

Social Provisions of Real and Imaginary Relationships in Early Childhood

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Preschool-aged children's perceptions of their social relationships were examined, including those with parents, best friends, siblings, and imaginary companions. Sixty 4-year-old children participated in an interview designed to measure perceptions of the degree of conflict, nurturance, instrumental help, and power available in their relationships. Three groups were compared: children with (a) invisible friends, (b) companions who were personified objects (e.g., dolls), and (c) no imaginary companion. Results indicated that children differentiated the relationships in their social networks according to provisions. Parent-child relationships afforded instrumental help and siblings were associated with conflict. Provisions of real and imaginary friendships were similar, although imaginary friends were preferred as objects of nurturance. Results imply that 4-year-old children have developed differentiated relationship schemas and that those of children with invisible friends may be particularly distinct.

The relationships that comprise an individual's social network are extensive even for young children (Lewis, Feiring, & Kotsonis, 1984). As early as toddlerhood, peer relationships are added to the relationships available with parents and siblings (Feiring & Lewis, 1989), and by the time preschool is reached, a significant proportion of children have supplemented these relationships with imaginary companions (Taylor, 1999). Research has provided descriptions of the qualities of the relationships children have with parents (e.g., Bowlby, 1969), peers (e.g., Howes, 1987, 1996), siblings (e.g., Garner, Carlson Jones, & Palmer, 1994; Howe, Petrakos, & Rinaldi, 1998), and imaginary companions (Gleason, Sebanc, & Hartup, 2000; Harter & Chao, 1992), and some work has addressed the ways in which multiple relationships within young children's social networks influence each other (e.g., Dunn, 1985; Dunn & Munn, 1985; Kramer & Gottman, 1992). Scant attention, however, has been paid to how children perceive the qualities of these different relationships or the extent to which they distinguish between them. The goal of this study was therefore to examine the nature of young children's social cognition regarding these ties.

Children's Differentiation of Relationships With Real Others

A theoretical framework for considering the differentiated nature of social relationships comes from Weiss (1974), who dem-

onstrated that relationships are specialized according to the nature of the interaction they provide. For example, friendships and romantic relationships might provide intimacy, whereas relationships with children would involve nurturance (Weiss, 1974). Weiss termed these qualities of relationships social "provisions" because they are supports or forms of interaction provided by relationships. Some provisions, such as companionship or instrumental help (aid with a difficult task), can be received from several types of relationships, and provisions inherent in any relationship would be expected to change with development.

Using Weiss's (1974) theory, Furman and Buhrmester (1985) constructed the Network of Relationships Inventory (NRI), an instrument designed to identify the social provisions that children and adolescents associate with different relationships. Although too complex for preschoolers, the NRI was used successfully with children as young as 7 years of age in a study of intimacy and companionship in relationships with siblings, peers, and parents. These children cited both friends and parents as important sources of companionship, whereas mothers were also associated with intimacy (Buhrmester & Furman, 1987).

Research on the relation between cognition and behavior supports the notion that children younger than 7 can differentiate between types of social relationships. For example, 18-month-olds have been observed changing their interaction styles depending on whether they are conversing with a same-aged peer or a 24-month-old child (Brownell, 1990). In addition, preschool-aged children involved in conflicts will reason more frequently with friends than with siblings (Dunn, 1996), implying that they are aware of the relative fragility of the two relationships (friendships can dissolve, whereas sibling relationships are permanent). Moreover, Dunn (1996) noted distinctions in the jokes preschool-aged children make to mothers in comparison to older siblings. Children's modification of their behavior in each of these examples indicates that they distinguish between their relationships with various partners.

Other studies suggest that differentiated relationship representations may underlie the behavioral differences found in young children's interactions with the members of their social networks. For example, in interviews regarding the hypothetical causes of people's emotions, young children's responses were differentiated

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according to both relationship partner and emotion. Specifically, children had difficulty giving hypothetical reasons for their mothers' sadnesses, but explained their own and their friends' sadnesses with similar frequency and using similar themes. In addition, siblings were often cited as sources of anger for both the self as well as for mothers, but not for friends (Dunn & Hughes, 1998). Likewise, in an interview study on children's perceptions of their social networks, Gamble and Woulbroun (1995) demonstrated that young children were able to name people within their social networks whom they could count on for emotional support, instrumental help, or recreation. Although mothers were reported as the most common source of support regardless of type, fathers and siblings were cited more often than were teachers as support providers. These studies suggest that relationship representations exist among young children and vary systematically according to relationship type.

Imaginary Companions as Relationship Partners

Research on imaginary companions suggests that these entities may be conceptualized similarly to real relationships, in that they may be associated with a particular set of social provisions. For example, the most common explanation for creating an imaginary companion is that a child is lonely or lacks playmates and seeks a social partner (Ames & Learned, 1946; Harvey, 1918; Hurlock & Burstein, 1932; Manosevitz, Prentice, & Wilson, 1973; Mauro, 1991; Singer & Singer, 1990; Svendsen, 1934; Vostrovsky, 1895). Hypothetically, such an imaginary playmate could fulfill a desire for the social provision of companionship. Pretend friends have also been said to compensate for missing family members (Ames & Learned, 1946) or to provide sympathy and understanding such as that obtained from close relationships (Vostrovsky, 1895). Moreover, relationships with imaginary companions are relatively enduring (Partington & Grant, 1984). They have been described by children as equally important or more important than their relationships with peers and parents (Mauro, 1991). This finding has not been replicated, but suggests that children are emotionally invested in their imaginary companions.

Significantly, the creation of imaginary relationships is not restricted to children. According to Caughey (1984), imaginary social relationships are a typical part of adults' social networks as well as children's, albeit in qualitatively different and culturally dictated ways. Whereas children may discuss their imaginary companions with others and involve them directly in their activities, adults regularly imagine conversations with real others or daydream about imaginary people (Caughey, 1984). The cognitive processes that underlie the formation of imaginary companions in children and the imaginary social relationships of adults may be similar to each other and may bear some resemblance to the cognition surrounding real relationships.

Whether those of children or adults, imaginary relationships differ from real ones in important ways. Interconnections between the behavior of two individuals in a relationship should be frequent, intense, diverse, and enduring, making the relationship observable to outsiders (Kelley et al., 1983); true relationships are a function of two people's contributions to interactions at both the individual and dyadic levels (Kenny, 1988). Clearly, neither of these criteria is met by imaginary relationships. However, although imaginary companions do not act or possess cognitions or affects

of their own, interactions with them may resemble those of close relationships in that they may occur every day, for an extended period of time, and in a variety of situations, and may be treated by the child as interdependent (Taylor, 1999). Close relationships are also characterized by a desire for physical proximity (Kelley et al., 1983), which is also common to relationships with imaginary companions (Gleason et al., 2000).

Investigating imaginary relationships, in which only one person's social history plays a role, could provide interesting insights into children's understanding of relationships generally. Although these relationships may not reflect the development of social skills, such as negotiation and maintenance of interaction (Gottman, 1983), they may be based on some of the expectations about relationships that children develop through early social experience. If individual differences in relationship quality are associated with the child's internal working model of relationships (Sroufe & Fleeson, 1986), then relationships with imaginary companions should be as well. Just as young children's pretend play episodes are often elaborations of real experiences (Harris, 2000), imaginary relationships might be elaborations of experiences in real relationships.

In some cases, relationships with imaginary companions might be idealized and a child might envision the pretend friend adhering to his or her whims. Yet, children do not always imagine that their pretend friends comply with their every wish. Children describe them as primarily amiable but imagine that they are difficult at times (Mauro, 1991), and on rare occasions children are frightened by them (Taylor, 1999). Children imagine conflicts between themselves and their companions (Taylor, 1999) or between multiple companions, and imagine that their companions are not always available when wanted (Caughey, 1984). Relationships with imaginary companions might thus include (or provide a venue for) conflicts and adjustments akin to those of real relationships, and a child's management of such difficulties might be reflective of how she or he understands the workings of real relationships.

The imaginary social forum provided by an imaginary companion may afford practice in negotiating and conceptualizing relationships. Of course, all children gain relationship experience in interacting with real others, so the significance of this extra social rehearsal is unclear. Ostensibly, children with imaginary companions may have inadequate social skills and having a pretend friend may be an attempt to compensate. This hypothesis seems unlikely, though, given that children with active fantasy lives outperform their less imaginative peers on measures of social cognition (Taylor & Carlson, 1997) and tend to be rated as more cooperative with peers and adults (Singer & Singer, 1990). Alternatively, the enactment of quasi-interactions with imaginary companions might give children who create pretend friends some expertise in conceptualizing and differentiating their relationships relative to other children. Performing both sides of a relationship might require a child to imagine the feelings, thoughts and actions of the self and the partner in ways that are consistent with and restricted by the kind of relationship that the child imagines having with the companion. That these imagined relationships might be consistent over time is suggested by the stability of descriptions of imaginary companions noted over months (Taylor, Cartwright, & Carlson, 1993) or even years (Mauro, 1991).

Of course, an important issue to consider in conceptualizing imaginary companions as relationship partners is that they are not

all alike. The relationships provided by imaginary companions differ systematically according to companion type and according to the genders of the children who create them. According to Gleason et al. (2000), invisible friends often provide relationships that are described by parents as horizontal, or equal in terms of competence and power distribution. In contrast, relationships with personified objects, such as stuffed animals or dolls that are animated by the child, are described as vertical—these companions reportedly require care and nurturing from their creators, much as a child does from a parent. As for gender, Harter and Chao (1992) found that girls' companions tend to be less competent than themselves, whereas boys' companions tend to be more competent. Taken together, these findings suggest that studying social provisions, such as the distribution of power or whether nurturance is provided, could highlight systematic differences in the relationship concepts that children have of imaginary companions.

Definitions and Hypotheses

Through investigation of social provisions, preschool children were expected to demonstrate different relationship concepts for parents, peers, siblings, and imaginary companions. The social provisions examined included conflict, instrumental help, power, and nurturance. Although conflict and power are not usually referred to as *social provisions* so much as *characteristics* or *qualities* of relationships, they are referred to as social provisions in this article because of their hypothesized relation to children's understanding of relationships. The management of conflict and power within a relationship may have an impact on how that relationship is conceptualized and thus on what it is perceived to provide.

Conflict was defined as a relationship quality marked by contentiousness and anger. This social provision was included because conflict is prevalent in most relationships, because it is concrete and understandable for young children, and because it varies with relationship type. For example, differences in conflicts with siblings and with friends have been identified (e.g., DeHart, Duffy, Kucharczak, Ghazanfari, & Johnson, 1999; Hartup, Laursen, Stewart, & Eastenson, 1988). Conflict is also likely in relationships with many opportunities for interaction, such as family relationships (Vanzetti & Duck, 1996).

Instrumental help was defined as assistance for situations or tasks beyond a child's capacity. Instrumental help is characteristically associated by preadolescent children with adults or individuals more competent than themselves (Furman & Buhrmester, 1985). Similarly, the social provision of *power* was defined as affording direction or supervision for the child. These provisions had the potential to distinguish between relationships with other young children and with adults as well as between the imaginary companions of boys and girls given the competency differences noted between their companions (Harter & Chao, 1992). Moreover, both provisions are easily described in concrete, behavioral terms.

Nurturance was defined as affording the child opportunities to help or care for a relationship partner, either instrumentally or through protection and attentiveness to the partner's needs. Note that nurturance refers to the child providing, not obtaining, nurturance. Nurturance was deemed relevant to the present study given that children as young as 8 years old have reported providing nurturance to their younger siblings (Buhrmester & Furman, 1990)

and some children nurture their imaginary companions (Gleason et al., 2000).

Other provisions discussed by Weiss (1974) and Furman and Buhrmester (1985), such as companionship, intimacy, affection, and enhancement of worth (i.e., affirmation of oneself by others), were considered but not included in this investigation for several reasons. For example, previous research has indicated that 7-year-olds have some difficulty distinguishing between their friends and acquaintances with respect to association (a provision similar to companionship) and intimacy, even when these provisions are described in behavioral terms (Furman & Bierman, 1984). Moreover, young children often associate companionship with both family members and friends (Buhrmester & Furman, 1987), making it an unlikely provision for differentiating relationships. In addition, assessing a social provision such as affection is particularly difficult with young children—asking preschoolers whether or how much a parent loves them is ethically questionable.

The consideration of real and imaginary relationships simultaneously was expected to provide three sets of information. First, the investigation was anticipated to highlight the nature of children's relationship concepts as demonstrated through the associations they make between social provisions and relationship partners. Specifically, children were expected to distinguish between their real relationships in terms of social provisions in the following ways: (a) parents, as authority figures, were expected to be seen by children as important sources of instrumental help, and to be clearly identified as more powerful than other relationship partners, (b) children were expected to choose other children, such as siblings and best friends, as sources of conflict, and (c) younger siblings were predicted to be recipients of nurturance.

Second, information was sought regarding the ways in which imaginary companions fit within children's social networks of real relationships. However, differentiation of imaginary relationships from each other and from real relationships was subject to competing hypotheses. On the one hand, the work of Gleason and colleagues (2000) suggested that personified objects would be chosen as recipients of nurturance more frequently than invisible friends and that neither type of companion would be associated with the social provisions of instrumental help or power. On the other hand, Harter and Chao's (1992) examination of imaginary companions according to children's gender suggests that girls' companions would be associated with nurturance, and boys' companions, given their typically heightened competence, would be seen as powerful and possibly as providers of instrumental help.

Third, the investigation was expected to illuminate patterns of individual variations in the differentiation of relationship concepts; that is, the differentiation of children's relationship concepts was expected to vary as a function of imaginary companion status. Because the creation of an imaginary companion might provide a social forum for conceptualizing and potentially distinguishing between different relationships, children with imaginary companions were expected to have more differentiated relationship concepts than their peers without such friends.

Method

Participants

A total of 111 families were contacted and, of these, 85 offered to participate. The sample was balanced by gender and group to include 60

(31 girls and 29 boys) 4-year-old children (mean age = 4 years 7 months; range = 4 years 3 months to 4 years 10 months) from middle to upper-middle class backgrounds. Four-year-olds were solicited for participation because (a) children with imaginary companions are often preschool-aged (Jersild, 1954; Masih, 1978; Partington & Grant, 1984), (b) the relationship concepts of very young children were of particular interest, but (c) pilot testing indicated that the task would be too challenging for children younger than 4. The sample was predominantly White (1 African-American, 1 Asian, and 1 Hispanic/Latino-American family participated), and all but two families included married parents. Primary caregivers (57 mothers and 3 fathers) also participated.

Children were recruited from a participant pool whose parents had responded to solicitation at the time of their children's births. Three groups of children were asked to participate: children with invisible imaginary friends (IFs; 11 girls and 9 boys), children with personified objects (POs; 11 girls and 9 boys), and children who had neither type of imaginary companion (NICs; 9 girls and 11 boys). Criteria used to include children in the IF or PO groups consisted of a parent's report of an imaginary companion who had been present for at least 1 month, and who was either played with, talked to, or talked about by the child. Children with invisible friends who were based in part on real people were included in the study only if distinct differences could be referenced to distinguish the real and invisible incarnations of the person.¹ To distinguish personified objects from transitional objects (i.e., objects not animated by, but important to, the child), the examples of Winnie the Pooh and Hobbes (from *Calvin and Hobbes*) were provided and parents were asked to verify that the object provided more than just security and comfort for the child. Objects that were simply carried around did not qualify. For inclusion in the NIC group, children were required not to have an imaginary companion of either sort either at present or in the past. Incidence of the creation of IFs and POs in this population was thus based solely on parent report, and was calculated to be approximately 21% for each type. Incidence was calculated by dividing the number of children having each type of imaginary companion by the total number of children whose parents indicated whether their child had a pretend friend, regardless of participation.

Some concern regarding the accuracy of parents' reports on children's imaginary companions has been expressed in the literature (Taylor, 1999). Children do not always appear to share their imaginary companions with their parents. According to Schmechel (1975, as cited in Taylor et al., 1993) approximately one third of parents are unfamiliar with their children's imaginary companions. Asking parents to identify their children as having or not having imaginary friends as was done in this study risks exclusion of children with imaginary friends who did not share those companions with their parents. On the other hand, relying on children's reports of imaginary companions would have risked including imaginary companions who were created at the time of the interview. The emphasis in the present study was on well-established relationships between children and imaginary companions; thus, parental verification of the imaginary companion was required. Children who described imaginary companions but whose parents were unfamiliar with the companion would have been excluded from the study, but no children fell into this category.

Materials

Telephone interview and background. In a brief telephone interview, the experimenter explained the nature of the study, solicited parents and children for participation, and scheduled appointments in the laboratory. This initial interview established whether children fit into the IF, PO, or NIC group. Once in the lab, parents completed a brief questionnaire asking for their child's birth order and number of siblings. Parents also identified the ethnicity of their children and themselves as well as their occupation and level of education.

Relationships interview. The relationships interview was adapted from Furman and Buhrmester's (1985) NRI. The format and complexity of the original instrument render it inappropriate for preschool-aged children;

consequently, the measure was modified in three ways. First, the number of relationships included was reduced to three for each child. Children with imaginary companions were queried about a parent (i.e., the one present at the interview), a best friend, and an imaginary companion. NIC children were asked about a parent, a best friend, and a sibling. The decision to ask NIC children, but not children with imaginary companions, about siblings was an effort to keep the interview parallel and of a similar length for all children (including siblings for children with imaginary companions would have increased the number of questions they answered to 72—twice as long as the questionnaire for NIC children). In spite of this effort, 1 child in the NIC group did not have a sibling; that child answered questions only about her parent and best friend. NIC children were asked about the sibling closest to them in age. For 89% of these children, that sibling was younger (usually 2 or 3 years old), and overall 63% of the children's siblings were of the opposite sex. Although they were not asked about them, 85% of children with imaginary companions also had siblings.

The second way in which the NRI was modified was to reduce the number of social provisions to four. Pilot testing had indicated that this number made the questionnaire a manageable length for the young participants. Thus, the four social provisions included were conflict, instrumental help, power, and nurturance. Each of these provisions was evaluated using three questions, generating 12 different questions overall (see Appendix).

Third, the format of questions was changed from 5-point Likert-type rating scales to forced choices (two alternatives only), meaning that for any given question two relationships were offered as choices. The questions were repeated until all possible combinations of relationships had been addressed. For example, one of the questions assessing the provision of instrumental help was, "If you were having trouble putting a puzzle together, who would you ask to help you?" The first time this question was asked, the child might be asked to choose between her mother (if the mother was the parent present at the interview) and her best friend. The second time, she would be asked to choose between her mother and her sibling, and the last time she answered the choices would be her best friend or her sibling. The same procedure was followed for the other two questions addressing instrumental help, as well as the sets of three questions addressing each of the other social provisions. No question was repeated before each of the 12 was asked once, and the order of both questions and relationship contrasts (e.g., parent vs. best friend) was randomized.

In summary, the three contrasts for children in the NIC group were (a) parent versus best friend, (b) parent versus sibling, and (c) best friend versus sibling, and for children with imaginary companions (IFs and POs) the contrasts were (a) parent versus best friend, (b) parent versus imaginary companion, and (c) best friend versus imaginary companion. Each of the 12 questions was repeated three times, once for Contrast a, once for Contrast b, and once for Contrast c, so the complete interview contained a total of 36 questions.

Procedure

Warm-up. While the parent read and signed the consent form and filled out the background information, the experimenter read a story to the child. When the child seemed comfortable, he or she was asked to name his or her best friend, and the parent verified the choice. The parent was instructed to keep this friend in mind when filling out the questions about best friends on the relationships interview. If the child had multiple siblings, the experimenter also told the parent at this time which sibling to consider when answering the questions. Once the child was comfortable, the parent

¹ For example, one boy's invisible friend was based on a female friend from school. The boy had married the invisible version of this girl (but had never pretended to marry the real girl) and the invisible girl lived in his room. These details were used during the interview to clarify to the participant that discussion during the experiment concerned the invisible girl, not her real counterpart.

Table 1
Examples of Invisible Friends and Personified Objects

Name	Description
Invisible friends	
Fake Tom	A boy who wears velcro shoes and rides a horse named Wacko. Child also has a horse named Wacko and the two ride together.
Batman	Based on the cartoon/comic book character
Anna	An invisible version of a real friend of the child
Cousins	A girl with brown hair who sometimes wears pigtails (loosely based on the child's real cousin)
Personified objects	
Raggie	An animated cloth diaper
Arthur	Stuffed aardvark from the television show "Arthur"
Pippo	A white bear in overalls described by the child as "cute and floppy"
Sara	A brown bear who sometimes pretends to be a kitty and with whom the child plays hide and seek

was asked to go to a nearby room, where she or he filled out the relationships interview.

Drawings. After the parent left, the child was given some crayons. The experimenter handed the child a sheet of paper with an oval printed on it, and said, "This is supposed to be a person's face, but it doesn't look like anyone, does it? I have some crayons here and I would like you to use them to make this face look like your [parent present at interview]. You could put in hair, eyes, a mouth—whatever you want to make it look like your [parent]." When the representation was complete, the experimenter said, "We need to make sure we remember that this is your [mother/father]. How can we do that?" If the child did not offer an idea, the experimenter suggested labeling the picture and helped the child to do so. The child was then asked to repeat the procedure for a best friend, and then for an imaginary companion, if she or he had one, or for a sibling if she or he did not. Children who were unwilling or unable to draw their imaginary companions (or any of the real people targeted) were asked to provide some sort of symbol or color to represent them. Children with imaginary companions were also given the option of drawing these creations on blank sheets of paper.

Relationships interview. After the child had finished drawing the relationship partners, the drawings were placed next to each other on the table facing the child and the relationships interview was administered. The interview began with practice questions to ensure that the child understood the task. For each item, the experimenter asked a question and then pointed to two relationship partners and asked the child to choose one. For example, the experimenter would ask, "Who comes to you for help with things he or she can't do alone, your mom [experimenter points to drawing of mother] or your brother [experimenter points to drawing of brother]?" At the end of the session, the child was given a token of appreciation (e.g., Play-Doh), thanked, and reunited with the parent. The entire session took approximately 1 hr.

Aggregation of the Data

Each question on the relationships interview pertained to a particular social provision (e.g., nurturance) and a particular relationship contrast (e.g., parent vs. best friend). The sets of questions relating to the same provision and contrast were aggregated for each child. For example, the three questions relating to the social provision of nurturance were (a) "Who do you protect and look out for?", (b) "Who do you take care of?", and (c) "Who comes to you for help with things she can't do alone?" For the contrasts of parents and best friends, on each question a child was arbitrarily given a score of 1 if the parent was chosen, and a 0 if the best friend was chosen. Consequently, each child had an aggregated score between 0

and 3 for contrasts between parents and best friends for nurturance. A score of 3 meant the child had chosen the parent for all three questions, and a 0 meant she or he had chosen the best friend on all three questions. Using this methodology, each child obtained 12 aggregated scores—one for each combination of the three relationship contrasts and the four social provisions.

The frequency distributions of each of the 12 aggregated scores were analyzed, using Pearson's chi-square, against the frequency distributions that would be obtained by chance. Because scores were aggregates of responses to three questions, each of the four possible scores (0, 1, 2 or 3) was not equally likely to appear by chance.² Consequently, the appropriate expected values for any distribution consisted of $n \cdot (.125)$ for scores of 0 and 3, and $n \cdot (.375)$ for scores of 1 and 2, where n is the number of observations in the distribution.

Results

Imaginary Companions

Some examples of the imaginary companions included in this study are presented in Table 1. According to the children's reports, approximately three fourths of the invisible friends were human, and the same proportion of the personified objects were animals. Over half of the companions in both groups were the same sex as the child. Over 80% of the invisible friends and slightly over half of the personified objects were the same age or older than the child. For complete information on the imaginary companions, see Gleason (2002).

² If choosing parent was assigned a value of 1 and choosing best friend a value of 0, then a child could receive a score of 0 in only one way—by choosing the best friend on every question of the three. Similarly, a child could receive a score of 3 only by choosing the parent for all three questions. However, a child could receive a score of 1 in three different ways: by choosing the parent only on the first, second, or third question. Similarly, a score of 2 could be obtained in three different ways: choosing the parent on the first two, last two, or first and last questions of a set. Scores could be obtained, therefore, in eight different ways overall, but obtaining a score of 1 or 2 was three times more likely than obtaining a score of 0 or 3.

Plan of Analysis

Relationships in this study were not associated with social provisions independently of other relationships but, rather, were always considered in comparison with one another. As a result, all analyses are reported in the context of the contrasts between two relationships. Also, analyses based on portions of the sample, such as those contrasting parents and siblings or parents and imaginary companions, should be regarded as preliminary findings owing to the small number of participants involved in these comparisons.

Four sets of analyses were conducted. First, chi-square analyses of distributions of aggregate scores were performed. These analyses were conducted within relationship contrast, participant group, and social provision. These analyses reveal the relationship partner favored in each case and demonstrate which social provisions were associated with each relationship. Second, to ensure that children were not choosing the same relationship partner for every provision but were, in fact, differentiating relationship partners across the social provisions as a set, distributions for conflict, instrumental help, nurturance, and power were simultaneously compared against one another, one participant group at a time and one relationship pair (e.g., parent–best friend) at a time. Significant differences in these comparisons indicate ways in which social provisions were differentially associated with relationship partners. Third, comparisons between participant groups (IF, PO, NIC) were conducted to test the hypothesis that children who had imaginary friends or personified objects had more differentiated relationship concepts than children who did not. Lastly, gender differences in the social provisions associated with imaginary companions were examined through comparison of the distributions of aggregate scores of males and females within each of the two imaginary companion groups.

Parent–Best Friend Contrasts

Analyses within each participant group. As displayed in Table 2, children with imaginary companions clearly associated conflict with a specific relationship partner: The PO group children chose parents over best friends, whereas among IF children these results were reversed. The effect for NIC children was not as strong, and these children were divided between parents and best friends for conflict. For instrumental help and power, children with personified objects and children in the NIC group responded similarly—both groups strongly preferred parents over best friends. Children in the IF group responded similarly to other children for power, but at chance levels for instrumental help as well as for nurturance. Children in both of the other groups (PO and NIC) demonstrated clear preferences for parents over best friends as recipients of nurturance.

Analyses across social provisions. Chi-square analysis of distributions of aggregate scores across social provisions was significant for children in the IF group, $\chi^2(9, n = 74) = 20.17, p = .02$, suggesting that parents and best friends were differentiated by provision (see Figure 1). In contrast, children in the PO group only marginally differentiated the relationships by provisions, $\chi^2(9, n = 77) = 15.90, p = .07$, and NIC children did not appear to differentiate between parents and best friends, $\chi^2(9, n = 75) = 11.45, p > .05$.

Comparisons between participant groups. Differences among the three groups were only marginal for the social provision of conflict, $\chi^2(6, n = 55) = 11.75, p = .07$. Distributions of aggregate scores did not differ between groups for either instrumental help, $\chi^2(6, n = 59) = 8.58, p > .05$, or power, $\chi^2(6, n = 58) = 8.19, p > .05$. Children with invisible friends, however, did not consistently choose parents for nurturance as did their peers, $\chi^2(6, n = 54) = 12.92, p = .04$.

Table 2

Contrasts of Parents and Best Friends: Distributions of Aggregate Scores, Chi-Squares Within Participant Groups, and Relationship Chosen

Social provision and group	Aggregate scores				Within a group (3 df)			Relationship chosen
	0	1	2	3	<i>n</i>	χ^2	<i>p</i>	
Conflict								
NIC	23.5	29.4	17.6	29.4	17	7.63	.054	Divided
IF	42.1	36.8	10.5	10.5	19	17.07	<.001	Best friend
PO	21.1	5.3	31.6	42.1	19	19.87	<.001	Parent
Instrumental help								
NIC	5.0	15.0	30.0	50.0	20	26.40	<.001	Parent
IF	0	31.6	42.1	26.3	19	5.56	.14	
PO	0	5.0	40.0	55.0	20	37.07	<.001	Parent
Power								
NIC	5.3	5.3	21.1	68.4	19	54.96	<.001	Parent
IF	15.8	21.1	26.3	36.8	19	11.18	.011	Parent
PO	0	10.0	20.0	70.0	20	61.07	<.001	Parent
Nurturance								
NIC	10.5	21.1	31.6	36.8	19	10.61	.014	Parent
IF	17.6	52.9	17.6	11.8	17	3.24	.36	
PO	27.8	5.6	38.9	27.8	18	11.63	.0088	Parent

Note. NIC = children with no imaginary companion; IF = children with invisible friends; PO = children with personified objects. An aggregate score of 0 = parent never chosen, best friend always chosen. An aggregate score of 3 = parent always chosen, best friend never chosen.

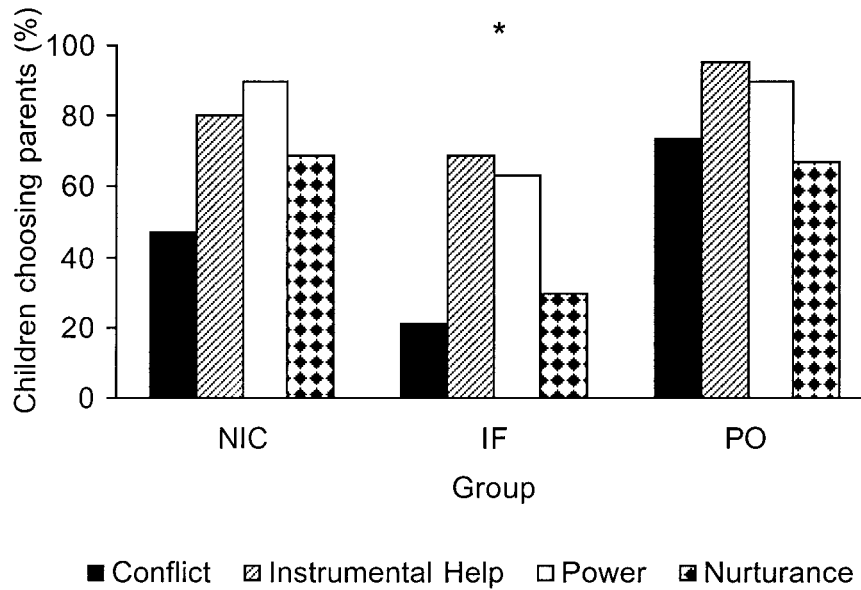


Figure 1. Percentage of children in each group who favored parents in contrasts of parents and best friends for each social provision. Sets of social provisions within which significant differences occur at the .05 level are marked by an asterisk. NIC = children with no imaginary companion; IF = children with invisible friends; PO = children with personified objects.

To summarize, the hypothesis that parents would be seen by children as important sources of instrumental help and power was largely supported. Parents were chosen more frequently than best friends for both of these provisions. The prediction that children would choose other children (i.e., best friends) as sources of conflict was supported only by IF children. Children in the PO group favored their parents for every social provision, as did NIC children for every provision except conflict. As for group differences, children in the IF group appeared to distinguish between parents and best friends more so than their peers.

Parent-Imaginary Companion Contrasts

Analyses within each participant group. Chi-square analyses of the distributions of aggregate scores for parent-imaginary companion contrasts are shown in Table 3. Both groups chose parents over imaginary companions for instrumental help. Children in the PO group were significantly more likely to choose parents over their personified objects for the provisions of conflict and power as well, but chose their objects for nurturance. Children in the IF group also chose their companions over parents for nurturance, but

Table 3
Contrasts of Parents and Imaginary Companions: Distributions of Aggregate Scores, Chi-Squares Within Participant Groups, and Relationship Chosen

Social provision and group	Aggregate scores				Within a group (3 df)			Relationship chosen
	0	1	2	3	n	χ^2	p	
Conflict								
IF	15.8	26.3	36.8	21.1	19	1.91	.59	Parent
PO	10.0	30.0	25.0	35.0	20	9.33	.025	
Instrumental help								
IF	10.0	10.0	40.0	40.0	20	16.27	.001	Parent
PO	0	15.0	35.0	50.0	20	27.73	<.001	Parent
Power								
IF	15.8	21.1	42.1	21.1	19	2.75	.43	Parent
PO	15.0	20.0	10.0	55.0	20	34.67	<.001	
Nurturance								
IF	27.8	55.6	11.1	5.6	18	8.96	.029	IF
PO	40.0	35.0	15.0	10.0	20	14.93	.0019	PO

Note. IF = children with invisible friends; PO = children with personified objects. An aggregate score of 0 = parent never chosen, imaginary companion always chosen. An aggregate score of 3 = parent always chosen, imaginary companion never chosen.

their scores were not significantly different from chance for the other two provisions.

Analyses across social provisions. For both groups of children, relationships were clearly differentiated by social provisions in contrasts of parents with imaginary companions (see Figure 2). Children with IFs, $\chi^2(9, n = 76) = 18.03, p = .03$, and POs, $\chi^2(9, n = 80) = 19.23, p < .01$, both appeared to see differences between these relationships, associating instrumental help and power with parents and nurturance with the imaginary companion.

Comparisons between participant groups. Distributions of aggregate scores did not differ significantly for conflict, $\chi^2(3, n = 39) = 1.42, p > .05$; instrumental help, $\chi^2(3, n = 40) = 2.49, p > .05$; or nurturance, $\chi^2(3, n = 38) = 1.65, p > .05$, although the two groups differed marginally for power, $\chi^2(3, n = 39) = 6.85, p < .08$. Although both children with invisible friends and children with personified objects favored parents over their imaginary companions for power, the children with personified objects were more consistent in doing so.

Gender differences. The distributions of aggregate scores of boys and girls were compared for parent-imaginary companion contrasts within each participant group (IF or PO). Using a significance level of .05, the eight contrasts were examined using the Mann-Whitney *U* test. No significant differences emerged for either imaginary companion group.

To summarize, the hypothesis that parents would be preferred over other relationships for instrumental help and power was again largely supported by these preliminary data. As predicted, personified objects clearly afforded nurturance more so than parents, and invisible friends were also chosen for nurturance over parents. Both groups distinguished these relationship partners well. Group and gender differences did not emerge in these contrasts.

Parent-Sibling Contrasts

Analyses within the participant group. Chi-square analyses of the distributions of aggregate scores for parent-sibling contrasts are shown in Table 4. Children chose parents over siblings for

instrumental help and power. Distributions of scores of the children in the NIC group did not differ from chance for either nurturance or conflict.

Analyses across social provisions. For children without imaginary companions, relationships were clearly differentiated by social provisions in contrasts of parents with siblings, $\chi^2(9, n = 73) = 30.20, p < .01$ (see Figure 3). NIC group children appeared to associate instrumental help and power with parents over siblings.

To summarize, despite the small sample size, the hypothesis that parents would be preferred over siblings for instrumental help and power was largely supported. In contrasts with parents, however, siblings were not unequivocal sources of conflict or nurturance as expected.

Best Friend-Imaginary Companion Contrasts

Analyses within each participant group. The distribution for conflict of the IF group did not differ from chance, and PO children did not clearly favor either best friends or personified objects as sources of conflict (see Table 5). For instrumental help, IF children chose best friends over invisible friends, whereas PO children were divided between best friends and their objects for instrumental help as well as for power. The distribution of children in the IF group was random for power. Children in the PO group chose personified objects over best friends as recipients of nurturance. Children with invisible friends followed suit, but these results were only marginally significant.

Analyses across social provisions. Children with IFs, $\chi^2(9, n = 71) = 12.14, p > .05$, and POs, $\chi^2(9, n = 72) = 10.32, p > .05$, did not differentiate significantly between real and imaginary friends by social provisions (see Figure 4).

Comparisons between participant groups. The two groups did not differ significantly for conflict, $\chi^2(3, n = 39) = 1.42, p > .05$, instrumental help $\chi^2(3, n = 32) = 5.09, p > .05$, or nurturance $\chi^2(3, n = 38) = 0.70, p > .05$. The moderate effect for power, $\chi^2(3, n = 34) = 9.67, p = .02$, was probably a function of

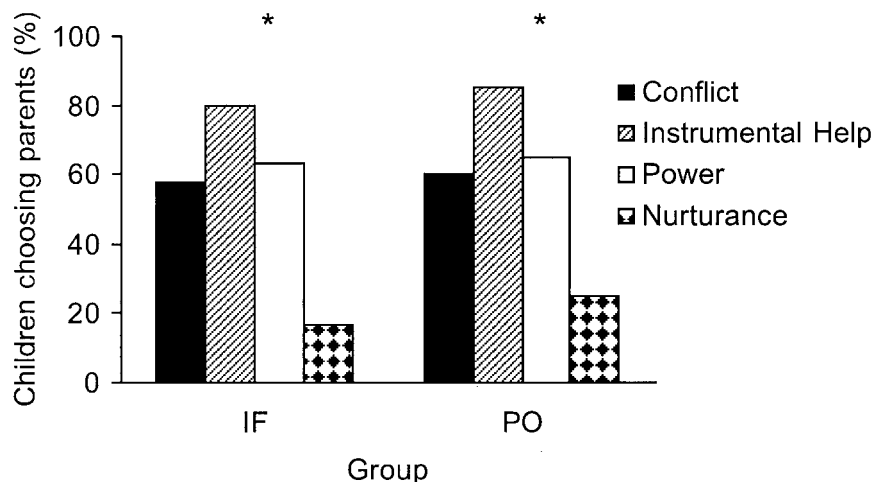


Figure 2. Percentage of children in each group who favored parents in contrasts of parents and imaginary companions for each social provision. Sets of social provisions within which significant differences occur at the .05 level are marked by an asterisk. IF = children with invisible friends; PO = children with personified objects.

Table 4
Contrasts of Parents and Siblings: Distributions of Aggregate Scores, Chi-Squares Within Participant Groups, and Relationship Chosen

Social provision	Aggregate scores				Within a group (3 df)			Relationship chosen
	0	1	2	3	<i>n</i>	χ^2	<i>p</i>	
Conflict	21.1	21.1	42.1	15.8	19	2.75	.43	Parent
Instrumental help	5.3	0	26.3	68.4	19	56.09	<.001	
Power	0	11.1	38.9	50.0	18	25.85	<.001	
Nurturance	17.6	47.1	29.4	5.9	17	1.67	.64	

Note. These results are based on data solely from children with no imaginary companion. An aggregate score of 0 = parent never chosen, sibling always chosen. An aggregate score of 3 = parent always chosen, sibling never chosen.

consistency in responding: Children with personified objects were divided between relationship partners but relatively consistent in their choices, whereas the distribution of aggregate scores of children with invisible friends did not differ from chance.

Gender differences. The distributions of aggregate scores of boys and girls were compared for best friend–imaginary companion contrasts within each participant group, again using a significance level of .05 and the Mann–Whitney *U* test. No significant differences emerged for either imaginary companion group.

To summarize, personified objects were chosen as recipients of nurturance over best friends as predicted, and invisible friends were marginally preferred for nurturance as well. Children in the IF group chose their best friends over their IFs for instrumental help, but children in the PO group were unexpectedly divided between their objects and best friends for both instrumental help and power. Conflict was not clearly associated with either relationship by either group. Neither group differentiated between the two relationships across social provisions, suggesting that IF and PO children saw similarities between these two relationships.

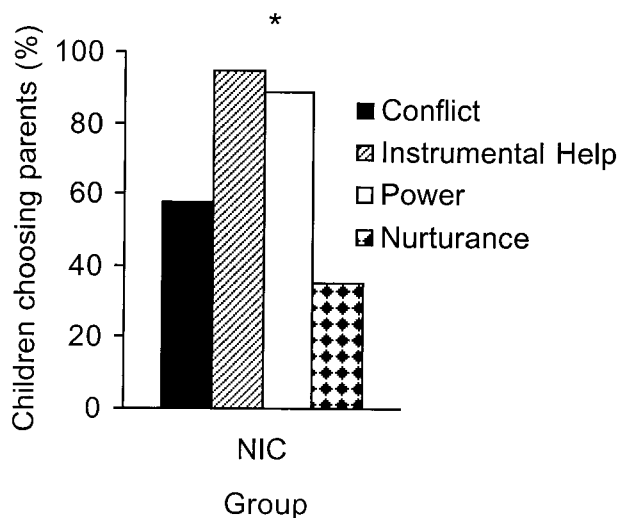


Figure 3. Percentage of children in the NIC group who favored parents in contrasts of parents and siblings for each social provision. Significant differences within the set of social provisions occur at the .05 level, as marked by the asterisk. NIC = children with no imaginary companion.

Differences between imaginary companion groups only emerged for the social provision of power, but appeared to be a function of the greater consistency with which children with personified objects made their choices. No gender differences were found. Again, these results should be considered preliminary owing to the small number of children on which they are based.

Best Friend–Sibling Contrasts

Analyses within each participant group. Although contrasts between siblings and parents had revealed that neither group was the decisive choice over the other for conflict, siblings were frequently chosen as sources of conflict over best friends (see Table 6). Children in the NIC group were significantly more likely to choose best friends over siblings for instrumental help and power. The responses of children in the NIC group were distributed randomly for nurturance.

Analyses across social provisions. NIC children differentiated between the two relationships according to provisions, associating conflict with siblings and instrumental help and power with best friends, $\chi^2(9, n = 68) = 39.55, p < .01$ (see Figure 5).

To summarize, the hypothesis that children would choose their siblings as recipients of nurturance did not appear to be supported, but siblings were chosen as sources of conflict over best friends. These preliminary analyses also demonstrated that children in the NIC group differentiated between the two relationships across social provisions.

Discussion

Differentiation of Relationships: Implications for Early Social Cognition

The 4-year-old children examined in this investigation demonstrated that they were able to differentiate among their relationships with various members of their social networks. Specific combinations of social provisions were associated with different relationships: Parents were most often identified as sources of instrumental help and power, whereas sibling relationships afforded conflict more so than best friends. Children associated their imaginary companions with nurturance, and generally, the provisions associated with real and imaginary friendships appeared similar. Lastly, because children with invisible friends distinguished between parents and best friends in terms of social pro-

Table 5
Contrasts of Best Friends and Imaginary Companions: Distributions of Aggregate Scores, Chi-Squares Within Participant Groups, and Relationship Chosen

Social provision and group	Aggregate scores				Within a group (3 df)			Relationship chosen
	0	1	2	3	<i>n</i>	χ^2	<i>p</i>	
Conflict								
IF	21.1	31.6	26.3	21.1	19	3.04	.39	
PO	25.0	20.0	20.0	35.0	20	13.87	.0031	Divided
Instrumental help								
IF	12.5	6.3	43.8	37.5	16	12.33	.0063	Best friend
PO	31.3	25.0	18.8	25.0	16	8.67	.034	Divided
Power								
IF	11.8	47.1	23.5	17.6	17	1.67	.64	
PO	35.3	11.8	5.9	47.1	17	30.84	<.001	Divided
Nurturance								
IF	31.6	36.8	21.1	10.5	19	6.97	.073	IF
PO	42.1	31.6	21.1	5.3	19	15.67	.0013	PO

Note. IF = children with invisible friends; PO = children with personified objects. An aggregate score of 0 = best friend never chosen, imaginary companion always chosen. An aggregate score of 3 = best friend always chosen, imaginary companion never chosen.

visions, whereas the children in the other two groups did not, the data suggest that the creation of an invisible friend may be related to understanding of the distinctions between these relationships.

The parent-child relationship. Parents, as predicted, were most frequently associated with the social provisions of instrumental help and power regardless of the relationship to which they were compared. These findings suggest that preschool children conceive the parent-child relationship hierarchically, and concur with research conducted with 10- and 11-year-old children on the social provisions that they associate with parent-child relationships (Furman & Buhrmester, 1985). The findings presented here indicate that such a schema, or generalized set of expectations for a relationship (Baldwin, 1992), is formulated by the age of 4 and may be carried forward and elaborated with development. One

could argue, on the basis of their help-seeking behavior, that children perceive parents as sources of help and power even earlier in development—as early as late infancy (Sroufe, Fox, & Pancake, 1983). Verbal acknowledgement of these provisions, such as that obtained here, confirms that young children understand to some degree the social affordances that are specific to parent-child relationships and that distinguish them from other relationships.

Relationships with children. Any conclusions regarding differences in relationships with siblings versus best friends must be qualified with reference to the small number of participants who reported on these partners. The children in this sample did, however, appear to distinguish their siblings from their best friends. Siblings were clearly seen as sources of conflict, whereas friendships were preferred for instrumental help and power. No doubt the

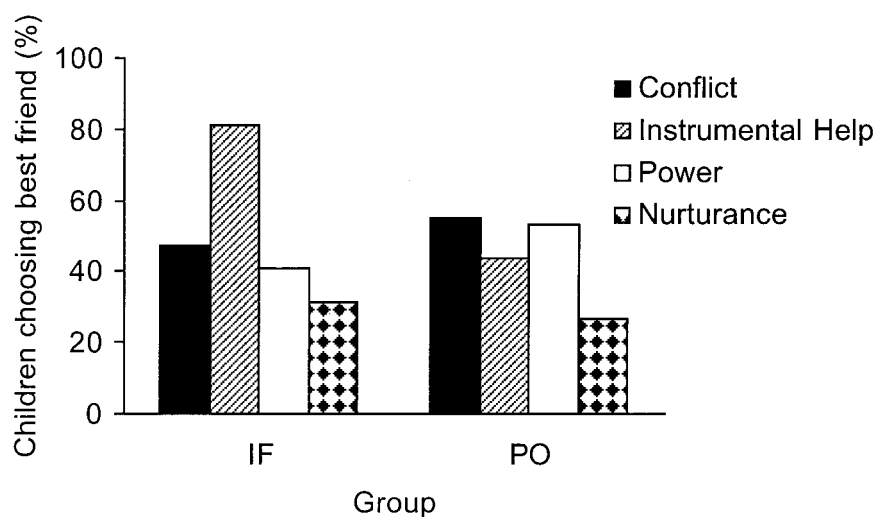


Figure 4. Percentage of children who favored best friend in contrasts of best friends and imaginary companions for each social provision. No significant differences occurred at the .05 level within these sets of social provisions. IF = children with invisible friends; PO = children with personified objects.

Table 6
Contrasts of Best Friends and Siblings: Distributions of Aggregate Scores, Chi-Squares Within Participant Groups, and Relationship Chosen

Social provision	Aggregate scores				Within a group (3 df)			Relationship chosen
	0	1	2	3	<i>n</i>	χ^2	<i>p</i>	
Conflict	47.4	21.1	26.3	5.3	19	21.28	<.001	Sibling
Instrumental help	7.1	14.3	14.3	64.3	14	34.38	<.001	Best friend
Power	0	11.8	41.2	47.1	17	21.43	<.001	Best friend
Nurturance	11.1	55.6	27.8	5.6	18	2.74	.43	

Note. These results are based on data solely from children with no imaginary companion. An aggregate score of 0 = best friend never chosen, sibling always chosen. An aggregate score of 3 = best friend always chosen, sibling never chosen.

high proportion of younger siblings in this study contributed to these findings by making them unlikely candidates as sources of instrumental help or power. The lack of association between siblings and nurturance is puzzling. Nurturance is part of children's schemas for younger siblings once middle childhood and adolescence are reached (Buhrmester & Furman, 1990) but does not appear to be part of 4-year-olds' concepts of toddler siblings.

Differentiation of cognitive schemas of relationships with siblings and best friends may be a social advantage. Preschool-aged children must learn to recognize that relationships with best friends are so-called voluntary relationships, which can be ended by unresolved conflict (Hartup et al., 1988). The involuntary nature of sibling relationships, on the other hand, makes them a safe forum for conflict and development of conflict resolution skills. These results are clearly consistent with children's more frequent use of reasoning in conflicts with friends than in conflicts with siblings (Dunn, 1996). The lack of differentiation between siblings and parents as providers of conflict may also be a function of the closed nature of these relationships, or perhaps a result of parents' participation in sibling conflicts.

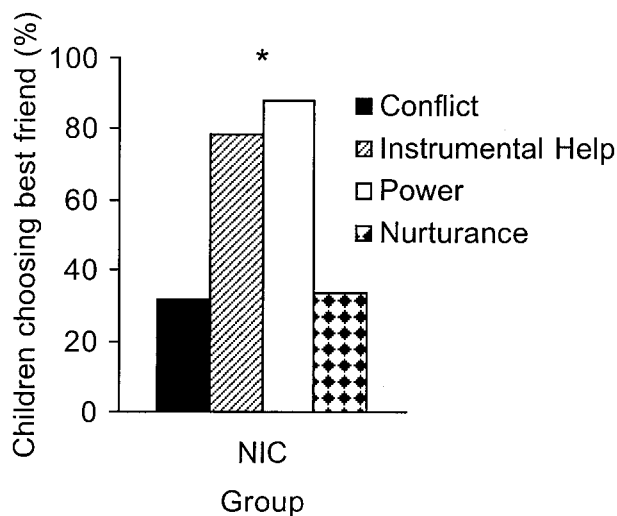


Figure 5. Percentage of children who favored best friend in contrasts of best friends and siblings for each social provision. Significant differences within the set of social provisions occur at the .05 level, as marked by the asterisk. NIC = children with no imaginary companion.

Imaginary companions. Differentiation of relationships was also evident for imaginary companions. Both children with invisible friends and children with personified objects consistently chose their imaginary companions over their parents as the relationship partners that they nurtured, and children with personified objects did so over best friends as well. Although based on a small sample, this finding is consistent with previous research indicating that personified objects often afford care-taking (Gleason et al., 2000). Children with invisible friends chose their companions only marginally more frequently than their best friends as recipients of nurturance, perhaps because both of these relationships often afford sociability rather than caregiving (Gleason et al., 2000).

The data showed a general lack of significant differences in contrasts between best friends and imaginary companions (see Figure 4). One interpretation of this result is that children have formulated generalized cognitive schemas for "relationships with friends." These expectations seem to apply equally well to "best real friends" and to "imaginary friends," meaning that a single cognitive schema may encompass these two types of relationships. Minimally, the results suggest that conceptualizations of relationships with best friends and with imaginary companions are overlapping. This interpretation is supported by the fact that children often play with their imaginary companions (Taylor, 1999) and play is considered the basis for friendship in early childhood (Howes, 1987).

Although the small groups require that these results be considered preliminary, the idea that the friend schema may be generalized to encompass both real and imaginary friends has implications for the development of social cognition generally. According to Selman (1980), a critical component of understanding social interactions and relationships is the ability to differentiate perspectives. In order to accurately interpret others' behavior, one must put oneself into the other's place (Selman, 1980). Children with imaginary companions may, in one sense, be taking on the friendship role by applying their schemas for friends to their companions. Actions, dialogue, and motives ascribed to the companion may reflect what the child perceives friends to say or do. The creation of an imaginary companion may not require the same level of sophistication as taking the perspective of another person, but children with pretend friends appear to be acknowledging that perspectives of others exist.

Differences Between Participant Groups

Unlike their peers, children with invisible friends distinguished between relationships with parents and best friends. As hypothesized, these children may have more practice conceptualizing friends, as distinct from parents, given that they do so in maintaining their imaginary companions. They may be invoking some sort of friend schema in interaction with an invisible friend. A similar process might be at work for children with personified objects, who chose parents over best friends for every social provision. The model these children use in maintaining their relationships with their personified objects may resemble a parent schema, although clearly the child is in the subordinate role with their own parent and may be in either role with the personified object. That children with personified objects in this study consistently associated their companions with nurturance suggests these objects are subordinate to the child, which would be consistent with past research (Gleason et al., 2000). On the other hand, children with personified objects were divided between best friends and objects for power and instrumental help, suggesting that at least some children may see these companions as more rather than less competent than themselves.

In basing their relationships with personified objects on parent-child relationships, children with personified objects appear to be acknowledging the existence of another perspective equally as well as children with invisible friends. Yet, the parent-child relationship is the first one experienced by the child, and is postulated to be the model for all other relationships (Sroufe & Fleeson, 1986). In a sense, then, generalizing a schema for friendship is arguably more developmentally advanced than is taking the perspective of the parent in the parent-child relationship; friendship is a relationship with a different set of rules and expectations than those governing the parent-child relationship. An empirical question worth exploring is whether the real friendships of children who have invisible friends are more stable or amicable than those of their peers, especially given the evidence for heightened social skills demonstrated by high- versus low-fantasy children (Singer & Singer, 1990; Taylor & Carlson, 1997).

Children's differentiation of parents and best friends for the social provision of conflict suggests an alternate interpretation of the results with respect to individual differences in young children's relationship concepts. Children with invisible friends chose best friends as sources of conflict in comparisons of parents and best friends, suggesting that they may have particularly conflictual friendships in comparison to the children in the other groups. If so, then the formation of invisible friends could be an outcome of difficulties with peer relationships rather than a reflection of their ability to successfully distinguish relationships via social provisions. Similar hypotheses have been suggested before (e.g., Ames & Learned, 1946; Svendsen, 1934), but have not been supported by empirical studies in which children with and without imaginary companions are compared on the quality of their play with peers (Manosevitz et al., 1973; Singer & Singer, 1990). Likewise, the tendency of children with personified objects to choose parents as sources of conflict and objects as sources of nurturance might be suggestive of a discordant parent-child relationship and consequent use of the object for managing those issues. This hypothesis is consistent with children's tendency to process events in their lives using their imaginary companions (Taylor, 1999), and the

possibility that a personified object might emerge first as a transitional object (Singer & Singer, 1990); however, the parent-child relationships of children with and without personified objects have not been systematically compared.

Limitations

The research presented here has three limitations. First, variations in the complexity of children's concepts of imaginary companions were unaccounted for in this study. All companions had existed for at least 1 month, but could, in fact, have existed for any length of time between 1 month and over 2 years. Children whose companions have existed for years may have more complex concepts of these companions than children whose companions have only existed for a month, and these variations could account for group or other differences. Second, children's responses may have been constrained by the forced choice format and the directionality of the social provisions. For example, some children might associate instrumental help with their siblings, but the fact that this provision is less associated with siblings than with parents or best friends means that such an association would be masked by design of the study. Third, not all children were included in all relationship comparisons. Those comparisons including only a portion of the sample are in particular need of replication.

Future Directions

Social provisions and relationships. The results reported here demonstrate that establishing the social provisions that young children associate with various relationships, both real and imaginary, is possible through direct questioning. The exploration of a wider variety of social provisions and a larger number of relationships would provide useful contributions to understanding how preschool children think about their relationships with the real and imaginary members of their social networks. Finer distinctions could be drawn between real and imaginary friends as well as between different family members. Additional examination of the similarities and differences between concepts of relationships with invisible friends and relationships with best friends is especially warranted to establish the extent to which schemas for these two relationship types are similar or overlapping. A comparison between the concepts of relationships with personified objects and of parent-child relationships may be informative given the apparent similarities of the children's schemas involving these relationships. An examination of multiple relationships and social provisions over time might also uncover certain constraints on the relationship concepts of preschool children and aid in illuminating the processes by which relationship schemas are created and refined with development.

Individual differences in relationship concepts. Further exploration of the individual differences in children's conceptualizations of relationships is warranted by this research. The use of imagination as an application of knowledge of relationships or as a forum for developing an understanding of relationships might be particularly fruitful. Similar sorts of conceptual skills developed through creation of an imaginary companion might be developed through extensive role play, but the data presented here suggest that the role a child adopts may be related to his or her understanding of relationships.

Conclusions

The differentiation of relationships by social provisions revealed in these data suggest that children have established distinct relational schemas even in early childhood. The existence of these conceptualizations implies that preschoolers have different expectations for the different members of their social networks, which are available for use in interpreting the actions of others as well as themselves. These results are largely consistent with research on the social provisions of relationships among older children as well as with behavioral evidence suggesting that preschool-aged children differentiate among individuals by altering their actions as a function of audience (e.g., Shatz & Gelman, 1973). Most important, the findings of this study go one step beyond what was previously known about early social cognition. Children are aware of and can specify the social provisions associated with different relationships in their social networks—real or imaginary—and they demonstrate individual differences in their abilities to do so.

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Appendix

Relationships Interview Questions Sorted by Social Provision

Social provision	Questions
Conflict	Sometimes people get upset with or mad at each other. Does this happen more often with ____ or ____? Sometimes people disagree with each other (think the other person is wrong). Does this happen more often with ____ or ____? Sometimes people argue with each other. Does this happen more often with ____ or ____?
Instrumental help	If you fell down and scraped your knee, who would you go to for help? If you needed to know how to tie your shoe, who would you ask? If you were having trouble putting a puzzle together, who would you ask to help you?
Power	Which of these two people tells you what to do? Who is more in charge?
Nurturance	Which of these two people decides what you are going to do? Who comes to you for help with things she or he can't do alone? Who do you protect and look out for? Who do you take care of?

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