the study, and both strengths and limitations accompany these choices. The strengths and limitations of this research are outlined below.

Strengths of the Study

The strengths of this study are coupled to the holistic nature of the case study design itself. This case study recognized the complexity and embeddedness of the

social phenomenon of sibling teasing and carefully attended to those social situations. As a result, greater depth of understanding of the phenomenon of teasing was realized (Adelman, Kemmis, & Jenkins, 1980). The focus throughout the study remained on the naturalistic interactions between siblings. This afforded a more complete *portrait* of the complexities of the social construction of teasing among young siblings. The *thick descriptions* that resulted from this research aptly captured the ‘lived experience’ (Prus, 1996). The case study results here are intelligible and would be easily understood and relevant to a wide audience (including parents, educators, curriculum developers) (Nisbet & Watt, 1984).

Another strength of the research was the inclusion of children’s perceptions and insights. Historically, the child’s perspective and *voice* has been one of the most neglected aspects of child development research (Greig & Taylor, 1999). Increasingly, researchers are encouraged to conduct research *with* children rather than *on* children to gain insight into what is meaningful and significant to children themselves (Hill et al., 1996; James, 1993; James & James, 2004; Mayall, 2002). The sibling participants in this study were provided an opportunity to explain “what it feels like to be a child” (James, p.92). Teasing is often a subtle, nuanced behaviour and gaining an understanding of this phenomenon required entry into the sometimes hidden culture of childhood (Simmons, 2002). A separate reality often emerges when children are given a voice within research studies (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 1999).

The time spent in the *field* was an additional strength of this research. The five months I spent visiting the families afforded me the opportunity to be invited into the children’s play world and be part of and witness to their natural daily interactions. I

was also able to garner the trust and confidence of the mother participants with the reward being the attainment of in-depth and detailed responses to the interviews.

The general principles of data collection in case study design were an additional strength of this research (Yin, 2003). Yin proposed that the use of multiple sources of data, creating a case study database, and maintaining a chain of evidence are essential principles of data collection in case studies. The data sources in this study included field notes, observations, and interviews. These data sources were triangulated (Patton, 1987) and developed “converging lines of inquiry” ultimately adding strength to the validity of the research (Yin, p. 98).

The systematic organization and documentation of data collection required in case study design was another asset. Here, the database consisted of the raw data (field notes, audio files, transcripts, and checklists) that are distinguished from the “narrative presented in the case study report” (Yin, 2003 p. 101). A case study database increases the reliability of the research by providing concrete particulars (beyond the narrative of the case study report) that can be subject to “secondary analysis” (Yin, p. 101). Additionally, by maintaining a chain of evidence (i.e., audit trail) throughout the process, the reliability of this case study was also increased. This chain of evidence allowed myself (and readers) to follow and cross-reference between the data sources (i.e., evidence), to examine the methodological choices of the researcher (i.e., protocol), the research questions, and the case study report. As Yin suggested, the chain of evidence should allow for a backward evidentiary tracing process where conclusions in the case study report itself can be traced backwards with specific references in the database and examples.

Case study design, by its very nature, “offers a means of investigating complex social units consisting of multiple variables of potential importance in understanding the phenomenon” (Merriam, 1988, p. 32). The rich and holistic account of the phenomenon of teasing provided in this study offers insights into the nature, form and function of teasing while also illuminating several courses of action for future research.

Limitations of the Study

Although case study research can be undertaken by the single researcher (Nisbet & Watt, 1984), the use of multiple cases in this research was demanding and time consuming. I was the sole researcher throughout this process, and case study research often benefits from a team approach (Stake, 2003). Additionally, the field research required a lengthy commitment from the participants and this may have impeded families from volunteering for the study.

The homogeneity of the participants was also a limitation, as no families with two female siblings were willing to participate in the study. Male siblings made up the majority of the participants (with only one female sibling participating) and this limitation may have directly impacted the behaviours observed. Additionally, all three families were middle class volunteers with an expressed interest in the general topic of sibling rivalry citing this as a common problem among their children. Moreover, observations were conducted based on the mother’s account of when the siblings would most likely be together and thus the level of interaction I observed may not be typical or average. These limitations may have translated into an over exaggeration of the phenomenon of teasing itself. As Guba and Lincoln (1981) highlighted “case studies can oversimplify or exaggerate a situation, leading the

reader to erroneous conclusions about the actual state of affairs” (p. 377).

Throughout the study I remained cognizant of the fact that the focus of the research on sibling teasing merely represented “a slice of life” (Guba & Lincoln, p. 377) and did not define the siblings’ relationships. Moreover, the observations were not an account of the whole dynamic of siblings, families, and social-emotional development.

Conversely, the phenomenon of teasing may have been ‘oversimplified’ or under-represented as my presence as an adult observer could have potentially constrained the children’s behaviours. Children were aware and cognizant of the fact that they were the focus of the study, and this may have limited or altered their teasing behaviours (e.g., at times it was evident that children exaggerated their teasing behaviour in my presence in an effort to ‘show off’). The unattended audiotape method provided some counterbalance and acted as an unobtrusive means of recording children’s teasing. Additionally, by acting in the ‘least-adult’ capacity and limiting my involvement in children’s conflicts or disputes the siblings were better able to view my role as that of a playmate and became increasingly more relaxed and natural in my presence.

In addition, the use of scales and checklists during the observations of the siblings further limited the study. The definitive categories for the children’s play behaviours, teasing behaviours, and interactions may have restricted and constrained the reporting of all possible behaviours that were displayed. Additionally, a second person was not used to independently rate and score the children’s behaviours and thus the normal conventions of intra- and inter-rater reliability were not applied. The majority of the children’s conversations recorded in the transcripts depended on the

addition of contextual information in order to comprehend the nature of their behaviours and what was said. Thus, scoring the transcripts by an independent person was not feasible. Ideally, an independent coder in the room during observations would have strengthened the study. However, an additional adult in the small play spaces of this study may have intimidated the children (and parents participating) and impacted the display of naturally occurring behaviours and responses.

Another limitation of the study may have been produced by my introduction of specific toys to the participants' homes. The majority of the toys I brought to the observations were cooperative in nature (e.g., train set) and this may have heightened and over-exaggerated particular features of the sibling relationship (e.g., competition or conflict for the control of the toys). Conversely, the *novelty* of the toys may have fostered interactions between the siblings that were uncharacteristic of their relationship.

This research may have also been hindered by observation bias and interview bias (Cohen et al., 2000). The naturalistic design of this study was incumbent upon my participation in the daily lives of the siblings. Thus, the case study may have been biased by my selection of what observations to attend to or by the interview questions I pursued, or my own subjectivity (Graue & Walsh, 1998; Nisbet & Watt, 1984). Because a researcher's attitudes and beliefs cannot be removed from the research process, "bias [too] cannot be removed" (Graue & Walsh, p. 126). Thus, bias needed to be addressed and identified, and "its effects explicitly monitored" (Graue & Walsh, p. 126). By remaining reflexive throughout the process and including the participants' voices I explicitly addressed the issue of bias. As

Hitchcock and Hughes (1989) stated “interpretative researchers take seriously the question of language and meaning and give priority to first unravelling actors’ descriptions of events and activities in a qualitative fashion rather than focusing upon observers’ descriptions in a quantitative fashion” (p. 29).

A further limitation of this study centered on the issue of generalizability (i.e., the small sample size). Case studies have been traditionally prejudiced as “providing little basis for scientific generalization” (Yin, 2003, p. 10). However, the goal of this study was not to represent a *sample*, rather the emphasis remained gaining an understanding of the emic perspective of teasing from the siblings themselves. By reporting on the three cases of sibling dyads in ample descriptive narrative I have enabled readers to “vicariously experience the happenings and draw conclusions”, ultimately inviting readers to apply these insights to other cases or situations (Stake, 2003, p. 141). Additionally, the utility of this case study lay in the potential of “refining theory and suggesting complexities for further investigation, as well as helping to establish the limits of generalizability” (Stake, p. 156).

Summary of Chapter 3

*We had the experience but missed the meaning.
And approach to the meaning restores the
experience in a different form. --T.S. Eliot (1968)*

A qualitative methodology was employed throughout this study to address the central question, what is the nature and meaning(s) of preschool siblings experiences of teasing within their relationship? This orientation underscores the importance of understanding the phenomenon of teasing from the child’s real world experience of teasing to portray ‘*what is going on*’ and ‘*what the situation is like*’. The data collection methods employed provided a means to immerse myself as an active

observer into the play of preschool age siblings and capture a glimpse of their *lived experience*. The process was not a linear one as each step informed and modified the next action. Each phase (pilot study, observations, interviews) was an intertwined piece of the holistic sense-making process.

My role in the research process was a complex one. At times I was the *learner, observer, confidant, participator, arbitrator, and expert*. The fluidity of the process required flexibility and adaptability in the methods employed. By remaining cognizant of my role in the process I was able to challenge my own interpretations throughout the process and reflect on the experiences of the siblings from various vantage points.

The portraits that emerged from the data collection process are presented in Chapter 4. These portraits provide a picture of the complexities of the social construction of teasing among preschool age siblings and provide a *voice* for children's experiences. The conclusions and implications of this study are discussed in Chapter 5.

Chapter 4 ~ Three Case Studies: Observations and Interpretations

This study addressed the following question: How do preschool siblings (approximately ranging between 2.5 to 6 years of age) experience the phenomenon of teasing within their relationships, and what function(s) do these experiences serve in relation to the child's developing social-emotional understanding? The presentation of the data begins with *my portrait*. I have included a discussion of my stance as a researcher as I was integrally linked to the process of research and greater understanding of how I framed my interpretations is garnered by making my perspective explicit. A discussion of the important role of *context* in framing the observations and data generated follows next. The data are then presented as *portraits* of the three separate families, as each case was unique. Subsequent to the three separate family portraits, I present and synthesize the results in a cross analysis of all three cases.

My Portrait

As a participant-observer I was integrally linked to the research process, participating at times with the children as a player. Ultimately, my presence in the family homes and this participation in the children's play impacted the results of the study. Throughout the process I struggled with the concept of the *researcher's stance* and my ability to provide multiple perspectives in this research report. Stance refers to "the various perspectives through which we frame the collection and interpretation of data...those [perspectives] that influence how and what we see and the interpretations in writing that arise from that seeing" (Ely et al., 1997, p. 32). Ashworth (as cited in Andrews, Lyne, & Riley, 1996) contended that each researcher approaches the topic and research process with a myriad of

presuppositions or ‘fore understandings’ (p. 443). Ashworth argued that fore understandings must be made explicit at the outset so that the researcher can reflect, revise, and modify their own understandings throughout the research process. I too monitored, reflected upon, and revisited my stance throughout the process in an effort to remain cognizant of how this perspective shaped the research process.

It's all about perspective. How do I hold the mirror to capture as many angles as possible? How do you solve the problem of the mirror itself? Once you hold the mirror up the images will be distorted and my image brought to the forefront. So how do you watch without being watched? How do you learn from those you're watching without teaching as well?

Reflective Field Journal, October 4th

Perspective is shaped by one's experiences in life. The difficulty in qualitative research is making these perspectives explicit to enable a reader to understand one's stance. Readers cannot fully comprehend the results of a study without understanding the researcher's stance (Ely et al., 1997). However, a researcher's perspective cannot hijack the research. In reference to Family A, I discussed this theme in the field notes of one visit (A-2-6 refers to the notation system of direct references taken from the transcripts referring to the second home visit to Family A and the transcription page six):

Clearly Mom is more relaxed with me here and engages in short bursts of conversation with me. Although it distracts me from observing the boys it is apparent that she wants to be significantly involved in this research and present during the observations. I find it a bit of a challenge to be participant, observer, and Mom's confidant all at the same time. I am going to have to find a way of regaining control of observation days or maybe simply let go of my expectations and follow the rhythm of this family.

A-2-6

Again with Family B, I reflected upon the tension between the many roles of a researcher.

It is so difficult to shed my Mom's skin when I visit these children. I feel that I own the Mom skin whereas the researcher's suit is temporarily on loan and doesn't seem to always fit. As it turns out my attempts at a negotiated settlement between the twins is usurped by the children's own abilities and I can quiet my Mom's voice and resume watching. B-8-13

At times, it was difficult to separate myself from my own personal perspective and remain an objective observer.

O.K. now I can't quiet my Mom's voice. Drake has tracked mud everywhere on the hardwood floor. Sand is being ground into the floor and I can't stop myself from spewing Mom-isms. Again, I question my ability to loosen my middle-class values and obsessiveness about things like cleanliness. Drake has made a valuable extension of his play theme in providing props for kicking the ball. Obviously this is important to him and I need to be able to relax and value what unfolds.* B-1-3

A little help from Mom would be nice right about now. The boys are brawling as she watches from the computer table. The educator's voice rises inside me and can't be held back. I hear myself saying, "Use your words." C-1-2

Additionally, my middle class perspective initially limited the many possibilities of interpreting the data. In reference to Family A and B, I made the following preliminary comments.

The living room is cluttered and littered with piles of toys, books, videos, newspapers, laundry baskets, etc. Every conceivable space is covered with something. Flecks of dirt, and lint cover the dark carpet that spreads over the living room area. A-O-1

So this is chaos. B-O-1

Although my middle class perspective framed and shaped my observations of the families my reflections throughout the process helped confront this standpoint, ultimately broadening my outlook.

On first meeting Caleb I wondered why the mother refused to teach him sign language. However, Caleb's story is an incredible test to the strength of this family. The mother perceives the child first and the disability as secondary.

* All names are pseudonyms.

Her survival of the fittest mentality translates into pushing Caleb beyond the limitation of his hearing and speech loss. Her choice for Caleb is born out of a mother's love for her child, so similar to everyone else.

Reflective Journal, March 1st

Throughout the process, I remained cognizant of my own lenses and struggled to remain open to the many possibilities of interpreting the data. I positioned myself throughout the research and writing process in the various stances of mother, researcher, and educator to examine and reflect upon the data. By monitoring my beliefs and how these influenced and shaped what I attended to during the observations and interviews I was better able to reflect, critique, and evaluate my own understanding.

The Context for Observations

The context in this research process was an integral part of the recursive process of the research and informed what Graue and Walsh (1989) referred to as “*interpretation in context*” (p. 159). In this research on sibling teasing, examples and descriptions from the data record are used to help illustrate the “situated nature of children’s lives” (Graue & Walsh, p. 159) and highlight how I came to my understandings about the role of context in sibling teasing. I strived to maintain the integrity of the participants’ actions and spoken words. However, for greater ease of reading I have also included grammatical corrections and contextual information in parenthesis in the samples taken from the transcripts that are included throughout this research report.

The Physical Play Space of Family A

The play space in Family A’s home presented several challenges from the outset, namely the lack of space hindered the siblings’ ability to have any *private*

space for play and influenced the type of play behaviour and the nature of the siblings' interactions. (Private space can be an area for one child to play alone and may be an important area to allow a child to decompress.) Additionally (with few exceptions), the brothers and the mother were together in one room. Thus, I was unable to make use of the *stand-alone* method for audio recording. There was an abundance of toys housed on shelves in the living room, as well as additional toy choices located on the floor against the shelving or walls. On my first visit to the family's home I noted in my field notes "*every conceivable space is covered with something*" (Field notes, A-0-2). The open area for play amounted to approximately a four by six foot green carpeted area in the center of the room.

Finding a space for the recorder is hard. I find a small, uncluttered area right in front of the television on the stand and wedge it in. A-O-3

Throughout the observations this small space was buzzing with the activity of the two brothers, the mother, the family dog, and myself. At times, the space restriction contributed to the nature of the siblings' interactions as distinct play themes competed for the same space. Moreover, the restricted space was a deterrent to active physical play (that appeared to be favoured by the younger sibling) and more conducive to constructive or tactile play (e.g., train track or puzzle building). As the following example illustrates, the competition for space negatively impacted the children's abilities to establish and maintain the play of their choice, and at times, one child had to concede the space to the other:

Mason rolls with the dog over James' and Mom's track play area. James screeches loudly. Mom says, "Pardon us, Mason." Mason whines as he stands in the middle of the room. Mom says to him "Sweetheart don't stand on the track while we're trying to build it." Mason moves over and jumps onto me as I sit on the floor watching, pushing me backward. The dog moves off to the side of the room and lies down. A-10-3

In previous research, a restricted play space has been found to be a contributor to cross-gender teasing among young elementary age children (Voss, 1997). Similarly, the frequency of aggression, teasing, and disputes between James and Mason in this study may have been influenced by the restricted space. Over one-third of all initiations involved aggressive, teasing, or disputing behaviours (see Appendix O). The lack of space may have fostered a climate of competition for space and resources and encouraged interfering behaviours in one another's play. These interfering behaviours took many forms such as aggression, physical interference with another's play or toys, verbal demands, intimidation, and teasing (see examples 4 through 8 in Appendix L).

Portrait of Family A

Family A consisted of two boys, James (51 months) and Mason (36 months), and a mother and father. The mother of Family A was the sole parent participant in the study. Overall, 13 home visits were made with Family A in the fall and winter of 2005/2006. The living room/dining room constituted the main play area in this home and was the site for all observations and interviews. The mother spent the majority of her time during these home visits either watching, supervising, disciplining, or participating in the play with the siblings. Approximately 3.5 hours of the mother's time during the visits was spent on other activities where she was not present in the room where the children were playing (e.g., laundry, talking on the telephone, preparing meals, or being interviewed by me). During one of the home visits, the mother was absent and the children's grandmother was present in the home (but not directly involved with the children or observations).

James

James was the elder sibling of Family A (51 months at the start of the research). He was an articulate and well-spoken kindergarten child who had an expressive and joyful manner. James attended a half-day kindergarten program each morning at the local community school. James easily conversed with me about his activities in school, his friends, and his play actions. He often sustained his play with an accompanying story-like narration. Generally, James took the leadership role in the play with both his brother and me. As the pair of examples below illustrate, this authority was exercised often in setting the theme of play, choosing resources, and sharing his knowledge of toys and their uses:

James is very animated in naming all the different train pieces for me (all part of Tomas the Tank™ engine set) and we work cooperatively building the track. Knowledgeably, he instructs me on which pieces fit where to make and complete the figure 8 track. A-O-4

James moves from the car play to the bucket of Mr. Potato Head™ pieces. James has selected a large potato head for himself and roots through the bucket pulling out additional pieces. Mason gladly accepts the small head from James, and I am handed the second large head. James states he's making the boy and I am to make the girl. A-2-11

James the Player

James' play was diverse and included such activities as colouring, play dough, rough and tumble play, puzzle making, dramatic play, and constructing complex train tracks. Often, together with his mother's assistance, James' track play would include the construction of an integrated system of multiple track pieces, bridges, cranes, roundhouses, and stations. Small figures, houses, signs, and trees were also added alongside the track to create a complex network that would

encompass the entire area of open floor space. James was very methodical in constructing these track configurations.

Mason would at times join this type of constructive play, but his peripheral participation was typically limited to adding a few pieces. Once the track construction was complete several train cars would be organized onto the track by each sibling to form two separate trains. James would dramatize the train's movement through the track and narrate complex storylines to accompany his movements. A detailed account of this play from the transcripts helps illustrate the complexity of James' track play:

James fixes his train back on the track and then noisily shouts "Somebody help me up this track!" He continues excitedly as he moves the train around the track "And then the tunnel was clear and he backs up to the tunnel but the other train comes backing up another one's coming...the clock tower!" James shouts directions to Mason instructing him to fix the cottage and clock tower [additional pieces that can be added beside the track]. James shouts for help again as he dangles his train off the bridge, "Somebody help me up this track!" Mason's motorized train bumps into James' and propels it up the hill. James' train rolls down the other side of the bridge as he narrates "And there was the trouble the train was going and the train was trapped."

A-5-5

At times, Mason joined this type of complex play and added a new dimension to James' storyline.

Mason adds the bus to James' ongoing train play. James says "And the train gets stuck in the tunnel [pause]" Mason adds, "And then the train gets stopped [pause]" and presses the button to stop the train. James responds, "No train this way. Mommy I want it this way", and complains about Mom's choice to switch the direction of the train. Mom adds "O.K." and changes the direction of train by pressing the button again. Mason responds, "Bus goes around and waits for the money." James chimes in "And then it was a waitin [waiting] train."

A-10-4

Overall, James demonstrated an affinity for constructive play (e.g, train track building) or dramatic play (e.g., pretending to shop for ice cream). Of the 45 various

play behaviours observed and coded on the Play Observation Scale (POS), constructive play was initiated 27% of the time while dramatic play was initiated 31% of the time (see Appendix P). The majority of James' play behaviours were conducted in a group situation (51%) (see Figure 4). James also engaged in solitary play (22%), nonplay behaviour (16%), and parallel play (11%). The non-play behaviours included watching television, aggression, and watching his sibling. James was almost as equally likely to engage in dramatic play by himself (11%) as with others (13%). This dramatic play involved pretense, where James attributed both voices and actions to imaginary objects or toys.

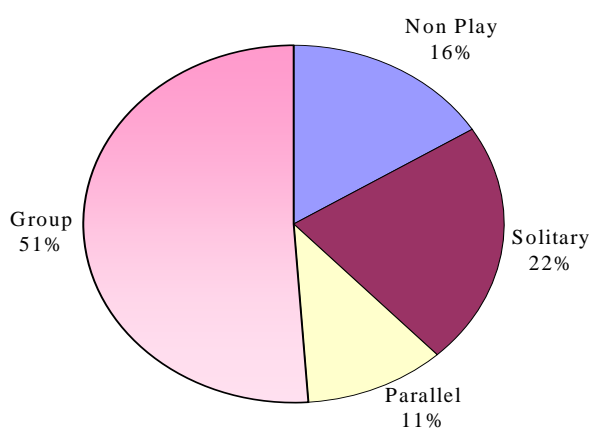


Figure 4. Social play behaviour of James

Mason

Mason, at 36 months in age, closely matched his brother's size and language ability. Mason was expressive and demonstrative in both his play and interactions. He was an animated and gregarious child. Mason tended to be more precocious and inquisitive in comparison to his more subdued sibling. During the first visit to the home, Mason demonstrated greater interest in both me and the orange canvas bag I carried to the visit. At my arrival it was Mason who accompanied his mother to the

door to greet me, brought me to the play area, and initiated play with me. He was very quick to demonstrate his affection by giving me a big hug on this first visit.

Mason tended to be physical in both his play and interactions. His interactions with me were both playful and affectionate:

Mason pulls my hands from my pockets then flops his body back onto my lap. Mason pops off me but holds my hands outstretched in front of me. He leans backwards holding onto my hands then slides himself across the carpet toward me till he falls to the floor on his bottom. Mason laughs and repeats this several times, laughing harder as the bumps to the floor get harder.

A-5-2

However, there were four similar incidences where Mason's attention was overwhelming and extended beyond my comfort level. On these occasions, I (or the mother) redirected Mason's play elsewhere.

Mason hops down off the couch then onto my back as I am trying to crawl to the other side of the room. Mom and I both ask him to get off as I explain that he is too big for my back. I offer to Mason, "I can have a hug instead." He and I hug.

A-12-3

Mason the Player

Overall, Mason's play tended to be more physical than that of his brother. He often engaged in rolling around on the floor, physically dramatizing an object of play (e.g., by pretending he was the object such as a bulldozer), bouncing through the house on a ball, or wrestling with the dog or his brother or mother. This physicality tended to demand attention as his antics were often loud, intrusive, or extremely amusing:

Mason grips James' feet tighter hissing playfully. "No he doesn't want to then you can play with Mason [pause] goodbye snake" James says answering his own question of whether his brother wants to play with the play dough. Mason grips tighter and starts to slither backwards pulling his brother off balance and trying to pull him under the table. "Oh no he's pulling my leeeeg! Can somebody say snake leg [let] go please!" James smiling, asks loudly for help. "You say snake let go", I advise. "Snake let go

please!” James screeches happily in high-pitched excitement. Mason holds tight. Mason as the snake slithers over to where Mom has re-entered the dining room. Mason fastens his arms around Mom’s leg. He holds tightly hissing as Mom moves around the room tidying up. He is dragged on his belly as she moves. Mom pauses to tickle Mason and all are laughing.

A-2-13

At times, Mason also escalated his behaviour to ensure attention was forthcoming.

For example, the initial attempt at interviewing his mother was hijacked by Mason’s escalating attention-seeking behaviours and ultimately his mother had to leave the interview to address his behaviour. Mason was successful several times in gaining his mother’s attention by using this escalation of behaviour technique:

Mason climbs onto the back of the couch spilling the laundry that Mom is folding there. “Honey I’m trying to fold the laundry where you going?” asks Mom patiently. Mason climbs up higher onto the back of the couch smiling and watching Mom. “Where you going...” Mom tries again. Recently folded laundry starts spilling off the back of the couch and Mom puts down her laundry and physically wrestles Mason off the couch. She explains to him that she’s folding laundry and he has to get down. “Mmmn” Mason complains as he struggles with Mom. Mom picks him up and sets him down onto the floor. [Mom does not return to fold laundry].

A-1-10

James demonstrated amusement, ambivalence, and annoyance toward his sibling’s attention-seeking efforts:

Mason grabs hold of my legs as I clean up the pieces from the car play. Holding fast he makes loud car noises. I comment to him as he holds my leg “You’re like a fish, a fish.” James laughingly calls out from the play dough table (where he waits for me and his brother) “There’s a snake on your leg.” “A snake?” I laugh. Mason doesn’t let go.

A-2-12

Overall, Mason displayed a variety of play behaviours including pretense, auditory play (e.g., listening to a recorded story and responding to prompts), reading, games, and rough and tumble play. Mason demonstrated an affinity for dramatic play and constructive play. Of the 44 play behaviours scored on the POS, 43% of these were recorded in the category of dramatic play, either in parallel fashion to his

sibling or cooperatively with his sibling (see Appendix P). Like his sibling, the majority of Mason's play was group play (see Figure 5). However, non-play behaviours, solitary play behaviour, and parallel play were slightly more evident in Mason's play behaviour than what was noted of James. Mason's non-play behaviours were diverse and included unoccupied behaviour, aggression, adult conversation, sibling conversation, and television watching. Parallel play included gross motor play, auditory play, and playing with the family pet.

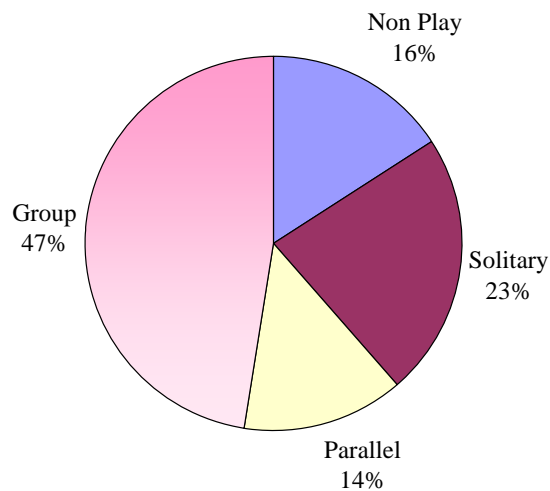


Figure 5. Social play behaviour of Mason

The Mother of Family A

The mother of Family A was a tall, large woman with a reserved and quiet personality. During the initial visits, I often mistook this quiet nature for severity and questioned her enthusiasm in participating in the research study. Although my initial nervousness with the mother dissipated somewhat over the course of the months as she and I engaged more, I remained cognizant of Mother A's disposition throughout the visits and continued to question my role in affecting these moods.

Am I interrupting Mom's time with James? Is that resentment I hear in her voice directed toward me? Am I distracting James and her from their play together? I'll try to pay close attention to Mom's mood and gauge whether I am the unwanted guest today. A-10-2

Although Mother A's disposition was reserved, she did display intense interest in the general topic of sibling teasing and often engaged me in short conversations about my progress. Additionally, she independently sought out other sources of information on parenting and managing children's behaviours and was a frequent user of additional services of the Ontario Early Years Centre.

The mother of Family A spent the majority of her time during the home visits in the dining/living room where the play occurred (approximately 13.5 hours of a total of 17 hours of the mother's time was spent in the play area). She often positioned herself elevated on the couch above the play. Mother A would often physically wince when lowering herself to the floor and verbally commented on two occasions that her leg hurt. Later, during one home visit the mother confided that she had a knee injury that caused her continual pain. This may account for her preference for the elevated spot on the couch in the playroom.

Mother A, the Player

The mother of Family A expressed great enjoyment in both participating in her children's play or simply watching them play. She often added ideas or suggestions to extend the ongoing play of the children. Additionally, the mother deftly utilized play as a means of diffusing conflict between the siblings or redirecting unfocused behaviours (e.g., running through the house). Mother A's enjoyment of her children was evident in the following observation:

Mom starts to tickle both boys and they both roll all over her body. Both request a turn, "Mommy tickle me?" Mom tickles them one at a time until

they start to slide off the couch upside down. Mom rolls their bodies into a ball and vaults them from the couch. All are laughing joyously. A-8-9

Overall, the mother demonstrated an affinity for constructive type play, particularly joining play that involved train track building or puzzle making. Although this play was typically initiated by the children themselves, their mother would often dominate in the decision making process. During one visit, track play was pre-organized prior to my arrival and clearly established for my benefit.

From the couch, Mom verbally explains to James how the change direction piece and the bridge need to be close together [in the track construction]. She motions with her hands how the flow of the track and the placement of pieces are important in getting the track to configure into the figure 8 shape. "Why?" James asks moving the change direction piece to several places. Mom giggles and explains, "Maybe one more curved one before the change direction one." I hand James the needed track piece and he follows Mom's suggestion of placement of pieces. A-2-3

At times, the mother's desire for control of the play hijacked the play desires and behaviours of the children themselves:

"I'm going in my house to see if it's all build [built] says Daisy" James says as he manipulates the small Minnie Mouse™ character through the door of the 3-D puzzle house. He continues, "The house is all build [built] Mickey Mouse" [actually an invitation to Mason who holds the Mickey Mouse™ character]. Mom answers for Mason, "O.K. Minnie Mouse." Mason still lies on Mom on the couch. James tries again "Come in the house Mickey Mouse." Mason slides off the couch and peels off one piece of the house [window] and slides his character through the opening. James opens the door to the front and slides his character through the door [door falls off]. James keeps a running dialogue of his actions and dialogue with his brother's character "I'm going away in the car said Minnie Mouse but you stay here." Mom interjects and leans over to adjust a window on the puzzle commenting, "The window's fallen down again." The boys stop their play and James asks "What?" Mom answers, "The windows stand up to make it look like a real house." A-8-7

Perhaps unwittingly the mother disrupted interactions between the siblings by calling attention to her own activities.

James picks up on the theme of racing and answers his brother, joining him in the same theme of play. They are both rolling around the carpet with their respective cars and motorcycle talking about "racing day." Mom says absently, "Oh look they have a train with remote control." The boys stop playing and peer over Mom's shoulder at the paper she is looking at [toy pamphlet]. A-8-5

Additionally at times, the mother's involvement in the children's play was more related to avoiding conflict between the siblings:

The boys are rolling each a long train around the track and Mom controls the traffic jams from her chair. Mom add, "Beep beep Thomas, back up" to get James to wait for Mason's train to pass. A-5-2

The other forms of play in which the mother participated included dramatic play and rough and tumble play. However, the mother's participation in this type of play lacked the intensity and time committed to the more favoured constructive type play:

James crawls back onto Mom and asks "Mommy can you tickle me again?" Mom complies and James laughs heartily. Mason pulls at James' legs saying, "Mommy let him go." Mom grabs Mason and tickles him. James crawls back on Mom and again asks "Mommy can you tickle me again?" Mason crawls onto Mom too and there is a tangled ball of two boy's arms, legs, and body parts. Mason screams and Mom asks, "What are you screaming about?" They both dissolve into laughter as she tickles both boys. James stops and asks Mom about the price tag on the puzzle box. She encourages him to read it. James reads the tag. Mason continues to bounce on Mom then moves off to the drawers of train pieces noisily riffling through looking for something. James finishes reading and says to Mom "I thought you said you was gonna [going to] tickle me." Mom answers, "I did." James commands "Tickle me lots, now get tickling me." Mom tickles James free of her body and he collapses to the floor in laughter. James moves back to his puzzle. A-8-9

The Mother's Management of Sibling Behaviour

Mother A emphasized themes of *fairness*, *equity*, and *respect* in managing the children's behaviour in the home, often referring to these themes explicitly in the interviews and in the management of sibling conflict (e.g., she would talk about turn-taking and using a respectful voice during disputes or conflict between siblings). She most often used verbal explanations and redirection as behaviour management

strategies with the children. There were seven instances where the mother physically removed a child from his activity (i.e., either the child was physically removed from the immediate area or given a ‘time-out’ in another area of the home). These instances centered on aggression being displayed by one child toward another or directed toward the mother. Despite Mother A’s personal philosophy of fairness, equity, and respect, at times the mother’s management of conflict between the two siblings had very distinctive patterns.

The mother tended to display more lenience with Mason’s misbehaviours, using a gentler tone of voice and more explanations in her responses. She demonstrated more tolerance for his aggressive type behaviours (e.g., spitting, hitting, and kicking) than what was granted to James. At times, the mother disregarded Mason’s aggression toward his sibling. The following pair of excerpts from the transcripts highlights this *softer touch* the mother used in managing Mason’s behaviour:

Mason screams and angrily throws his body against his brother [Mason tries to dump out the cars from the box]. James tries to push the cars further into the box. Mom moans softly “Oh Mason.” Mason screams loudly with vocal cords protruding and his body becomes rigid. A-5-8

Mason lays on the couch with his head on Mom’s lap. He drops his leg over the edge of the couch kicking James again. James squeals “ow” and turns and grabs Mason’s legs. Mom pulls Mason’s legs back onto the couch snuggling them and says, “Relax James I’ve got him.” A-7-2

Alternately, the mother tended to have greater expectations for James in regards to his management of his behaviour. Her management of James’ behaviour centered more on emphasizing the *house rules* for governing behaviour. The mother’s tone of voice and manner tended to be more direct and slightly harsher with James.

Mason continues to shoot his gun as James complies with Mom's wishes (to put the guns away and clean up the magnets). Mom repeats to Mason, "Put the guns away." Mason points the gun at me and I hold the end of it so the bullet can't be propelled outward. I tell him "O.K. I don't want you to shoot the gun at me cause it really hurts." Mason laughs and squeals but continues to point the gun at me. He pulls backwards from me freeing the gun but the bullet dislodges and I keep it in my hand. James has retrieved his gun and is waving it wildly in front of Mom. Mom says angrily to James "Did you hear what Debbie said? She said that really hurt when she got hit. I told you there was no more warnings, I would just take it away." Mom takes James gun again while Mason continues to play with his gun and he moves to the stairwell.

A-12-3

During one visit Mason spent the majority of the time sprawled on the couch partially on top of the mother, a probable byproduct of having recently recovered from an illness. James competed for the mother's attention but was at times reprimanded for his attention-seeking behaviours.

James climbs on top of Mom and lays his body out down the length of her legs. He rises and buries his head in her shoulder. Mom complains, "I'm not a jungle gym" ...[and later that same day] James squeals and bounces back on top of Mom. Mom says more angrily this time "honey I'm not a jungle gym." She takes James' arms and tells him firmly, "You can either sit down or get down."

A-7-3

At times, the mother asked James to concede to his brother's wishes during disputes between the two siblings. And often, Mason's interruption of his sibling's play or aggression directed toward James appeared to be tolerated by the mother.

James builds a 3 dimensional puzzle of a house on the floor, taking out pieces and replacing them. Mason comes over and smashes the house down to the floor. James cries out "NO MASON!" and begins to whimper. Mom states, "Look James you were taking it apart and he just followed suit." [James begins to rebuild his puzzle].

A-8-9

Additionally, during one teasing episode, initiated by Mason, the mother placed the onus on the recipient of the tease (James) to forfeit the desired object:

[Mason taunts his sibling with a track piece.] James cries in frustration "I need that straight piece." Mom says, "How about you ask Mason nicely, you say Mason could you please put this piece here so we can finish the track?"

James crumbles onto himself and whimpers out a cry. Mom continues, "It works a lot better than yelling or hitting sweetie." James continues to cry in distress. Mom admits, "Ya you know he likes to take the pieces to bug you." James cries very distraughtly. Mason says, "It won't work" [and places the track piece himself after Mom asks him to do so]. James has moved off close to Mom and cries intensely.

A-8-3

During one episode of conflict, although both siblings received the same consequence (i.e., time-out) for aggression, the mother's expectation of compliance to the consequence was vastly different for each sibling. James was removed from the room and placed on the stairwell for a 'time-out' for hitting his sibling with a toy. James displayed great stress at being removed from the play (i.e., howling and crying) and the mother immediately attended to him in the hallway reiterating both the norms of the house governing aggression and her expectations for his compliance to the consequence. Alternately, although the same infraction from Mason (i.e., hitting his sibling) also received a time-out, the mother had to physically carry Mason from the room to serve his time-out on the stairwell. Mason too displayed great stress at being removed from play, screaming on the stairwell and frequently re-entering the room. Here, the mother's response to Mason was more physical (i.e., carried from the room) as opposed to a verbal explanation. There was less of an emphasis or expectation for Mason to complete the consequence, and the mother made no references in relation to the *house rules*. The mother's differential treatment and management of sibling conflict may have contributed to the nature of interactions between the siblings and their overall relationship quality (Brody, 1998). Moreover, the nature of the siblings' interactions and the quality of their relationship may have also been affected by the difference in the children's ages.

Nature of Interactions Between James and Mason

James and Mason's interactions varied from cooperative interactive play to hostile aggression. The nature of the siblings' interactions was complex and diverse. The mother also used contradictory terms in describing the relationship as both "rivalrous" and "very loving" (Interview Transcripts 1 & 2, p.2 & p. 4, respectively).

At times, the siblings displayed great enjoyment in play with one another, sustaining cooperative play for long periods of time. This play was collaborative, friendly, cooperative, and involved sustained conversation between the two siblings.

James calls Mason on the play phone to place his order and each hold a phone to their ear and have the following conversation.

James—“No chocolate, strawberry, and everything of the rainbow.”

Mason—“I don't have that.”

James—“O.k. then chocolate sprinkles please.”

Mason—“I don't have that either.”

James—“What sprinkles do you have?”

Mason—“Umm....the colours of the ummm the tv” [visually scans room].

James—“O.k. black, just black the tv, Mason has black sprinkles.”

Mason—“Aaa I don't have any of those either.”

James—“What do you have tell me what kind of sprinkles you have?”

Mason—“Aaha I have orange.”

James—“O.k. I want orange sprinkles good bye.” James hangs up his phone. Mason follows and hangs up his own phone. James stands and pretends to drive a car running through the room making car noises. He stops in front of his brother. James requests of Mason “please give me my ice cream order please and ice cream cones too.” Mason pretends to hand him his order saying, “I hope you have a truck.” James responds, “yes I do.” They load his pretend truck and James drives back to where he was sitting earlier beside me. Mason calls out “come back soon.” Ice cream truck play continued.

A-9-10

On occasion, the siblings interacted with one another in a gentle manner, while other

brotherly interaction was characterized as simply playful and fun:

Mason tickles his brother and they both collapse into a heap onto the couch laughing. Mason continues tickling James and they squeal with laughter. Mason makes “tickle tickle tickle” sounds and James collapses on top of Mason. Mason screams out. James quickly gets off. They continue tickling each other accompanied by lots of laughter.

A-8-9

Conversely, some of the siblings' interactions were plagued with disputes, conflict, competition, and aggression.

Mason tries pushing his brother's train out of the way of his own train. I suggest, "how about you let James pass [pause] he's going on this track, can he pass?" Both push each other's trains banging them head on into each other and struggle for control of which train will pass the junction first.

A-10-9

Nature of Siblings' Interactions Scale

This complex and diverse pattern of interactions between the siblings was also mirrored in the findings from the 12 random on-site measures of the *Nature of Siblings' Interactions* that were conducted during the observations. The nature of the interactions between these siblings can be described both as cooperative and responsive, and conflictual and rivalrous (although this pattern is somewhat distinct for each sibling).

James' interactions. Of the 12 measures scored during observations, James' highest concentration score was for cooperative and responsive interactions (see Figure 6). Thus, most of James' interactions with his sibling can be described as cooperative, responsive, and attentive. He consistently demonstrated the following behaviours: engaging in joint play, following his sibling's suggestions, offering unsolicited help or sharing, imitating in a friendly manner, giving up objects willingly (or suggesting how they can be shared), and maintaining amicable conversations. Likewise, James' conflictual interactions with his sibling were rated at the lower end of the scale (see Appendix H for explanation of scales I through V). During the 12 observations scored during the home visits most often James had occasional disputes that generally did not involve physical interference or

aggression. Additionally, James solved these disputes by negotiation, concession, or relinquishing control.

Similarly, control/intrusiveness and competition/rivalry were also scored most frequently at the lower end of the scale (II and III, respectively on Figure 6). James scored equally in the II or III category in relation to control and intrusiveness. Thus, James was equally likely to make suggestions on how his sibling should behave (indirectly), and make direct commands to control his sibling's behaviour. Additionally, he was just as likely to wait for a turn as to interfere in his sibling's play by removing toys or blocking access to play materials. Overall, James was less intrusive and controlling of his sibling's play and behaviour than the reverse (i.e., the level of intrusiveness and control demonstrated by Mason toward James was much greater).

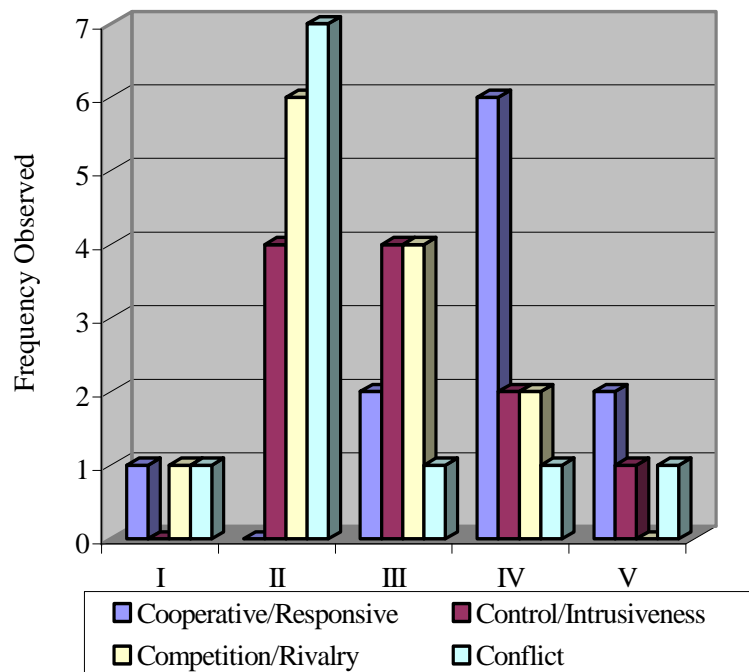


Figure 6. Nature of James' interactions

Although James scored in all of the first four categories of the scale in relation to competition and rivalry, most often his interactions were categorized at the lower end of the scale (II category). Thus, James demonstrated little competitive and rivalrous behaviour when interacting with his sibling. On occasion he would express some concerns about fairness or equality, make “I won” or “I lost” comments, and monitor Mason’s interactions with the mother. However, in none of the 12 random measures taken was James observed intruding on his sibling’s interactions with the mother, or making frequent competitive statements. As well, James was scored as being uncritical of his sibling’s right to play, nor making disparaging remarks about Mason to the mother.

Mason’s interactions. The pattern of Mason’s interactions with his sibling is more complicated as the nature of his interactions is less polarized along the scale (see Figure 7). For example, Mason was equally likely to score both at the lowest end and highest end of the scale in relation to competition and rivalry. Similarly, although conflict was most frequent at the II level on the scale, the behaviour was almost equally represented in the categories I, III and IV. This lack of consistency in Mason’s interactions with his sibling may be attributed to his younger age, and his immature ability to assimilate the social norms governing behaviour and interactions.

However, in Figure 7 several differences between the nature of Mason’s interactions with James (versus James’ interactions with Mason) are highlighted. Firstly, Mason’s cooperative and responsive interactions with his sibling were rated at a lower level than James (II versus IV). Similarly, control and intrusiveness interactions played a greater role in Mason’s behaviours toward his sibling. Thus, although Mason was likely to follow James’ suggestions, occasionally Mason was

not cooperative and regularly failed to reply to his sibling's questions or comments. Additionally, Mason was more likely to interfere with James or his play than the reverse. When interacting with his sibling, Mason made frequent attempts to direct or control, refused to relinquish control, and made frequent comments on how James should behave or play.

Competition and rivalry also played more of a role in the nature of Mason's interactions with his sibling than what was noted of his brother's interactions. Mason was equally likely to show either no signs or frequent and intense signs of rivalry or competitiveness. As noted in the observations, Mason's behaviours tended to receive the bulk of the mother's attention.

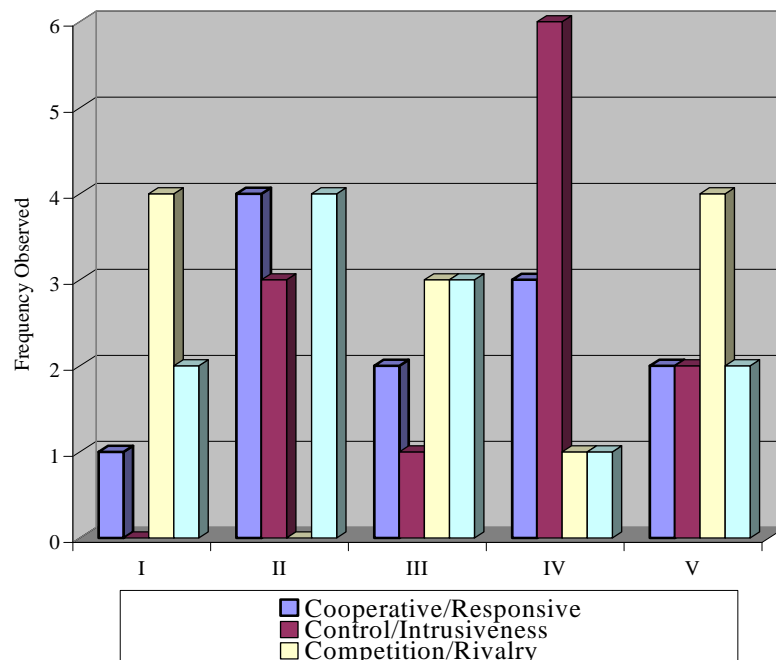


Figure 7. Nature of Mason's interactions

The mother herself referred to this tendency in the interview transcripts when she stated, *"But you're right about the competition for my attention because I've been*

away for the weekend and Mason is glued to me today" (Interview Transcript, 2, p. 4) and *"I think Mason feels closer to me because he [pause] like if we're doing a family thing [pause] when we're on a family outing you know we're going in the car he'll say, no Mommy has to do it"* (Interview Transcript, 1, p. 2). Thus, on visits when Mason received the mother's attention he may not have needed to compete with his sibling (i.e., scoring low on the scale for competition/rivalry). Conversely, during times when James was the focus of the mother's attention Mason would escalate his competitive and rivalrous behaviours intruding on the parent-sibling interaction, become physically aggressive (in connection to winning or controlling the play), or escalating his attention-seeking behaviours.

Mason interacted with his sibling in a conflictual manner across all levels of the rating scale (I through V). Thus, there were observations scored with no conflict, minimal conflict, regular conflict, and frequent and intense conflict between Mason and his brother. Mason was equally likely to engage in either no conflict or occasional conflict (i.e., category I, and II) as regular intense conflict that involved teasing and taunting or extended disagreements over the course of play (i.e., category III, IV and V). The range in the scale of conflict demonstrated by Mason may be attributed to his younger age and the greater use of both verbal and physical conflictual behaviours favoured by him. (It should be noted that physical aggression was subsumed under the category of conflict in the Nature of Siblings' Interaction scale and this may also be a contributing factor to the higher levels of conflict noted.) As Vespo and Pedersen (1995) observed in their study of sibling conflict, younger siblings are more likely to precipitate conflict when the older sibling was engaged in on-task behaviour (i.e., focused on his/her play and 'minding one's own business').

These researchers proposed “perhaps because of limited cognitive and social skills, rather than smoothly joining the interactions [with their sibling], they inadvertently interfere and create conflict” (Vespo & Pedersen, p. 196). Perhaps, Mason’s tendency toward conflict was generated from his ill-equipped attempts to join his brother in social play. Alternatively, fewer intrusions from James into his sibling’s play may have meant Mason had less reason to protest and this could account for the lower levels of conflict observed on specific visits.

However, the patterns that emerged in the nature of interactions between siblings (i.e., Figure 6 and Figure 7) may have simply resulted from the timing or the specifics of what was observed. Thus, the question, *regarding the nature of the siblings’ interactions* remained unanswered. I addressed this question by coding all of the siblings’ behaviours recorded in the transcripts.

Siblings’ Interactions Coded from Transcripts

From the observations I noted that James and Mason’s interactions were varied and complex. And although distinct patterns emerged from scoring of the *Nature of Siblings’ Interactions* during the observations, I questioned whether these patterns would be upheld across all of their interactions. Thus in addition to the 12 on-site measures taken, I coded each of the siblings’ interactions from the transcripts in respect to the frequency of aggressive behaviours, playful behaviours, teasing, or disputing/conflicting behaviours initiated by each child.

The transcripts were coded for incidences of play, aggression, conflict and disputes based on which child initiated the behaviour (see Appendix K). Aggression and conflict/disputes were differentiated based on the intention of the behaviour, that is, aggression were acts with the intent to harm (e.g., hitting, biting, kicking)

(Abramovitch et al., 1979; Vespo & Pedersen, 1995) while conflicts/disputes involved deliberate acts of provocation by one sibling toward another (Dunn & Munn, 1985). Conflicts/disputes had to include overt opposition from the targeted child, that is, in instances where the targeted child was persuaded or immediately complied with the sibling's request conflict was not scored. From the transcripts, I coded who initiated the behaviour. In instances where both participants initiated the behaviour simultaneously, both were given a score for initiation. Since my interest was related to answering the overarching question, (*How relevant is teasing behaviour in relation to the other types of behaviours siblings engage in?*) all play activities were scored (including solitary, parallel and interactive group play).

Overall, James and Mason initiated playful activities most often (the siblings initiated on average 9.3 playful activities each hour of observation see Appendix Q). Although teasing was apparent, it was not as prevalent as aggression or disputes and conflicts (see Figure 8). While Mason initiated the majority of the teasing incidents and aggression, both brothers were closely matched in the number of disputes and conflicts they initiated.

In total, 33 conflicts between James and Mason were identified. On average this dyad had 1.9 conflicts per hour (see Appendix Q). Similar to previous research findings (Shantz, 1987; Vespo & Pedersen, 1995), conflicts between James and Mason were brief with the majority of their interactions more harmonious and playful. Mason and James' disputes and conflict tended to be centered on the use of space or resources and the small space dedicated for play may have been a contributing factor.

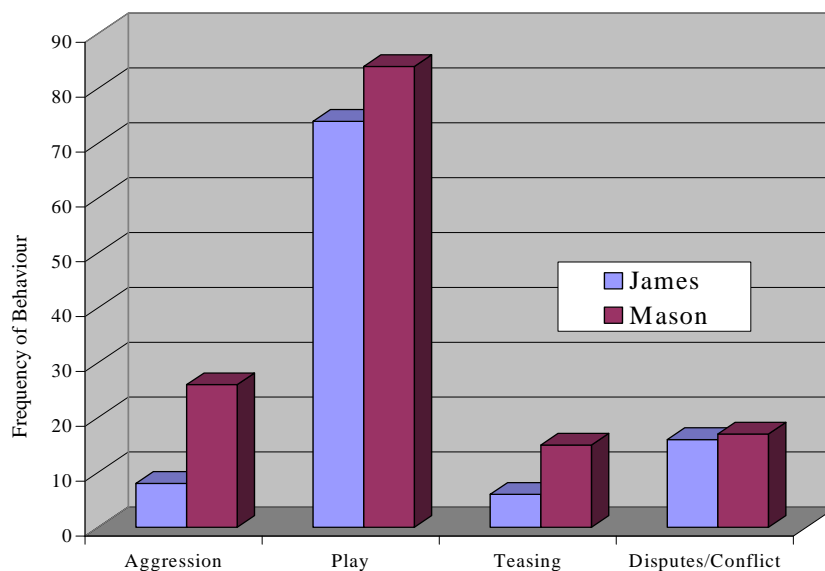


Figure 8. Frequency of initiated acts—James and Mason

Conflicts were both verbal (e.g., “*Mason move!*” *James warns his brother as his own train is approaching the area where Mason plays. A-1-8*) or physical (e.g., *Mason swoops in and pulls away the engine that James is playing with. A-10-2*). Conflict typically lasted only a few moments and lacked the emotional intensity and anger involved in more aggressive behaviours.

Overall, 34 aggressive interactions were observed between James and Mason. On average two aggressive behaviours were observed each hour. Thus, unlike the previous research of Vespo and Pedersen (1995) that “found a general lack of aggression” (p. 196) between siblings, the aggressive interactions of James and Mason slightly exceeded the number of conflicts. Aggressive behaviours tended to be related more to *authority* and *power* issues, such as the rightful ownership and entitlement to use a specific toy or space:

James disconnects his train from the long combined train of both his and his brother’s parts. He manually drives it around the track. The two separate trains collide on the track and Mason pushes both James’ and his train aside.

A-10-5

The theme of winning or being first was also prevalent in some of the aggressive interactions:

As Mason searches for the appropriate button to push James beats him to it and pushes the button first. Mason hits his brother and James squeals "ow."
A-6-6

At times, disputes over objects or control of play escalated and led to aggression.

James is excitedly hollering, "The train, its comin [coming] too fast"! Mason throws the lever and catches the train [stopping it] saying, "catch." I comment, "You caught it." Mason shouts excitedly, "Let it go in the box!" James pulls the train backwards affirming, "The train doesn't want to go in the box." James pulls roughly on his brother's body as Mason grasps the train.
A-2-10

Unlike previous research (Abramovitch et al., 1986), in this dyad the younger sibling Mason initiated the bulk of the aggression. Perhaps, Mason's tendency toward aggression was a factor of his immature cognitive and social skills. As the younger sibling Mason demonstrated a keen interest in the activities of his older sibling and a desire to imitate those behaviours, a facet characteristic of younger-older sibling dyads (Abramovitch et al., 1986; Dunn, 1983). However, Mason's attempts to join his brother's activities were often not successful and this frustration may have contributed to the higher levels of aggression he displayed.

Despite the prevalence of conflict, teasing, and aggression between these two siblings there were many instances of warmth and closeness observed. The mother also described this dichotomy of the children's relationship in her interviews:

Primarily they are loving kids, they love each other, but they also bug each other. But I think that's normal of any them. You know with your siblings sure you love them but they get under your skin.

Interview Transcript, 2, p. 4.

Similar to previous research (Abramovitch et al., 1986; Shantz, 1987), the nature of interactions between these siblings was most often amicable, prosocial and playful. Yet, conflict, aggression, and teasing were evident with this sibling dyad. However, conflict is a normative function of any relationship and may provide psychological growth and social problem-solving opportunities for children (Howe et al., 2002; Shantz & Hartup, 1992), although the utility of conflict and conflict resolution strategies as a contributor to social-emotional development lies in differentiating between constructive and destructive conflict. And although aggression tends to be characteristic of young siblings' interactions most children learn to regulate aggression and find alternative responses prior to entering primary school (Tremblay et al., 2004). Similarly, the presence of aggression and conflict is not necessarily indicative of poor relationship quality between siblings (Sanders, 2004).

Teasing Behaviours of James and Mason

Overall, there were a total of 21 incidences of teasing observed of James and Mason (two of these instances involved me as a target). On average 1.1 episodes of teasing were observed each hour between the siblings (see Appendix Q).

Overwhelmingly, Mason initiated the majority of these incidences ($n = 15$) while James contributed to a much lesser extent ($n = 6$). The form of these teasing incidences was both behavioural (e.g., pulling on a sibling's leg) and verbal (e.g., name-calling). Similarly, the content of the teasing varied and included social norm violation, character teasing, taunting, and trickery (although the patterns for each sibling were distinct).

James' teasing behaviours. James utilized teasing behaviour to a much lesser extent than his sibling. Of the six incidences of teasing initiated by James, two of

those occurrences involved me as the recipient of the tease. One of these instances involved a verbal tease (i.e., trickery) while the other was a behavioural taunt (i.e., attempting to write on me). Of the incidences involving his sibling as the recipient, two occurrences were verbal while two were behavioural in form. James utilized a variety of off-record markers to indicate his intention to tease, including behaviours such as smirking, sing-song chant, laughing, escalating inappropriate behaviours, and pestering. All of the teasing episodes occurred either during parallel play (e.g., colouring beside me) or group play (e.g., constructing or dramatizing with trains and track).

Both Mason and myself utilized a variety of response strategies to James' teasing. I utilized a verbal response and redirected conversation as a response strategy to the incidences involving verbal teasing. However, I responded both behaviorally and verbally to James' physical taunts (e.g., I held his hands and vocalized "markers are for the paper"). Mason's response to his sibling's teasing also varied. During one instance Mason ignored his sibling's verbal tease, responded verbally to another, and then responded both verbally (i.e., "*James stop it*" (A-9-8)) and behaviorally (i.e., distracted James from teasing by making physical motions on the floor) to a third tease. However, Mason responded with aggression to one of the behavioural teases initiated by James during play. Overall, Mason's responses to his sibling's teasing tended to be emotionally charged:

James shouts again "THE POLAR EXPRESS IS GOING TO GO OFF THE TRACK!" Mason whines then pushes his brother as James tries to propel his train faster...[The brothers compete to have their separate trains lead on the track]. James says, "He's so screechy today." I ask, "Screechy what does that mean?" James responds, "He's so bad!" James moves his train faster on the and Mason screams "NO!" James repeats this several times picking

up his train and placing it in front of his brother's, laughing as Mason screams louder and louder. A-10-6

The valence of James' teasing (directed toward his sibling) was both negative (2 of the incidences) and positive (1 incident). During one episode of teasing, the content of the tease appeared to be more related to an invitation for his sibling to play. James pestered his sibling by pulling on his legs while Mason was occupied in other play. Despite Mason's initial response and request for his sibling to stop, the content of the tease appeared to be more related to fun and silliness than a negative intent. The other two teases were rated as negative in valence since the content of these teases were connected to negative characteristics in Mason (i.e., *being bad*) or negative behaviours in James (i.e., sarcasm or pestering of the sibling).

The mother was the intended audience for the majority of James' teasing occurrences. Although the mother is not present during two episodes of teasing, for the remainder she responded either by ignoring the tease or verbally redirecting the instigator. In both instances of verbal redirection, she encouraged James to engage in some other form of play.

James' teasing behaviours varied more than that of his sibling (see Figure 9). However, the majority of James' teasing was initiated equally between social norm violation and taunting. In the social norm category, the accepted practice in the household regarding amicable conversation, and honesty, were violated in both of the teases initiated by James. In the instance where Mason was the recipient, James mocked his sibling with a sarcastic tone and made statements in opposition of what was true. Both taunting type of teases involved behavioural forms of teasing (e.g., pulling on his sibling's legs, and colouring on me with a marker). I was the intended

recipient of James' one instance of trickery. Here, James used white lies and falsehoods in an attempt to mislead me and end one visit early. James' categories of teasing were notably different from those of his sibling.

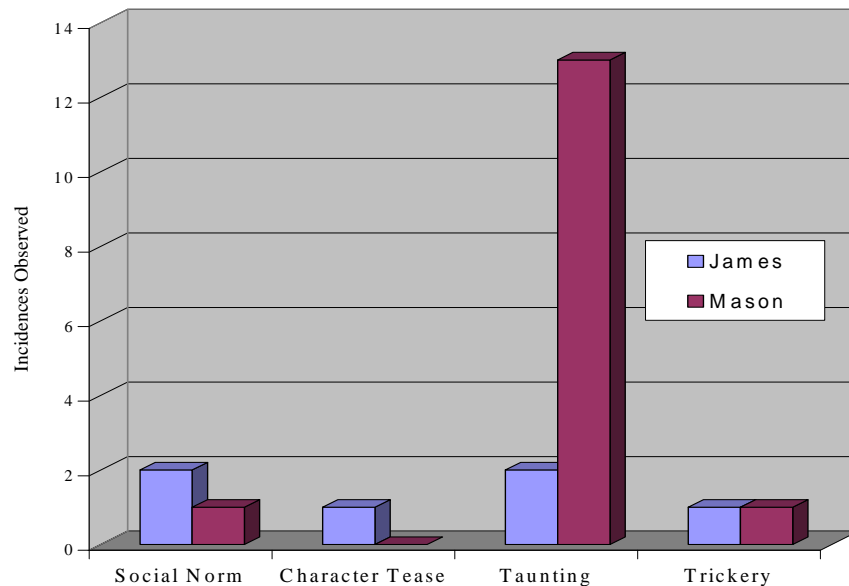


Figure 9. Teasing categories of James and Mason

Mason's teasing behaviours. Mason initiated the majority of the teasing occurrences observed throughout the study (15 of a total of 21). Interestingly, with the exception of two incidences, all of the teasing took the behavioural form with James as the intended recipient. Mason provoked his sibling by various means including disruption of his sibling's play, sticking out his tongue, verbal sing-song chants, mocking his sibling with a desired toy, or intentionally doing the opposite of what was requested. Clownish type behaviours often accompanied Mason's teasing (e.g., flailing his own body, sticking out his tongue, or laughing heartily).

James' train collides with Mason's bus at the front end and begins to push the bus down the track in front of it. "Ah! Train go back!" cries James excitedly. The train pushes the bus further away from James as Mason chants repeatedly, "Nya nya na boo boo! You pushed bus." A-2-8

Similar to the example above, Mason's teasing was embedded within the context of play. The children were engaged in parallel functional train track play preceding seven of the incidences of teasing. Group dramatic play or group functional play (i.e., cooperatively building track together) preceded six of the incidences of teasing, while James was engaged in solitary play prior to two of the occurrences. (Similarly, Mason was engaged in solitary play prior to one of these incidences and non-play behaviour prior to the other).

James utilized an array of response strategies to Mason's teasing including verbal, aggression, ignoring, and humour. Although, James responded most often aggressively ($n = 7$), he was almost equally likely to use some other response strategy. James utilized humour on one occasion in response to his sibling's teasing and verbal negotiation, verbal protest, and angry verbal protest, were also each used on one occasion. Additionally, James was able to ignore Mason's teasing on three occasions. Notably, the ignore response and humour response were the only strategies that allowed play to continue after the teasing episodes. Moreover, an aggressive response was noted when the teasing episodes succeeded in interrupting James' play. It may be that the recipient more closely attended to this form of taunting, as the effect was an interruption in play and his desire to play.

As an audience to Mason's teasing, I primarily ignored his behaviour. However, in one instance I responded with humour while also using distraction of the instigator and recipient in two other teasing scenarios. The mother's response to Mason's teasing was more variable than what was observed as a response to James' teasing. The mother responded using a variety of means including distraction, verbal response, ignoring, positive encouragement, and placing the onus on the recipient of

the tease to concede. The mother used distraction of the instigator and the recipient to three instances of teasing. The mother also responded verbally to two instances of Mason's teasing, typically by calling out his name in a harsh manner or labeling his behaviour as "not very nice." Moreover, the mother ignored two instances of Mason's teasing and was not present for two other occasions. She responded favorably with laughter to one instance of Mason's teasing and his teasing behaviour continued. Additionally, there were four instances where the mother placed the onus of concession or response on James, the recipient of the tease. Here, the mother expected James to either relinquish a disputed toy, or respond in a calm manner to the teasing incident.

Mason's foot falls repeatedly from the couch kicking his brother who sits on the floor beside the couch playing with a sticker book. Mason smirks as James complains, "Ow Mason kicked me right in the back." Mason's leg falls from the couch again and he repeats kicking his sibling. James squeals "ow" and turns to forcefully grab Mason's leg. Mom pulls Mason's legs back onto her lap on the couch and cautions, "Relax James I've got him."

A-7-2

Perhaps the mother had higher expectations for James, the eldest child, to be able to regulate his emotions. Overall, the mother's response strategies to Mason's teasing were more variable and less rigid than what was observed with James.

The valence or content of Mason's teasing tended to be negative. Only two of the teases were rated as positive in content. However, both of these teases were behavioural with no specific content. That is, Mason utilized silly nonsensical behaviour to taunt his sibling. The remainder of the teasing episodes was rated as having a negative valence, since the content of these teases involved direct negative actions or verbal statements intended to taunt, goad, or bait James.

Overwhelmingly, the teasing category Mason demonstrated was *taunting* (see Figure 9). Mason initiated one instance of social norm violation type teasing where he violated the household norm of ‘making loud noises indoors versus outdoors’. Additionally, Mason demonstrated one instance of trickery where he deceived his brother during an episode of play. There were no instances of character teasing noted. However, 13 of the total of 15 episodes of teasing involved some form of taunting. Eleven of these taunts were behavioural in form with two taunts being verbal (i.e., Mason taunted his sibling with the familiar song-like chant “nya, nya, nya, nya, nya, nya” and he continued to make loud musical noises with an instrument after his sibling requested him to stop).

Behaviorally, Mason utilized physically blocking his brother’s access to toys or play, intentionally doing the opposite of what was requested by the sibling (e.g., the game of *keep away*), using toys to interfere with the sibling, or removing toys to taunt James. In each instance off-record markers such as laughing, smirking, flailing his body, sticking out his tongue, screeching, and escalating the undesirable or offensive behaviour accompanied a tease. Mason’s reliance on taunting and more physical forms of teasing may be a reflection of his younger age. Perhaps James was more competent in social understanding, as his teasing was less concentrated in this behavioural form. As children develop social competence teasing demonstrates a trend toward becoming more symbolic, less hostile, more positive and more focused on social norms (Keltner et al., 2001; Shapiro et al., 1991; Warm, 1997). The more playful prosocial aspects of teasing may not have been easily recognizable to Mason as his social understanding had yet to fully develop (Heerey et al., 2005).

What Mother A Said About Teasing

The mother of Family A had a clearly articulated definition of teasing as well as an expectation that her children would tease one another. The mother defined teasing as “*bugging the hell out of another*” (Interview Transcript, 1, p. 3), and distinguished hurtful teasing from playful teasing. Mother A discussed her personal childhood history of teasing as being the recipient of the teasing attention of three brothers. Additionally, Mother A indicated she currently used teasing with her own sons in a “*playful manner*” (Interview Transcript, 2, p. 2). Mother A also reported that the distinction between hurtful teasing and good-natured teasing rested with the recipient’s response. The following exchange highlights the mother’s thinking:

- Interviewer* *How do you distinguish between the two, the hurtful from the more playful kinds of teasing?*
- Mother A* *Um well for example them [the children] at lunch [pause] James said something which Mason responded to and said ‘no I don’t like that’. And then he’d repeat it and do it again to really bug him [pause] hurt him. That’s how you tell.*
- Interview Transcript, 2, p. 2

The mother reported that a verbal response strategy was the best means for the children to respond to teasing. She indicated that she coached her children to respond verbally to both teasing and conflict. Additionally, in light of persistent teasing, Mother A cited enlisting the help of an adult as an appropriate response strategy.

The mother perceived a cognitive function to teasing as a means of assessing situations and problem solving. She also referred to the teasing process as *learning to manipulate*. Mother A indicated that both children were capable and skilled at this form of manipulation through teasing. On the cognitive function of teasing the mother made the following statements:

- Mother A* *See what they can get the other to do or not do. Um...other than that [pause] ya you know their little brains are working out the dynamics of it all [pause] figuring out what they can do.*
Interview Transcript, 2, p. 3
- Interviewer* *How would you describe the impact of teasing on their whole development of social, emotional skills?*
- Mother A* *Well, I'm sure it helps ah with their cognitive thinking [laugh] you know their figuring out making their brains work.*
- Interviewer* *When you say figuring out, what do you mean figure out?*
- Mother A* *The situation and the best way to go about getting what they want. [Laugh]*
- Interviewer* *Mmhm. That kind of assessing of the alternatives and [pause].*
- Mother A* *Like the different ways he tried [pause] James tried to get the man back.*
Interview Transcript, 2, p. 3

From the mother's perspective, teasing was a typical activity of childhood, a rite of passage. Although the mother noted teasing and conflict as components of the rivalrous nature of the children's relationship, she still rated the quality of the siblings' overall relationship as being both warm and close.

The mother further qualified the children's relationship using contrasting terms, rivalrous and loving. She indicated that the rivalry started very young (possibly toddlerhood) and cited the children's closely spaced ages as a determining factor (i.e., 14 months difference in ages). Mother A also indicated that James' exposure and interactions at school (kindergarten) were also a contributing factor to the nature of interactions between the brothers, that is behaviours, such as teasing, learned at school were transferred to the home environment.

- Interviewer* *How do you describe the quality of their relationship from your point of view?*
- Mother A* *For the most part um I've noticed a little bit recently that the dynamics are changing a little and I think that's from James' influence from school. Because he's [pause] a well [pause] as you stated last week it was the first time you saw that aggression really [pause] where he just whacked him [Mason]. And I [pause] it's just like James is definitely changing and I know it's from being around the other*

schoolmates it's when the boys you know they get along like [holds fingers close together] this but the other boys are really rough and tumble prankster kind of thing and I [pause] think James is a [pause] I don't know how to really describe it [pause] it's just a [pause] like before, before you got here the reason he ended up going upstairs was a [pause] to me he just wasn't being a nice person. He was doing anything he could to bug Mason [pause] ah [pause] and the culmination was again some kind of physical thing where Mason came crying into me. And there's different types of crying right? I mean you know [laugh]. Interview Transcript, 2, p. 1

Yet, despite the rivalry and conflict (which the mother indicated was lesser during my visits) the mother described the children's overall relationship as a close one.

Mother A I'm just so glad its so loving. Sometimes they'll be sitting there and I'll hear them say I love you.

Interview Transcript, 1, p. 2

The mother also cited each child being a playmate for the other, and a solid foundation of friendship as beneficial aspects of the sibling bond. Sibling rivalry and the frequent conflicts were cited as the mother's concerns for the relationship.

What James and Mason Said about Teasing

I made several attempts to conduct conversational interviews with James and Mason throughout the visits (eight conversational interview attempts were initiated in total). All interviewing of the children took place in the general play area and during ongoing play. Four attempts with Mason had little success. Mason demonstrated reluctance and little interest in conversing with me on the topic of teasing. Although he had an affinity for pretense with telephone play, this mode of play failed to generate substantive or often relevant responses when used as an interviewing technique.

During telephone play I try a few questions with Mason "What kind of things do you like to play?" Mason responds, "Sometimes I like to play dress up with my hands." I comment, "Oh dress up with your hands. What other

things do you like to play?” Mason says, “I like cousin [pause] good-bye [pause] why did the crackle cwooss [cross] the road?” “Are you telling me a joke?” I ask. Mason smiles and responds, “Mmmhm [giggle] why did the cracker cross the road?” I answer, “Mmmhm I don’t know, why?” Mason hangs up his phone saying, “good-bye.” A-3-4

During the same visit I made several attempts to engage Mason in a conversation about teasing. However, Mason quickly reverted to more playful behaviours ending any possibility of continuing an interview.

I make ringing noises and Mason answers his phone “hello.” “Hello Mason” I say. Mason answers, “Hello.” I ask, “How are you?” Mason answers, “great.” I ask, “How do you like being a little brother?” Mason responds, “I dunno [don’t] know.” I echo, “You don’t know.” Mason chirps, “I wanna [want to] be James.” I question, “You want to be the big brother?” No response from Mason. I try, “What kind of things do you like to do with your brother James?” Mason corrects me, “I’m James.” Laughingly I respond, “Oh you’re James.” James chimes in, “No I’m James.” I try again, “Maybe you could be Mason [pause] what does Mason like to do with James?” Mason says through a nasal voice, “I like to play play dough.” I ask, “What else do you like to do?” Mason now presses on his nose and his words are barely audible or understandable, “I like to pet Lola” [family dog]. I try again, “If you were going to come over to my house what kind of things would you like to play?” Mason smiling and growls in a raspy voice, “Play dough.” I respond, “Play dough.” Mason hangs up his phone “Mmmhm [pause] good-bye.” A-3-7

Mason did indicate that play dough, puzzles, playing with the family pet, and playing with the mother were his favoured activities that excluded his sibling. He also indicated that puzzles, pencils (possibly meaning colouring), and trains were his favoured activities to play with his sibling.

Four interview attempts were also initiated with James, with varying degrees of success. Like his sibling, at times James was reluctant or disinterested in conversing about the topic of teasing, providing only the briefest of responses before attending to other activities.

I say, “Remember last time I was here and Mason was a snake on your legs James and wouldn’t let go?” [referring to last week’s tease initiated by

Mason]. James recalls, “Ya ya.” Mason immediately flops onto his belly and begins slithering across the floor. James giggles while playing with his car, “Sometimes he’s silly macaroni.” I repeat James’ phrase and ask “How did it feel to be teased liked that?” James indicates, “I liked it [pause] can you help me fix this?” [part of the car wash toy we are all playing with]. Mason mouthing the top of the toy distracts James. Then James asks to watch television and moves off to make his request to grandma. A-3-8

During one interview attempt, James was more forthcoming in his responses to questions than other attempts (this interview is discussed presently).

Coincidentally, the mother and Mason were not present in the room (or on the main floor of the home) during most of the conversation. Although initially during this interview, James was reticent in responding and lounged with his head down on the table colouring, later he provided more in-depth responses and demonstrated his knowledge of teasing by engaging in teasing behaviour (with me as the recipient).

While James did not recall specific incidences of teasing with him as the instigator or recipient, when prompted he indicated his dislike of being the recipient of his brother’s teases. Despite James’ exposure to larger groups of children, both in school and at playgroups, Mason was named as James’ only perpetrator of teasing. James’ responses typically did not include mental-state terms and only once did he make reference to his own feelings of being teased.

Interviewer Sometimes when he takes your trains away and he says to you ‘nya nya nya nya nya I got your trains and you can’t have it’.

James [Heavy sigh] ya.

Interviewer How do you feel when he does that?

James I don’t like it.

Interviewer You don’t like it?

James No.

Interviewer I remember once somebody used to make fun of me, ‘Debbie’s got boy germs, yucky, yucky’ [pause] what should I think when somebody says that to me?

James Stop

Interviewer I should tell them to stop?

James Mhm. [nods yes]

Interviewer *How does it feel when someone teases you like that?*
James *Oooh sad [said very softly and with a collapsed posture]*
Interviewer *It would make you feel sad?*
James *Ya* A-11-4

However, James was also able to ascribe feelings of sadness to a cartoon character. On the third visit the siblings and I watched a Thomas the Tank Engine™ video ("Thomas & Friends: Sally's secret," 2002) where the main character, an engine named Harvey, was teased by other train engines. I made reference to this episode during the interview and asked, "*How do you think Harvey felt about getting teased?*" (A-11-6). James ascribed the feeling of sadness to this fictitious character.

Consistently, James responded that teasing was best responded to by making verbal responses or enlisting the help of an adult if teasing persists.

Interviewer *What's the best thing to do when someone teases you?*
James *Say stop!*
Interviewer *Say stop?*
James *And if it doesn't stop tell the teacher or a grown up.*
Interviewer *And you can get help?*
James *Yes.* A-11-5

James also anticipated the mother would also advise a verbal response as the best method to respond to teasing. However, despite James' insistence that a verbal response was the best response strategy to teasing, his own responses to Mason's teasing were mostly aggressive. Perhaps, James' response to the interview question was influenced by his mother's presence (she had re-entered the room during this point of the interview) or a facet of attending kindergarten (James did reference his teacher as someone who emphasized verbal responses to conflict).

James did reference and distinguish between hurtful and playful teasing. Accordingly, James indicated *having fun* was an acceptable motive for teasing. Towards the end of the interview, James engaged in teasing me. He taunted me with

a washable marker and feigned writing on me while repeatedly chanting, “*these are not washable markers*”. When prompted again “*how do you tell if someone is being hurtful or just having fun?*” James confirmed that singing and smiling were cues to the hurtful or playful nature of teasing. He also articulated that his intent in teasing me was not a hurtful one by stating his teasing “*means to make you laugh*” (A-11-7).

Overall, interviewing these children was a difficult endeavor and the results were limited. Possibly, the children perceived my role to be one of playmate, and this precluded me from engaging in more adult-like behaviours such as asking formal questions. Additionally, the mother’s presence may have impeded the conversations since the topic, teasing, concerned behaviours that were considered *taboo* in the family home.

Summary of Family A

Overall Family A was a demonstrative and engaging family. James, the elder sibling, fulfilled the leadership role in play with his sibling (and myself) while Mason tended to be more clownish as the follower. The space provided for play was congested and physically limiting. The restricted physical space impacted the nature of the children’s play and interactions as the siblings often competed to dominate this space. This context may have directly impacted the nature of the interactions observed in this sibling dyad as approximately 35% of these interactions involved teasing, aggression, conflict or disputes (see Appendix O).

The mother tended to be actively involved in the children’s play, conversations, and lives outside the home. The mother tended to participate in more constructive like play (e.g., track building) with the children, at times controlling or disrupting the siblings’ engagement in play. The mother’s management of sibling

conflict differed for each child. She demonstrated more tolerance for Mason's aggression while James was expected to exhibit more self-control. Additionally, the mother emphasized the *house rule* in her explanations with James and she anticipated greater compliance to those rules (than what was expected of Mason). The mother's contribution as a player and in managing the children's behaviours may have directly impacted the nature of the siblings' interactions.

The nature of James' and Mason's interactions was varied and complex as the children's engagement with each other was both cooperative and rivalrous. And although, conflict, aggression, and teasing were evident, the two brothers tended to interact primarily in a playful manner. Playful activities were initiated in greater frequency than aggression and conflicts and disputes (9.3; 2.0; 1.9, respectively). Teasing behaviours were the least frequently observed behaviour (see Appendix Q).

Mason tended to tease more frequently than his older sibling. Overwhelmingly, both siblings utilized taunting as the primary form of teasing one another. Fifteen of the 21 teasing incidents involved taunting (the sibling or myself) (see Figure 9). Taunting was both physical (e.g., pulling on a sibling's leg) and verbal (e.g. sing-song chant 'nya, nya, nya, nya, nay'). Both children utilized a variety of verbal and behavioural off-record markers to indicate the intent to tease (e.g., smirking, laughing, sticking out one's tongue, and flailing one's body) as well as diverse response strategies (e.g., verbal, aggression, ignore, and humour) as recipients of teasing. Mason's teasing behaviour and understanding of teasing tended to be centred on the physical aspects of teasing while James' use and descriptions of teasing indicated a more mature understanding of the complexities of teasing.

Portrait of Family B

The participants of Family B included a set of fraternal twins (male and female) and their mother. The father was present for one of the observations days but, in general, did not participate as the primary caregiver during the home visits for this study. Overall, I made 13 visits to Family B during the fall and winter of 2005/2006. The context for observations played a pivotal role in shaping and influencing the nature of interactions between the siblings and contributed to the overall dynamics of the sibling relationship. Thus, a discussion of the physical space of Family B will precede the portraits of the participants.

The Physical Play Space of Family B

The entire physical space of Family B's home appeared to constitute a play area for the children. There was evidence of play materials in each of the rooms located within the home, including toys in the bathroom, each of the children's bedrooms, living room and dining area, and on some visits construction-like materials (used by the male twin) were also located in the parents' bedroom. The home of Family B was a long red brick bungalow with the main rooms all located on one floor. Although the children frequented the basement during the observations, I did not leave the main living quarters and cannot comment on the physical space of the basement.

The home was a small, congested, and well-used space. The mother once commented about the lack of space and how quickly her family had outgrown the home. The home appeared cluttered on most visits but this may be as a result of the small space rather than an abundance of *things*. Although the living-dining room area housed the majority of the children's toys, the twins enjoyed an abundance of

freedom in moving about the house and relocating toys to and from other rooms. This *freedom* was also extended to using household items as playthings (e.g., cooking utensils and other items from the kitchen), toileting themselves, and retrieving food and drinks from the kitchen unsupervised. This theme of *freedom* directly impacted the children's play and nature of interactions.

[After tossing the ball back and forth for a few minutes.] Drake leaves the room and returns wearing his rain boots stating, "Now we can kick the ball." Drake's blue rain boots are caked in dry mud and he leaves a sandy trail behind him. I ask, "Are you sure it's okay to wear your boots to play soccer?" Drake verbally reassures me. But I remain unconvinced, "You do this all the time?" Drake answers "yeah" then notes the trail of sand behind him and removes his one boot. "I should clean this" he states in a deep man's voice. He exits the room to the kitchen and I can hear loud bangs [the boot being beaten about inside the garbage can]. Mom still converses on the phone but verbally instructs Drake on how to remove the sand from both his boots. He finishes his task then returns to kick the ball in the dining room.

B-1-3

As the play space was not restricted to one area, one child moving off to another area in the home could potentially settle disputes. Additionally, play could be expanded beyond the original set up area to encompass more space in the home. This freedom allowed the children to have large complex networks of play materials strewn throughout the home, as well as engage in play more typical of the outdoors (e.g., ball throwing and kicking, and mechanized airplane flying).

Drake pulls me toward Mom's room telling me "Let's make a trap." I am reluctant to enter Mom's private room and try to tell Drake that it's my time to go. He insistently pulls me toward Mom's room where the mother and Brianna have also retreated. I stand in the doorway of Mom's room as Drake shows me his 'trap'. Mom tells me how he originally called it an exercise gym. The mother's room has a four-poster bed that Drake's has wrapped a rope around all 4 posters creating a square of rope around her bed. At one of the corners of the bed dangles a pulley. Drake suggests, "Let's take it apart."

B-9-11

The siblings often ignored the literal nature of objects and various items were transformed into playthings. For example, the child-size play table was transformed into a snowplough, lawnmower, tractor, and gymnastics equipment. Additionally, the telephone became construction material, and a jar of soup was transformed and added to the train track system. There appeared to be no restrictions placed on what household items were used or where they were re-located. Furniture, pillows, blankets, and toys were rearranged and used by the children. However, the mother did interject and restrict the children's play or choice of play materials when safety was a concern.

Drake meows from inside the mesh toy bag. Mom enters the room and tells Drake he needs to get out of the mesh bag. They discuss the dangers of the wire poking out from the bag and how the toy got broken in the first place (from Drake's misuse of the toy). The toy is intended as a storage bag.

B-10-14

Additionally, the mother redirected or admonished the children for inappropriate behaviour (e.g., screaming, or aggression toward the other sibling). In general, the children were given great freedom in directing their own play activities and interactions. During my visits, this play was largely unsupervised by the mother. Typically, the mother's supervision consisted of periodically checking into the playroom either visually or verbally (e.g., the mother would call out from her location somewhere else in the house "Is everything okay?"). However, it was not clear if unsupervised play was part of the normal routine for this family or a direct result of my presence.

Drake

At the start of the observations, Drake was a stocky 46-month-old male twin. He had boundless energy and quickly moved about the home during play episodes.

Drake was often referred to by his nickname, Drakester, by other family members. Drake was demonstrative, friendly, and expressive in his play and conversations. He spoke with a slightly garbled lisp in his voice, at times making his slurred speech difficult to understand. Drake also favoured using a pacifier (primarily at night for comfort), but at times he sought out the soother when he seemed emotionally distressed. Although Drake demonstrated some hesitancy toward me during the orientation visit, by the second appointment to the family's home I was greeted warmly. A familiar routine was established during this second visit as the children typically greeted me at the door and organized the setting up of my visit.

I greet both children as they open the front door and I ask, "Is it okay if I come to play today?" Both children agree happily and Drake pulls my large canvas bag toward the living room. Remnants of breakfast litter the small child-size play table (half eaten strawberries, pieces of toast, watermelon, and sippy cups filled with juice lay partially eaten and forgotten on the table). Toys are neatly tucked along the walls and in front of the television stand. The television is tuned to Treehouse™ and it noisily plays in the background. Drake has pulled my bag to the far side of the room and collapses with his sister in front of the couch. They both begin to pull things from my orange canvas bag, asking what I brought today. I regain control of my bag and begin by pulling the consent forms out. I ask each of them to sign if they think it is okay for me to play today and do my homework with them. They both make their mark on a blank page I have attached to the consent form. Brianna indicates she wants to colour on my field journal and I redirect her to a large stack of blank paper I have brought. I hand her a small pencil case with assorted markers. Drake says "Me too I want to draw." Brianna shuffles pages his way and while they are distracted I am able to pull my recorder from the bag. Drake notices the recorder and asks "We talkin [talking] in that today." I indicate yes and he says "okay." B-1-1/2

Drake the Player

Drake was an accomplished player. He contributed several ideas on the themes of play, added resources, and continuously expanded upon ongoing play. Drake tended to control the pace of play and often enjoyed the leadership role in his interactions with his sibling (and myself):

Drake puts down the bucket and sits on top of it. Brianna and I are sitting expectantly in front of him on the hardwood floor. Drake says, "I jus [just] gonna [going to] talk to you guys." I nod, "Okay." Drake continues, "How you do dis [this] is you jus [just] gonna [going to] put them there like this [motions with hands] then afer [after] and afer [after] [pause] dis [this] guy going first." Drake holds out 2 wood blocks in my direction. Brianna speaks confidentially to me "Tell him you're a girl." I nod, "You want me to go first." I line up the two narrow blocks up behind each other, "Like that?" "Yup" Drake nods his approval. He continues to hand out blocks to Brianna and I, directing our movements and the placement of the blocks. B-2-9

Drake intercepts Brianna as she crawls on all fours across the floor. He says, "Pussy cat, pussy cat, c'mere [come here]." Drake wears his headset and holds the antenna over his sister's body. I ask, "Are you checking her too?" Drake quietly states, "Pussy cat's very tired" as Brianna kneels before him and meows. He picks up the doctor's kit tools and uses them to check out her body. He talks quietly explaining all his actions as he does this. He loops a toy pearl necklace around Brianna's neck and pulls forcefully, "There cat, this way." Brianna follows on all fours until she butts her head into the side of the couch. B-2-4

Drake also tended to exert control over his mother's actions as well. He demonstrated great reluctance to the mother either joining the play or acting as a spectator to the play. On five separate occasions Drake physically pushed his mother from the play area and forbade her from entering (B-1-2; B-1-4; B-1-10; B-3-10; B-9-11). For example,

Mom enters the room and asks, "You guys okay in here?" Brianna answers and Drake echoes the same words, "Ya [yes] we playing dominoes." Mom looks to me and nods, "You sure?" Drake pushes Mom out of the room again, "Mama you no allowed~~~~[indistinguishable]." Mom asks as she allows herself to be pushed backwards "Oh I'm not allowed to watch you play dominoes?" Drake affirms sternly "No." Mom retreats down the hall saying, "Okay well I'll go fold the laundry in the back bedroom, okay." Drake calls out, "Ya and don't come back in here." Mom calls out, "Never?" Drake shouts, "NO"! B-1-14

Drake's play was diverse and varied. He initiated dramatic play, puzzle making, drawing, organized games (such as hide-and-seek), and constructive type play. Drake demonstrated an affinity for constructive type play where he would build

elaborate structures out of toys or materials found in the home and then incorporate these *structures* into his pretense play:

Drake returns from the basement with a long electrical cord. Mom tells him “No more cords Drake, you’re not allowed to have them in the house.” Drake explains that he must show me the cord. Drake unrolls a long electrical cord starting in his room and ending in the living room. Drake explains, “This is the cord and it goes round here like dis [this]” as he busily unrolls the cord. I laugh and say “Wow you’re going to tie up the whole house.” He runs back to his room and retrieves another power cord and a timer. He begins hooking all the cords together. Later Drake runs off to the basement again and returns with a power paint sprayer. Mom tries to dissuade him from bringing it upstairs. But he successfully manoeuvres the sprayer into the living room. Drake demonstrates for me how to push the button and pretends to paint informing me “[paint] goes all over da [the] place.” B-6-6/7

Dramatic play or pretense also figured prominently in Drake’s choices. His dramatic play often included Brianna (or myself) in elaborate play themes. Drake was also content to engage in dramatic on his own.

Drake calls out that he’s calling the doggie on the phone. Brianna picks up the phone and barks into it. Drake comments, “You didn’t you didn’t come to my house now.” Brianna hangs up the phone as Drake says “Come over to my house kickly [quickly].” Brianna hobbles over on all fours and Drake strokes her hair gently. Drake guides the dog [Brianna] over to the window and shows her the snow outside. [Doggie play continued with new themes of the ‘doggie running away’ and ‘feeding the doggie’ added.] B-4-3

Drake re-enters the room pushing his play table. I ask, “What is your upside down table going to be?” He says “No!” I clarify, “No what are you going to pretend your upside down table is [pause] what is going to be today?” Drake says happily, “A snow blower [pause] now move out of my way I’m coming over here” as he keeps one hand on the table and waves at me with the other. He says louder but with a large grin “Out of my way [pause] out of my waaaaay!” B-10-4

The influence of television was also evident in Drake’s play. The television played continually during many of the early visits to Family B’s home. During the fourth visit, the mother insisted to the children that the television remains off during my visits and this condition persisted for the remainder of the observations. At times,

Drake's play was interrupted and he stood hypnotically in front of the television program for brief moments. Additionally, several of Drake's themes for play were directly borrowed from television.

Drake scoops several pieces of the train track and hugs them intently. He screeches "I'm Swipper the Fox, Swipper the Fox" [a current character from television that steals things from the main character, Dora the Explorer™]. Drake runs off to the back bedrooms and returns to 'steal' more things several more times. He calls out "You'll never get me now" [a direct line from the show]. He giggles loudly when he returns each time. Brianna calls out "Swipper no swiping, Swipper no swiping!" [direct line from the show]. He laughs as he runs from the room. B-5-9

Drake would both mimic the actions and words of programs as they played on the television.

Drake stomps noisily around the room chanting, "Ripped off...me getting ripped off"! I ask laughingly "You're getting ripped off [pause] what does that mean?" Drake drops down on all fours in a cat-like stance and crazily bucks his legs around the table chanting loudly "Ripped off ripped off ripped off." Brianna points to the television and says, "Ripped off from there." [Drake mimics the rock-and-roll actions and song from the movie 'School of Rock' (Linklater, 2003) currently playing on the television]. B-2-3

At times, television watching interrupted the ongoing play and introduced new forms of play while on other occasions the children's play stopped in favour of watching the television:

[Drake and I are playing talking on the telephone with the play phones.] A song begins to play on the television and Drake pauses to look. I ask him if he's watching television. He announces excitedly, "Oh dat [that] song I like dat [that] song you wanna [want to] dance with me?" I ask, "You like that song?" Drake hangs up his phone "C'mon let's go" and begins to bounce around the room dancing. [The movie Madagascar (Darnell & McGrath, 2005) currently being played on the television.] B-3-6

In general, Drake's play was loud, boisterous, and active. Overall, Drake demonstrated an attraction for dramatic play and constructive play. Of the 49 various play behaviours observed and recorded on the POS, dramatic play was initiated 47%

of the time while constructive play involved 22% of the time (see Appendix P). Games were also initiated more often than other play behaviours (12% of all activities). The non-play behaviours observed included each one instance of aggression and conversing with an adult, and two of television watching.

Most often Drake engaged in *group play* with either his sibling or his sibling and myself (45%). Often the twins played near one another in a similar fashion with no attempts to join the play together in a common purpose or goal (i.e., parallel play). This was 35% of Drake's play (see Figure 10).

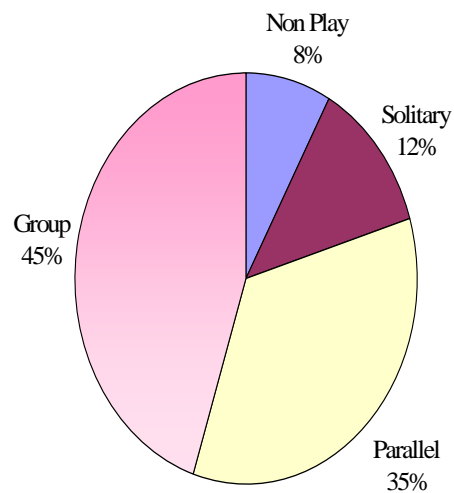


Figure 10. Social play behaviour of Drake

Brianna

Brianna was an articulate, demonstrative, and inquisitive female twin. Affectionately, her family often referred to Brianna by a nickname, Nana. Her diminutive stature, in comparison to the male twin, gave her the appearance of being delicate. However, Brianna could be as boisterous and rambunctious as her male twin. Brianna was more verbally expressive and more adept at using verbal negotiation during play or conflict, as well as more likely to correct or clarify her

sibling's speech than her brother. Brianna's outward and friendly manner was noticeable upon first meeting her as I made the following comments in the field notes after the orientation visit:

Upon entering the room, Mom introduced me to the children. The female twin immediately hugged me while the boy looked at me shyly. Mom cleared toys from the couch and invited me to sit. She informed the children that she and I would spend a few minutes talking. The female twin interrupted her and anxiously asked if I wanted to see her room. The Mom told her in a few minutes after we had talked. The male twin eyed me seemingly uninterested and continued to watch the television while retreating to the play table to pick up strawberries.

B-O-2

Her inquisitive nature also extended to my activities and personal life. Brianna questioned me regarding the names of my children, father, and various aspects of my family life.

Brianna notices that I am writing in the field journal and asks what I'm doing. I explain that I am just writing down what we are playing. She tries to pull my journal away from me and colour in it, offering, "I can write it down for you." I offer her several pieces of blank paper and say "I brought this paper for you and this paper for me cause this is what I have to give my teacher [pause] this is my homework." Brianna asks, "You have a teacher?" I answer, "I do." Brianna continues, "Why?" I respond, "I still go to school." Brianna questions me again, "Why?" I answer, "I like learning new things." Seemingly satisfied Brianna accepts the blank paper and begins to draw.

B-1-3

Brianna readily engaged in conversations with me and generally demonstrated more interest in conversing than her sibling:

Brianna pauses to talk to me and tells me "I love you Debbie." I answer, "Oh thank you I was so excited to come here today." Brianna responds, "I was waiting all year for you to come." I tell her, "I was very nervous driving in the snow." Brianna asks, "Why?" I answer, "I'm not used to driving in the snow [pause] I don't really have snow where I come from." Brianna smiles, "Ya but snow is fun." I agree, "Ya I like snow its lots of fun tobogganing, skating." Brianna and I continue to chat about some drawings on her arms. She tells me she drew on her arms and that "I really don't mind." She says, "I was writing you" when I ask her what she was writing on her wrist. We continue talking about how much she grew, her hair, and how big or small I am.

B-6-2

Brianna the Player

Like her sibling, Brianna was also an accomplished player. She contributed resources, themes, and conversation to initiate and extend play. Specific play themes initiated by Brianna, such as *animal play* or *store/office play*, continued over several visits. And although, Brianna often deferred to her brother's authority during play, she was equally likely to make suggestions for various types of play.

Brianna has retrieved scissors from the play kitchen unit and moves to stand beside the couch. She cuts the green paper into tiny pieces and then calls loudly, "Time for lunch." Drake pops up to his feet and takes his truck over to the couch saying "Mommy's callin [calling] me for lunch." Noisily he rolls the truck over the back of the couch and then beside Brianna. "Are you calling me for lunch?" he asks. Brianna answers him yes and gives him small bits of cut paper. Drake pretends his truck eats the paper by rolling his truck over the paper and smacking loudly. Brianna then calls me over with my toy truck and I repeat Drake's actions.

B-2-12

Brianna often opted for the more subservient role during dramatic play with her sibling, preferring to be the *cat* or *dog* as opposed to the *owner* or *veterinarian*.

During this play, she allowed her sibling to lead her about and direct her actions.

However, Brianna did exert her will and also influenced her brother's actions during other episodes of play:

[Stacking boxes] Brianna offers a large box and places it in the middle of the three other boxes. "Which one is next?" I ask. Brianna squeals as Drake places a box on top and it covers the last box placed there. "No it doesn't go there", Brianna corrects her brother and reorders the boxes in the proper sequence.

B-1-2

Both children were equally comfortable with directing my play.

Brianna drops the boxes and pulls my arm to drop to the floor. "Oh am I the dog this time?" I ask. "Yup" Drake shouts and pops back to his feet. Drake tells me "You go ruff ruff ruff." I crouch on my hands and knees and bark "Ruff ruff." Drake jumps onto my back, "Go doggie, go." Brianna grabs onto her brother and climbs onto my back. [Later] "The doggie needs breakfast now" Drake says as he carries more food over to me. He

commands, “Doggie sit!” I sit with hands raised in a dog begging position, panting furiously. Drake places food and the container at my knees. Drake says, “Good doggie, doggie c’mere [come here].” Brianna throws 2 pieces of play food at my knees and says, “Here’s your treats.” Drake continues, “You done now doggie?” I bark my agreement, “Ruff, ruff, ruff.” Brianna commands, “Go to sleep now doggie.” I roll into a ball and make snoring noises.

B-1-5

Although Brianna often exerted less influence in the play dynamics than her sibling, she was adept at employing several strategies to counterbalance her brother’s dominance, such as *waiting*. At times, Brianna simply waited for her sibling to lose interest in an activity or toy claiming the contested toy for herself, once Drake had moved off. Brianna also used retaliation and distraction with her sibling during episodes of conflict.

Television also appeared to have an influential impact on Brianna’s activities. Although television programming was less evident in Brianna’s play themes, she was well versed in discussing the content of programs and was engrossed in watching television on two separate visits. Brianna also engaged in conflict with her mother during these two occasions regarding the watching of television.

As Drake opens the door happily to greet me I can hear Brianna screaming from the living room. She screams about not wanting me to come and wanting to watch ‘Scooby Doo’ (Gosnell, 2002). Mom frantically tries to reassure her that she can watch the movie after I leave. Drake helps me into the room, carrying the stacking boxes I have brought back with me today. Mom is trying to convince Brianna to get dressed and Brianna continues to scream. Eventually Mom carries her from the room to the back bedroom and is able to dress and calm her.

B-4-1

By the sixth visit Brianna appeared to accept the new house rule regarding television watching (initiated by the mother) as she commented to me, “*We have to turn off the t.v. [television] when you come*” (B-6-2). The mother also affirmed that limiting

television watching was being extended beyond my visits to include other family routine times such as dinnertime.

Overall Brianna enjoyed a variety of play, including dress-up, colouring and drawing, constructive play, pretense and dramatic play, and organized games (e.g., hide-and-seek). Of the 47 play behaviours observed and recorded on the POS, Brianna engaged in dramatic play activities most often (28%) (see Appendix P). However, drawing and colouring figured prominently in Brianna's choices (21%) as did constructive type play (19%).

The majority of Brianna's play took place within a group situation with either her sibling or her sibling and myself (44%) (see Figure 11). Brianna's affinity for dramatic play may account for the large percentage of group play noted. However, Brianna's play was almost as equally likely to be a combination of parallel and solitary play (28% and 13%, respectively). Brianna also engaged in non-play behaviours such as television watching, conversing with an adult, watching her sibling's play, and eating.

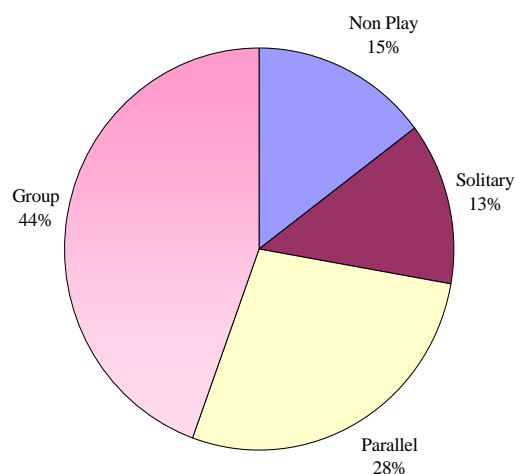


Figure 11. Social play behaviour of Brianna

The Mother of Family B

The mother of Family B was a small-framed woman with energetic and quick movements. She was outwardly friendly and excitable in her actions and conversations. From the outset, Mother B expressed great interest in participating in the study and appeared generally excited during my visits. After the first orientation visit I made the following comments in my field journal:

Mom ushers me into the living room in a hurried pace chatting non-stop the entire time. She fusses over the children's uneaten breakfast that lays abandoned on a child-size play table in the middle of the living room. She flitters about the room picking up objects and laying them down in different locations. Mom is constantly in motion as she chatters away and simultaneously responds to the twins' demands. B-O-1

Mother B did not participate directly in the play with the children during my visits. There were only two incidences of play where she was directly involved. Both of these involved a short episode of pretense play with Brianna. During these episodes, Brianna dramatized being either a cat or a doctor and her mother performed as the cat owner or a patient receiving a needle. Generally, Mother B would make quick brief appearances in the play area throughout the visit *to check* on the children's activities or to greet me upon my arrival.

Mom continues talking on the phone for the first 5-10 minutes after I arrive. She then comes into the living room and apologizes for being on the phone. She indicates it was a friend calling whose child was sick. Mom offers me coffee (that I decline) and then Drake pushes her from the room. As she retreats backwards toward the kitchen, she says, "Okay then I'll just be in the kitchen." I nod and she leaves. B-1-2

At times Mother B's absence became noticeable to the children as they sought her out to solve conflict.

Brianna re-enters the room and tries to angrily pull at the truck held by her brother. She screeches "Mom, MAAAA, help help!" Mom has not been seen on this floor for some time. Not sure where she is. B-1-7

Most often Mother B was occupied in other areas of the home and engaged in various activities such as talking on the telephone, attending to laundry, cooking, or conversing with the grandmother who visited twice during the observations. Overall, I observed approximately one hour of the mother interacting directly with the children.

The Mother's Interactions with the Twins

The interactions I observed between the mother and the children of Family B were primarily of a caregiving nature such as retrieving snack, helping with toileting, organizing and retrieving toys or other items requested by the children. Additionally, Mother B provided verbal guidance to the children to complete certain tasks or to reinforce household rules.

Mom notices Drake's sandy footprints on the floor. Mom comments, "Drakester next time sweetie those were outside boots, Mommy cleaned them, but oh well, don't worry about it." Mom retrieves a small battery operated hand held vacuum explaining "We have this little mini vac, Mommy will pick it up just don't step on it." B-1-4

Mother B tended to use more rationalization and explanations in her interactions with Drake in comparison to her interactions with Brianna.

Drake whines holding tightly onto Mom "No don't do it." [Drake is upset as Mom is hooked to a portable heart rate monitor.] Mom responds, "You think Mommy's an alien." Drake pulls her shirt out of her pants. Mom says "No no sweetie leave my shirt in cause my back is gonna [going to] get cold [pause] its okay it's just a recorder." Drake fingering the monitor again "What's this?" Mom explains again "Just a recorder [pause] don't get Mommy upset cause it's gonna [going to] go off [pause] okay let's say good-bye to Nona [grandmother]." B-10-2

The mother's expectations for the children's behaviour also appeared to differ. She was less likely to admonish Drake for inappropriate behaviours and was quicker to resolve and attend to his requests.

Mom begins to talk to Nona [grandmother] and Drake tries to shout over her talking. Mom chastises Drake for interrupting and encourages him to go play with Debbie. Drake whines and pulls at the shelf behind Mom. She hurriedly hands him 3 batteries and says "Here, here, here, now go play with Debbie."

B-2-10

Brianna starts screaming for Mom to tie her balloons. Mom is conversing with Drake about putting water in balloons, "No water Drake." Brianna escalates her screaming. Mom speaks to Brianna loudly and sternly, "You have to wait!"

B-6-8

Additionally, there was less of an expectation for Drake to comply with *rules of the household* even after being reiterated by his mother (e.g., no throwing the ball in the house and Drake continued to throw the ball). She was also quicker to admonish Drake for what was considered *babyish* behaviours.

Drake in his babyish voice chants, "Put trains together!" Mom calls from the kitchen "Drake talk like a big boy." He continues to chant in a baby voice "Blah bada bada bada."

B-10-7

The mother's interactions with Brianna tended to be more conflictual in nature (e.g., arguments over the use of television, the giving of a present, juice, and appropriate snack choices). After the conflict regarding television watching, she labelled Brianna's reaction as "*purely drama*" and emphasized that the child "*needed to learn to wait for things*" (B-4-2). Conversely, Mother B was more likely to cradle or carry Brianna than Drake and involved Brianna in adult-like conversations (e.g., the parents' wedding, and the birth of the children). At times, both children competed for the mother's attention. Typically, the child whose behaviour was the most noticeable (e.g., yelled the loudest, climbed on the mother's back) received the bulk of her attention.

Mother B commended Brianna for behaviours such as being brave (during a tobogganing outing with the father), her drawing abilities, and her knack for

communication. Drake was complemented for his imagination, active behaviour, and entertaining stories. The father also emphasized Brianna's cognitive abilities by getting her to display her counting abilities during the one day of observation when he was present. He used descriptors such as "good girl" in reference to Brianna and "he's going to be an electrician" and "tiger" in reference to Drake (B-7-6). Drake's mechanical interests were also highlighted and encouraged by the father as he provided both attention and mechanical parts to his son for this interest. During this visit, the father relegated Brianna to the role of watcher and stated, "go watch how he [Drake] puts it [mechanical airplane] together" (B-7-10).

The children's security items also seemed to be treated differently by Mother B. Whereas, she purposefully tried to dissuade Drake's use of a pacifier, Brianna's security blanket was readily available in the living room on most visits and no attempts were made to limit her use of that item. Mother B was also more likely to provide comfort and quickly soothe Drake during periods of emotional upset as the following excerpt from her second interview illustrated:

- Drake* **Mama! Mama!** I told you throw the...not to throw the soother out!
[Drake has moved from the couch down the hallway and back into the dining room very upset and distraught].
- Mom* You know what?
- Drake* **Get it!**
- Mom* Shhh! Listen to me, can you go get a tangerine for Nana. I forgot she asked me...go in the basket cause you're the big boy, can you help me?
- Drake* Where is my soother [moans]?
- Mom* Sweetie the soothers are all gone now.
- Drake* **Where is them!** [stamps foot on floor]
- Mom* You were getting a rash so daddy threw them out.
- Drake* [Crying angrily and shouting] **I want them now get them for me!**
- Mom* [Holds Drake's arm as he tugs away] Listen to me, shhh, listen...
- Drake* **But I want them!**
- Mom* Listen to me, listen. [Both move into the kitchen and Mom whispers to Drake]. Would you like a banana? [Mom and Drake move down the

hallway to the back bedroom. Mom is talking quietly to Drake. The interview is halted until they return and Mom offers both children a sucker. Drake happily accepts the sucker and Mom reconfirms with him that now that he's big he can have things like suckers instead of a soother.

Interview Transcript, 2, p. 2

The Mother's Management of Sibling Behaviour

The mother emphasized themes of *fairness* and *equitable treatment* in her articulated philosophy of managing the children's behaviours. She attributed differences in the children's behaviours and interests as innate and a result of gender. Despite the mother's insistence that the children received the same treatment in the home, Mother B appeared to grant greater tolerance to Drake for *inappropriate* behaviours and uphold greater expectations for Brianna to comply with the norms of the household. As the mother noted in her first interview:

You know she started speaking before him and he started toilet training before her and she mastered everything and he's still working it.

Interview Transcript, 1, p. 2

These perceived differences in the children's abilities may have accounted for the differential treatment the children received by the mother (especially in relation to the management of their conflict).

Although Mother B labelled aggression between the siblings as an inappropriate behaviour she tended to grant Drake greater tolerance for this behaviour than what was extended to Brianna. In the interview the mother referred to Drake's aggression as being at times *justifiable retaliation* whereas Brianna's aggression was labelled as *instigating* and *inviting*.

Additionally, during two aggressive episodes where both children were hitting each other Mother B (and the mother and father co-jointly during one episode) placed the onus on Brianna to concede the disputed toy to her sibling. She

may have had greater expectations for Brianna to use her verbal skills to negotiate and settle conflicts, thus making the decision to reward Drake the disputed toy. During an additional episode of conflict over toy usership, although Mother B initially reprimanded both children (with a time-out), eventually Drake was distracted and given her attention while Brianna was awarded the toy. Drake exhibited extreme distress during this incident and the mother may have felt more obligation to attend to his emotional distress than administer the time-out.

Overall, Mother B emphasized the theme of *respect* in her philosophy of how to manage the sibling conflict. She contended that by granting the children freedom and independence to solve and negotiate a settlement to their own conflict, they would learn self-management skills and internalize norms regarding aggression and fairness. Although there were 23 incidences of conflict and 15 episodes of aggression between the siblings (see following discussion on *nature of interactions*), the mother rarely intervened and appeared to adhere to this philosophy of minimal interjection and children's self-management. Alternately, the mother may not have been aware of the number of aggressive and conflictual interactions between the children, as her supervision of the children during my visits was minimal.

Nature of Interactions between Drake and Brianna

The nature of the interactions between the twins varied. At times, the siblings engaged with one another in long periods of sustained cooperative and interactive play while at other times they displayed hostile aggression or complete indifference to one another. The mother used primarily positive descriptors in recounting the quality of the twins' relationship including terms such as *warmth*, *playful*, and *friendship* (Interview Transcripts 1 and 2). Although the mother described episodes

of aggression, conflict, and teasing between the children, she did not classify the nature of their interactions as primarily conflictual.

From the observations, the siblings' enjoyment of one another was evident during the long periods of cooperative and interactive play and conversations they sustained. Additionally, during the approximate 21 minutes of unattended taping, the siblings continued to engage with one another in their play and conversation with no interruption to the flow of that play.

[While unattended the children are both behind the play case and quietly adding and taking things out alongside each other. Both initiate dramatic play as kittens and the following conversation ensued.]

Brianna—Is that your leash? Where is your leash?

Drake—I can't find my leash. Mine decided my other leash. I can't find my other leash.

Brianna—Well I can't go walk with you.

Drake—[Angry] meow.

Brianna—I can't find your other leash, time for your needle.

Drake—I gonna [going to] get your friend.

Brianna—Yes he is.

Drake—Hello doppie, doppie [plays role of friend].

Brianna—That's [pause].

Drake—[Angry] growl [pause] I gonna go for a walk...p-l-e-a-s-e!

Brianna—If you get your leash [pause] you're staying home.

Drake—[Becomes cat again] meow.

Brianna—You're staying home if you get your leash. Cause I'm not letting you if you get your leash.

Drake—I'm not going to get my leash.

Brianna—And then I'm not gonna give you a walk.

Drake-Blah [feigns crying].

Brianna—I'm going out with Kika [stuffed animal toy].

Drake—Why why?

Brianna—Cause I want her to come with me.

Drake—Naw meow.

Brianna—And I promised her and you're not coming.

Drake—Not me.

Brianna—I'm here! Oh I forgot I'm calling you a babysitter, calling you a babysitter.

Drake—[Angry] meow [giggle].

Brianna—That's it! Now no sequins. Pretend you're awake and moving to the house.

Drake—[Cries out] Can I come to your new school?

Brianna—No.

Drake—Mine a new neighbour [assumes new role as neighbour].

Brianna—Well doggie and kitty cat are going. [Play continued...]

B-10-12/15

Cooperative play was balanced as each player contributed ideas, resources, new themes, and assumed a variety of roles. However, conflict was also evident within the siblings' relationship. Typically, conflict resulted from disputes over toys (i.e., ownership rights) or an imbalance of power during play episodes.

[Drake has retrieved an electronic talking book that he has turned on its side and labelled 'a computer'.] Drake presses several buttons and explains their function. Brianna reaches across him several times to also try to push buttons. Drake tells Brianna "Don't touch that" and moves Brianna's hand away. Drake continues to push buttons. Brianna tries several more times to push buttons. Drake warns her again sternly, "Don't push that, no pushing!" Drake moves his body and blocks Brianna's access to the toy. Brianna complains, "I can't push any buttons" and crawls onto the couch. She curls her body up onto the couch and whimpers.

B-9-11

The overall complexity observed in the dynamics of the siblings' was also mirrored in the results from the 12 measures taken on the Nature of Siblings' Interactions Scale.

Nature of Siblings' Interaction Scale

The pattern of the twins' interactions yielded some notable results and distinctive patterns (see Figure 12 and Figure 13). Of the 12 measures taken, Drake's scores on the interaction scale tended to be concentrated in the middle to upper range (i.e., category III, and IV) whereas Brianna's ratings were more variable across the scale.

Drake's interactions with his sibling tended to be moderately cooperative (category III). He followed suggestions, made tentative attempts to cooperate, shared help, sustained brief conversations, and responded to comments on most occasions.

Similarly, competition and rivalry were also most frequently scored at the category III level.

However, competitive and rivalrous behaviours were almost equally split between either no rivalrous or competitive behaviours or occasional signs of these behaviours (that is, there were four incidences that received a score of category I and five that received a category III score). It may be that Drake, as the more dominant player, did not necessarily need to compete arduously with his sibling for attention. Additionally, as the mother was not physically present in the play area for many of the observations, the level of Drake's rivalrous behaviours may not be accurately reflected.

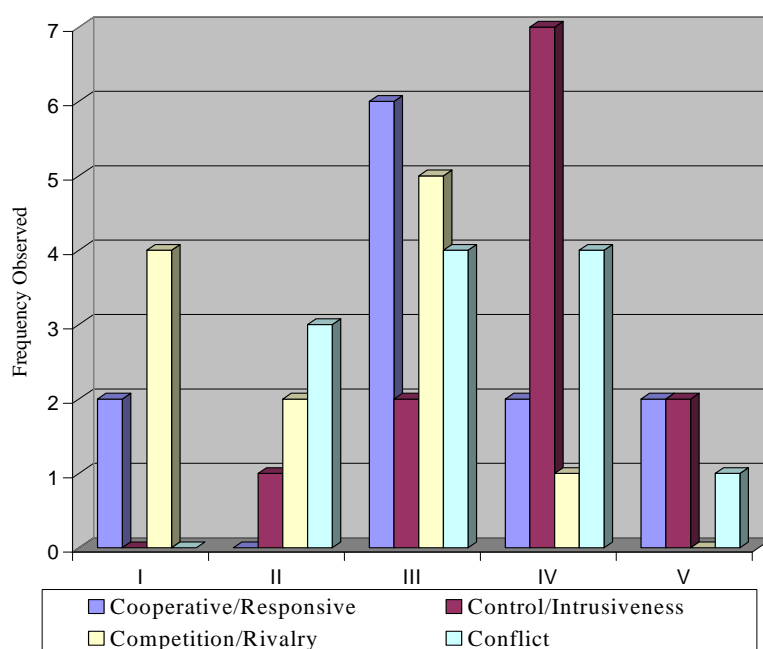


Figure 12. Nature of Drake's interactions

Conflict was also evenly split between category III and category IV in the ratings of Drake's interactions. Thus, the majority of Drake's conflicts included three or more disputes, teasing and taunting behaviours, and criticism of his sibling.

Additionally, Drake exhibited anger or irritability, and occasional aggression during conflicts. Although Drake's conflictual interactions with his sibling were not at the extreme end (category V), conflict was persistent.

Controlling and intrusive behaviours figured prominently in Drake's interactions with his sibling. Of the 12 interactions scored, Drake made clear attempts to control his sibling, either physically interfering in her play or refusing to relinquish control or objects on Brianna's (or the mother's) direction. During play, Drake made repeated suggestions about how Brianna should behave. The mother also noted throughout the interview that control was a key issue for Drake.

Mother B *So he does wanna have that kind of control thing very much... [and later] So yes he definitely has more of the power trip, he likes to be more controlling.* Interview Transcript, 1, p. 7

Brianna's cooperative interactions with her sibling were rated at a higher level than Drake's (category IV) (see Figure 13). Typically, she made suggestions for joint play or cooperation, followed her sibling's suggestions, and offered help or unsolicited sharing. Additionally, Brianna would more often suggest joint usership of playthings and sustain the bulk of the conversation during play episodes. Control and intrusive behaviours were less prominent in the 12 ratings of Brianna's interactions with her brother (the majority scored as a category II). As Brianna often adopted the more submissive role in play, it is not surprising that she preferred to relinquish control (when Drake claimed control) or simply waited for a turn as opposed to displaying controlling and intrusive behaviours.

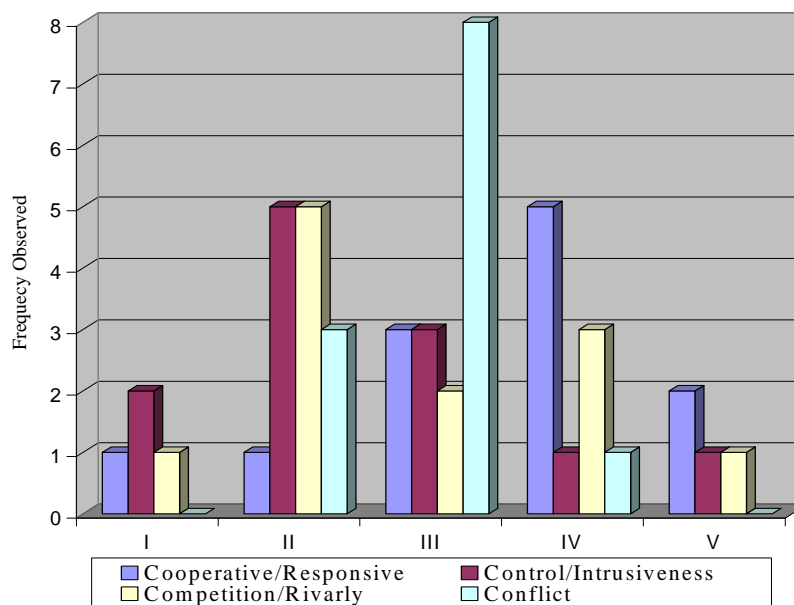


Figure 13. Nature of Brianna's interactions

The majority of Brianna's conflictual behaviours were rated at the category III level. Like her sibling, Brianna routinely engaged in disputes, arguments, or protests during play. These conflicts included teasing and taunting and, at times, the disagreements extended over the course of play. Brianna's display of competitive and rivalrous behaviours varied across the rating categories. The highest concentration of these behaviours were rated as category II, denoting that Brianna made occasional signs of rivalry and competitiveness. However unlike Drake, Brianna was more likely to display competitive and rivalrous behaviours characteristic of category IV and V. Thus, Brianna tended to be more cognizant of issues of *fairness, right to play, and the parent-sibling interaction*. During the observation day when the father was present Brianna articulated her feelings of anger toward her parents regarding her perceived imbalance of the parent-sibling interaction. She was also more likely to make disparaging remarks about Drake to

the mother (labeling him a *baby* and herself a *big girl*). However, the level of competitive or rivalrous interactions between these siblings may not be accurately reflected in the 12 ratings as the mother was not present during eight of these observations. To gain a greater perspective on the nature of the siblings' interactions, all exchanges were also coded from the transcripts to examine the overall nature of playful interactions, teasing, disputes and conflicts.

Siblings' Interactions Coded from Transcripts

The patterns that emerged from the observations and the 12 on-site ratings of the siblings' interactions were mirrored in the results from coding all of the interactions (from the transcripts). The coding of all interactions helped address,

How relevant are teasing behaviours in relation to other forms of behaviours

Brianna and Drake engage in?

Overwhelmingly, the twins engaged in play most often (see Figure 14). Brianna initiated slightly fewer playful activities than her sibling. Both children were closely matched with regards to the number of conflict and disputes initiated. On average the twins engaged in 11.1 playful activities each hour during the observations (Appendix Q).

In total, the siblings initiated 23 conflicts. On average, 1.4 conflicts or disputes occurred per hour between this sibling dyad. Conflicts between the siblings tended to be brief and centered on issues of toy use or access to toys.

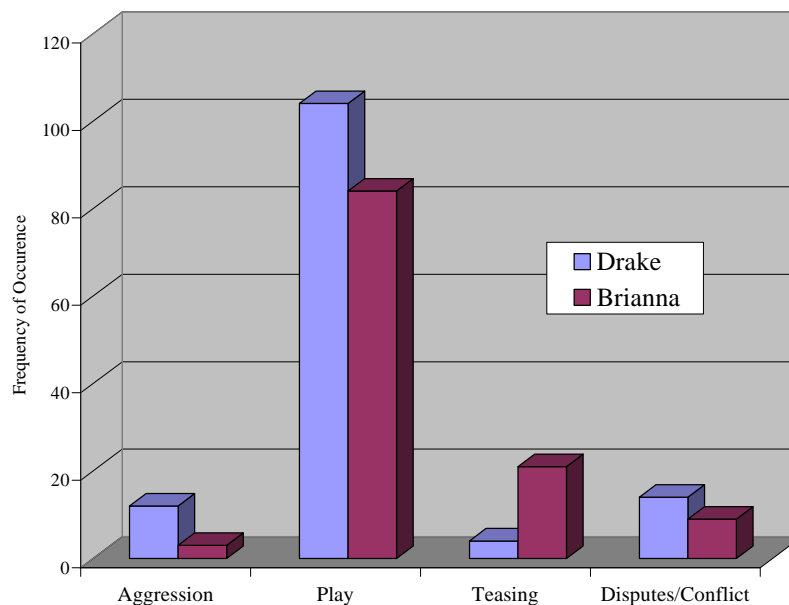


Figure 14. Frequency of initiated acts of Drake and Brianna

Although conflicts were both verbal and physical in nature, the majority of the conflicts were vocal (overall 12 conflicts were verbal, 9 conflicts were physical, and 2 conflicts were a mix of physical and verbal). Only three conflicts escalated into aggression.

Example of verbal conflict:

Drake pulls the Hawaiian lay necklace off Brianna's outstretched arm. She shouts angrily, "give that to me! I'm gonna [going to] arrest you!"

B-11-10

Example of physical conflict:

Brianna runs to collect the scissors from the couch but Drake grabs them first. They both pull at the scissors but Drake remains a hold of them. Brianna grunts her frustration and I point to the other pair of scissors on the other couch.

B-2-14

Drake initiated the majority of the aggressive behaviours. Overall, 15 aggressive interactions occurred between the siblings. Aggression tended not to be significant or present at each home visit. However like conflict, aggression was likely to be centered on themes of toy usership or access to toys.

Drake grabs the Barbie™ doll from Brianna pushing her out of the way and claims “it’s my turn.” Brianna cries softly “that’s mine” but watches as Drake wraps the doll in paper and takes over her play. B-2-13

Similar to the findings from other studies (Crick et al., 2006; Maccoby & Jacklin, 1978), gender appeared to play a role in the instigation of aggression between the twin siblings. Brianna initiated only three episodes of aggression in comparison to Drake who initiated 12. Conversely, Brianna initiated the bulk of teasing interactions. However, the initiation of aggression and teasing may have been more attributable to the nature of the siblings’ interactions and the quality of those interactions rather than their respective genders. Although aggression, conflict, and teasing were prevalent within the sibling relationship, overwhelmingly their interactions were of a playful nature. However, teasing played an important role in this relationship and was more prevalent than aggression and slightly more predominant than conflict.

Teasing Behaviours of Drake and Brianna

In sum, there were 25 teasing incidents observed between the twins. On average, 1.5 teasing incidents occurred each hour (Appendix Q). Overwhelmingly, Brianna initiated the majority of the teasing incidents ($n = 21$) while Drake exhibited teasing behaviours to a much lesser extent ($n = 4$). Teasing behaviours included both behavioural (e.g., pulling of hair) and verbal (e.g., name-calling). The form, function, and teasing category all varied and demonstrated distinctive patterns for each child.

Drake’s teasing behaviours. Drake initiated only four teasing incidences during the 17 hours of observations. Three of these involved a behavioural form of teasing (e.g., sticking out of his tongue) while the other incidence involved a verbal taunt in an attempt to goad his sister. Drake incorporated a variety of off-record

markers to indicate his intention to tease, such as laughter, sing-song chants, sneers, mimicry, and give-and-withdrawal of a desired object.

A variety of play behaviours preceded each incident of Drake's teasing. The children were engaged in parallel play prior to two of the incidences, and group constructive play preceded the third incidence. Brianna was engaged in television watching (non-play behaviour) prior to the fourth incident.

Brianna, the intended recipient for each of the teases, varied her responses. She replied verbally, with humour, or by ignoring the tease. Brianna's responses tended to be brief and relatively emotionally neutral. With the exception of one tease (where the mother removed Drake from the room), play quickly resumed after each teasing incident.

Drake flops about in front of the television as Brianna tries to watch. He laughingly taunts Brianna by blocking her view and sticks his tongue out at her. Brianna states with a strong voice "that's rude." B-3-1

Three of the four instances of Drake's teasing were rated as having a *negative* valence. The content of the behavioural teases initiated by Drake emphasized negative behaviours and thus were deemed negative. The content of the verbal tease was rated as neutral, since it appeared to emphasize neither positive nor negative behaviours or attributes. In this instance, although the intent to tease was evident in the sing-song chant and mocking tone of Drake's voice, the content involved neutral terms (i.e., Drake chanted "*come and get this, come and get this.*" B-10-10).

The mother appeared to be the intended audience in two of the incidences of teasing. She was not present in the room during the other two episodes. The mother made both a physical response (i.e., removed Drake from the room) and a vocal response (i.e., the mother cautioned Drake to "*be polite*") to the teasing episodes.

My response as the audience member to the majority of the teasing was primarily neutral, that is I did not respond with either facial or vocal expressions. However, on one occasion my initial response was a humorous one (that mirrored Brianna's response as the recipient).

The classification of Drake's teasing was uniformly split between social norm violations and taunting, while Brianna's teasing behaviour varied across three categories (see Figure 15). Drake sullied the household practice of *politeness* in both instances of norm violation (by making what the family ethos considered rude and unacceptable actions). In both instances of taunting, Drake mocked his sibling by offering then withdrawing a desired toy. Brianna's teasing behaviours were vastly different from those of her sibling.

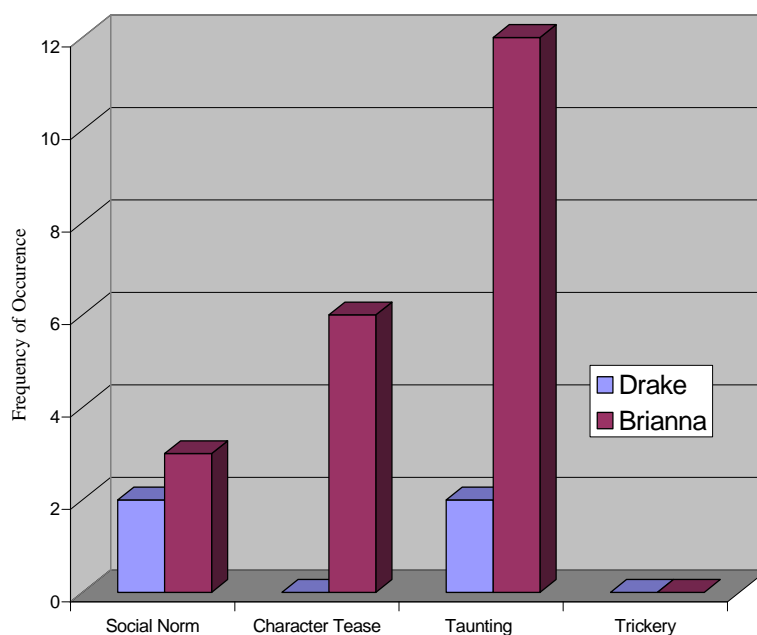


Figure 15. Teasing categories of Drake and Brianna

Brianna's teasing behaviour. Overwhelmingly, Brianna was responsible for the majority of the teasing interactions ($n = 21$). In addition to her use of teasing,

Brianna also appeared well versed in the language and understanding of what constituted teasing (see discussion of Brianna's conversational interview responses on p. 216). Brianna engaged in a variety of teasing behaviours, including pulling her sibling's hair, name-calling, interference in Drake's play, verbal jeers, poking, saying the opposite of what was true, goading and taunting with a desired toy.

Parallel or group cooperative play preceded the majority of the Brianna's teasing incidents ($n = 20$) while solitary play preceded one episode of teasing. Competing to be *first* or *winning* were central themes of the teasing that occurred during parallel play:

Drake has now caught up to Brianna at the end of the track pushing her bus along in front with his train. "Hey" she protests and quickly races her bus to the end chanting, "Who is gonna [going to] win the race. She continues to chant in sing-song, "I win I win me the best I'm the winner, I got the blue ribbon." B-5-2

Alternately, Drake's invasion of Brianna's play space during parallel play also prompted teasing once. During cooperative group play, either the children were engaged in dramatic play or collaborating in constructing train track or puzzle assembly prior to the incidences of teasing. Again, the issue of *accessing* resources and *control* of the play appeared to figure prominently during the teasing episodes that occurred during cooperative play.

Brianna quickly swipes the bus back "Now you don't get the bus." Drake screams "Ya." Brianna insists, "I need the bus." Drake baby talk "Mine bus." Brianna "Nope it's my bus [pause] I get to drive I get to drive to get the trophy." Drake lays across the track and talks in a baby like voice, "I get another prize." Brianna chants again, "And I get the trophier [trophy]." Drake continues in his baby talk-like voice "I get another prize." Brianna collects all the train pieces and chants, "And and I'm not letting you get the prize train! I'm not playing with you and I'm not playing with the train and I'm not playing trucks and I'm not giving a prize to you." B-10-9

Brianna may have utilized teasing behaviours as a means of levelling the playing field and challenging Drake's typical control of the play scenarios.

Drake utilized a variety of response strategies in answer to Brianna's teasing. Drake responded with humour, ignoring, and verbally. Also, Drake responded with aggression toward his sibling, retaliation with his own tease, and physical anger (whereby he smashed a toy). Most often Drake ignored his sibling's teases ($n = 9$). The humorous response and ignore response were more likely to result in continued or renewed play after a teasing episode than any other response strategy. Additionally, when Drake responded verbally or with a retaliatory tease play also resumed. Conversely, play did not continue when Drake's responses were aggressive in nature either toward his sibling or the toys. In these three instances either the instigator (Brianna) left the room or lost control of a resource and no longer participated in the play that preceded the teasing.

The mother was present for only three of the teasing episodes initiated by Brianna (during one of these three incidences the mother and father were jointly present). Similar to the finding of Lightner et al.'s study (2000), it would appear that much of Brianna and Drake's teasing was conducted outside the realm of adult supervision. The mother, when present, responded verbally to one incident, ignored another, and physically reacted to a third episode after labelling Brianna's behaviour as *teasing*. Interestingly, in all three instances the mother negotiated a settlement to the teasing scenario by rewarding Drake (the recipient of the tease) the disputed toy. It may be that the mother responded to Drake's intense emotional reaction in each of these episodes, as he was visibly distraught. Conversely, she may have had greater

expectations for Brianna to concede as the mother perceived the female twin as the more mature child.

My responses, as the audience to Brianna's teasing, were also mixed. I varied my response strategies between distracting the instigator, ignoring and observing, engaging the instigator in a conversation about teasing, and physically intervening in one teasing episode (this instance involved the safety of the recipient). Primarily I reacted by ignoring and simply observing the incident of teasing as it unfolded. During one episode of teasing there was no audience as the children were unattended and the teasing scenario was captured on the audiotape.

With the exception of one incident, the valences of all of Brianna's teases were negative in content. One incident of teasing was rated as neutral in content since it contained a non-specific statement ("*Ha ha boo boo*" [B-9-3]). The remainder of the teases were rated as having a negative content for explicit statements made (e.g., derogatory name-calling) or the offensive behaviours that were conducted (e.g., poking the sibling).

The majority of Brianna's teases were taunts (see Figure 16). Fifty-seven percent of Brianna's teases involved taunts of her sibling, while character teases accounted for 29% and social norm violation 14%. Similar to her sibling, there were no instances of trickery noted.

Brianna initiated slightly more verbal taunts ($n = 7$) than behavioural non-verbal taunts ($n = 5$). Verbal taunts were explicit statements accompanied by sing-song chants and prosodic variation (e.g., "*I win I win, me the best, me the best*"). Behavioural taunts included pulling of hair, poking, and pestering the sibling with a desired object. Although Brianna favoured taunting, she demonstrated greater variety

in her teasing behaviour than her sibling. Brianna also displayed social norm violation teases and character type teasing.

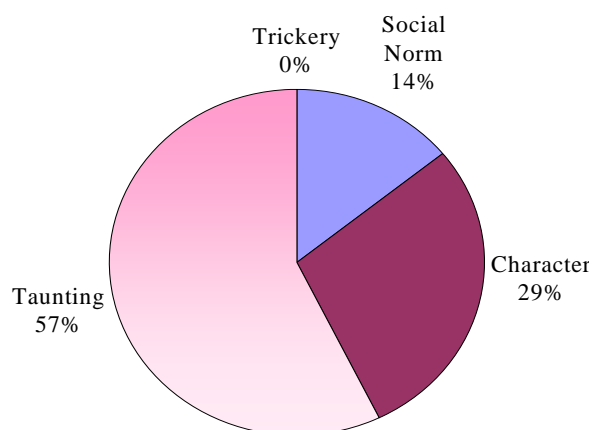


Figure 16. Categorization of Brianna's teases

Brianna instigated three teases that were classified as social norm violation. All of these instances involved Brianna acting in a manner that contravened the household norms for acceptable behaviour. The family's custom governing *fairness*, *politeness*, and *respect* were all violated during Brianna's teasing incidences involving social norms.

Character teases are specific to various aspects of an individual's character, psychological trait, physical trait, or mental characteristic. In the six instances of character teasing Brianna used name-calling to tease her sibling. All of these instances involved derogatory terms that negatively characterized her sibling. Brianna teased Drake by calling him names such as "*Duffus*", "*Meanie*", "*Baby*", or "*Goofy*." The first three terms characterized undesirable traits such as being unintelligent (*Duffus*), malicious (*Meanie*), or immature (*Baby*), while being silly (*Goofy*) may have indeed been a desirable trait for the children. However, the

context of this tease involved Brianna sneering the label as Drake removed toys from her control. Brianna appeared more adept at utilizing character teasing as a means to provoke her sibling. Additionally, all of the name-calling involved terms that referred to Drake's psychological traits or mentalistic attributes (although the label *Meanie* could have also been used in reference to Drake's behaviours). Possibly the intimacy afforded young twins makes them more attuned to one another's mentalistic traits and further capable of using this understanding to construct meaningful teases targeting the other sibling.

What Mother B Said About Teasing

The mother of Family B referred to terms such as *tormenting* and *taunting* in her definition of teasing (Interview Transcript, 1, p. 3). Conversely, the father's concept of teasing centered more on issues of toy usership. During the observation day when the Father was present he commented, "*oh there's some serious teasing [pause] at the very beginning you know my son would not let her play with that [indicates box] and you'll see if he comes back he'll steal it from her*" (B-7-8). Both parents recognized and were aware that both of the children were capable of and initiated teasing behaviours. The mother also recognized that teasing between her children was a form of a *put down* where one child gained status at the detriment of the other. Mother B also stated having an "*audience*" for teasing was an important component of teasing (Interview Transcript, 2, p. 5). The mother also had an expectation that teasing would be a factor in the children's future schooling experience (the twins were registered to attend junior kindergarten in the autumn of the following year). During one home visit she expressed her concerns regarding

Drake's garbled speech as a source for potential teasing as his social world expanded outside the home.

The mother highlighted the nature and form of a tease as being distinguishable from play by the "*sing song that comes out or that little attitude or tone comes out and you know [pause] that's teasing*" (Interview Transcript 2, p. 3). She distinguished hurtful teasing from playful teasing by the *joking manner* that is adopted during a tease. However, the mother made several references to the more hurtful nature of teasing in reference to both herself and the children.

Mother B depicted a lack of teasing in her own childhood history, citing that she was neither a recipient nor instigator of teases within her sibling relationships (Mother B was a twin herself, and also had an additional older sister and one older brother). Thus, she described hurt feelings and being insulted when she was the recipient of her husband's teasing. The mother also recognized that the father provided the children with an inappropriate role model for teasing behaviours. Mother B further depicted incidences of teasing between the father and the children. She perceived that the father mistakenly used teasing as a means of curbing undesirable behaviours or encouraging other behaviours. The mother's own admitted lack of experience with teasing might have predisposed her to attend closely to the more hurtful nature of teasing and respond accordingly.

Like he'll say to Drake 'oh why don't you go to the bathroom, the toilet like Nana does, you're just a little baby [pause] still you're a big baby and Nana's a big girl'. And I say don't compare like that you have to say it in a positive way. He thinks by saying that he's going to force him to do it. But I don't think it works that way. But he'll also do it to Brianna like if he says something to Brianna like 'oh look Drake can do this why can't you you're smart you can do it', so.

Interview Transcript, 2, pp. 3-4

She perceived name-calling to be more playful than physical teasing. Additionally, the mother cited that she typically only responded to the latter form of teasing.

Mother B also emphasized that verbal responses were the most appropriate response strategies for her children to counter teasing. Additionally, she admitted an influence from television in the terms the children used in name-calling incidents of teasing. (The term *Duffus* was borrowed from a movie the children had recently watched.)

The mother also recognized Brianna's teasing abilities during one episode of teasing and commented, "*you see what she does she just won't leave him alone*" (B-5-10). During the interviews the mother had a greater tendency to describe Brianna's teasing behaviours than Drake's. In one instance she stated, "*Ya [yes] the taunting is a big thing with her, she taunts a lot*" (Interview Transcript, 1, p. 4). The mother emphasized Drake's tendency to be more controlling during the interview with four explicit references to his desire for control.

During the interviews, the mother referenced her husband's teasing behaviours (of herself and the children), the children's teasing behaviours (of the parents and each other), but stated that she did not engage in teasing (the children or her husband). Interestingly, the grandmother (Mother B's mother) engaged in teasing behaviours during one of her visits to the home. The grandmother teased Drake verbally while playfully pulling on his soother in an attempt to dissuade his use of it. And although the mother was present during the incident she condoned the grandmother's teasing and admonished Drake for his continued use of a soother. It may be that Mother B was reluctant to intervene in the teasing as the instigator held the matriarchal position within this family. Conversely, the mother may have

perceived the grandmother's taunt as harmless because it was mostly verbal in nature and non-aggressive.

The mother perceived teasing to function as a means of stimulation, a way of getting attention from the sibling. Additionally, she believed the children learned to manipulate one another as a result of teasing, as well as learn to negotiate power within the relationship:

Interviewer *What do you think they learn through teasing?*

Mother B *Well I guess they be [pause] if they always get their own way it's a bit of manipulation. If I tease enough they'll just let me do what I want, um. That's a bad thing, um [pause] I'm just trying to think in their little minds what they'd be thinking [pause]. Um I guess it's probably not to let themselves feel inferior. They do have that little struggle I guess in whose going you know get their own way, whose going to win.*

Interview Transcript, 2, p. 5

The mother was less clear on her views of whether teasing had an emotional impact on the children. She described both a lack of emotional impact yet also depicted the hurtful nature of teasing.

I don't really see it [teasing] as any major emotional impact right now. I think it's more of learning or practicing, I think that's it. I don't really see them emotional too much cause you know it's the moment and then they kind of forget about it.

Interview Transcript, 2, p. 7

But they do get hurt obviously.

Interview Transcript, 2, p. 7

Conflict was cited as the mother's primary concern regarding the twins' relationship. However, despite the teasing and conflict the mother described throughout the interviews, she classified the children's overall relationship as warm and playful. She described the children's relationship in terms of being friends and playmates for one another. Additionally, Mother B highlighted that the twins were

protective of one another (in play with other friends and in light of the father's teasing).

What Drake and Brianna Said About Teasing

I initiated ten attempts to engage the twins in a conversational interview about teasing. All interviewing attempts took place in the general play area of the living-dining room during the course of play. The children were both interviewed separately and jointly. The mother was not present during any of the conversational interviews. Interviews with Brianna were generally more successful than those with Drake.

Specific examples of play or interactions were used as the basis for several of the attempts to interview the children. The results were mixed. Brianna appeared to be more attuned to her own feelings about teasing scenarios as they were occurring. Less specific questions such as "*what kind of things does he do that bug you*" failed to generate anything beyond Brianna affirming "yes" (B-3-8).

[Continued from earlier teasing] Drake returns to Brianna and snatches several of her loose crayons and the last remaining empty box. She screams loudly "NO!" He gets the crayons and box and says, "I just need them." He sits down on the floor nearby and stuffs the crayons into the empty box. I try asking Brianna "how does it make you feel when he takes your crayons?" Quietly, she responds after a long pause, "I feel mad." B-3-8

Interviewing the children within the context of dramatic play yielded the most responses to questions regarding teasing by both of the twins. During the eleventh home visit, the children were engrossed in dramatic play with the theme of *office workers* for the majority of the visit. During this play I was able to engage each of the siblings in a conversation on the topic of teasing as well as converse with them jointly.

Overall, I attempted to engage Drake in a conversational interview four times throughout the course of observations (the fourth attempt involved interviewing Brianna and Drake simultaneously). The results were mixed. The first two attempts yielded few relevant responses from Drake despite the use of telephone play as a means of interviewing (a theme of play favoured by Drake). However, Drake identified “*playing with his sister*” and “*playing doctor*” as his favoured activities that included his twin during the second attempt at interviewing (B-3-5). Additionally by the third attempt, Drake identified “*playing with Mommy*” and playing “*officers*” [office workers] as his favoured activities that did not include his sibling (B-8-11). Additionally, Drake was able to attribute hurt feelings to me when I described a teasing scenario (where I was the recipient), but less likely to identify himself as a victim of teasing.

Interviewing Drake was a challenge as he was less likely to remain focused on the process than his sibling. Often his play and play language were interspersed with the responses to the questions:

- Interviewer* *Can you tell me about the kind of things you like to do with Brianna?*
- Drake* *Mmhm yes.*
- Interviewer* *What kind of things do you like to do with her?*
- Drake* *[Points] See that truck with that loaded on the back?*
- Interviewer* *Anything else besides playing trucks?*
- Drake* *Gets up and moves to the truck demonstrating and verbalizing how the toy truck can hook up another truck and pull it. He returns to his seat.* B-11-3

Although Drake acknowledged a verbal response strategy would be most appropriate for teases where I was the recipient, he identified aggression as his own usual response to Brianna’s teases. Drake also identified retaliation and enlisting help from an adult as an appropriate response strategy to Brianna’s teasing. His definition of

- Interviewer* *What do you think it means to tease?*
Brianna *I tease my brother.*
Interviewer *If you're going to tease him what would you be doing?*
Brianna *Just playing.* B-5-6

Additionally, she also labelled the brother as her teaser. Brianna described instances of taunting (e.g., taking her toys away or physically pestering her) and character teasing in her references to the form of teasing Drake instigated.

- Interviewer* *And what kind of stuff does he do when he's teasing?*
Brianna *He likes to tease me. He calls me stupid and says nobody likes me.* B-5-7

Social rejection was another theme Brianna identified:

- Interviewer* *What kinds of things does Drake tease you about?*
Brianna *He says that he didn't wanna [want to] play with me.* B-8-8

Brianna identified “*playing with Mommy*” (B-8-9) as an appropriate response strategy to Drake’s teasing. She also cited retaliation as an appropriate response strategy (i.e., Brianna responded, “*take his stuff away*” to the question “*What should you do when he teases?*” [B-11-8]). Additionally, Brianna indicated that the mother would counsel the children to play together in response to the question “*What does Mommy say to do if Drake’s teasing you?*” (B-8-10). However, Brianna was less likely to make a relevant response to questions regarding how to discriminate between hurtful and playful teasing.

- Interviewer* *How do you know when he's teasing or he just wants to have fun?*
Brianna *How do you get this off? Take the wrapper off. [I remove some tape for her.] He called me bad names and Mommy didn't like it.*
Interviewer *Okay and that means he's teasing you when he's calling you bad names?*
Brianna *Yes.* B-11-6

- Interviewer* *And how do you know if he's being hurtful when he's taking things from you or is he just having fun?*
- Brianna* *Well that [pause] the important papers are ready [play reference].* B-11-7

Brianna competently ascribed various feeling states in regards to her own emotions about being a teasing recipient. She used terms such as mad, sad, angry, and jealous in reference to her own feelings. Brianna also indicated her sibling's teasing of her meant he did not like her.

- Interviewer* *Has anyone ever done anything to hurt your feelings Brianna?*
- Brianna* *Yes. Drakey always calls me stuff, names.*
- Interviewer* *Getting called names, how does that feel?*
- Brianna* *Yes sometimes, sometimes he calls me stuff.*
- Interviewer* *How does it feel when you get called names like that?*
- Brianna* *It means I'm sad [fingers through the book and stands glued to my side leaning on me]*
- Interviewer* *It means you're sad.*
- Brianna* *Yes very sad [Brianna uses a quiet voice and leans against my body, lowering her head].* B-11-4

Brianna was less likely to ascribe any feeling states to Drake as the recipient of her teases. This may be because Brianna perceived her own teases as playful whereas Drake's teases were described in hurtful terms. Additionally, Brianna labelled teasing where I was the recipient as playful as well.

- Interviewer* *Sometimes when I was little, kids would say 'nya nya nya nya nya'.*
- Brianna* *Why'd they say that?*
- Interviewer* *I don't know, what do you think, why do you think they would say that?*
- Brianna* *I bet they were just having fun.* B-5-6

Similar to the findings from the study of Shapiro et al. (1991), Brianna as the primary instigator of teasing discerned her teasing behaviour as playful. Conversely, when Brianna was the recipient, she perceived the teasing to be hurtful. It may be that recipients and instigators attend to different cues in teasing scenarios. Thus, the

instigator may be more cognizant of the off-record markers that indicate the non-serious nature of a tease, whereas as the recipient children may attend more to the emotional intent inherent in the explicit statements or behaviours. This may account for Brianna's two distinct views teasing. As an instigator, teasing was fun while as a recipient teasing was hurtful.

Summary of Family B

Overall the theme of *freedom* appeared to guide the nature of the siblings' interactions with one another as well as the mother's management of the children's behaviour in Family B. The context for play appeared unrestricted as ample space and resources were available to the children. The nature of the siblings' interactions was impacted by this pervasive philosophy within the home.

Mother B's participation in play with her children was infrequent (during the observations). Overall, the mother spent 16 out of 17 hours engaged in other activities within the home (e.g., talking on the phone, laundry, preparing meals, or visiting with the grandmother). However, it was unclear if this pattern of minimal interaction was typical or a result of my presence.

Mother B granted Drake more tolerance for his inappropriate behaviours while having a greater expectation for Brianna to self-regulate. As the mother perceived Brianna to be the more competent twin, she may have had less tolerance for Brianna's unacceptable behaviours. The children's gender and varied developmental levels appeared to influence the differential treatment by the mother as well as the nature of the children's relationship.

The nature of Drake and Brianna's interactions were complex and multifarious. Overall, playful activities accounted for 75% of the twins' actions

while teasing, aggression, and conflicts/disputes were less evident (see Appendix O). However, teasing between the twins tended to be more prevalent than aggression and conflict and occurred at a rate of 1.5 incidents per hour (see Appendix Q).

Brianna was responsible for 84% of the teasing episodes. The majority of both children's teasing behaviours involved taunting (16 of 25 teases were taunts), although Brianna was almost equally likely to use social norm and character teasing (see Figure 16). Brianna was also more likely to describe various forms of teasing and label Drake and herself as capable teasers. Additionally, she attributed various hurt feelings for herself as the recipient of teasing (i.e., mad, sad, angry, jealous) while perceiving teasing of her brother as playful and harmless. These two distinct views of teasing and being teased are not uncommon among children (Shapiro et al., 1991).

Portrait of Family C

Family C was comprised of three male siblings, Connor (66 months), Caleb (46 months), and Reese (27 months), and a mother and father. The mother was the sole adult family participant from this family. The two youngest males, Caleb and Reese, were the primary child participants as Connor the eldest sibling attended school (grade 1) and was typically not present during the observations. Overall, I made 11 visits to Family C during the fall and winter of 2005/2006. A family room located in the basement of the home was the dedicated play space and all observations took place here.

The Physical Play Space of Family C

The family room housed the children's toys and provided a clear boundary that *this space was for play*. The mother informed me that the children's rooms also

contained toys and were used for play but I did not visit or observe the children in their bedrooms. Overall the home was neat and orderly. All items (including toys) appeared to have a dedicated place. The main level was comprised of an entrance, living room, kitchen, and dining area. There was a noted absence of toys on this level.

The family room was well organized and arranged to foster play. The children's toys were neatly stored and sorted in large toy bins according to their play uses. For example, all trains and track building materials were located in one bin with a dedicated storage spot next to the television wall cabinet. Although the children's choices during play appeared unrestricted, the mother did expect that the children would participate in cleaning up after play finished, returning play materials to their dedicated storage spaces.

The play area consisted of a corridor that led from the stairs to the family room, giving the space an overall 'L' shape. Directly underneath the stairs was a small area that housed several bins of toys. The children also used this small storage area together with the hallway and bottom of stairs as a play area. This entire area was not easily viewed from the main family room and often provided a space where the children's play and behaviour could go unchecked by the mother or myself. At times, conflict occurred within this space as the children competed for control of specific resources.

Although there was an abundance and assortment of playthings in the family room, conflict and aggression between Reese and Caleb was routine. The mother noted during the interview that having multiple playthings plus a variety of toys in the household were strategies to reduce sibling quarrels.

Ya [Yes] like we try to make sure there's enough for the three of them to play so they don't have to [share], like there's lots of trains. We try, we don't just buy one of something unless it's something they can all do together. Like for Christmas they all got they each got a robot, they each got a you know something that they can each play separately but when they play together, they each got a robot and they each got a ninja turtle. But Reese got a pirate ship with lots of pieces that they can all play. And then there's a racetrack that Conner got but everybody got a car that they can play on it. We try to keep it even so that to cut down on the fighting. Doesn't always work though.

Interview Transcript, 1, p. 6

Despite this strategy, conflict and aggression between the siblings was routine. On average, 2.7 conflicts between the siblings occurred each hour (see Appendix Q). Additionally, three aggressive interactions between the brothers were noted each hour. The physicality of the siblings' relationship was also noted by the mother as the most concerning aspect of the brothers' interactions.

Caleb

Caleb was the large-framed middle child of Family C. At 46 months he closely matched his elder sibling, Connor, in size. Caleb had a profound speech delay that greatly impacted his ability to communicate. His speech was low and garbled and typically he generated 2 to 3 words sentences. For example, Caleb stated “*choo choo light*” (C-1-2) to indicate he was watching the light of the mechanized toy train as it lapped the track. Often I relied on his facial expressions and body movements to interpret his spoken words.

Caleb quickly draws on the etch-a-sketch then announces “dido.” I guess, “a potato?” at his circular drawing with dots. Caleb repeats “dido.” This time I guess “Oh a circle.” Caleb smiles nodding his head and draws again.

C-1-4

At times, I also clarified my interpretations with the mother. Caleb was assigned a speech therapist and attended weekly appointments.

Caleb was an inquisitive and expressive child. He was demonstrative and easily engaged in play with me on my first visit to the home. During interactions with his sibling, Caleb tended to dominate. He often made the decisions regarding the theme of play and the allocation of resources.

Caleb takes the two vehicles and says “me.” Reese is grabbing for one vehicle and I ask Caleb “Which one can Reese have [pause] the ambulance or the fire truck”? Caleb hands Reese the fire truck and keeps the ambulance for himself, he also hands me a third truck [gas refuelling truck]. C-2-1

Caleb often tried to control his sibling during play at times, using his physical size to intimidate the much smaller Reese:

Caleb moves back to the train and wrestles it away from Reese once again breaking it apart. Reese cries out “my train, my train” and then starts to cry. C-4-1

Caleb did not limit his controlling behaviour to his younger sibling. Rather, on several occasions Caleb attempted to control my actions during play and utilized intimidation tactics with his elder sibling as well (Connor was present during two of the observations days plus the orientation visit).

Caleb grabs the play food from my hand and pushes on my head toward the carpet. He says “Sleep, sleep.” I tell him “You need to ask me, please don’t push on my head, ask me to go to sleep.” He says “Sleep, sleep” and pats the floor. I say “okay” and lay down on the floor as he’s instructed. C-4-3

Caleb the Player

Caleb enjoyed a variety of play activities including trains, track assembly, dramatic play, book reading, playing with dolls, colouring, and rough and tumble play. Caleb’s play tended to be physical and lacking elaborate narratives or play props. He enjoyed more realistic toys such as play food and utilized these toys in more of a literal manner (e.g., cooking with play foods). Caleb’s play also tended to be more imitative than original in content.

Caleb calls “Right here right here myer [spider].” I turn back to Caleb’s drawing and make several wrong guesses as to what he has drawn. Mom helps from the couch, informing me it’s a spider. “Oh a spider, nice spider Caleb” I respond. Caleb beams proudly, pointing to his drawing “A myer, myer [a spider, a spider].” I say “Yes that’s your spider, and your spider is sad boo hoo hoo.” Caleb laughs. I crawl my hand across the floor slowly inching it toward him and tell Caleb this is my spider. Caleb screams and smacks the top of my hand squishing it to the floor. I laugh, “Oh you squished my spider.” He laughs and we repeat this spider play several more times. Caleb then makes the same action with his hand and crawls it onto my hand. I say, “Oh is that your spider?” He softly places his hand on mine and I comment “Now the spiders are friends.” C-1-6

Overall, Caleb demonstrated an affinity for dramatic play. Of the 33 play behaviours scored on the POS, dramatic play was initiated 42% of the time (see Appendix P). Caleb’s dramatic play tended to be centered on themes of *daily living* (e.g., going to bed, waking up) and *cooking* (or preparing imaginary food for cooking). He was equally likely to engage in aggressive behaviour (non-play behaviours) as functional play (each representing 15% of his total activities scored). Mostly, Caleb engaged in group play (see Figure 17). However, parallel play also constituted a large portion of Caleb’s social play (36%). Caleb did not engage in solitary play during the 16 hours of observation. The small play space or the novelty of my presence may have impacted Caleb’s desire to play alone.

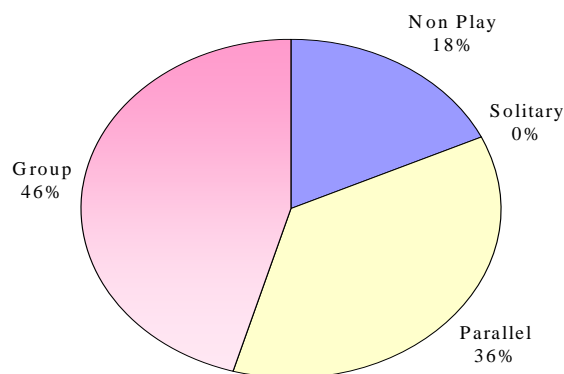


Figure 17. Social play behaviour of Caleb

Caleb engaged in group play with a variety of people including his mother, the younger sibling (Reese), myself, and the older sibling (Connor). Forty percent of Caleb's group play that was scored was conducted with someone other than his youngest sibling. Additionally of the remaining incidents, most often group play included both Reese and myself (or Reese and the mother or eldest brother). Rarely, did Caleb and Reese engage in group play without another person participating (only 2 of the 15 group play interactions observed were between only Reese and Caleb). Group play between Caleb and Reese tended to be brief and basic in comparison to the more dynamic group play that occurred when other people were involved. Moreover, my presence as a new playmate was a source of great excitement for both boys and at times they were clearly more interested in engaging with me than with each other.

Connor climbs to the back of the couch, standing up on the back to "reach apples." Reese follows Connor and teeters at the back of the couch. Reese descends the couch and places his pretend apples in the pile. Connor and Reese repeat the actions of picking apples. Caleb climbs the pretend tree on the floor, he sings, "Rainin pooring [raining pouring], rainin pooring [raining pouring]." Connor lists off all the wet weather gear he's wearing as he climbs the couch. Reese descends holding out his hand to me saying "Lella." I interpret this as 'umbrella'. Reese holds his hands over his head as his umbrella. Picking apple play continues. [Later] I suggest "Maybe we should make a pie now." Caleb jumps in front of me and sits pretending to be a truck. Caleb says, "drive" and noisily makes driving noises. Connor joins Caleb and follows closely behind him as Caleb moves about the room making driving motions. Reese flops into my lap and joins us in our 'apple truck'. We pretend to drive to the grocery store to buy ice cream for our pie (my idea). Caleb makes all the corresponding loud car noises then loud whistle noises. I ask, "Where else should we take the apples?" Connor says, "Maybe we should go home and bake a pie." Caleb drives again until Connor announces, "We're here"...[baking pie play continues with all three boys and myself].

C-4-7

Reese

Reese, the youngest sibling, was 27 months at the start of the observations. He was a petite boy with limited speech. In the field notes, I described Reese as being “*like the child who tries to disappear. He is physically small and very powerless, often cowering away from the larger Caleb*” (C-4-6).

In the initial two months of the research, Reese primarily relied on gestures, crying, and screaming to make himself understood. He also utilized sign language with his mother to indicate ‘more’ and ‘eat’. Additionally, Reese uttered simple phrases that were often garbled and unclear. One of Reese’s most often used phrases involved “*mine choo choo*” (C-1-3) to indicate both his desire to play and his concurrent activity. Despite the age gap between Reese and Caleb, their verbal language abilities were similar.

By the third month of the home visits, Reese began to articulate more clearly and use greater variety in his speech acts (e.g., “*I made choo choo*” and “*my choo choo mine, wait choo choo*”). Reese also began a speech therapy intervention program entitled Toddler Talk (Health, 2004) at this time, and the mother reported this greatly benefited his speech. However, Reese typically relied on crying and screaming in response to conflict with his sibling. This behaviour pattern appeared unchanged by Reese’s increased competence in language abilities:

Reese moves over to the pile of plush toys that Caleb is standing on and tries to retrieve one. Caleb shouts out “no” and holds his arms out from his body horizontally. Reese whines and lays on the floor whimpering softly. C-10-7

Reese the Player

Reese enjoyed a variety of play activities, including trains, track assembly, puzzle making, nesting dolls, dramatic play, colouring, and throwing and catching a

ball. Overall, Reese's play tended to be quieter and less physical than that of his sibling. He also displayed greater ease in playing on his own and occupying himself than his sibling.

Reese loads a person onto his ambulance truck. When it falls out he picks it up and cuddles the figure to his chest rocking it gently back and forth. He makes cooing and comforting noises and kisses the figure gently. He repeats this play several more times. C-2-4

Reese rarely initiated play with others but rather watched the play progress before joining in (or waited to be invited to play). Additionally, there was one instance where Reese simply ceased his play and sat next to the couch banging his head hypnotically against the cushions for 2 to 3 minutes.

Reese watches as his brother's train laps the track. He notes when the train goes off the track pointing and stating, "Oh oh." C-1-2

Reese also tended to accept the roles and toys assigned to him by his older sibling:

Caleb hands me the play food that looks like a waffle and I pretend to eat it. He then hands it off to Reese. Reese places the waffle in his mouth then on the floor and bends over it pretending to eat [like a dog would eat]. C-4-3

In general, Reese was clearly dominated by Caleb and often submitted to his authority (or physical force).

The boys are side by side each pushing a button on a toy fire and ambulance house. Each button corresponds to a flashing light and loud siren noise. Caleb announces "no mine" pushing Reese's finger off of what he considers his button. Reese returns to his dedicated button. Mom warns Caleb "You need to share." Caleb answers "No." C-2-4

Routinely, Reese reacted to conflict by throwing himself on the floor and crying or simply whimpering quietly. However, he was equally likely to react aggressively or retreat in response to Caleb's aggression. His mother or I often mitigated conflict on Reese's behalf:

Caleb tries to grab the train that Reese is playing with. I interject “You have to ask Reese when he’s finished playing with the train.” Caleb growls loudly and I repeat that he has to ask his brother for a turn. Caleb says “my turn” grabbing the train. Reese whines and cries as he loses control of the train. Caleb has regained control of the train and Reese cries loudly. Mom interjects and tells Caleb he has to give it back. Caleb backs away from the train after Mom asks him if he needs a time out. C-1-6

However there were six instances where Reese exerted his own authority and refused to relinquish control to his sibling during disputes (one of these disputes involved the eldest sibling and Reese). For example:

The Mom notes that the batteries are dying out on the mechanized train that Reese is playing with. Connor tells Reese “Turn that off it has batteries and they’re gonna [going to] die out.” Reese responds “No way.” Connor insists, “Yes way.” The train continues on and Reese refuses to switch it off. C-5-8

Overall, Reese demonstrated a variety of play behaviours including functional play (e.g., driving a toy car across the carpet repeatedly), exploratory play (e.g., touching and feeling plush toys), construction of train track, drawing and writing, and dramatic play. Of the 32 various play behaviours scored on the POS, 44% of those were dramatic play type behaviours (see Appendix P). Reese demonstrated an affinity for dramatizing activities such as picking apples, baking pies, cooking, and playing the role of *daddy*. He utilized play props, gestures, and simple word phrases to enhance his play:

Reese continues to squeeze his flour sifter over the toy eggs that rest in the pan. As I hold the handle of the pan he offers “more” each time squeezing the handle of the sifter. I thank him. I try to flip the eggs into the air and re-catch them in the pan. The eggs fall to the floor as I pronounce “Aaaah I missed.” Reese says, “Oh oh mess” [pause]. I say, “Oh look I spilled eggs all over the floor. What a mess!.” Reese coos and pretends to clean the mess. C-10-2

The majority of Reese’s play was conducted in a group situation (Figure 18). However, Reese was almost equally likely to engage in parallel play alongside his

sibling. Solitary play also figured prominently in Reese's play behaviours as he was more likely to engage in play by himself while Caleb was either out of the room or engaged elsewhere with another playmate (the mother or myself).

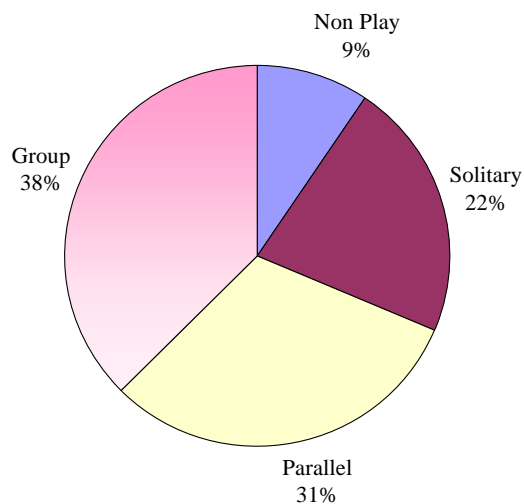


Figure 18. Social play behaviour of Reese

Similar to the findings of Caleb's POS scoring, Reese's group play often involved players other than his middle sibling. Of the 12 group play scenarios scored on the POS, eight involved other players (myself, the mother, Connor). Thus, although Reese demonstrated an affinity for group play, rarely did he enter play with his sibling alone. It may be that Reese was intimidated to initiate group play with his sibling as Caleb clearly dominated during play episodes. Reese may have been more comfortable in group play scenarios where another player was present to mediate his sibling's behaviour. Moreover, it may be that Reese and Caleb's limited capacity for language impacted the nature of their play. Additionally, Reese's young age may have also been a contributing factor to the dynamics of the children's play. The mother's role and parental philosophy also greatly impacted the dynamics of the interactions between these siblings.

The Mother of Family C

The mother of Family C was a petite woman with a shy and reserved demeanor. She was friendly with a relaxed manner and spoke quietly. Her composed manner was also extended to the approach she took to the research study. At the first meeting when I discussed the significance of the research and her participation, the mother commented, "*It gives us something else to do in the week*" (Organization Meeting, Nov. 8, 2005).

The mother was the children's primary caregiver during the day and also worked at night after the father returned home. At the outset of the visits, Mother C was in the first trimester of her fourth pregnancy. Her physical exhaustion was evident in these first two months of home visits as she often lounged on the couch in the family playroom during my stay.

Over the course of the 11 visits to the family home, Mother C split her time between remaining in the family playroom and attending to other activities elsewhere in the home (e.g., cleaning, laundry, baking). In total, the mother spent three hours engaged in play with her children during the 16 hours of observations. This play varied and included constructing track, playing cars/buses, and pretense and dramatic play (e.g., pretending to eat and cook). The mother spent the remaining five hours in the playroom either reading (to herself), working on the computer, cleaning the playroom, resting, or toileting and dressing the children. Her engagement in play with the children generally occurred during the later half of the visits as early on she readily admitted to needing respite (because of the pregnancy).

Mother C, the Player

The mother of Family C expressed excitement and enjoyment when engaged in play with the children. She generally followed their lead and would frequently laugh at their spontaneous behaviours. Mother C also contributed resources and ideas to extend the children's play. The mother also provided verbal direction to guide play rather than actively engaging in that play.

The boys are playing with the fire/ambulance station on the floor. The Mom pops down off the couch and sits cross-legged on the floor next to them. She adds a wash station and encouragingly asks, "Whose truck needs a wash?" She often helps Caleb enunciate words such as 'station' as they all play together.

C-2-2

Mom helps Reese configure the track with verbal directions from where she sits on the couch "Reese turn it over, turn it over, turn that one over." Reese turns the piece end for end several times looking at Mom for confirmation. Mom says "no, over."

C-6-1

At times, the mother's play was more of an attempt to appease and placate a distraught child or mediate the conflict between the siblings:

Reese tries to place his people figures onto the bus Caleb is using. Caleb bats away his brother's toy and says "No mine bus." Mom pulls out the second bus and offers it to Reese. Reese whines a bit before taking the second bus. Mom helps him place people inside.

C-2-3

Overall, the mother engaged in constructing track, rough and tumble type play (e.g., tickling and wrestling), and dramatic play. Dramatic play tended to dominate the mother's choice of play activities as this accounted for approximately 60% of the play in which she engaged. This dramatic play with the mother tended to center on themes of cooking and eating.

The Mother's Management of Sibling Behaviour

The mother of family C upheld a type of *survival of the fittest* approach to managing the children's behaviour and conflicts. She fully recognized that a high

level of conflict and aggression existed among the siblings, but justified that a certain amount of aggressive retaliation was appropriate (especially in incidents where Reese was the intended target and retaliated with aggression toward Caleb). After one instance where Reese responded to his sibling's aggression with his own aggressive act, the mother commented, "*I can't blame him a bit*" (C-4-2). She also responded that it was appropriate for Reese to use physical force as a means of dealing with what she labelled Caleb's "*physical attitude*" (Interview Transcript, 1, p. 3).

The mother described Caleb by labeling him a "*bully*" and attributed the source of many conflicts and aggression to him. Her responses to Caleb's aggression and conflictual behaviour tended to be much harsher than her reactions to Reese.

The mother was also quicker to admonish Caleb for inappropriate behaviour while at times she appeared to condone Reese's more aggressive acts.

As the three of us (Caleb, Reese, and myself) move back toward the train tracks Reese tries to take a bite by gripping his brother's arm tightly. Caleb wails and throws his body to the ground. Mom does not intervene but says, "Now he [Caleb] will know how it feels." C-3-3

In general, the mother used a gentler approach in managing Reese's aggression than what was observed with Caleb. She tended to respond verbally to Reese or ignore his aggressive and conflictual behaviour.

Reese opens his mouth and chomps down toward his brother. He misses Caleb's hand and bites the wooden doll. Caleb screeches. Mom says "Ah ah ah no biting!" I pull Reese off of Caleb and Reese begins to cry. Caleb says quietly "No biting." Reese cries and I tell him "You bit the toy, you missed your brother and bit the toy." Mom hands Reese a doll "Here, here, here's one for Reese." C-8-2

The mother responded to Caleb's aggression with a harsher tone of voice, as well as with warnings of consequences (e.g., going to bed) and time-outs. Moreover,

despite the fact that Reese was the aggressor during one instance of conflict, the mother held Caleb accountable and placed him on a *time-out* for refusal to relinquish a disputed toy:

Reese brings his teeth to his brother's arm and Caleb tries to struggle free. Both are screaming and struggling. Reese manages to get his mouth open and onto his brother's arm and chomps down fiercely. Caleb screams. Mom sits at the computer watching the conflict. She says "Oh oh Reese no." Caleb manages to free the small figure from Reese's grip [toy is source of conflict] and says happily, "Got it!" Reese bites him again. Mom says "Caleb give that back to Reese, Caleb give that back." Caleb holds fast and struggles away from his brother. Mom asks Caleb "Do you need a time out?" [Caleb moves to the time-out spot on the stairs]. C-6-5

The Mother's Interactions with Caleb and Reese

The mother tended to have greater expectations for Caleb's behaviour than what was expected of Reese. She used terms such as '*be good*' and '*no fighting*' in her interactions with Caleb (C-6-5). However, no such expectations were made of Reese. Additionally, during one instance where Reese defied the mother (retrieved his soother after the mother denied his request for it), she responded with humour and distraction (by offering Reese something to eat in place of the soother).

The mother's display of comforting behaviours was also distinct for each of the siblings. Although affectionate towards both children, the mother tended to display more instances of tenderness (e.g., rocking, soothing, carrying, holding, hugging, pat on the back, snuggling together) toward Reese than what was initiated with Caleb. Overall, the mother interacted seven times in a comforting fashion with Reese while the following excerpt depicts Mother C's only initiated act of tenderness that was observed with Caleb:

Caleb wails "Mommy Mommy." She rubs his back as she sits at the computer. Caleb wanders to the stairs and wails "Mommy Mommy"! I comment, "Oh, oh he's crying on the stairs." Mom comments, "He didn't get his way [pause] it's a

tough life you know.” Reese and I continue with our pretense of hot soup eating. Caleb wails louder “Mommy Mommy where are you!” Mom calls out loudly, “Mommy’s right here where you left her.” Caleb continues to wail on the stairs. [Later] Caleb moves back in the room and toward the couch, whimpering. Mom says, “Come get your waffle.” Caleb lifts the lid to the fry pan and continues to whimper. Mom says harshly, “Stop that noise.” He whimpers softly, “Mommy.” She pulls him toward her and hugs him rubbing his back “You’re okay, you’re a big suck.” C-7-10

Overall the mother’s interactions with Caleb tended to involve more confrontation. There were two instances of notable conflict both centering on toileting. Additionally, the mother was more likely to describe Caleb’s behaviour using derogatory language while using more praise and encouragement with Reese. For example, in reference to Caleb’s behaviour the mother stated, *“I see a lot of Tylenol in that kid’s future”* (C-6-5) while Reese was praised, *“Oh you’re such a good boy thank you for sharing with Caleb”* (C-7-8). It may be that the differential treatment the children received by the mother was a consequence of their age. As such, Reese as the youngest child was granted more caregiving type of attention and greater tolerance for misbehaviour because the mother perceived him as the *baby* of the family. Moreover, the mother’s perception of Caleb as a more difficult child could have made the mother more closely attuned to his misbehaviours and more responsive to them, ultimately reinforcing his more negative behaviours. She described Caleb as a *“Very frustrating child, very frustrating”* (Interview Transcript, 1, p.2). Perceived differences could have impacted the nature of the mother’s interactions with the siblings.

His [Caleb] language isn’t what it should be, so it takes a lot to get him to do things, like cooperate. If it was just the two of them I wouldn’t notice it so much, but with Reese being so good, he listens and he does everything. It just makes Caleb stand out that much more. He’s a handful, a challenge!

Interview Transcript, 1, p. 2

The mother's differential treatment may have also impacted and influenced the nature of interactions between the siblings themselves. Brody, Stoneman, and Burke (1987) found that maternal favouritism impacted the nature of interactions among siblings, namely when the youngest sibling was favoured, siblings conversed less with one another and interacted less frequently (both negatively and positively).

Nature of Interactions Between Caleb and Reese

Caleb's and Reese's interactions varied and included hostile aggression, cooperative and engaged behaviours, and absolute dismissal of one another. The siblings were capable of cooperative behaviour in play, expressing enjoyment and care with one another during these exchanges. The mother also reported during the interview that the two youngest siblings often played cooperatively together during the day (while the eldest sibling was at school):

Caleb asks "Reese help?" Reese takes a handle of the shopping bag that is loaded down with toys [that both have placed inside the bag]. Reese quietly says "okay." I comment on how well they are working together. They converse to each other as they move down the hallway [indistinguishable what is said but they appear to be understanding one another as each nods their head and adds to the others' statements]. Caleb calls out "Bye, come on Reese." They get to the opposite end of the hallway and they turn around as Caleb says "Come on home to Debbie." The two return to the main play area carrying the bag between them. C-10-4

Moreover, the mother described the children's relationship as one of "playmates" and "good buddies" (Interview Transcript, 1, p. 2; p. 9). She also described the physical nature of the siblings' relationship and cited the conflict and aggression as the most concerning aspect of their relationship. Aggression and conflict occurred regularly during the 16 hours of observations. The number of aggressive/conflictual interactions between the siblings closely matched the playful behaviours (90 conflict/aggressive acts versus 110 playful acts; see Appendix O).

Overall, the siblings tended to initiate few interactions between themselves unassisted. Their playful interactions primarily occurred within a group situation where the mother, the elder sibling, or I were also involved. During the 8 minutes of unattended taping neither sibling initiated play or conversation with the other, but rather both engaged in parallel play. Reese and Caleb's interactions often required facilitation and mediation by the mother or myself.

Nature of Siblings' Interaction Scale

Each of the siblings' patterns of interactions was distinctively different. In the 10 random measures of the *Nature of Siblings' Interactions Scale* taken during the observations conflict played a formative role in the relationship. However, the pattern of controlling interactions and cooperative interactions was decidedly distinct for each of the brothers.

Caleb's interactions. Overall, Caleb's interactions with his sibling were characterized as conflictual in nature (see Figure 19). Conflicts were most often rated at the uppermost end of the scale. Thus, 8 of the 10 interactions randomly scored were noted as being characterized by intense aggression, physical aggression, intense teasing or involving frequent criticism of the other or physical intimidation of the sibling.

Similarly, *control and intrusiveness* also described the nature of Caleb's interactions with his sibling (with 9 of the 10 observations scored as either a IV or V on the scale). Thus, Caleb was most often observed exerting control over his sibling by physically interfering in his brother's play, refusing to relinquish control of objects, or taking over his sibling's play:

Reese picks up the bus and rolls it on the track. Caleb grabs the bus and throws it roughly from the track saying loudly “No Reese.” Reese screams and starts to cry. I tell Caleb that the bus is for the tracks and ask him “Where can the bus go?” Caleb indicates the floor by pointing and says, “Right here the bus goes.” I tell Caleb that the “Bus likes to go on the tracks he likes going through the tunnel.” Reese places the bus in the tunnel and Caleb grabs it off the tracks again saying “no outside” tossing it to the floor. Reese cries and moves to the floor area with his bus. C-1-3

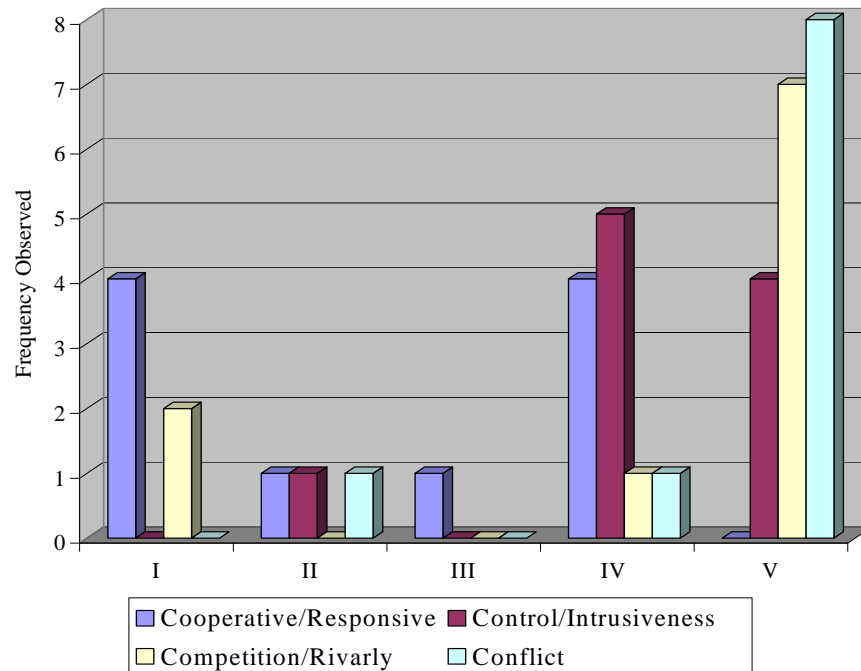


Figure 19. Nature of Caleb's interactions

Correspondingly, competition and rivalry were rated at the high end of the scale with most of Caleb's interactions being scored a V (7 of the 10 observations were scored at this level). Caleb's rivalrous interactions were therefore characterized by physical aggression (in connection to controlling his sibling), criticism of his sibling's right to play or access play materials, intrusiveness on the parent's interactions with Reese, and frequent use of behaviours to attract attention to himself (i.e., negative-attention seeking behaviours):

Caleb crawls beside the sofa and is half hidden from all of us playing on the floor (Reese, Connor, Mom, and myself). He cries loudly, peeking around the

corner at Mom. I ask "What's wrong?" He continues to cry and moan softly "Mommy, daddy waa waa." Mom asks, "What's wrong?" C-5-3

Caleb's rating of cooperative and responsive interactions was less definitive, as he was observed at both the lower and higher end of the scale (see Figure 19). Caleb scored equally in categories I and IV for his cooperative interactions (with one rating in each of category II and III as well). Thus, most often Caleb either made no attempts to cooperate or one or two suggestions of joint play and cooperation. Given the dominance of parallel play or facilitated group play observed between these two siblings, the mixed result for cooperation is not surprising. Similar to the play interactions between the siblings, cooperation may have also needed facilitation and the presence of either the mother or myself to occur. Cooperative interactions may have been hindered because of the young age of these two siblings and their limited language competence.

Reese's interactions. Similar to his sibling, Reese's interactions tended to be conflictual in nature. Seven of the 10 interactions randomly scored during the observations were rated as category IV or V for conflict (see Figure 20). Thus, Reese engaged in regular disputes, teasing, or physical aggression with his sibling. He often utilized intense aggression during these conflicts such as biting his sibling. Control and intrusiveness were less notable in Reese's interactions with his sibling. Although Reese demonstrated control and intrusive behaviours at the II, III, and IV levels on the rating scale, primarily his interactions lacked controlling or impulsive statements or actions toward his sibling. During the observations Reese was dominated and controlled by his sibling and this pattern of interactions was again reflected in the 10 random measures scored on the scale. Reese's competitive and rivalrous interactions

with his sibling were somewhat uniformly distributed across the scale. Thus, Reese demonstrated various levels of competitive and rivalrous behaviours toward his sibling. However, Reese was just as likely to fail to display any rivalrous behaviours as make frequent competitive and rivalrous statements or actions.

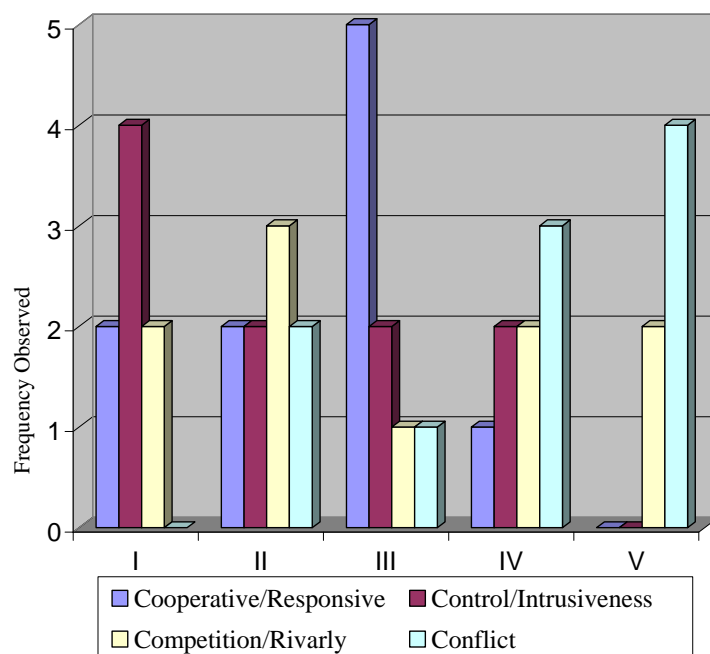


Figure 20. Nature of Reese's interactions

Primarily, Reese's interactions with his sibling can be described as mildly cooperative and responsive. The greatest concentration of scores was rated in the III category for cooperative/responsive interactions. Thus, Reese's interactions included following suggestions, making occasional tentative attempts to cooperate, offering help (if requested), responding to comments on most occasions, and maintaining brief conversation or sharing of resources. It may be that Reese, as the dominated player, made tentative attempts at cooperation to placate Caleb and circumvent more controlling behaviours from being initiated by his sibling. Moreover, the moderate

cooperation may be a reflection of the nature of the siblings' overall relationship. For both Caleb and Reese, conflict and aggression tended to dominate the 10 interactions scored and this pattern was replicated when all of the siblings' interactions from the transcripts were scored.

Siblings' Interactions Coded from Transcripts

The patterns that emerged from the 10 observations rated were also replicated in the findings of siblings' initiated acts coded from the transcripts. The transcripts were rated and the frequencies of initiated acts of aggression, play, teasing, and conflict/disputes for each sibling were noted. Although, the siblings primarily engaged in playful activities (on average the siblings engaged in 6.9 playful behaviours each hour), conflict and aggression closely matched the number of playful acts initiated (see Figure 21). Moreover, the scoring of play activities did not discriminate between parallel, solitary, or group play. Thus, the frequency of play acts initiated does not necessarily reflect playful interactions *between* the siblings. As was noted earlier, Caleb and Reese rarely interacted together in playful activities unassisted. Thus, their self-initiated interactions tended to be more aggressive and conflictual than amiable.

Caleb instigated the majority of the playful behaviours as well as the conflicts/disputes and aggression. Reese initiated slightly more teasing behaviours than his sibling. In total, the siblings engaged in 44 conflicts (of which 3 occurred between a sibling and the mother). On average the children initiated 2.8 conflictual interactions per hour (or 2.7 conflicts per hour solely between Caleb and Reese) (See Appendix Q). Conflicts and disputes tended to be brief, primarily physical, and related to object use or access to play.

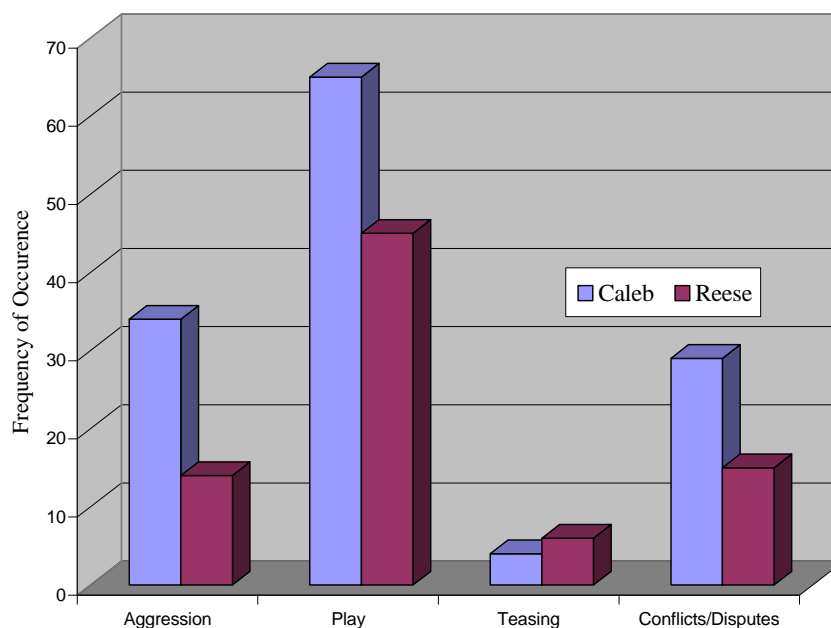


Figure 21. Frequency of initiated acts of Caleb and Reese

Aggressive interactions between the siblings were also prevalent. In total, 48 aggressive interactions were scored from the transcripts. Caleb initiated approximately 70% of the aggressive acts while Reese contributed to a much lesser extent (30%). On average, 3.0 aggressive interactions were recorded each hour between Caleb and Reese (see Appendix Q). Similar to conflict, aggression was centered on themes of toy usership or access to play. Teasing between these siblings was less prominent than conflict and aggression.

Teasing Behaviour of Caleb and Reese

In total, only 10 acts of teasing occurred between these siblings. Teasing was not significant or evident during all of the home visits. The number of teasing episodes the children initiated were similar, with Reese accounting for six incidents and Caleb responsible for four. All teasing behaviours were behavioural taunts (except one incidence of Reese's teasing that involved trickery).

Caleb's teasing behaviours. Caleb initiated four behavioural taunts toward his sibling. Although one incident involved Caleb growling at his sibling, as the tease lacked explicit verbal content, it too was classified as behavioural. In each instance of teasing, Caleb taunted Reese by either removing toys (or a desired object) or repeating an offensive behaviour (e.g., growling or throwing toys at the recipient). A variety of off-record markers indicated Caleb's intent to tease and included behaviours such as laughing, smirking, intently observing the recipient's response before repeating the behaviour, and escalating the offensive behaviour.

Prior to two incidences of teasing the children were engaged in parallel play alongside one another. Cooperative track play (with myself included) preceded a third incident while Reese was engaged in solitary play prior to the fourth episode.

Primarily, Reese as the intended recipient responded emotionally to Caleb's teases. In three instances, Reese whimpered quietly in response to the teasing incidents. However, Reese responded verbally to another incident. In this instance, Reese stood, confronted his sibling, and commanded in a loud voice "*Caleb stop!*" (C-8-6). This response strategy was successful in stopping the teasing immediately whereas the emotional response strategy tended to foster and perpetuate the teasing. Play resumed in parallel fashion after all instances of teasing. The valence of each of Caleb's teases was rated as negative in content. The behavioural taunts involved offensive behaviours (e.g., throwing toys at the recipient) that were considered negative in content.

The mother was present for only one of the episodes of teasing. In this instance she made a verbal response reprimanding the instigator by stating, "*That's not nice Caleb*" (C-6-3). As the sole audience member to the remaining three

incidences of teasing, I too made verbal responses. In all three instances the verbal response was an attempt to mediate the teasing situation with the goal of circumventing continued teasing or escalation to aggression. My verbal responses included statements such as “*that hurts*” (throwing toy incident of teasing), “*Reese doesn’t like that*” (growling incident of teasing), and “*whose crown is that Caleb?*” (taunting with toy incident) (C-8-6; C-9-7; C-9-8). During the teasing episode that occurred while the mother was present, my response was neutral.

Reese’s teasing behaviours. Similar to his sibling, Reese’s teasing primarily involved behavioural taunts. Only one incident (out of 6) involved a different form of teasing (i.e., trickery). In this instance, Reese deceived his sibling into thinking a ball would be thrown at him (Caleb, the target). The remainder of Reese’s teases involved physical interference in his sibling’s play, taunting with a desired object, escalating an offensive behaviour, or purposefully doing the opposite of what was requested.

Reese utilized a variety of off-record markers to indicate his desire to tease. Often Reese smirked, made faces, escalated the annoying behaviour, laughed, or pestered his sibling during his teasing behaviours. Reese also incorporated his body language to indicate his desire to tease, and on two instances kept his back to his sibling while turning his head towards Caleb to make faces or smirk.

Control of resources (and play) and a restricted area for play contributed to three instances of teasing. In two of these instances, a dispute over resources (trains) preceded the teasing whereby Caleb attempted to dominate the play and control the resources. Reese may have utilized teasing as a reactionary strategy to mollify his brother’s attempt to dominate the play. Finally, in the third incident the tease ensued

after Caleb invaded Reese's play space. Parallel or group play preceded the remaining three incidents of teasing.

Caleb responded in a variety of ways to Reese's teases. Caleb reacted verbally to three incidences of teasing either asking for the teasing to stop or making demands of his sibling to behave in another manner. Additionally, he responded to the remaining three teases with aggression, emotional response, or humour. With the exception of the emotional response, following the tease and response Caleb assumed control of the play (or resource). The emotional response strategy fuelled more teasing from Reese.

The mother was present for four of the incidents involving Reese as the instigator of teasing. She was equally likely to make a verbal response or not respond at all to Reese's teases. One of her verbal responses appeared to condone Reese's teasing behaviours as she commented, "*I can't blame him a bit*" (C-4-2). The other verbal response did not directly target the teasing incident but rather involved reminding Reese of expectations for his behaviour (i.e., to roll the ball in the house versus throwing). It may be that the mother was more lenient with Reese's teasing behaviours as she typically only intervened when one sibling was hurt by another.

Interviewer Is there a threshold where you become involved?

Mother C Ya oh ya, if somebody is really getting hurt or comes crying big time, I'll step in [pause] I mean if somebody gets bitten and usually if its Caleb doing the biting, I'll stop it. But usually I can let them work it out.

Interview Transcript, 1, p. 3

My responses as an observer also varied. In one instance I remained neutral while I provided emotional comfort to the recipient in another episode (Caleb crawls into my lay and rests his head over my shoulder and I pat his back). The remainder of my

responses were verbal and involved mediating the teasing and negotiating settlements between the children. Mediation was successful in encouraging more cooperative play to resume after the teasing incidents.

Five of Reese's teases were negative in content. One tease was rated as positive because the content involved loud noises that did not seem to be offensive to either the instigator or recipient and appeared as more of an invitation to play. However, the remaining behavioural taunts involved offensive and interfering type behaviours and were thus rated as negative.

Overall, teasing was not as common as aggression and conflict within Caleb and Reese's observed interactions. These two young siblings typically interacted with one another in a physical manner with few verbal interchanges. Additionally, many of their interactions either involved a third player or were mediated by another person. It may be that the children's language competence impacted the number of incidences of teasing observed. Conversely, my presence could have impacted the nature of interactions between the siblings, and heightened the frequency of conflict and aggression as the children competed for my attention and use of resources.

What Mother C Said about Teasing

The mother defined teasing as one child "*Doing things intentionally to get the other upset*" (Interview Transcript, 1, p. 3). She perceived teasing as a rite of passage, *part of growing up* (Interview Transcript, 1, p. 4). Mother C also indicated that she herself as the eldest child instigated teases toward her two sisters and brother. Additionally she stated, "*My father always teased us and gave us a hard time*" (Interview Transcript, 1, p. 4). Mother C's own history of teasing may have predisposed her to utilize and respond to the children's teasing in contrasting ways.

Mother C indicated she used teasing with the eldest child Connor as a form of correcting undesirable behaviours (i.e., acting babyish). She perceived this teasing to be subtle and playful and beyond the realm of understanding of the two younger siblings. Mother C clearly delineated between playful verbal teasing (i.e., the type of teasing she engaged in) and the more hurtful taunting that the younger siblings enacted.

Ya, [yes] I tease the kids. Not to get them upset but to make them laugh, give them [pause] get them to see that they're being strange, doing things maybe they shouldn't, especially Connor. The other two don't really get it, but Connor will understand if you're teasing him. If he's [Connor] being unreasonable about other things we'll [husband and herself] tease him a little bit.

Interview Transcript, 1, p. 4

At times, Mother C conflated the term teasing with bullying. She clearly indicated that Caleb was the bully of the family and described the physical nature of his teasing behaviour as being hurtful. Reese's teasing was described more in terms of being retaliatory and a justifiable result of being the frequent recipient of Caleb's taunting (and bullying).

The mother indicated that teasing functioned to teach the children tolerance. Mother C specified that the children learned *patience* from teasing and would later be able to transfer those skills to other environments (e.g., school and play groups). Moreover, she perceived the sibling relationship as practice ground for developing appropriate social behaviours. In reference to Caleb's learning of appropriate social behaviours, the mother explained during the second interview:

I mean I realize that being at home with his brothers is a different thing that's his comfort zone and he's got to be able to do what he wants here and learn from that. I can't take him out and let him abuse other kids so that he'll learn that he can't do that [pause] I don't know. I think he's going to surprise us, I'm hoping, I think he's probably better than what we see him as, just because we see him here most with the kids.

Interview Transcript, 2, p. 4

Mother C also perceived that the children learned to match their emotions to words during episodes of teasing. She indicated this learning, to verbally express feelings, was more significant for Reese as he was the frequent victim of Caleb's bullying. Thus, Reese would be better prepared to respond verbally to teasing by making such statements as 'I don't like that', or 'That hurts me'.

Mother C responded that a verbal response was the best strategy to counter teasing. However, she further indicated that retaliation was also an appropriate response strategy (especially in reference to the siblings responding to Caleb's teasing and bullying).

Interviewer *What do you think is the best way for the children to respond if they are being teased?*

Mother C *We [Mom and dad] try to encourage them to tell whoever is teasing them to stop, they don't like it. Connor used to be really good at that, but now Caleb is not really big on listening. So [pause] of course we get frustrated so we eventually just tell him go ahead if Caleb is doing something to annoy you do it back. Like if he's pushing you or hitting you, hit him back. He's a bully, he needs a little bit of bullying. Like we used to for the longest time, tell you know use your words tell him to stop, Caleb just doesn't listen to that.*

Interview Transcript, 1, p. 5

Mother C had clear expectations of the role of schooling in addressing teasing and bullying behaviours. She indicated that she expected teasing and bullying to occur as Caleb was set to enter kindergarten in the autumn of the following year. Mother C anticipated that Caleb's speech delay would be a potential source of teasing and bullying. However, she expected that kindergarten would expose Caleb to various personalities and potential conflicts as well as diverse means of managing those conflicts. In this respect, the mother foresaw kindergarten as a means to address (and potentially correct) what she perceived as Caleb's bullying behaviours.

Although Mother C described the more conflictual and physical side of the siblings' relationship during the interviews, she also included terms such as *good buddies*, *playmates*, and *friends* in describing the quality of the children's bond. She indicated that fighting and conflict were typical of any sibling relationship and did not necessarily reflect the quality of that relationship. In reference to her own childhood sisterly bond Mother C stated:

Me and my sister used to fight dreadfully non-stop. I mean we were always still friends, it's not like we didn't want to be with each other it's just how we dealt with each other.

Interview Transcript, 1, p. 9

Clearly the mother perceived the conflict, aggression, and teasing among her children as normative and not indicative of the overall quality of the sibling bond.

What Caleb and Reese Said About Teasing

The mother was the sole participant to answer interview questions regarding teasing. Four attempts were made to conversationally interview the siblings. However, neither child responded to questions related to teasing. Specific questions related to concurrent activity such as, "*Reese how did you feel when Caleb took your train?*" went unanswered. Similarly, more general questions such as "*What do you like to play with your brother?*" went largely unanswered and ignored. Caleb did respond on one occasion that he liked trains but failed to distinguish if this was the preferred type of play that included his sibling or excluded Reese. However, other attempts to engage the siblings in conversations about teasing, play, or their relationship were unsuccessful. It may be that the children's language competence hampered the children's abilities to formulate responses. Conversely, the children

clearly perceived me as their playmate and this may have impeded my ability to adopt the additional role of interviewer.

Summary of Family C

In general, the siblings of Family C were young and had yet to internalize norms governing aggression, teasing, and conflict. The interactions between siblings were primarily physical in nature. Given the language delay of two of the children, this was a family of few words. By the mother's own admission, the recommended schedule for Caleb's speech therapy was not always followed as the family was more focused on 'survival':

And we're supposed to practice with him which doesn't always happen [pause]. With Mommy just trying to survive the day and working at night and daddy trying to survive the night [pause] he [Caleb] doesn't get as much practice as he should but [pause] he goes to speech therapy every week. And it helps, I've seen a difference with the whole listening thing he's getting so much better. If you could have seen that kid a year ago, he was fighting with anyone and everyone all the time [pause] so it's been good for him.

Interview Transcript, 1, p. 8

Similarly, during play the siblings rarely conversed with one another. And when the mother did participate in play her conversational exchanges with the children were brief and typically focused on mediating or circumventing conflict.

The nature of Caleb and Reese's interactions tended to be conflictual in nature. Although play activities were initiated frequently (6.9 activities per hour), most often these playful interactions between the brothers were mitigated by the presence of another player (myself, the mother, or elder sibling). Moreover, conflict, aggression and teasing accounted for 48% of the interactions between the siblings (see Appendix O). Teasing between the siblings was primarily behavioural in form (e.g., growling, throwing toys at the recipient). And despite the low frequency that

was observed (0.6 incidences of teasing per hour), teasing tended to be centered on issues of control, restricted space for play, and access to resources (playthings). The higher rate of conflict and aggression observed as well as the low rate of teasing in this sibling dyad may have been associated with their younger age, limited language competence, or the family ethos of *survival of the fittest*.

Cross-Case Synthesis

Collectively, the three cases revealed that play figured prominently in these six preschool age siblings' choices (see Figure 22). Similar to previous studies (Abramovitch et al., 1979, 1982, 1986) the siblings in this study engaged most often in positive playful behaviours with one another (although aggression and conflict figured prominently as well). This finding was consistent even after the play category was adjusted and parallel play and solitary play were removed from the frequency count on the POS of all children (see Appendix R). The rate of play, conflict, aggression, and teasing varied for each sibling set and are detailed in Appendix Q.

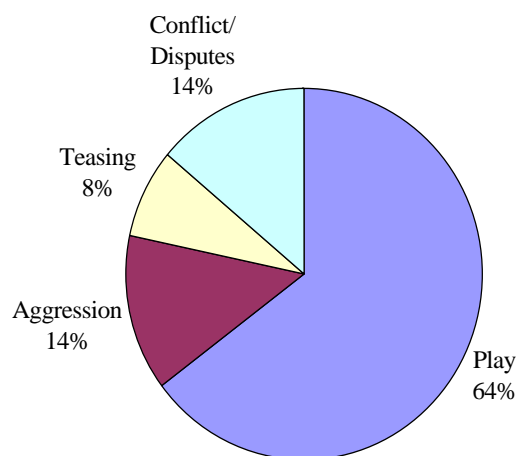


Figure 22. Initiated behaviours of three dyads of siblings

Playful behaviours were diverse and wide-ranging, with dramatic play comprising the greatest proportion of all play activities engaged in by all three dyads of siblings. Conflict and aggression were initiated equally and each accounted for 14% of all behaviours enacted. Teasing represented only 8% of the total of all the behaviours initiated.

In keeping with the findings of Abramovitch and her colleagues (1979; 1982; 1986), the majority of the aggression and conflict in this study was instigated by the older sibling toward the youngest (see Figure 23). However, the exact opposite held for teasing. The youngest siblings in this study were responsible for initiating the majority of the teasing. Brianna, the female twin, accounted for half of the teasing scored in the younger sibling category. Despite being a twin, Brianna was recognized by the family as the younger sibling. Additionally, as the mother of Family B indicated during interviews and as the observations revealed Drake, the male twin, enjoyed the status of controller and tended to dominate much of the sibling's play and activities. Thus, Drake tended to act in ways similar to an older sibling (Toman, 1969). Conversely, Brianna's teasing behaviour may have been more of a factor of her language competence than status as the younger sibling.

The elder sibling in all the three dyads tended to enjoy a greater status and power within the interactions with their siblings. The elder often set the play theme, pace, and direction of play, allocating resources and roles to the younger sibling. Moreover, the elder of these three sets of siblings physically dominated the younger sibling and typically (with the exception of Brianna) was verbally more competent. Additionally, the mothers of families A, B, and C all labeled the elder sibling as the more dominant player. Thus, teasing may have provided a means for the younger

'less powerful' sibling to level the playing field and diffuse the authority inherent within the elder sibling's role.

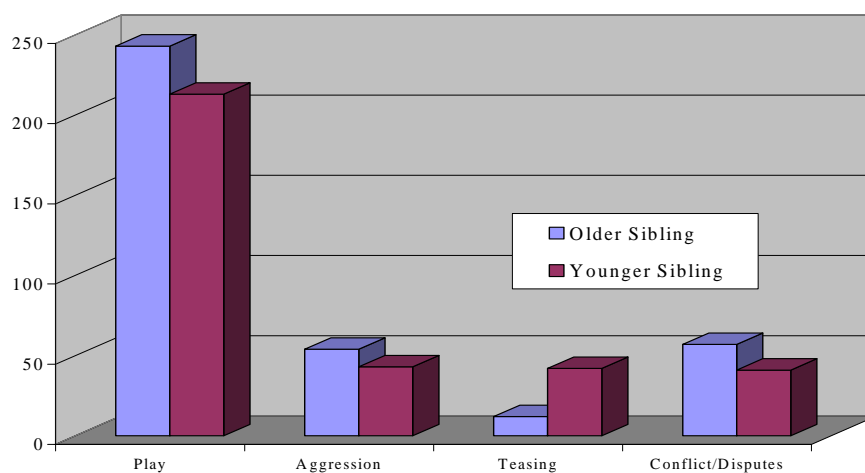


Figure 23. Initiated behaviours of older versus younger siblings

Note: Older sibling group includes the male twin as he was recognized within the family as the elder twin. The younger sibling group includes the female twin as she was recognized within the family as the youngest.

The Patterns of Nature and Form of Teasing

Despite the commonality of the younger sibling initiating the bulk of the incidents, the teasing behaviours of all six siblings demonstrated a similar pattern of nature and form. Overwhelmingly, the majority of the teases were taunts (see Figure 24). Taunting a sibling included mimicry, mocking, intentional disruption of their play, and physical teasing such as poking, hitting, or touching the other person or playthings. Social norm violation, character teases, and trickery were not frequently utilized. Only 2 of 54 teases between siblings involved trickery, while 8 social norm violation type teases were made, and 7 character teases were initiated.

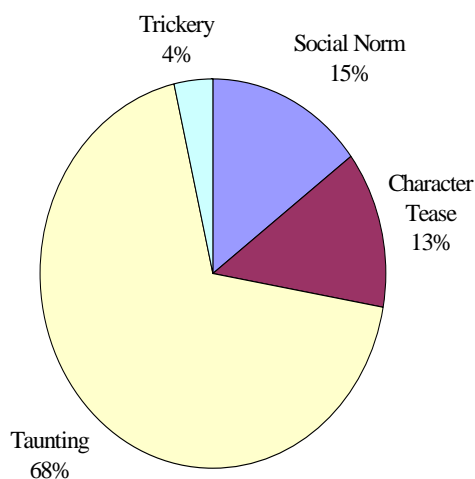


Figure 24. Form of teasing of three sibling dyads

Intention

Overwhelmingly, the teasing of the siblings in this study was negative. Forty-nine of all 56 teases initiated by the children (including those initiated with an adult) were rated as negative in content (with four teases rated as positive and three rated as neutral). Thus, these young children typically emphasized the more negative traits or behaviours of their sibling during teasing or conducted offensive acts (e.g., throwing toys at a sibling) within the teasing episodes enacted. Consequently, the young siblings of this study tended to tease in hostile ways and the more symbolic and playful teasing (typical of older children) was not as evident.

Response Strategies to Teasing

The six sibling recipients in this study utilized various response strategies to the teasing scenarios. These response strategies included verbal responses, physical responses, ignoring, emotional responses (e.g., crying and whimpering), combined verbal and physical response, retaliations with a tease, and humour (see Figure 25).

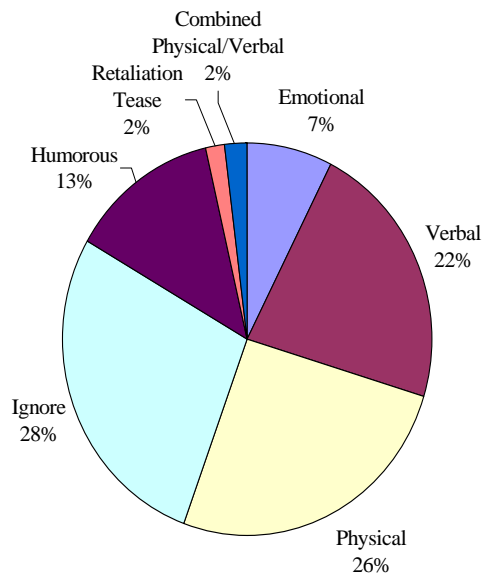


Figure 25. Response strategies used by sibling dyads

The favoured response strategy utilized was ignoring the tease (28%) with physical responses (e.g., aggression) representing 26% of all types of responses made and verbal responses comprising 22% of the response strategies. Interestingly, Drake an infrequent teaser, was primarily responsible for the high scoring of the ignore response. He initiated 60% of the ignore responses scored in this category (Table 3).

Ignoring the tease facilitated the continuation or renewal of play after the teasing incident. Similarly, humorous responses to teasing also aided the continuation of play and interactions between the siblings. A retaliatory tease (also humorous in content) was also effective in continuing interactions between siblings. Additionally, the majority of the verbal responses (8 of 12) to teasing ended in continued play. The remaining four verbal responses included statements of anger and frustration and an elevated tone of voice (e.g., yelling or screeching). These four responses did not result in continued interactions between the siblings after the teasing episodes. It would appear that although verbal response strategies are

effective overall, it is the quality those verbal responses that impacts the interactions following teasing episodes. Emotional responses, physical reactions, and combined responses did not result in continued or resumed play following the teasing episodes.

Table 3

Frequency of Teasing Response Strategy by Child

Child/Strategy	Emotional (Whimpering, crying)	Combined Physical and Verbal	Verbal	Physical (Includes Aggression)	Ignore	Retaliation Tease	Humour
Mason	0	1	1	1	1	0	0
James	0	0	3	8	3	0	1
Drake	0	0	3	4	9	1	4
Brianna	0	0	1	0	2	0	1
Caleb	1	0	3	1	0	0	1
Reese	3	0	1	0	0	0	0

Audience Responses

The audience's role in teasing scenarios may be a crucial component of the teasing triangle. The mothers of this study (and myself) had varied responses to teasing. Most often the three mothers either responded verbally or by ignoring the teasing behaviour of their children (see Table 4). Other responses included physically removing the child from the room, distracting the instigator, responding with humour, or placing the onus on the target to make concessions or change their pattern of behaving. Moreover, the mothers were absent and unaware of 54% of the teasing scenarios.

Similar to the mothers' responses, my responses as an audience to the siblings' teasing also varied (see Table 5). I too responded with humour, verbal,

physical, and distraction strategies. However, I also combined physical and verbal strategies in two instances and provided emotional comfort (i.e., a hug and cuddling) to a recipient in another instance. Overwhelmingly, I responded to the majority of teasing by ignoring (56%).

Table 4

Frequency of Mothers' Audience Responses

Mothers/ Response Strategies	Physical	Verbal	Ignore/ Neutral	Distract Instigator	Humour	Onus on Target	Not Present
Mother A	0	4	4	3	1	4	5
Mother B	2	2	1	0	0	0	20
Mother C	0	3	2	0	0	0	5
Totals	2	9	7	3	1	4	30

Table 5

Frequency of Researcher's Responses as Audience to Teasing

Response Strategy	Physical	Verbal	Ignore/ Neutral	Distract Instigator/ Recipient	Combined Physical/Verbal	Humour	Emotional Comfort (Recipient)	Not Present
Researcher	1	10	30	6	2	3	1	1

Summary of Chapter 4

The observational data from this study revealed that the sibling dyads engaged in playful activities most often. Teasing among these sibling dyads was not as evident as conflict and aggression. The nature and form of sibling teasing had specific characteristics that may be unique to the sibling bond. Sibling teasing tended to be more physical in nature and lack the symbolic and playful nature reported to be typical of older children.

The interview data from the participating mothers highlighted the general consensus that young siblings are capable and do engage in teasing behaviour with

one another. Moreover, the parents' prepositional attitude and personal history of teasing appeared to impact their perceptions (and interventions) of their own children's teasing. The interview data from four of the children interviewed indicated that young siblings are aware of (or initiate) the various forms of teasing and attend to various contextual cues to both form their understanding of teasing and generate responses to teasing. The perceptions of the mothers at times converged with those of the children while, at other times, they were divergent.

Chapter 5 ~ Summary, Discussion, Implications, and Conclusions

This study investigated the teasing experiences of three dyads of preschool age siblings. Observations of the sibling dyads were conducted to further understand the characteristics and constraints inherent to the sibling context that impact teasing. Additionally, the perceptions of mothers and the children were gathered in order to gain an understanding of teasing behaviour between young siblings.

The results and conclusions from Chapter 4 are summarized and discussed in this final chapter. The discussion seeks to address the main research question of this study, that is: *How do young siblings experience the phenomenon of teasing within their relationship, and what function(s) do these experiences serve in relation to the child's developing social-emotional understanding?* Several other sub-questions for this study were also included:

Nature and form

1. What is the *nature and form* of the tease?
2. What are the prepositional attitudes of the instigator and recipient of a tease?
3. What are the possible positive/negative contributions of sibling teasing in facilitating emotional, social, and cognitive understanding?
4. What are the possible effects of gender on the above questions?

Intent of

5. What does the instigator of the tease *intend, propose, or mean* to say?
6. What are the perceptions of the siblings (instigator and recipient) and parent of the functions of a tease?

Responses

7. To what part of the teasing message does the recipient attend?

8. How is this message interpreted? What emotional meaning(s) do the children ascribe to the tease?
9. How do the perceptions of the parent either converge with, or diverge from, or influence the experiences of the child?

Summary and Discussion

The three participating families consisted of two preschool age males and a mother in Family A, a male and female twin sibling set and a mother in Family B, and the two youngest preschool age boys of a three male sibling set plus the mother in Family C. In total, I spent 50 hours observing and interviewing the participants within the family homes. The specific research questions will be used to guide and organize the overall discussion of the results from this study.

Defining Teasing

Current literature does not have an agreed upon definition of what constitutes teasing. Historically, the definition of teasing has been polarized with some researchers emphasizing the negative components of teasing (Aho, 1998; Dunn & Herrera, 1997; Lightner et al., 2000; Warm, 1997) while others have stressed the more prosocial aspects of teasing (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986; Seigel, 1995). These polarized definitions tend to capture either the prosocial benefits or the antisocial outcomes of teasing.

The definition proposed by Keltner et al. (2001) did provide a broad conceptual framework to examine the many forms of teasing behaviour observed in this study. Teasing as “an intentional provocation accompanied by playful off-record markers that together comment on something relevant to the target” (Keltner et al., p. 234) allowed for both the verbal and physical teasing of the siblings to be

recognized. The teasing observed in this study included pulling hair, verbal jeers, poking, name-calling, give-and-withdrawal activities, purposeful and repeated disruption of another's play, saying the opposite of what was true, keep away of desired objects, social or household norm violations, goading, and taunting. Thus, the traditional perspective of examining teasing as a verbal or communication act (Eisenberg, 1986) must be broadened to include physical forms of teasing that were more typical of these preschool age siblings.

The off-record markers indicate the playfulness or non-serious nature of teasing. The off-record markers differentiate a tease from other forms of interaction (i.e., aggression, criticism, or humiliation). In this study the off-record markers observed included laughing, smiling, smirking, sing-song chants, tickling, gestures (e.g., sticking out one's tongue), offensive noises or behaviours (e.g., screeching, playing loud music), explicit statements (e.g., saying the opposite of what was true), and silly non-sensible behaviour (e.g., flailing one's arms and legs while in a prone position on the floor). The children of this study clearly were able to differentiate between play, conflict, aggression, and teasing based on the off-record markers used. Moreover, the off-record markers influenced the hostile or prosocial effect of a tease. In instances where the provocation to tease included off-record markers that were pleasurable (e.g., tickling), the children responded more benignly. Thus, off-record markers are a core element in deciphering teasing behaviour among preschool age children and the varied forms of markers found in this study can be used to differentiate teasing behaviour from other forms of social interaction.

The parent participants defined teasing as a form of play and stimulation. Additionally, they further noted that the children's teasing was a form of

manipulation, torment, and taunt. The one father to comment indicated teasing was a means for the children to establish toy ownership. All parents indicated playful teasing was an acceptable form of teasing and a mode of teasing favoured between the parent and child. Moreover, parental teasing as a means to highlight children's inappropriate behaviours (e.g., being selfish) was also considered a positive aspect of teasing.

The children also highlighted the positive and negative aspects in defining teasing. The children perceived teasing as a form of play, an invitation to play, and fun. Conversely, teasing was also considered hurtful and mean.

Nature and Form of Sibling Teasing

Teasing among the sibling dyads in this study was relatively rare, and comprised only 8% of the nature of their behaviours during the observations in comparison to play, aggression, and conflictual behaviours (see Figure 22). In keeping with the findings of previous studies (e.g., Newman, 1994), the young children of this study engaged more often in playful cooperative interactions (see Appendix O). Moreover, in all three-sibling sets the rate of hourly play far exceeded the rates of conflicts, aggression, and teasing by a ration of 2:1 (see Appendix Q). However, in this naturalistic study the young siblings tended to utilize teasing in distinctive ways, underscoring both the significance of the quality of their social relations and the influence of the contextual variables inherent in teasing that potentially impact and contribute to their developing social-emotional understanding.

The majority of the siblings' teasing was behavioural in form, specifically one sibling taunting another. Taunting accounted for 68% of all forms of teasing behaviour enacted (see Figure 24). More symbolic forms of teasing were less

evident. Teasing one another based on character traits or social norm violations was rarely used, each accounting for only 13% and 15% respectively of each of the teases initiated. Moreover trickery, practical jokes, pranks, tricks, white lies, and false descriptions made by one sibling toward another were also infrequent (i.e., 4% of teases initiated). In this study, the three dyads of siblings were inclined and well equipped to taunt one another, as they were keenly aware of the others' desires during playful interactions (Dunn, 2005).

The content of the sibling teasing in this study was related to accessing resources (i.e., toys), the play area, or controlling the pace of the play. Unlike teasing among peers (Martlew & Hodson, 1991; Mooney et al., 1991; Shapiro et al., 1991; Warm, 1997), *physical differences* between siblings was not a common focus of the content in the sibling teasing episodes observed.

Previous research (Keltner et al., 2001; Shapiro et al., 1991) has also cited interpersonal conflict as a reason why teasing occurs among peers. In this study, conflict occurred at regular intervals (1.9 conflicts/hour between James and Mason; 1.4 conflicts/hour between Brianna and Drake; 2.7 conflicts/hour between Caleb and Reese). Teasing may have provided a means of negotiating conflict among the three dyads (Dunn & Munn, 1985). Moreover, the taunting behaviour of one sibling toward another may have been used to mitigate and deter these conflicts from escalating or prolonging (as conflict over resources or control of play was a major theme for all three dyads).

Prepositional Attitudes

Power and status within the sibling relationship tended to impact the children's prepositional attitudes. The siblings emerged as either a *leader* or *follower*

during the observations. The child with the leadership role held much of the power during interactions, setting the pace of play, allocating resources, and deciding upon pretense roles and the theme of play. James, Drake, and Caleb tended to assume this leadership role in the interactions with their respective siblings. The older siblings engaged in playful activity at a higher rate than their younger siblings (243 initiated playful acts versus 213 by the younger siblings). Moreover, James, Drake, and Caleb initiated 56% of the aggression and 58% of the conflictual interactions in comparison to the younger siblings (see Figure 23). As leaders and the more-often targets of teasing, James and Caleb tended to respond aggressively most often. Perhaps they perceived teasing as challenges to their authority and responded aggressively as a result. However, Drake tended to ignore his sister's teasing and may have been either unconcerned or unaware of such a challenge.

The *follower* role tended to be assumed by Mason, Brianna, and Reese. These younger siblings were responsible for the bulk of the teasing initiated toward their elder sibling, accounting for 78% of all teasing initiated. As the more dominated player, teasing may have potentially functioned in leveling the playing field and as a means to challenge the authority of the elder sibling.

Relationship of Teasing and Development

Specific developmental measures (i.e., false-belief measures) were not the focus of this study and therefore the influence of teasing on the siblings' emotional, social, and cognitive understanding can only be addressed in general terms. The very definition of teasing implies that something meaningful is intentionally said or enacted toward a recipient. The recipient receives and deciphers this message by utilizing the contextual cues that indicate this is a tease. The message of the tease is

internalized with the child's existing emotional, social, and mental understanding in the process of deciding the relevance of a tease. Then, the recipient formulates a response strategy based on his/her knowledge and understanding. This complex process requires participation and understanding by both the instigator and recipient for a tease to be completed.

The sibling dyads of this study were capable of teasing and understood when they were the targets of teases. Although the majority of teasing was hurtful and less symbolic, all children demonstrated an awareness of what would be meaningful as content for teasing the other sibling. The twin dyad also used idiomatic communication in some of their teasing behaviours demonstrating both a use of and understanding of nonliteral communication (or language only known to themselves, that is, twin language). Thus, the young siblings of this study were able to closely attend to the language and contextual variables of their social interactions in evoking and responding to teasing behaviour.

Effects of Gender

The effects of gender could not be adequately assessed in this research study, as only one female sibling participated. Some previous researchers have supported the contention that greater conflict and less interaction between mixed gender sibling pairs is more likely (Dunn & Kendrick, 1982c) while others have found only weak tendencies (Abramovitch et al., 1986) or no relationship between gender composition and quality of sibling interactions (Lamb, 1978). The mixed-gender dyad of this study had a higher rate of hourly play than the same-gender pairs, while engaging in slightly less conflict in comparison to the male dyads. However, the mixed-gender

pair of this study was a twin set and the nature of their interactions may be more characteristic of the twin phenomenon than a factor of the gender composition.

Although the effect of gender on the nature of siblings' interactions cannot be assessed in this study, it was evident that gender influenced the mothers' expectations of sibling relationships in this study. All three mothers referred to the children's gender in regard to the nature of the siblings' interactions and behaviour. Comments (e.g., "*He's all boy*") related to the nature of boys' aggression were made throughout the observations and interviews by each of the mothers (A-9-7). Brianna's mother had clearly established gender role expectations and attributed Brianna's language competence, social skills, and overall development to her gender. Thus, the behavioural expectations inherent within gender roles of siblings, social comparison between siblings, and differential parental treatment may impact the nature of siblings' interactions (Newman, 1994).

Intentional Understanding and Teasing

Teasing requires a level of intentional understanding (Heerey et al., 2005). The siblings of this study made judgments and predictions of how the other would respond to teasing episodes. Additionally, one child made predictions of the emotional response of a fictitious character while three children predicted and described my emotional response to a teasing episode. Moreover, all the children capably assessed the desires of the other child in the many taunting behaviours observed.

Additionally, all the parent participants recognized the intentionality of the children, that is teasing was done purposefully. Moreover, the child participants themselves used terms such as 'means to', and 'wants to' in reference to why people

tease. Intentional understanding was both a part of enacting a tease and interpreting its relevance. All the siblings demonstrated both abilities.

Perceptions of Parents and Children of Functions of Teasing

The parents' perceptions provided several clarifications and contrasts to both the children's own descriptions and reactions to teasing experiences and what I had observed as the researcher. The observational and interview data were greatly enriched by the inclusion of the parents' perspectives.

In general, the mothers participating in this research had three distinct perceptions of teasing. Mother A viewed teasing as typical and a natural pattern of behaviour within families. She also foresaw teasing as a subcomponent of sibling rivalry and a function of family constellation variables (e.g., gender, and the age spacing between the children). Mother B perceived teasing as a hurtful form of interaction between her children and detrimental to their overall development, while Mother C regarded teasing as a rite of passage, an unavoidable aspect of childhood. Mother A and C both had a history of childhood teasing with themselves as the recipient (Mother A) and instigator (Mother C). Mother B reported no such history.

Each mother perceived a function to teasing with all three parents highlighting the cognitive or social aspects of teasing. Although the three mothers each discussed the emotional impact of teasing, none believed teasing impacted the children's emotional development negatively over the long term. Mother A supposed the children learned to manipulate others, assess situations, and problem solve through teasing interactions. Mother B also stressed manipulation and negotiating power within relationships as a function of teasing. Mother C perceived that the children learned tolerance, patience, and social skills through teasing scenarios. All

three mothers viewed the sibling relationship as a practice ground for learning social skills that would be later transferred to peer relationships.

Each of the three mothers also foresaw a role for schooling in either perpetuating or curbing the teasing behaviour of the children. In the autumn of the year following the data collection, 5 of the 6 children in this study would be attending an early childhood program (likely within the school system, as children in Ontario enter junior kindergarten at age four). The mothers all anticipated that schooling and early childhood programs would influence their children's teasing behaviours. Mothers A and C stated their children learned some of the teasing behaviours from the early childhood programs they attended at the time of the research (all the children frequented the playgroup program offered at the Ontario Early Years Centres; additionally James attended junior kindergarten). All three mothers anticipated that early childhood programs (and schooling) would both proliferate teasing as well as actively address teasing by teaching appropriate response strategies and behaviour management strategies.

The children's perceptions of teasing were much more difficult to capture. However, James, Drake, and Brianna (the three children that participated in answering interview questions related to teasing) tended to perceive teasing in contrasting ways, both as hurtful and playful. This perception was shaped by whether the child had the role of teasing instigator or recipient. In describing themselves as an instigator of teasing, the three children perceived this form of teasing to be playful. Teasing in these instances functioned as a form of engaging the other in play. Conversely as the recipient, all three children agreed this form of teasing was hurtful in nature. In keeping with Shapiro et al.'s study (1991), here too the children's

perception of teasing was influenced by the role they assumed in the teasing scenario. And although each child was both an instigator and recipient of sibling teasing, the perceptions they held for themselves were not transferred to their sibling (i.e., as the instigator they did not perceive that their sibling as the recipient would have hurt feelings despite defining hurt feelings for themselves as the target). Unlike the sisters of the pilot study, none of the children from the main study responded to questions regarding the functions of a tease. The specific questions, what do you think you learn from teasing (or being teased by) your sister/brother? and how does teasing your brother/sister help you (or not help) when you're playing with your friends? may have been too complex. Moreover, as these questions did not relate to the context that children were engaged in during interviewing, they might have been too obscure for the children to generate responses.

However, there was a general trend for the children to emphasize the more hurtful nature of teasing as the three respondents all indicated they did not like teasing or were hurt by teasing. And although each mother recognized the potential of hurt feelings of the recipient, none considered teasing to have a long-term negative impact on the children's emotional development.

Responses to Teasing

The six children of this study tended to respond to teasing most often by ignoring the tease, although physical and verbal responses were also used frequently. Similar to the children of Shapiro's (1991) study, it would appear that although these siblings regularly utilized ignoring as a response strategy (28% of the responses), 72% of the time they utilized some other response strategy (see Figure 25). Although

play continued after the use of the ignore strategy, other responses to teasing were equally effective in continuing or renewing interactions between the siblings.

The contextual cues to mark '*this is a tease*' may have been more influential in determining to what the sibling recipients attended and how they constructed a response than the explicit statements or teasing behaviours enacted. Off-record markers such as laughter, sing-song chants, or silly behaviours provided the contextual indicators of the non-seriousness of a tease as well as possibly impacting the response strategy undertaken by the recipient. Similar to the findings of Bollmer et al.'s (2003) study, one's teasing history appeared to play a role in the response strategies used by each sibling. Perhaps infrequent teasers such as Drake are better able to ignore teasing by others, as occasional teasers may either be disinterested in or unaware of the teasing leveled towards them.

All three mothers indicated a verbal response was the best strategy for children to use to counter teasing. Mother C also supported retaliation (in the form of aggression) as an appropriate response strategy for the victim of teasing. Despite the observed children's use of humour, emotional responses, ignoring, and combined responses, none of the mothers listed any of these varied replies as appropriate strategies for teasing recipients. Furthermore, the three children to generate interview responses all indicated that enlisting help from an adult was an appropriate response strategy. Conversely, only one mother specified enlisting the help of an adult as a strategy and this was emphasized only in relation to persistent teasing.

As the audience to 46% of the teasing scenarios the mothers responded most often either verbally (34%) or by ignoring (27%) the teasing (see Table 4). Other response strategies were used (such as humour or distraction) but to a much lesser

extent. Verbal responses were brief and did not include discussions of the behaviour or consequences of teasing or any discussion of the recipient's feelings of being teased. Additionally, the majority (54%) of the teasing behaviours occurred while the mothers were not present.

Implications

Teasing is a complex relational phenomenon. The findings from this study highlight several important implications for parents, early childhood educators, early childhood centers, and training programs. Teasing among siblings is an important issue for parents as they are the child's first educator and ultimately responsible for preparing a child for the social world outside the family home. Additionally, as the children and parents in this study held expectations that teasing would occur and be addressed within early childhood programs, centers and educators (including primary educators) need to be well-versed and prepared to address teasing within their curriculum.

Implications for Parents

The quality of siblings' social interactions tends to be a concern for most parents. Sibling conflict, aggression, teasing, arguing, and bickering appear to be routine among young sibling pairs. How parents address these behaviours will influence the quality of the siblings' continued interactions. The parents of this study often indicated that they felt ill prepared or over-burdened in addressing their children's conflicts, teasing, and aggression.

Teasing is a complex behaviour that is often confused with bullying and aggression in the literature and society in general. Here too the mothers participating in this research used the terms teasing and bullying interchangeably. In general,

parents should be encouraged to use the language of teasing to define, label, and help their children understand the implications of teasing and their own behaviour. For example, when one child uses name-calling, a parent can label this behaviour as *teasing* and highlight the potential hurtfulness of this teasing. Parents can also use emotional and mental state terms to describe children's behaviours and feelings in connection to teasing (e.g., a parent can respond "It sounds like what your brother said really hurt your feelings" in response to a teasing episode).

Although all three mothers of this study had a clear definition of what constituted teasing, rarely did they define and label their children's behaviour as such while it was occurring. Defining and labeling teasing behaviour facilitates children's understanding of *what is* teasing (Froschl & Sprung, 2005). Young children can learn to differentiate between words and actions that are hurtful versus those that make others laugh and feel positive (i.e., making fun versus having fun). Through discussions, parents can model that the home is a safe environment for talking about teasing and feelings about being teased, and help to expose the often *hidden* culture of childhood teasing.

There are various forms of teasing and teasing differentiates from bullying. Some parents may not be aware of the various forms of teasing or the subtleties that differentiate teasing from bullying. Moreover, there are a variety of response strategies that may be effective to counter and negate the more negative effects of teasing (e.g., verbal, ignore, empathy-inducing, humorous, or hostile responses). However, the evidence of the effectiveness of any response strategy has yet to be established (Lightner et al., 2000). Yet, parents often coach their children to respond verbally (i.e., the parents of this study) or by ignoring (i.e., the adults of Shapiro et

al.'s study, 1991). Parents and adults in general need to be aware of the varied strategies that are available and practice these strategies alongside children (Freedman, 2002). Children can then be empowered and equipped to find multiple ways of responding to teasing.

The three mothers of this study perceived teasing as an influence on their children's social and cognitive development. However, none perceived a negative impact of teasing on the children's emotional developmental. Parents need to be aware of the emotional impact of teasing on children's development and the potential long-term detrimental effects of persistent hostile teasing. Similar to bullying, children who are the victim of persistent hostile teasing can experience exclusion, social rejection, and internalizing difficulties (e.g., depression, loneliness) (Rubin et al., 1999). Preparing one's children for teasing scenarios at home and in their wider social networks requires a well-informed parent. So how does a parent become informed of the nuances of teasing and the strategies to address teasing within sibling relationships? Parents often rely on an informal network of friends and family for a variety of parent education issues (e.g., toilet training, toddler biting, and sibling conflict) (Mayfield, 2001). More formal parent education and support programs are also readily available.

Parent Education and Support Programs

Parenting education and support programs are available and offered through a variety of agencies (e.g., Ontario Early Years Centres, British Columbia Council for Families, and Family Resources Centres such as West Side Family Place in Vancouver). The intent of such parenting programs is to educate and support parents in their role. STEP (Systematic Training for Effective Parenting) and Nobody's

Perfect are two examples of formal parent-education programs. Both of these programs provide information and focus on children's behaviour and development as well as parenting skills (British Columbia Council for Families, 2007; *STEP Systematic Training for Effective Parenting*, 2006). Although *birth order, bringing home the new baby and sibling rivalry*, and *jealousy and the new baby* were specific content areas neither program included an explicit component on sibling teasing. Commonly, the general topic of *sibling rivalry* appears as the focus of various parent education programs while specific information on teasing among siblings is noticeably absent (e.g., Ontario Early Years Centres, 2007; West Side Family Place, 2006). The *sibling rivalry* parenting workshop I attended (Ottawa South Early Years Centre, December 5, 2005) focused more on birth order and the generalized traits that are associated with first, middle, and youngest children. Teasing between siblings was not mentioned.

Information on teasing among siblings (and young children) could be disseminated through a variety of avenues including parent education programs, parent cooperative training groups, parent associations in schools, teen parenting programs, parent websites, family resource programs, and family magazines (e.g., *Island Parent*). Teasing as a focused topic of information and parent education could highlight the elements of a tease (i.e., intentional provocation, off-record markers, and relevance to target) as well as the differences between teasing and bullying. Moreover, information on why children tease, the content of children's teases, effective response strategies to teasing, and how parents can discuss teasing with their children could also be disseminated through the various avenues discussed.

As well, parents often obtain information and resources from libraries, bookstores, and early childhood programs they currently use. A search of the local library and bookstore in two communities (one library and bookstore in each province of British Columbia and Ontario) was conducted to find the type and quality of references and resources available to parents on the subject of teasing.

Resources for Parents in Libraries

The two library searches yielded similar holdings of reference books and videos that addressed teasing specifically. Overall, neither library contained more than three reference books specifically targeting parents and the issue of young children's teasing. Although both libraries contained numerous videos and children's picture books on the subject of teasing, some of these holdings were targeted more toward teachers and older children and were more specific to bullying (National Film Board of Canada, 2000, 2001; Sprung, 2005).

Only one additional reference book was held by the library in British Columbia (Cooper, 2000) in comparison to the library in Ontario. The remaining two references were held by both libraries (Freedman, 2002; Thompson, Cohen, & Grace O'Neill, 2002). Of the three references, the Freedman book was the most specific and comprehensive on the subject of young children's teasing. Freedman defined and differentiated the various forms of teasing as "having fun versus making fun" (p. 3) as well as discussed the continuum of teasing possibilities as including playful banter and bullying. She also addressed why children tease, the subject of children's teases, and how a parent can discuss teasing with their child. The book also included an informative chapter on teaching children response strategies to teasing scenarios and in which situations specific strategies are most effective.

The response strategies discussed in the Freedman (2002) book are varied and include such tactics as self-talk (e.g., reminding oneself of their positive traits), ignoring, agreeing with the teaser, complimenting the teaser, and humour.

Additionally, the “I” message is a strategy proposed by Freedman to empower children who are targets of teasing. Here children practice stating both their feelings and expectations for the instigator’s behavior. A teased child is encouraged to respond with a basic three-component model (I feel___; when___; and I would/want___). So in light of a name-calling scenario of teasing, a recipient might respond “*I feel sad when you tease me about my hair and I want it to stop.*”

Visualization is another strategy discussed in the book. Here children are encouraged to use their imaginative skills to create visuals to shield and protect themselves from hurtful teasing (e.g., blowing teases away, hitting teases with a tennis racquet). One of Freedman’s examples helps illustrate the *reframing* strategy and the *so what* strategy:

Teaser:	Your lunch looks like vomit. How can you eat that?
Teasee (<i>Reframe</i>):	I see that you are really interested in what I am eating.
Teasee (<i>So what</i>):	So what? (p. 126).

Freedman’s (2002) book is anecdotal and based on her experiences as a social worker within the school system. Additionally, although the book is targeted toward parents, a discussion of sibling teasing is noticeably absent. Yet despite these criticisms, this book provided the most comprehensive reporting on teasing among young children, as well as offered several avenues for future researchers to pursue (e.g., the efficacy of the various response strategies discussed within the book).

Implications for Early Childhood Educators and Programs

The young children of this study appeared well versed in the language and behaviour of teasing. These siblings then enter early childhood programs with prior knowledge and familiarity with teasing as well as various other social skills learned at home. Moreover, the parents of this study had expectations that teasing would occur in the early childhood programs their children attended and that these behaviours would be addressed. As all the children of this study attended both early childhood programs (i.e., play group) and were entering kindergarten or junior kindergarten (except the youngest boy) the following year, the implications set forth here apply equally well to preschool/daycare, kindergarten and primary grades.

Teasing and Bullying Prevention

A lack of resources on teasing within the preschool years currently exists for educators and early childhood programs. Despite recognition among some early childhood educators that young children tease and are targets of teasing, social skills curriculum or prevention programming is generally targeted within school systems and not widely available to early childhood programs (Harwood, 2006). Information on specific programming that does exist for early childhood education, such as Safe Spaces (Westcoast Childcare Resource Centre (n.d.)), is piecemeal and often difficult to access. Additionally, information is also available through private websites such as the one maintained by the Vancouver Public Library (2007), but again not knowing where to access information may limit its use. Both the provinces of British Columbia and Ontario provide access to violence prevention (or bullying) resources for teachers within the school system. However, neither province has an equivalent

comprehensive database of resources readily available to the early childhood community.

Professional development experiences for educators are another avenue where information on teasing among young children could be disseminated. Several associations host annual conferences supporting professional development initiatives for early childhood educators. Yet despite the growing desire identified by some early childhood educators to be informed and practiced in dealing with teasing among young children (Harwood, 2006), teasing as a specific topic has yet to be a central focus and is noticeably absent from several professional development venues (Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario, 2007; Early Childhood Educators of British Columbia, 2006, 2007; Vancouver Island Cooperative Preschool Association, 2007).

Bullying prevention in the elementary years was the focus of British Columbia's resource document made available within the public education system in 1999 (Ministry of Education and Ministry of Attorney General). Here, teasing is defined as a form of indirect bullying and verbal aggression. Resources for children, parents, and educators are listed within the document as well as lesson plans for kindergarten to grade 7. Although teasing is addressed within the document it is defined narrowly as a subtype of bullying. The more prosocial aspects of teasing are overlooked as well as the features of teasing that distinguish it from bullying.

Generally, prevention type programs typically target bullying behaviors and teasing is subsumed under this more general category. However, teasing has distinctive properties and deserves a specific focus within prevention/education type programming. Not all teasing is bad and not all teasing is bullying. Bullying has been

defined as “a dynamic of unhealthy interaction. It is a form of repeated aggression used from a position of power” (Ontario Safe Schools Action Team, 2005, p. 10). Moreover, bullying tends to be recognized as persistent negative behaviour that involves a power imbalance between the instigator and victim (Olweus, 1978). Teasing is a distinct category of behavior and is distinguished from bullying by several facets, such as the playful intent, the off-record markers, and the important role of the recipient’s response in determining if indeed a tease is completed. Additionally, there are a variety of effective strategies to respond and negate the detrimental effects of teasing. Therefore, teasing is in need of its own focus in programming to both educate and aid children in distinguishing the elements of a tease as well as practice in the various response strategies. The application of the overarching label of bullying to teasing behaviour ignores some of the more prosocial benefits of teasing.

The Ontario Ministry of Education (2006) also supports a registry of bullying prevention programs available to school personnel. Of the 35 various programs or resources listed, 27 are targeted toward elementary age children and 11 of these are specific to junior kindergarten and kindergarten. Presumably by including programming specific to elementary children, the Ministry recognizes the advantages of targeting bullying prevention programming at younger ages. Moreover, as upwards of 40% of children will be involved in a bullying situation within the first three years of public schooling, bullying prevention programming aimed at young children is prudent (Beran & Tutty, 2002). However, despite the availability of information on violence prevention, the majority of these programs are specific to bullying and teasing is not mentioned in many of their descriptors.

Programming within early childhood needs to include opportunities for children to discuss, examine, and reflect on the issue of teasing. Additionally, the overarching social-emotional curriculum of an early childhood center will validate children's feelings and provide a safe environment for social interactions (Gordon & Browne, 2007). Young children need to be provided with opportunities to practice discerning between hurtful and playful teasing as well as the various response strategies. The inclusion of discussion circles, literature, tease-free zones, role-play, and puppet scripts that address the many facets of teasing needs to be included within any prevention/education type programming (Freedman, 2002; Froschl & Sprung, 2005; Sprung, 2005).

Early Childhood Journals, Educational Databases, and Professional Associations

A review of the major early childhood journals (see Appendix S for a list of reviewed journals), databases, and associations (i.e., National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), and Canadian Child Care Federation) revealed few references to teasing. Journal articles that did include the topic of teasing often referenced the behaviour in relation to bullying or as problem behaviour (Pepler, King, Craig, Byrd, & Bream, 1995; Santrock, Smith, & Bourbeau, 1976; Smetana, Campione-Barr, & Yell, 2003). Additionally, teasing was noted as a form of social exclusion (Sapon-Shevin, Dobbelaere, Corrigan, Goodman, & Mastin, 1998) and an act used to discriminate (Jalongo, 1999).

The journal, *Young Children*, had two articles focused on teasing (Bakley, 1998; Froschl & Sprung, 1999). The Froschl and Sprung article defined teasing alongside bullying and provided practical solutions for the classroom to stop such behaviours. The Bakley article was more related to the experiences of one child. The

journal, *Interaction*, also cited teasing explicitly in reference to young children's aggressive and bullying behaviours (Mann, 2003) and in reference to teasing that occurs as a result of having a sibling with special needs (Tozer, 2001). Overall, teasing rarely appeared as a focused topic in the reviewed journals (journals practitioners are most likely to read).

The educational databases reviewed for this study also revealed few references to teasing and young children. The Educational Resource Information Center (ERIC) was the only database to have resources related specifically to teasing. Here, three articles were found concerning the specific topic of teasing (ERIC Development Team, 1997; Freedman, 1999; Froschl, Sprung, & Mullin-Rindler, 1998). The Freedman article was the most specific to teasing, identifying various forms of teasing, addressing why young children tease, and providing strategies for parents to help children cope with teasing. Although the Freedman article was targeted to parents, many of the suggested strategies are applicable and easily adaptable to the early childhood classroom (this article preceded the Freedman book published in 2002). The remaining two ERIC references again defined teasing as a form of bullying. Moreover, when bullying was combined with teasing in the database search several articles (over 50) were found.

The website for the NAEYC cited teasing in reference to teaching assertive skills to young children (1996) and in conjunction with anti-bias education (2007). Teasing was specifically labeled a "provocative behavior" that could be ignored as one means of teaching children to be more assertive in their social interactions with peers (National Association for Education of Young Children, 1996, p. 1). Additionally, children's teasing based on a person's appearance was identified in the

article *Teaching Young Children to Resist Bias*, as an unacceptable form of prejudice. The Canadian Child Care Federation (CCF) website had one reference related to teasing that results from having a sibling with a special needs and emphasized the importance of “identifying the difference between gentle, empathetic teasing and bullying” (Tozer, 2003). A similar article by the same author also appeared in the Association’s journal *Interaction*. Additionally the CCF website contained a reference sheet entitled, *Fear and loathing: A guide to bullying behaviour* (2006) to address the issue of bullying. A few other articles on this website also mentioned bullying peripherally with no specific information related to teasing.

Overall, the review of several early childhood journals, educational databases, and professional associations held few references to the topic of teasing. Primarily, teasing was conceived of as a negative behaviour and a subset of bullying. The positive or prosocial benefits of teasing as well as the distinguishing elements of a tease were not mentioned (with the exception of Freedman’s 1999 article).

Books for Early Childhood Educators on Teasing

There also exists a lack of educational resource books specific to the topic of teasing among young children. Generally, resource books target broader subjects such as conflict resolution (Evans, 2002) or creating safe environments for social-emotional learning (Kreidler et al., 1999; Polland, 2000; Schiller & Bryant, 1998; Smith, 1993) with teasing only mentioned peripherally if at all. Alternatively, some resource books address teasing as a component of bullying among preschool age children (Froschl & Sprung, 2005; Ross, 1996). Moreover, general informational books do exist that address teasing (Kowalski, 2003; Macklem, 2003). However,

educational resource books specific to young children's teasing were not found during my review. Similar to the Freedman (2002) book for parents discussed previously, educators could also benefit from a resource book specific to teasing. Teasing among young children is a complex relational behaviour that requires a distinct focus in the literature. Educational resource books that discuss the teasing phenomenon as well as provide curriculum strategies to include inside classrooms are greatly needed.

Implications for Early Childhood Education Training Programs

Early childhood educators are trained in programs specializing in the care and education of children 0 to 6 years (although some provinces such as Ontario include a school-age component in their training programs). These training programs are offered in a variety of colleges, institutes, and universities across Canada and vary from one to four years in length (Child Care Human Resources Sector Council, 2007). Training programs typically utilize a variety of educational tools, such as textbooks and practicum experiences, to educate and train individuals in the care and education of young children. I reviewed several early childhood introductory textbooks for references to the general topic of sibling relationships and the more specific subject of teasing (Bornstein & Lamb, 1999; Craig, Digdon, & Kermis, 2002; Gordon & Browne, 2007; Hendrick, 2005; Hendrick & Weissman, 2006; Kail & Zolner, 2005; Kaiser & Rasminsky, 2003; Nutbrown, 2006; Yelland, 2005). Given the influence and significance of the sibling relationship on early learning I sought to find references within seminal texts in early childhood education. Moreover, as teasing appears prevalent at a young age and parents have expectations that this behaviour will occur and be addressed within early childhood programs I sought to

answer how training textbooks approached and prepared future educators to address this phenomenon.

Overall, few textbooks extensively addressed the important role of siblings' social influences on early development. Moreover, as sibling research has generally been neglected in traditional psychology circles (Dunn, 1992) it is not surprising that peer relationships and family-child relationships receive the focus of textbook print while attention to sibling relationships is marginal. The Bornstein and Lamb (1999) textbook has dedicated chapters on parent-child relationships and peer relationships but no such equivalent chapter devoted to sibling relationships.

The Kail and Zolner (2005) textbook does include a small section on "relationships with siblings and peers" (p. 314). This recent Canadian edition is currently in use by a local community college in British Columbia as an introductory textbook to train and prepare early childhood educators. The five-page section dedicated to siblings begins by discussing the effects of the ordinal position of siblings on parenting styles. The book also discusses individual development that may be related to the child's position in the family (e.g., the general academic success of first-born children). The final section dedicated to siblings addressed the important aspect of quality within the relationship. Several important aspects and influences on the quality of the sibling relationship are discussed (i.e., individual temperament, age, gender, and parental influences and differential treatment). And although conflict and conflict resolution strategies are discussed as important influences on sibling relationships, there is no mention of teasing.

Similarly, the Craig, Digdon, and Kermis (2002) textbook also included a small section on sibling attachment and role as important agents of social modelling.

Additionally, the subject of sibling rivalry was also addressed in a single paragraph. Although teasing was not specifically mentioned, bullying and playground aggression was discussed as a “focus on an issue” within the section on personality and social development in middle childhood (pp. 444-445).

The subject of teasing was referenced six times in the Kaiser and Rasminksy (2003) book on *Challenging Behaviour in Young Children*. Additionally, this book contained a comprehensive chapter on the topic of bullying. However, teasing was subsumed under the more general category of verbal bullying and as a form of indirect aggression. Moreover, in a chapter entitled “*Fostering self-discipline and conflict resolution skills*” (pp. 107-220), Hendrick and Weissman (2006) briefly mention teasing and bullying in a single paragraph. Despite the authors’ assertion that bullying occurs at the preschool and kindergarten level and teasing and bullying need to be discouraged and stopped within the classroom, the general topic of bullying and teasing received little focus in the textbook.

In general, teasing was not a focus of discussion in any of the textbooks reviewed. Moreover, siblings and sibling relationships received minimal coverage in these textbooks despite the recognition by some researchers of siblings as significant “agents of cognitive development” (Azmitia & Hesser, 1993, p. 430) and influence on social development (Dunn & Munn, 1986b). Given the significance and importance of the early years, early childhood education training programs and textbooks should address the phenomenon of teasing among young children as well as the significance of the sibling relationship on social-emotional and cognitive development.

Future Research

The findings from this study help underscore the importance of continued and future research on the topic of teasing. Several possible avenues for future research are outlined in the following paragraphs.

Alternative Environments

This research explored the phenomenon of sibling teasing within the home environment. This familiar environment may have impacted the nature of the siblings' interactions and the nature and form of teasing that was observed. Sibling teasing may be more or less likely in less familiar environments. The nature and form of teasing as well as the responses siblings' use may vary depending on the physical location. A sibling may be less likely to tease another during playgroup or respond with aggression in the grocery store. Understanding the impact of the environment on the nature of sibling teasing (and young children's teasing in general) could be further enhanced by exploring teasing in varied settings such as early childhood programs, school, and public places (e.g., libraries, and playgrounds).

Family Composition and Diversity

The participants of this study were Caucasian and middle-class with similar compositions (i.e., preschool age children and a mother and father). Moreover, all three families had an expressed interest in teasing and sibling rivalry and cited this as a motive for participating in the study. Thus, it is unclear if the teasing observed in these families would be typical of other families with varied compositions (i.e., single-parent families or blended families) or no expressed interest in teasing and rivalry. Additionally, families of diverse cultural backgrounds may hold varied and

informing perspectives on teasing. Likewise, as the mother of family C indicated, the dynamics between pairs of siblings is affected by the presence of a third sibling and thus, the number of siblings may affect the nature of teasing interactions between siblings. Future research could explore the phenomenon of teasing within varied family structures of diverse backgrounds.

Gender and Teasing

The impact of gender on the phenomenon of teasing could not be comprehensively assessed in this research as only one female child participated in the study. The dynamics of sisterly teasing was therefore not reflected. Possibly sisters' teasing patterns and responses to teases are unique and vary from those observed between the brother dyads and the twin dyad of this study. Moreover, as only one of the sibling dyads in this research was a brother-sister dyad, more research is needed on mixed gender dyads. Future research should aim to include sister-dyads and mixed-gender dyads to address this unanswered question as well as confirm or negate whether same-gender dyads' teasing patterns differ in comparison to mixed-gender dyads.

Developmental Stages of Teasing

The sibling dyads of this study displayed teasing behaviours that were distinct from previous studies (Dunn & Munn, 1985; Keltner et al., 2001; Warm, 1997). For example, physical forms of teasing (i.e., taunting) tended to dominate the type of teasing between the young siblings of this study. Moreover, the off-record markers to indicate the non-serious nature of the tease were diverse and incorporated a variety of non-verbal behaviours not previously identified in these earlier studies (e.g., flailing one's body, escalating an offensive behaviour, purposeful non

compliance with a sibling's request, nonsensical behaviours, or screeching).

Although the teasing observed between the siblings of this study tended to be negative, there were instances of playful prosocial teasing. This more benign form of teasing was labeled by the parents and two of the children in the interviews as being an acceptable form of playful provocation (i.e., perhaps a sibling's invitation to play). Possibly, teasing is an evolving form of interaction with specific stages beginning in early childhood. As Warm (1997) indicated in his study, teasing tends to become more symbolic and playful and less hurtful as children mature.

Teasing and Theory of Mind

Does teasing relate to theory of mind abilities? The findings from this study hint at the possible connection between theory of mind abilities and the understanding of social interaction that both underline teasing scenarios. Teasing and interpreting teases tends to require a certain maturity of social understanding (Keltner et al., 2001; Lightner et al., 2000). Children with difficulties in ToM abilities (e.g., children with autism) have demonstrated difficulties in understanding teasing behaviours (Heerey et al., 2005). Teasing is “a social commentary about the behaviour of another individual” (Heerey et al., p. 65) and is distinguished from explicit actions by the playful behaviours that accompany teasing. Teasing and theory of mind abilities may emerge simultaneously as young children's cognitive, social, and emotional understandings mature.

The instigator of a tease must intentionally provoke another and generate off-record markers to indicate the non-seriousness of the tease. As Keltner et al. (2001) indicated, off-record markers require the ability to discern and distinguish between the literal and the intended meaning. Young children may have to attend to the

contextual cues, the tone of voice, facial and body language, and the implied meaning both to evoke and respond to teasing. And although young children appear to be sensitive to obvious forms of off-record markers (e.g., sticking out of one's tongue) more allusive and symbolic forms of teasing may require greater development in social, emotional, and cognitive understanding (Warm, 1997). In teasing scenarios young children may be able to discern that the instigator holds a belief other than what has been actually said (i.e., first-order belief) but may have more difficulty discerning what the instigator intends the recipient to infer from what has been said (i.e., second-order belief). Yet, teasing simply requires one sibling to *understand* the feelings and desires of the other. Notably, the young siblings of this study had clear and definite understandings of how to annoy the other. Thus, teasing may share similar developmental trajectories to a child's developing social understandings and theory of mind abilities (ToM). The relationship of teasing, social understanding, and ToM has yet to be fully researched.

In general, sibling teasing appears to provide young children with an early practice arena for social interactions. The young children of this study were capable teasers and teasing functioned as a means of stimulation, play, manipulation, control, negotiating power, assessing situations, and problem solving. Moreover, teasing may have contributed to the children's abilities to be tolerant and patient of their siblings. Despite the reliance on more physical forms of teasing and literal interpretations of those teases, sibling teasing may be one antecedent of teasing behaviour found within friendships. Additionally, many of the functions of teasing may help prepare young children for their interactions in the wider social context.

A longitudinal study that follows multiple dyads of siblings through their early interactions in the home to their experiences in early childhood programs and later school years, would serve to enhance our understanding of how teasing behaviours develop and change. Research of this nature could address important questions such as: *Does siblings' abilities to discern intended messages of teasing improve with more mature mental state understanding?* and *What role does social context play in teasing?* Moreover, longitudinal studies that present teasing scenarios across varied ages could examine the shifts in the development and understanding of hurtful teasing (and hurtful responses) to more prosocial and enjoyable teasing.

Methodological Considerations

The naturalistic orientation of this research provided me an opportunity to participate and observe young siblings as they engaged with one another. In doing so I was able to address the research questions. However, there were several limitations inherent in this methodological choice of which two are highlighted here, as they may be informative for future researchers (see pages 132-135 for a complete discussion of all the study's limitations). Firstly, as only three cases were utilized in this study, the data are only generalizable to the participants of this study. Secondly, the study hinged on the accuracy of the observations and these may have been impacted by observation bias and interview bias (Cohen et al., 2000).

Case studies by their very nature typically present difficulties in generalizing results to other populations (Yin, 2003). The findings from this study are specific to the three dyads of siblings that participated. However, this study helps further our understanding of the emic perspective of sibling teasing. Future researchers may wish to replicate the methods employed in this study to other populations and that

may further validate and generalize the findings of this study beyond the three cases depicted here.

As the researcher I was keenly interested in observing teasing behaviours between the siblings of this study. This personal desire may have impacted the nature of my observations and the natural actions of the participants. The children were aware of my persistent presence and rather than acting naturally the siblings may have *performed* some of their interactions in an effort to please the researcher. Moreover, during the interviews the participants may have also provided responses in anticipation of my desires and in an effort to gratify the researcher. A less intrusive research method may have yielded different and more naturalistic results. Videotaping the children in the home environment or a one-way mirror system in an early childhood program could yield more impartial findings.

Alternative Avenues to Pursue

Teasing is a topic rarely addressed in research, yet it is evident in all aspects of our society. Throughout this research journey, rarely did I meet a person who did not have a personal story to share on the subject of teasing. This research focused on describing the naturalistic experiences of young siblings engaged in teasing and adds to the holistic understanding of this complex phenomenon. However, there are several avenues that remain unexplored in relation to young children and teasing. Teasing is a complex relational behaviour that incorporates aspects of pretense, social understanding, emotions, communication, and cognition. The correlational or causal relationship between these many developmental aspects and teasing has yet to be fully researched. Questions remain unanswered such as, *Are children that engage*

in pretense more capable of discerning messages in teasing? and Do children with advanced theory of mind abilities engage in more or less teasing behaviours?

The response strategies utilized by a recipient appear to have a profound impact on the negative impact of the tease as well as continuing or discontinuing interactions with the instigator after the tease. As such, future research on the efficacy of various response strategies (possibly those suggested by Freedman, 2002) would add to the knowledge base of teasing. Moreover, intervention plans at the curricular level could be strengthened with the addition of well-researched response strategies.

Reflections on Processes of Data Collection

Some processes of data collection completed for this study were informing while others were less illuminating on the phenomenon of teasing. These processes are highlighted here as recommendations for future researchers to consider when approaching research with young children.

The use of the checklists and a formal interview approach were two processes that somewhat constrained the data collection process. The checklists used in this study narrowly defined categories of behaviour that often failed to capture the complexity or intensity of the children's actions. Thus, the checklists provided more of a 'jumping off' point, while the details and essence of the children's behaviours were more fully captured in the field notes and audio recordings. Checklists should not be relied upon solely to portray the intricate and complex behaviours inherent with young children's teasing.

A formal interview approach was not a successful strategy with the children of this study. The young children responded more favorably to a relaxed

conversational approach to interviewing. Particularly significant and fruitful were conversations about teasing that occurred during the context of their play. Here, as opposed to a scripted interview, I was better able to explore and revisit the children's perspectives. Interviewing young children requires flexibility and adaptability; at times, it necessitates incorporating a variety of strategies such as interviewing the siblings together, using hypothetical questions or third-party questions, and adapting the questions to the context (Graue & Walsh, 1998). The stringent requirements (i.e., pre-specified interview protocols and questions) required by the University of Victoria Human Research Ethics Board may be an inhibiting process to the success of future researchers' in interviewing young children.

Most illuminating to this research process was the study of children in *context* and using children's interests, insights, and conversations as procedural tools in gathering data. By thinking "of children as living in *specific* settings, with *specific* experiences and life situations" (Graue & Walsh, 1998, p. 5) the complexity of the siblings' lives can be further explored. Young children are enmeshed in a variety of contexts, yet little research attention is given to the day-to-day experiences of these varied contexts. Children enter formal schooling (or early childhood education programs) with a multitude of experiences, perceptions, thoughts, and behaviours and much can be gained from interpretative and descriptive studies that focus on and attempt to do justice to the many aspects of children's lives.

Interviewing the parents twice as well as frequent member-checks with the participants was also beneficial to the study. These measures ensured that the parents and children had a voice in how they were being represented throughout the study.

As a participant-observer in this research I was afforded a window on the siblings' interests, insights, and conversations, ultimately enabling me to use this information to shape the data collection process. I was able to adopt the *flexibility* needed to follow the siblings' leads, making use of such strategies as the orange canvas bag to bridge my entrance into the children's play, and using specific play frames as a tool for interviewing (e.g., office play theme).

However, the procedures used throughout this study of sibling teasing should not be considered a *recipe* for future researchers to follow (Graue & Walsh, 1998). There is no single method or procedure that is *the correct path* in conducting research with young children. What is recommended is that researchers consider the context and their role within that context, remaining *flexible* in both data gathering and in their interactions with children.

Conclusion

This study explored the phenomenon of teasing within three dyads of young preschool age siblings. The focus of the study was in gaining an emic perspective of the nature, form, and function of teasing within the sibling relationship. Additionally, parents' perspectives of teasing were gathered and provided contrasts to the perceptions held by the children. Three distinct portraits of the families emerged in this study and provided a glimpse into the experiences of these families as they addressed and dealt with a common sibling phenomenon, teasing.

The study demonstrates that physical contexts contribute to the form and function of teasing among sibling dyads. The contexts of the three families described in this study were distinct as themes of *restriction*, *freedom*, and *control* emerged in reference to the experiences of the three sets of siblings. Context appears to be an

integral aspect of the nature of teasing and cannot be overlooked in future research of this phenomenon.

This study demonstrated that young siblings engage in teasing behaviours. Yet, teasing was not as prevalent as conflict and aggression. And most of the siblings' interactions were playful. However, aggression, conflict, and teasing appear characteristic of young siblings interactions and these behaviours may have unique influences on the development of social cognition.

Sibling teasing had a role in playful interactions creating an invitation and stimulus for play. Yet, overwhelmingly teasing between the siblings was hurtful and mean. The form of sibling teasing noted throughout this study was also distinct from teasing more typical of peers. Sixty-eight percent of all teasing among the siblings was taunting. Taunting, a more physical form of teasing, may be more relevant to the sibling-sibling interaction as the young sibling has a clear understanding of the desires of the other. Thus, sibling teasing may serve as precursors to different forms of teasing more typical within friendships.

Mothers were absent for the majority of the children's teasing (54%). Despite this, the parents stated that teasing occurred between siblings. The results of the interview with parents indicated that teasing has social and cognitive functions in children's development; schooling and early childhood programs both facilitate and act as a resource for children learning about teasing and teasing prevention; and personal history influences parents' perceptions and responses to teasing. The children were more likely to ascribe hurt feelings and an emotional affect of teasing than were the mothers in their interview responses. Perhaps parents unwittingly minimize the emotional impact of young children's teasing since parental teasing is

typically more symbolic and playful (while young children's teasing appears more hurtful in nature).

The results of this study hold implications for the understanding of child development. Possibly teasing functions to limit or enhance social skill development as children must balance and negotiate aspects of pretense, non-literal communication, and information about the social context in order to tease and formulate responses to teasing. The results of the study also hold several implications for educators, parents, and training programs. Few resources are available on the subject of teasing and young children (and teasing and siblings). Any intervention or education on teasing must target the many social layers a child is embedded in, including the home environment, early childhood programs, and schooling.

Teasing is a complex relational phenomenon, much more than a 'rite of passage' or something that has to be endured in childhood. As Keltner (1998) emphasized, "teasing lies on a perilous boundary between aggression and play and can increase intimacy and integrate members into groups or through subtle changes of form become a vehicle of victimization and ostracism" (p. 1244). Teasing involves skills of social understanding, understanding of intention, pretense, non-literal communication, and emotion regulation. Children's capabilities with these skills may affect the nature, form, and intent of teases as well as the responses generated to teasing scenarios.

The adage 'sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me' does not appear to hold true in some young children's experiences with teasing. Young children need to be empowered with a variety of response strategies as well

as the abilities to distinguish between hurtful teasing and playful teasing. Then, children will be well equipped to cope with teasing scenarios.

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Appendix A



University
of Victoria

Human Research Ethics Board
Office of Research Services
University of Victoria
Technology Enterprise Facility, Room 218
Tel (250) 472-4545 Fax (250) 721-7836
Email ethics@uvic.ca Web www.research.uvic.ca

Human Research Ethics Board Certificate of Approval

<u>Principal Investigator</u> Debbie Harwood Graduate Student	<u>Department/School</u> EDUC	<u>Supervisor</u> Dr. Margie Mayfield	
<u>Co-Investigator(s):</u>			
<u>Project Title:</u> Exploring the phenomenon of teasing: A collective case study of three sibling dyads			
<u>Protocol No.</u> 05-234	<u>Approval Date</u> 21-Sep-05	<u>Start Date</u> 21-Sep-05	<u>End Date</u> 20-Sep-06

Certification

This certifies that the UVic Human Research Ethics Board has examined this research protocol and concludes that, in all respects, the proposed research meets appropriate standards of ethics as outlined by the University of Victoria Research Regulations Involving Human Subjects.

Dr. Richard Keeler
Associate Vice-President, Research

This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above term provided there is no change in the procedures. Extensions or minor amendments may be granted upon receipt of a "Research Status" form.

05-234 Harwood, Debbie

Appendix B

Information Letter

“STICKS AND STONES”**SIBLING TEASING****UNIVERSITY DOCTORAL STUDENT SEEKS FAMILIES TO PARTICIPATE IN STUDY OF SIBLING TEASING**

I am a student and parent of two young children. I am looking for families with two young children between the ages of approximately 2.5 to 6 years of age together with a parent to volunteer for my study on sibling teasing. The time required for this would require a commitment of 1 ½ to 2 hours of my observing in your home (over a 3 month period) and just over two hours of interview time with one parent (and one hour of interview time with each child). All observations and interviews would be scheduled at your convenience, and completely voluntary. You and your children will have the opportunity to opt out of the study at any time.

Why *teasing*? Teasing seems to happen everywhere and to everyone. Some of this is hurtful and some is playful. I had many questions about children’s abilities to understand and cope with teasing. What part of the message of a tease does the child hear? And do they internalize the negative parts? What tools do we give to our children to negotiate teasing in the complex social world?

Some of these questions came from watching my own children. As a parent, I often give the advice “oh just ignore it” or “she doesn’t mean anything by that.” But I wonder if that is always the best advice? What are the children thinking, and feeling? As a student, I thought I should try to learn about teasing from their perspective.

Brothers and sisters are a child’s first playmates. Learning, playing, and talking with each other may set the child’s path for later friendships. Understanding the unique aspects of the siblings’ relationship and how they deal with teasing is the first step.

If you would like more information or are willing to volunteer, please contact me.

Thank you.

Debbie Harwood

xxx-xxx (home)

xxx-xxx (cell)

debbieharwood@xxxx.xx

Appendix C

Request for Approval from Board of Directors of Ontario Early Years Centres

Debbie Harwood

xxx-xxxx

Regional Executive Director
Board of Directors
Ontario Early Years Centre

I am a Doctoral student from the University of Victoria, British Columbia and I am looking for families with two young children between the ages of approximately 2.5 to 6 years of age together with a parent to volunteer for my study on sibling teasing.

Why teasing? Teasing seems to happen everywhere and to everyone. Some of this is hurtful and some is playful. I had many questions about children's abilities to understand and cope with teasing. What part of the message of a tease does the child hear? And do they internalize the negative parts? What tools do we give to our children to negotiate teasing in the complex social world?

I am requesting the permission from the governing Board of Directors to solicit family participants to take part in this study, families that currently attend programming within your center. I would solicit these participants, after your approval, by making short 5-minute presentations prior to the start of a regularly scheduled parent-child program (such as, the drop-in program). During this presentation I would introduce myself, the general purpose of the research, highlighting the central points of the study and the commitment required from participants, as well as the measures that will be taken to insure families' privacy and anonymity. The presentations will also allow individuals to ask questions and receive an information letter (see attached information letter).

Copies of this information letter will be left in a central location within your centre's facility so that any potential family interested in additional information on participating in this study may pick it up at their leisure and discretion. Families interested in participating will contact me directly at my personal number to ensure their anonymity.

In addition to being able to contact the researcher and/or the supervisor at the above phone numbers, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Associate Vice-President, Research at the University of Victoria (250-472-4545).

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of granting approval to solicit participants from the Ottawa South Ontario Early Years Centre for this study and that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researcher.

Signing Authority of Board of Directors
Ontario Early Years Centre

Date

Appendix D

Participant Consent Forms

1 of 4 pages

EXPLORING THE PHENOMENON OF TEASING:
A COLLECTIVE CASE STUDY OF THREE SIBLING DYADS

You are being invited to participate in a study entitled *Exploring the phenomenon of teasing: A collective case study of three sibling dyads* that is being conducted by Debbie Harwood.

Debbie Harwood is a graduate student in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Victoria and you may contact her if you have further questions by calling xxx-xxxx (home) or xx-xxxx (cell).

As a graduate student, I am required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a degree in Doctor of Philosophy in Education. It is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Margie I. Mayfield. You may contact my supervisor at 250-721-7849.

The purpose of this research project is to examine the dynamics of naturally occurring teasing incidents between sibling dyads (aged approximately between 2.5 and 6 years of age). This research will potentially add to the understanding of how young children experience, resist, and internalize the messages of childhood teasing. Research of this type is important because it will contribute to the insights and understanding of the child's experience of teasing, and specifically their feelings in relation to being teased.

You are being asked to participate in this study because you have two young children between the ages of approximately 2.5 and 6 years.

If you agree to voluntarily participate in this research, your participation and your children's participation will include observations of the children while they play in your home environment for approximately 1.5 to 2 hours per week over a three-month period. I also require your permission to interview you (as the parent or guardian) and both of your children. Two interviews with the parent are planned in the study and will not exceed 1 hour for each interview. The two interviews with the children will each not exceed 30 minutes and will be more conversational in nature. The observations and interviews will be conducted during the children's regular day, in the home, and under your supervision.

Participation in this study may cause some inconvenience to you, including some disruption to the normal routines of your day, and a commitment of time.

There are no known or anticipated risks to you or your children by participating in this research. The potential benefits of your participation in this research include gaining insight into your children's perceptions and understanding of teasing incidents, and the possible messages from teasing that they attend to and internalize. By understanding the various contexts of young children's social worlds this research could potentially provide insight into how teasing manifests itself between siblings, and ultimately add to the research literature on the complexity of children's social lives and the influence of the specific sibling relationship on mental state understanding.

Appendix D Continued

page 2 of 4

Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. If you do withdraw from the study your data will be used only if participant gives permission (verbally and written).

To make sure that you continue to consent to participate in this research, I will I will verbally request permission at the outset of all observation periods and interview sessions. I will also verbally ask your child to consent as well.

All data collected will remain confidential and I will protect your and your children's identities by removing all names and any other information that would identify you and your children from any written report of this study. To ensure accuracy of the study I will be using audiotapes. Audiotapes may be downloaded onto computer audio files to facilitate the transcription process. The computer audio files will be protected by a security password and deleted after data analysis is completed. The audiotapes will be kept in a secure locked cabinet and destroyed after transcription. Access to the data collected will be restricted to myself, and the faculty supervisor listed above.

It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared with others in the following ways: directly to the participants, through a dissertation, class presentation, and published article.

Data from this study will be disposed of immediately following the oral defense of the dissertation, this includes all paper transcripts will be shredded, electronic data erased, and audio data destroyed.

In addition to being able to contact the researcher and/or the supervisor at the above phone numbers, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Associate Vice-President, Research at the University of Victoria (250-472-4545).

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study and that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers.

Name of Participant

Parent Signature

Date

Name of Child Participant

Name of Child Participant

A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.

Parental Consent Form

As the parent/guardian of _____ and their sibling
_____, I give permission for them to participate in the
teasing study entitled, "Exploring the Phenomenon of Teasing: A Collective Case
Study of Three Sibling Dyads", being conducted by Debbie Harwood. I understand
that my children will be audiotaped while at play in the home and during an
interview. I understand that my children's privacy and identity will be protected and
that all data collected will be used only for the purposes of the study and
dissemination of the study report.

Parent's Name (Print)

Parent's Signature

Date

Children's Written Consent

Sibling 1:

I _____ agree to take part in Debbie Harwood's study (homework) on teasing. I understand that Debbie will watch me play with my brother/sister and ask me questions about how we get along and play together. I understand that sometimes Debbie will audiotape and record my voice on her tape machine. I understand that I can stop any time, ask Debbie to leave, or leave the room myself. I understand that my Mom/Dad/ or guardian will be close by or in the room at all times.

Child's Signature (Mark)

Date

Sibling 2:

I _____ agree to take part in Debbie Harwood's study (homework) on teasing. I understand that Debbie will watch me play with my brother/sister and ask me questions about how we get along and play together. I understand that sometimes Debbie will audiotape and record my voice on her tape machine. I understand that I can stop any time, ask Debbie to leave, or leave the room myself. I understand that my Mom/Dad/ or guardian will be close by or in the room at all times.

Child's Signature (Mark)

Date

Children's Verbal Consent

Spoken to child prior to each observation and interview:

Hello, I'm Debbie. I am doing some homework for my school. I am looking at how you and your (brother/sister) play and talk together, and what you think about that. I would like to watch you play¹, ask you some questions², but you do not have to play¹, answer². If you would like to leave at any time, you can. May I ask you some questions?

Appendix E

The Play Observation Scale Coding Sheet

Sibling: _____
 Date: _____

Children	Non Play				
Transition					
Onlooker					
Aggression					
Adult Conversation					
Sibling Conversation					
TV watching					
Functional	Solitary				
Exploratory					
Constructive					
Reading					
Dramatic Play					
Games					
Drawing/Writing/Art					
Auditory Play					
Gross Motor					
Functional	Parallel				
Exploratory					
Constructive					
Reading					
Dramatic Play					
Drawing/Writing/Art					
Gross Motor					
Games					
Functional	Cooperative/Group				
Exploratory					
Constructive					
Reading					
Dramatic Play					
Drawing/Writing/Art					
Gross Motor +					
Games					

+ Includes play that was denoted as rough-and-tumble.

Note: Time of day and name of other player when indicating play category.

Appendix F

Nature of Siblings' Interactions Checklist

Date & Time: _____

Context of Observation: _____

<u>Behavioural Description</u>	<u>Scale (Refer to Definitions Appendix H)</u>				
Cooperative/Responsive/Attentive	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
Control/ Impulsiveness	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
Competition/Rivalry	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
Conflict	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.

Other Descriptions of Interactions

Note: Adapted from "Rating Scale for Siblings' Videotaped Interactions" by Stocker, C., 1988.

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Appendix G

Record of Time Spent with Data Collection Specifics

Family	POS (total times across all visits)	Nature of Interactions (number of times)	Teasing (number of times)	Range of Time to Complete (minutes)	Time Spent Recording Checklists (minutes)	Interview Time with Mother (minutes)	Interview with Children (minutes)	Unattended Tape (minutes/seconds)	Field Journal Recording (minutes)	Participant Observer (hours)	Non Participant (hours)
A	89	12	12	3-10	90	60	During Play	N/A	90	13.00	4.00
B	96	12	12	3-10	90	60	During Play	21M3S	90	12.65	4.35
C	65	10	10	3-10	80	45	During Play	8M3S	80	12.45	3.55

Appendix H

Behavioural Definitions and Scale for Siblings' Interactions

Category-Nature of Interaction	Definitional Scale
Cooperative/Responsive/Attentive	
I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> No attempts to cooperate <input type="checkbox"/> No innovative suggestions for joint activity <input type="checkbox"/> Refusal to cooperate or follow suggestions <input type="checkbox"/> May ignore conversational attempts and questions from sibling <input type="checkbox"/> No attempt to share resources <p>Example*--<i>Dramatic Play with Fire Station Toy</i>: Caleb fails to cooperate in sharing the toy, and refuses the Mom's suggestions for playing together. Plays independently and ignores siblings attempts to join in his play. C-2-2</p>
II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Follows suggestions on occasion <input type="checkbox"/> No attempts to initiate cooperation. <input type="checkbox"/> Does not reply to question or comment on more than one occasion <p>Example—<i>Train play</i>: Reese rights his brother's train after it jumps from the track but does not respond to Drake's invitation to join him in play. C-1-1</p>
III	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Follows suggestions <input type="checkbox"/> Occasional tentative attempts at cooperation <input type="checkbox"/> Shares help if requested <input type="checkbox"/> Responds to comments on most occasions, but may fail to reply once <input type="checkbox"/> There may be brief sustained conversation or sharing of resources <p>Example* --<i>Track Building</i>: James has short conversation with sibling on how to configure track. He passes pieces to his brother when requested. A-10-4</p>
IV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Some suggestions of joint play or cooperation <input type="checkbox"/> Follows sibling's suggestions <input type="checkbox"/> Unsolicited sharing or helping <input type="checkbox"/> Imitates in a friendly way <input type="checkbox"/> Gives up objects willingly when requested or makes suggestions for joint use <input type="checkbox"/> Initiates several conversations <input type="checkbox"/> Amicable conversation sustained <p>Example*—<i>Mr. Potato Head Play</i>: James suggests joint play with sibling and myself. Sibling suggests characters for building Potato Heads and James follows. Offers help when asked and conversation is sustained throughout. A-1-2</p>
V	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Frequent attempts to cooperate with sibling, responding promptly to suggestions or questions <input type="checkbox"/> Frequent sustained conversation <input type="checkbox"/> Makes innovatory suggestions for cooperative play <input type="checkbox"/> Friendly imitation <input type="checkbox"/> Shares resources in collaborative way

Appendix H Continued

Example*—*Dramatic Play*: Brianna makes loud meowing sounds to continue the play and increases her cat-like behaviours in response to Drake’s actions as the cat owner. She responds to Drake’s suggestions and allows herself to be led by a rope, and fed using the play food, offering several suggestions herself of what a cat would eat. B-2-4

Control/Intrusiveness

I

- No controlling, bossy, or directive statements.
- No physical acts of interference in others’ actions
- No impulsive acts directed toward disrupting sibling

Example*—*Conversation with Father*: Brianna converses with her father and allows her brother to interject freely in the conversation. B-7-6

II

- Mild suggestions as to how other should act, although not in a directive mode
- Relinquishes control easily when other child wants control
- May wait for sibling to lose interest in toy, then declare turn for self

Example*—*Tower Building*: Brianna makes 1 or 2 suggestions on how to build the tower but allows Drake to take over the construction. Once he moves to another toy Brianna resumes building the tower. B-1-9

III

- Occasional directive commands, but asks permission when showing controlling behavior
- Refuses to relinquish control when the other child demands it or relinquishes control with much reluctance
- May interfere in sibling’s play by removing toys or blocking access to play materials
- 3-4 suggestions on how sibling should act/play

Example*—*Magnet Play*: James directs Mason how to match his magnets to the pictures on the book. He takes control of Mason’s magnets but hands them back after Mom insists. A-12-2

IV

- Clear attempts to direct or control
- Some physical interference with sibling’s toys, play area, or physical person
- Adamant refusal to relinquish control or object on others’ direction
- 4-6 suggestions on how sibling should behave/play

Example*—*Dramatic Play*: Mason grabs play phone that James was using and claims it for self. He directs James to use the other phone but then removes it from his reach. A physical struggle ensues for the phone. A-9-11

V

- Frequent bossy, directive, or controlling statements
- Frequent and intense physical interference with sibling’s play
- Takes over sibling’s play
- Demonstrates distress over being controlled (e.g., screaming, intense criticism)
- Clearly dominates play and may be angry while dominating
- More than 6 attempts to control the actions of siblings (either by making suggestions or physical interference)

Example*—*Train Play*: Caleb repeatedly controls the levers on the assembled track and swats at Reese when he attempts a turn. Reese then adds a toy bus to the track. Caleb takes Reese’s bus piece off the truck and throws it to the open floor space. Caleb screams at Reese “no Reese” and physically blocks Reese from approaching the track again. C-1-3

Appendix H Continued

Competition/Rivalry

I

- No signs of rivalry or competitiveness
- No competitive statements
- No “capping” of sibling’s comments
- No complaints about turns
- No disruption of parent-sibling interaction (or researcher-sibling interaction)

Example*—*Dramatic Office Play*: Brianna and Drake share the office play dramatic toys. Amicable conversation is sustained between the two. I am assigned the role of *office visitor* and both children take turns interacting with me in my role. B-11-2

II

- Occasional signs of rivalry or competitiveness
- Makes “I won” / “I lost” comments
- Expresses some concern about equality or fairness
- Monitors and watches parent-sibling interaction (or researcher-sibling interaction) and may make comment

Example*—*Play Dough*: James complains “not fair” when Mason takes more than half of play dough. He stares intently when Mason slithers to the floor and wraps his arms around Mom’s legs and receives tickling attention from Mom. A-2-14

III

- Makes most of the above signs
- Monitors parent-sibling interaction and draws attention to self
- Makes mild competitive remarks (e.g., “I’m better than you!”)
- Often “caps” sibling statement with statements about self
- Makes 2 or 3 references to equality or fairness
- May be critical of sibling’s actions (e.g., “You know nothing about building track.”)

Example*—*Block Play*: Drake criticizes Brianna’s choice of block placement He commands her to place blocks on his instructions telling her “me know, me know.” Mom enters the room and converses with Brianna about the play. Drake physically pushes Mom from the room telling her “Mama you no allowed...” B-1-10

IV

- Frequent or intense signs of above
- Monitors parent-sibling interaction and demands for self
- Promptly “caps” sibling’s statements with “me, too” type comments
- Complains about turn-taking
- Critical of sibling “he/she is not doing it right.”
- Critical of sibling’s right to play or access play materials

Example*—*Dramatic Play*: Mom joins Reese, Caleb and I on the floor where we are assembling breakfast foods with the play food. Mom distributes toys to both boys while labelling things she likes to eat. Caleb tugs at toys offered to Reese as each boy claim “mine, mine.” Caleb is not appeased when Mom offers him an identical set of toys to those offered to Reese. C-7-8

V

- Frequent and/or intense signs of above
- Frequent competitive statements
- Physical aggression in connection with winning or exerting control of play
- Intrudes on parent-sibling interaction
- Disparaging remarks about sibling to parent
- Constant use of “I” (e.g., refusal to play, angry/distressed if losing at game play, refusal to relinquish toys, or possessive of territory, negative attention-seeking behaviour)

Appendix H Continued

Example*—*Dramatic Play*: The brothers and I play ‘apple picking’. Both boys climb onto the couch reaching up to pick apples from the pretend tree. Caleb hastens his actions to retrieve more apples than his brother. Caleb hits his brother when Reese adds ‘baking pies’ to the play. He physically blocks his brother from engaging in additional play. C-4-8

Conflict

I

- No physical aggression or teasing
- No verbal hostility
- No protest or disputes

Example*—*Mr. Potato Head Play*: James and Mason play amicably with toys. A-1-2

II

- Occasional disputes or protests (1 to 2 disputes)
- Disputes or protests do not involve physical interference or aggression
- Any disagreements over the course of play are solved without anger, solved by negotiation, concession, or relinquishing control

Example*—*Car Play*: Cooperative car play between James and Mason is only interrupted by 2 disputes over car ownership. The disputes are quickly settled when James concedes ownership of the cars to his sibling. A-8-5

III

- Some disputes, arguments, or protests (3 disputes)
- Occasional teasing and taunting
- May be extended disagreements over the course of play
- Child may be irritable or angry while arguing

Example*—*Airplane Toy*: Brianna argues with her brother and disputes his ownership of a partially built toy airplane. Dad awards Brianna and Drake each both a section of the plane. Brianna taunts Drake with her piece by offering it to him then retrieving it. B-7-9

IV

- Regular intense disputes or arguments (4 disputes)
- Occasional physical aggression or teasing
- Some criticism of others’ actions

Example*—*Dramatic Play*: Caleb tries to wrestle the cake pan from Reese’s hands repeatedly. Caleb argues “Reese away” and claims “Reese done” after Reese refuses to both give up the toy or move away from the play. C-10-3

V

- Intense aggression, physical aggression (e.g., intense biting, pulling hair)
- Frequent or intense teasing
- Frequently criticizes others’ actions
- Uses physical intimidation on sibling

Example*—*Mechanized Car Track*: James screeches at his brother about how to use the toy properly. His frustration increases and he bashes his car into his sibling’s. James throws his body against Mason and hits his sibling. A-6-5

**Examples are taken from transcripts of observations from the study entitled, Exploring the Phenomenon of Teasing: A Collective Case Study of Three Sibling Dyads*

Note: Adapted from “Rating Scale for Siblings’ Videotaped Interactions” by Stocker, C., 1988.

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Appendix I

Play Classifications and Definitions

<u>Category-Nature of Play Behaviour</u>	<u>Definition</u>
Solitary Independent Play	The child plays alone and independently with toys that are different from those used by the sibling within speaking distance and makes no effort to get close to the other child. He/She pursues his/her own activity without reference to what the other is doing.
Parallel Play	The child plays independently, but the activity he/she chooses brings him/her close to the other child. He/She plays with toys that are like those which sibling is using, but he/she plays with the toys as he/she sees fit, and does not try to influence or modify the activity of the other child near him/her.
Associative Play	The child plays with the other child. The conversation concerns the common activity, there is a borrowing and loaning of play material...Both members engage in similar if not identical activity; there is no division of labor, and no organization of the activity around any material goal or product. The children do not subordinate their individual interests to that of the group.
Cooperative/Group	The child plays in a group that is organized for the purpose of making some material product, or of striving to attain some competitive goal, or of dramatizing situations of adult and group life, or of playing some formal games. There is a marked sense of belonging or not belonging to the group. Control of the group is discussed with one member directing the activity of the other. The goal as well as the method of attaining it necessitates a division of labor, taking of different roles and the organization of activity so that the efforts of one child are supplemented by those of the other.
Onlooker	The child spends most of his/her time watching the other play. He/She often talks to the child they are observing, asks questions, or gives suggestions, but does not overtly enter into the play himself/herself.

Appendix I Continued

Unoccupied

The child apparently is not playing, but occupies himself/herself with watching anything that happens to be of momentary interest. When there is nothing exciting taking place, he/she plays with his/her own body, 'wanders', stands around, or sits in one spot glancing around the room.

Note: Based on "Social Participation among pre-school children," by M. Parten, 1932, *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 27, pp. 243-269.

Appendix J

Play and Non-Play Behaviour Definitions

Category	Definition
Exploratory	Focused examination to obtain visual information from an object.
Functional	Experience sensory stimulation through simple, repetitive muscular movements.
Constructive	To create or construct something.
Reading	Examining, exploring books, and related resources.
Dramatic	Acting out life situations or animating an inanimate object.
Games-with-Rules	Engagement in competitive-type games with established rules and limits.
Transition	Child prepares, sets up, or tidies up an activity, or moves from one activity to next.
Active Conversation	Child communicates verbally with others. Excludes parallel and private speech. Conversation is coded when child is actively engaging, listening, and responding to another child.
Aggression	Non-play physical contact with another child. It is agonistic in nature and includes hitting, kicking, grabbing, threatening, etc.
Rough-and-Tumble	A specialized type of functional or dramatic play that involves playful or mock fighting, running around in a disorganized fashion, or playful physical contact (e.g., tickling).

Note: Based on “*The Play Observation Scale*”, by K. H. Rubin, 1989, University of Waterloo, pp. 4-7. Copyright 1989 by the University of Waterloo. And “*The Play Observation Scale*” by K. H. Rubin, 2001, University of Maryland, pp. 7-8. Copyright 2001 by the University of Maryland. Adapted with permission.

Appendix K

Illustrative Examples of Behaviours from Transcripts

Play

Example 1: Drake picks up a ball and coughs. He asks his sister and me “okay you wanna [want to] play ball with me over here now”? (B-1-2)

Conflicts/Disputes

Example 2: James cries out “Mason stop! Mason’s stopping it.” I ask “stopping what?” James whines out “go by itself [sniffle] all by itself Jason” [meaning let the train move by itself]. I clarify “you want the train to go all by itself”? James moans “mmhm”. Mason continues moving the train by hand without turning on the mechanized button. James moans and whimpers and insists Mason turn on the mechanized train. (A-8-4)

Aggression

Example 3: Caleb and Reese play peek-a-boo with Caleb hiding under a large gift bag. Caleb lifts off the bag calling out “peek-a-boo”. Caleb repeats his actions and tugs at Reese playfully. Reese screeches. I say, “Reese doesn’t want you to grab him. Reese tell Caleb to let go”. Caleb retreats back under the bag again. Reese kicks Caleb while he hides under the bag and Caleb cries out then growls angrily. (C-10-5)

Example 4: Mason comes and lays on his belly beside his brother who also rests on the floor writing letters. Mason’s body is squished partially under the chair. James pushes against his brother elbowing him in the ribs, saying “get away I don’t want you here.” (A-12-7)

Physical interference

Example 5: Mason stops James’ train by holding it and moves his own bus out in front. James cries out, “Hey let go!” Mason hops in front of his brother saying, “I wanna [want to] be in front.” James mocks in an angry tone, “I wanna [want to] be in the front!” Mason replies “then you have to stop and back you up” and turns off his brother’s train. He then takes several of the train pieces of James’ train and adds them to his own. (A-10-4)

Verbal demands

Example 6: Mason noisily drives a car onto the train track. James responds, “NO cars allowed on this track. NO CARS!” (A-O-4)

Appendix K Continued

Intimidation

Example 7: James rises to his knees so that he towers over his brother who squats still on the floor next to the toy ferris wheel. James' body is rigid and his fists clenched. His veins in his neck protrude as he growls angrily at his brother for not complying with his earlier demand to open the trap door of the ferris wheel. (A-6-5)

Teasing

Example 8: "The train needs to go back" James tells his brother who now controls the motorized train. The train collides with the bus at the front end and begins to push the bus down the track in front of it. "Ah! Train go back!" screeches James excitedly. The train pushes the bus further away from James' grasp as Mason chants "Nya nya na boo boo! You pushed bus." Mason taunts his brother for a few times then snatches the bus off the front of the train. James resumes control of the train and switches the button to propel the train toward him. (A-2-8)

Appendix L

Conceptual Framework for Observations of Teasing Incidents

Elicitor (Who, gender, age)	<i>Provocation</i> Behavioral Form (e.g. poke in the ribs) or verbal (e.g. sarcasm)	Off-record Marker Verbal (e.g. exaggeration) or non verbal (e.g. prosodic variation)	Context (subject of the tease)	Recipient Response	Audience Response	Teasing Category 1. Social Norm 2. Character Teasing 3. Taunting 4. Trickery	<i>Consequence</i> <i>What happened after?</i>	Valence (positive or negative)

Elicitor refers to the specifics of the initiator of the tease, their gender and age.

Provocation refers to the behavioural or verbal form of tease. Provocations are either direct (i.e., nicknames) or indirect (i.e., saying the opposite of what is true) and intentional and relevant to the target.

Off-record marker refers to the verbal (i.e., explicit statement, exaggeration, metaphor) or non verbal (making faces, sticking out tongue, laughing at recipient, non verbal chants, pestering) content of the tease. Content will also refer to the subject matter of the tease (such as physical attribute, mental capabilities, etc.).

Context refers to the situated and contextual knowledge of the teasing incident (i.e., the local knowledge) that aids the participant's understanding that 'this is a tease'.

Recipient's response refers to the outward emotional response (crying, anger, articulating 'hurt feelings') and/or behavioural response (retaliate, ignore, empathetic response, humorous, hostile).

Audience response refers to any parental response (verbal or behavioural) noted when they are present during a teasing episode.

Teasing Category refers to the classification of the tease as either 1. social norm violation, 2. character teasing, 3. taunting, or 4. trickery.

Valence refers to the content of the tease as either positive (for teases concerning positive traits or behaviours) or negative (for teases concerning negative traits or behaviours).

Note: Based on "Just teasing: A conceptual analysis and empirical review," by D. Keltner, L. Capps, A. M. Kring, R.C. Young, & E. A. Heerey, 2001, *Psychological Bulletin*, 127(2), pp. 229-248.

Appendix M

Interview Guide for use with Adults

A. Introduction and briefing

B. Opening Statements by researcher:

I'm here today to speak with you, since you know your children best. I am trying to get a full picture of your children's relationship and how they interact, and basically add to the information I gathered by observing them naturally. I would like to include your general perceptions of teasing, and the more specific thoughts you have of teasing between your children. At any time, if you would like to take a break, pause or quit please just let me know. Ready?

C. Questions—Grand Tour & Focused Questions

<i>Grand Tour</i>	<u>Parent's Comments</u>	<u>Researcher Analytic Notes</u>
<p>Tell me about your experience of family life with two young children under the age of 6.</p> <p><i>General Attitude on their Children's Relationship</i> How would you describe your children's relationship with each other?</p> <p>Can you provide an example or short story that would provide a 'picture' of this relationship?</p> <p>What do you see as the most beneficial aspect of their relationship?</p> <p>What concerns you most about this relationship?</p> <p><i>Transition Message</i></p> <p>From what I've just heard you say....this is how you would describe your children's relationships...</p>		

<p><i>General Attitude on Nature & Form of Teasing</i> How would you define teasing?</p> <p>What has been your personal experience with teasing (from childhood)?</p> <p>How do <i>you</i> use teasing in your relationship with your child? Partner? Other relationships?</p> <p>How do you tell the difference between playful teasing and hurtful teasing?</p> <p><i>Responses to Teasing</i></p> <p>What do you think is the best way for <i>your child</i> to respond to teasing?</p> <p>If you were going to give advice to another parent, what would you say was the best way to handle teasing?</p> <p><i>Transition Message</i> I'm summarizing what you've just describe as what you mean by teasing as.....</p> <p><i>Perceptions on the Functions (i.e., intent) of Teasing</i> What do you think was going on when your child was observed____(cite specific e.g. of teasing from observations)?</p>		
--	--	--

<p>What do you think your children learn through teasing?</p> <p>How would you describe the impact of teasing on your children's social learning? Emotional learning?</p> <p><i>Transition Message</i> This is my interpretation of what I just heard you say the functions of teasing are...</p> <p><i>Probes</i> Can you tell me more about that? (specific to what was just said) What did you mean by....?</p> <p><i>Close</i> Do you have anything more to add?</p>		
--	--	--

- D. Debriefing
- E. Follow-up Interviews (within one month of initial interview)
- Transcripts of first interview provided a week prior to second interview
 - Participant asked to clarify, comment, question transcript of first interview
 - Additions/deletions agreed upon and completed
- F. Family Variables—Adult to Identify (√)
- Education Level:**
- Degree/Diploma or Higher _____
- Professional/Trade Certification _____
- High School _____
- No Qualifications _____
- Occupational Class:**
- Professional (e.g. Doctor) _____
- Managerial/technical (e.g. teacher, computer tech) _____
- Skilled/nonmanual (e.g. secretary, clerk) _____
- Skilled/manual (e.g. hairdresser, carpenter) _____
- Semi-skilled (e.g. gardener, security guard) _____
- Unskilled (e.g. cleaner, laborer) _____
- Other (please identify) _____

Appendix N

Interview Guide for use with Children

A. Introduction and briefing

B. Opening Statements by researcher:

Hello, remember me, I'm Debbie. I am doing some homework for my school. I am looking at how you and your (brother/sister) play and talk together, and what you think about that. I would like to ask you some questions, but you do not have to answer. If you would like to leave at any time, you can. May I ask you some questions?

C. Questions

<i>Grand Tour</i>	<u>Child's Comments</u>	<u>Researcher's Analytic Notes</u>
<p>Tell me what it's like to be the big/little sister/brother? (Depending on child's position in sibling relationship).</p>		
<p><i>Nature of Sibling Relationship</i> Tell me about the kind of things you like to do with your sister/brother? (may refer to specific routine with which child is familiar)</p>		
<p>Tell me about the kinds of things you like to do without your sister/brother?</p>		
<p><i>Teasing (nature, form)</i> If a cat could talk and asked you to tell them about teasing, what would you say?</p>		
<p>If someone said to me, "Debbie has boy cooties", what should I think about that?</p>		

<p>What has someone else said/did to you that's hurt your feelings?</p> <p>How does it feel to be teased? (may need to provide specific example)</p> <p>How does it feel to tease? (may need to provide specific example).</p> <p><i>Sibling Teasing (nature, form)</i></p> <p>What kinds of things do you and your sister tease each other about (if teasing has been noted)?</p> <p>Or</p> <p>What kind of things do you like to bug your sister/brother about?</p> <p>What do they bug you about?</p> <p>How does that make you feel?</p> <p><i>Intent of</i></p> <p>What do you think your sister/brother means when they say _____ (cite specific example from observations)?</p> <p>How do you tell the difference if your sister/brother is just having fun or being hurtful when they tease you?</p>		
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<p><i>Responses to</i> What is the best thing to do when he/she teases you?</p> <p>How does your Mom or Dad feel about you two teasing each other?</p> <p>What would your Mom or Dad say to do?</p> <p><i>Functions of Teasing</i> What do you think you learn from teasing (or being teased by) your sister/brother?</p> <p>How does teasing your brother/sister help you (or not help) when you're playing with your friends?</p>		
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Possible Alternate Technique-for children who experience difficulty/reluctance verbally articulating:

- I make two toy telephones available and sit near them, children may freely choose to converse with me in a pretend play episode.
- Listen to specific audio file from previous observation and use audio of event to prompt child's recall and conversation.
- Use some play theme previously identified by the children and converse about teasing within play episode.

Directed Probes:

1. Tell me more about that _____ (specific reference to what child just said).
2. You have a lot to say about _____ (reference child's initiated topic of discussion).
3. Tell me more about what you meant by _____ (refer back to study's questions).

D. Debriefing

E. Follow-up Interviews (within one month of initial interview)

- Summary of first interview provided
- Participant asked to clarify, comment, question summary of first interview

Appendix O

Summary of Observed Frequency of Nature of Siblings' Interactions

<u>Sibling Dyad</u>	<u>Aggression</u>	<u>Teasing</u>	<u>Disputes/Conflict</u>	<u>Play</u>	<u>n</u>
James-Mason	34	19	33	158	244
Drake-Brianna	15	25	23	188	251
Caleb—Reese	48	10	42	110	210
Totals	97	54	98	456	

Appendix P

Play Behaviours Coded for all Children on a Collapsed POS

Non Play Behaviours	Transition	Onlooker	Aggression	Adult Conversation	Sibling Conversation	TV watching	Other (eating, bathroom)	Play Behaviours	Functional	Exploratory	Constructive	Reading	Dramatic Play	Games	Drawing/Writing/Art	Gross Motor	Other (Auditory Play, R&T)
James	--	4	9	--	--	2	--		--	7	27	9	31	4	2	--	4
Mason	--	5	5	2	2	2	--		5	--	14	9	43	5	--	5	5
Drake	--	--	2	2	--	4	--		--	6	22	--	47	12	2	2	--
Brianna	--	4	--	2	-	6	2		2	6	19	--	28	6	21	2	--
Caleb	--	--	15	--	--	--	3		15	3	6	3	42	--	6	3	3
Reese	--	3	6	--	--	--	--		19	6	16	--	44	--	6	--	--

Appendix Q

Rates of Initiated Acts per Hour per Sibling Dyad

Behaviour	James—Mason	Drake—Brianna	Caleb—Reese
Playful	9.3	11.1	6.9
Conflicts/Disputes	1.9	1.4	2.7
Aggression	2.0	0.9	3.0
Teasing	1.1	1.5	0.6

Note: All hourly rates are expressed in terms of interactions between siblings. Thus the 2 teasing incidents between James and myself were not included as well the 2 conflicts between Caleb and his mother was also not included in the calculation of hourly rates. Similarly, the 2 incidences of conflict between Brianna and her mother were also not included in the above rates.

Appendix R

Frequency of Playful Interactions of all Siblings scored on POS

<i>Child/Play</i>	<i>Solitary</i>	<i>Parallel</i>	<i>Group/Cooperative</i>
James	10	5	23
Mason	10	6	21
Drake	6	17	22
Brianna	6	13	21
Caleb	0	12	15
Reese	7	10	12
Total	39	63	114
% of Play	18	29	53

Appendix S

Reviewed Early Childhood Education Journals and Databases

<i>Journal</i>	<i>Number of Articles Referencing Teasing</i>
Child Development	2
Child & Youth Care Forum	1
Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood	0
Early Childhood Education Journal	2
Early Childhood Research & Practice	1
Early Childhood Research Quarterly	0
Educational Leadership	4
Early Childhood Today	1
Interaction	2
International Journal of Early Years Education	0
Merrill-Palmer Quarterly	3
Phi Delta Kappan	0
<i>Databases</i>	<i>Number of References</i>
Academic Search Elite	0
ERIC	3
Psycharticles	0
Psychinfo	0