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**FAIRNESS, FORGIVENESS AND GRUDGE-HOLDING:
EXPERIMENTAL STUDIES WITH PRIMARY SCHOOL
CHILDREN IN NEW ZEALAND**

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degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology at Massey University,
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ABSTRACT

Fairness, forgiveness and grudge-holding are concepts which underlie many aspects of our interpersonal relationships. Fairness is the foundation of our day-to-day communication with others and forgiveness is concerned with a positive strategy used to manage negative emotional experiences of underserved unfair treatment. Grudge-holding results as an accumulation of negative feelings, which are associated with the original experience of unfairness. Two experimental studies investigated children's perceptions of, feelings about, and reactions towards the unfair behaviour of a mother and a friend, by individually inviting the children to scenario-based interview sessions, which included three imaginary tasks. The children were asked to judge the fairness of a mother and a best friend's treatment towards a child protagonist and to report their associated feelings, after listening to a scenario that described an interaction between a child and a mother and an interaction between a child and a friend. They further responded to three scenario-based experimental tasks, regarding their willingness to grant forgiveness, as opposed to expressions of hostility. In the first study, the children's willingness to forgive, as a result of unfairness, was explored with 82 local primary school children in Palmerston North, New Zealand, whose ages ranged from 8- to 11-years-old, in addition to 50 parents of these participating children. The parents also completed a questionnaire about their approaches to their children's common misbehaviours. The study found that the children were typically willing to grant forgiveness to a mother, even though she had been unfair. Their forgiveness tendencies were not related to aspects of parental disciplinary behaviour. However, an examination of the

children's verbatim responses through the use of thematic analysis revealed the complex nature of the relationship between parent and child concerning tolerance for mistakes. In the second study, I explored on whether the children's repeated exposure to unfairness would contribute to their display of grudge-holding against a mother or a best friend in the scenarios and this investigation involved 55 local primary children, whose ages ranged from 8- to 12-years-old, in Wellington, New Zealand. The children participated in individual scenario-based interview sessions, which included three imaginary tasks over the two time periods, one week apart from each other. The children's levels of grudge-holding was measured by analysing the possible increase in hostility, which the children expressed from Time 1 to Time 2. The study showed that a repeated experience of unfairness had a noticeable effect on the children's level of hostility towards the person who was unfair and especially towards the best friend. The children's verbatim comments also suggested some evidence of accumulated negativity in their responses to an unfairness experience. Thus, this study proved to be a suitable paradigm for operationalising grudge-holding in children.

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FOREWORD

Unfairness, unfortunately, takes place within our social interactions. We are occasionally confronted with situations where some groups of people are treated better or worse than others, because of their cultural backgrounds, gender, professions, or age groups. On a more personal level, some people receive advantageous or disadvantageous treatment merely because of their intellectual level or having a certain type of personal characteristic. Throughout our daily communications with others, we certainly realise how judgemental and critical we can be towards people who are unfair to us. At the same time, surprisingly, we are also aware of how upsetting those experiences of unfairness might be for us.

We implement a number of strategies to manage our negative emotional experiences of unfairness. Some people may try to put those negative feelings of unfairness into a positive frame, whereas other people tend to keep those negative feelings to themselves. Similarly, some people may choose to forgive a person who hurts them, in order that they can let go of their angry feelings and then they can move on. Some people may bear a grudge towards a person who has hurt them, in order to protect themselves from further harm. How people manage their negative emotional experiences varies a great deal.

As much as we (as adults) are aware, experiences of unfairness may be a common occurrence in children's daily lives and it is something about which children are particularly critical. In New Zealand, in particular, a weekly TV programme called *Fair Go* discusses a variety of issues related to fair treatment in our day to day lives. For just over three decades, many episodes have been

broadcast, which have stimulated people's perspectives of fairness. New Zealand is certainly a nation where people are familiar with making fair judgements — and children are no exception.

One Fair Go episode was particularly useful for me to gain some insights into children's perceptions of the fairness of adults' behaviour. The main issue was raised by a young primary school child who spoke about their right to wear a pair of long trousers, instead of wearing netball skirts, when they were playing a netball game on a cold winter's day. She talked about how difficult it had been for children to play a game well when they were feeling cold and how unfair it was for them to not be allowed to wear something warm, when they were feeling so cold. Her arguments sounded fair enough for many people in the audience — including myself. However, one of the coaches who expressed the importance of following rules and regulations made an interesting comment: Whilst children were expressing how unreasonable it was for them to play well under difficult weather conditions, the adults were trying to teach the children about the importance of following rules and regulations. From this episode of Fair Go I learned about some children's views of fairness during their daily experiences. Children question adults' decisions on a number of topics and they are more than capable of voicing their opinions on unfairness to children in relation to some of those adults' decisions. It is clear that children are able to offer reasonable reasons, in order to justify their judgement of fairness.

My investigation of children's perceptions of fairness began about six years ago, after a discussion with Ian Evans regarding my research interests about the effects of parental disciplinary practice on the development of children's personalities. At first, fairness was difficult to understand as a

psychological construct and it seemed to be less relevant to my general research interests. However, as I read a series of experimental studies carried out by Evans and his colleagues, I realised that fairness is something that could be incorporated into my research project concerning parental disciplinary practice, particularly in relation to rewards and punishments.

Evans has suggested that the perception of fairness can be investigated under four conditions: (a) unfair punishment for something one did not do; (b) unfair rewards for something one did not do; (c) unfair (i.e., absence of) punishment for something one did do; and (d) unfair (i.e., absence of) reward for something one did do. These four classifications were helpful ways for me to recall some of the situations that I had personally experienced. My notions of unfairness possibly arose as I traced back to my personal memories of unfairness; I was certainly able to relate to the idea of unfair disciplinary practice. Based on this idea of the unfairness of adult disciplinary practice, I began to wonder about how children actually think and feel about their mother's disciplinary behaviour, during their everyday lives.

Following earlier studies carried out by Evans and his colleagues, and guided by my own personal interests and experiences, I began to focus on children's perceptions of unfair punishment and particularly their emotional responses to the maternal disciplinary practice of unfair punishment. I emphasised listening to children's voices, rather than parents' self-reports concerning their disciplinary practices. Parental disciplinary practice is an area of psychological research in which a large number of studies have investigated parents' own judgement of their disciplinary behaviour. In addition, there a number of studies that have observed how parents interact with their own

children. Although these studies are interesting and helpful, in order to learn about parents' perceptions of their children's behaviour and their own attitudes towards their children's misbehaviour, they are less likely to include the children's perceptions of their parents' or caregivers' parental disciplinary behaviour. Following my identification of this limitation, I began to focus on an investigation into children's voices, relating to their parents' disciplinary behaviour. It is thought that, if we are to give effective help to the development of children's emotional well-being, it is important to gain an insight into children's perceptions of parental behaviour.

The importance of listening to children's voices was one of the take-home messages I received from attending an early childhood conference in Porirua, New Zealand in 2006. At this conference, I had an opportunity to listen to one of the keynote speakers, Dr. Freda Briggs, who is best known for her expertise in the area of child protection. She was presenting her recent work concerning children's early experience at schools in Australia and New Zealand¹. Her studies consisted of individual interviews with children about their experiences at school. A number of interesting topics were covered in the interviews, including fairness/justice. One of the episodes concerning fairness that she had shared with us was about children's views of their school principal: the children commented that it was unfair for their school principal to pick up rubbish that s/he had not thrown on the ground. This example illustrated how perceptively and sensitively children judge the fairness of others' behaviour.

Listening to children's voices and learning about their perceptions of and their emotional reactions to experiences of unfairness was the main motivation

¹ More detail of this study is published as Potter, G., & Briggs, F. (2003), Where children talk about their early experiences at school. *Journal of Australian Research in Early Childhood*, 28, pp. 44-49.

for the present thesis. I hoped to tap into children's real life experiences of unfairness and the strategies they use to manage the emotional experiences of these incidents. The first study, concerning children's origins of forgiveness, is one of the main themes that emerged from my earlier Master's thesis research, children's responses to unfair punishment by a mother. Forgiveness has been studied by a number of disciplinary groups and people have been seeking the nature of, significance of, and practice of forgiveness. I had an opportunity to attend an international conference in Salzburg, Austria, in 2008² and I learned how widely the concepts of forgiveness have been examined by diverse groups of international scholars. One of the main discussions, amongst a group of philosophers, was about investigations into the real meanings of forgiveness. They were passionately discussing the origins of forgiveness and how these might have evolved over the centuries. Perhaps more realistic views of forgiveness have been discussed by sociologists and psychologists, who deal with the significance of and practice of forgiveness in our day to day lives.

In some nations, people hold lingering memories of genocide, torture and terrorism. Does practicing forgiveness help people to heal their deeply hurt emotions and to be able to move on into the future? It might take a long time, but it might be possible. A study carried out after the 9/11 incidents in the USA showed that forgiveness may be one of the coping strategies, whereby some people are able to deal with psychological distress and responses to stress (Rhoades, McIntosh, Wadsworth, Ahlkvist, Burwell, Gudmundsen, Raviv, & Rea, 2007). On a more personal level, we are sometimes confronted with interpersonal disputes involving betrayal or disloyalty. Some people may have

² 1st Global Conference Forgiveness: Probing the Boundaries, Salzburg, Austria, March 2008.

the benefit of learning forgiveness as a strategy to heal their emotional wounds. Forgiveness is a complex psychological construct, which is rarely investigated, in relation to the socialisation of children. In a classic book on children's understanding of justice, Piaget (1932) only briefly discussed how ideas of forgiveness might be accumulated, in relation to the cognitive maturation of children. In theory, in order for children to practice forgiveness, cognitive maturation plays an important role. However, more realistically speaking, I believe that children practice forgiveness to some degree in all their daily interpersonal interactions, particularly at the time of interpersonal conflicts with family members or friends. Accepting an apology may be one of the examples where children learn to: see the perspective of others; to manage their negative feelings towards an offender; and rebuild their interpersonal relationships. I believe that it is possible for children to use forgiveness as a strategy to deal with the negative emotional experience of unfairness, in the same way as some adults try to manage their negative emotional experiences by extending their forgiveness to people who have hurt them.

Although offering forgiveness helps us to reduce certain levels of negative thoughts associated with feelings of unfairness, it does not necessarily mean that certain levels of negative feelings (associated with the original unfair incident) will not linger on, which could lead someone to hold a grudge towards the people/person who had been unfair to them. This idea led me to consider the second experimental study. This study was designed to explore *grudge-holding*, in relation to experiences of unfairness. Grudge-holding is another complex psychological construct and it has rarely been investigated with adults or with children. One of the challenges of this investigation would be to

objectively define the construct of grudge-holding. Although the idea of grudge-holding is familiar to many of us, we are yet to understand what it actually means to us in our interpersonal relationships. It is understood that certain situations/behaviours are difficult to accept and to forgive even after receiving an apology. I believe that children have similar experiences. In fact, we occasionally hear episodes or incidences, where a group of children are fighting over something that happened to them a while ago. I believe that forgiveness may be an ideal way of managing the negative emotional experience of unfairness, although, in order to gain a whole picture of what we really mean by forgiveness, an investigation into grudge-holding appears to be necessary.

The present thesis, *Fairness, Forgiveness and Grudge-Holding*, is concerned with children's perceptions of, emotional responses to, and behavioural reactions to experiences of unfairness. Unfairness is a common occurrence in our daily lives. I believe that forgiveness is a personal choice and (if we are willing to practice it) it could have a positive impact on our well-being. At the same time, I also feel that we need to acknowledge that certain incidents, no matter how large or small they might have been, are occasionally difficult to let go and the negative feelings associated with these incidents can remain with us. Thus, what I hope to discuss in this thesis is children's perceptions of feelings about and behavioural reactions to unfairness in their every day lives. I further hope to explore children's displays of forgiveness and grudge-holding, as being strategies they use to manage the negative emotional experiences associated with experiences of unfairness.

CHAPTER 1

GENERAL INTRODUCTION: CHILDREN'S PERCEPTIONS OF UNFAIRNESS AND FEELINGS OF HOSTILITY

Children receive a varied array of treatments in their daily lives and they appear to be close monitors of the fairness of how others treat them. The phrase *but that's not fair* will be familiar to anyone who has spent some time with children. The experience of not being treated fairly by another individual may be quite a common occurrence in children's social relationships. Fairness matters to children strongly enough to influence how they think about, how they feel about and how they act towards people in their everyday lives. However, there is little specific empirical information on these responses.

Fairness involves a subjective judgement of whether or not someone has received just treatment and the immediate feelings associated therewith (Evans, Galyer, & Smith, 2001). Children's perceptions of fairness are individually different and influenced by their own understanding of the characteristics of situations (Thorkildsen, 1989a, 1989b). By defining fairness in this way, we propose that the concept is different from the abstract principles of justice, particularly distributive justice that have been addressed in much of the child development research literature. Early studies showed that judgement of the fair distribution of goods is influenced by: children's age and stages of cognitive development (Piaget, 1932); characteristics of friendships (McGillicuddy-DeLisi, Watkins, & Vinchur, 1994); and quality of sibling relationships (Thomson &

Jones, 2005). These studies have informed us regarding children's abstract ideas and universal rules associated with justice judgements. However, such studies did not tap into the individual differences associated with cognitive judgement of and emotional responses to everyday experiences of fair and unfair treatment by others. Children, I propose, construct their own personal perspective of fairness through their social relationships. Their perception of fairness and the associated feelings are based on common experiences of fair and unfair treatments, particularly in the context of disciplinary events, such as punishments and rewards.

Fairness underlies many aspects of interpersonal relationships. In terms of parent-child interactions, Kowal and Kramer (1997) studied the effect of differential parental treatment and the quality of sibling relationships. They showed that children actively compare fairness of parenting behaviour towards themselves and their siblings. Interestingly, children who perceived their parents' behaviour as unfair could have positive relationships with their siblings, so long as their parents were able to provide justifiable reasons for treating their siblings in different ways. Konstantareas and Desbois (2001) examined young children's perceptions of unfairness in disciplinary practices. In their study, the children were presented with five different types of maternal disciplinary practice and asked to judge the degree of fairness and unfairness for each. Their findings were that children as young as four years of age were able to differentiate fairness across disciplinary practices, with maternal differential treatment of siblings seen as the most unfair, followed by public humiliation.

Dobbs (2007) conducted a focus group study with children, aged between five and fourteen years in New Zealand, examining their perception of

physical punishment by their parents. One of the key questions included in their study concerned the children's perception of fairness of physical punishment. We may think that any form of physical punishment is inappropriate for the discipline of children. However, one of the more insightful children commented that *"it's [receiving physical punishment] unfair if you don't hear your parents properly and if you don't understand"*. Perhaps physical punishment, per se, does not impact on children's perception of fairness. Instead, parents' intentions, when using physical punishment, seemed to matter in the children's judgement of fairness.

Everyday experience overwhelmingly confirms that perceived unfairness results in negative emotional reactions. Empirically, Mikula, Scherer, and Athenstaedt (1998) have reported that anger, disgust, sadness, fear, guilt and shame were commonly associated with unfairness judgements. Young children also recognise that people who have received unfair treatment would have some negative emotional experience (Evans, Goldberg, & Dickson, 1996; Evans, Salisbury, Palombaro, & Goldberg, 1994). Evans et al. (2001) investigated children's perception of unfairness of reward and punishment and its associated feelings, with children of elementary (primary) school age. Children were presented with a series of realistic scenarios describing daily events involving unfair punishments and rewards. Children judged the degree of unfairness and the types and degrees of feelings that might be evoked as a result. The children — particularly boys — judged that missing a promised reward for good behaviour would be more negative than receiving punishment when innocent. For both types of unfair treatment, feelings of sadness and

anger were the two major negative feelings reported by the children — with anger being the dominant affective reaction.

The experience of unfairness may lead to expressions of negativity directly towards the person who was unfair. In a classroom situation, children's perception of the unfairness of teaching practice was recognised as one of the causes of children's misbehaviour (Miller, Ferguson, & Byrne, 2000). Miller (2001) suggested that retaliation and hostility may be common reactions from people who have been treated unfairly or unjustly by others. Similarly, with respect to children's reaction to perceived unfairness, Wilson and Evans (2005) argued that children who consistently receive unfair treatment may become hypersensitive to the unfairness of others and thus they are motivated to retaliate. Arsenio and Gold (2006) also proposed that the possible origins of children's motivation to deliberately harm others (e.g., morally relevant transgressions) may be related to their experiences of unfairness and injustice in their immediate and wider social contexts. Furthermore, one of the children, who participated in Dobbs' (2007) focus group study, responded to a question about her response to unfair punishment from her parents and she stated that "*if it's fair then I don't try to get back at my mum and dad*". It appears that a perception of unfairness contributes to children's motivation to *get back at* or *retaliate against* the person who was unfair.

Despite these strong indicators of a relationship between perceptions of unfairness and feelings of hostility, there is, to my knowledge, no direct empirical test of this effect. It thus appears that an investigation into children's perception of unfairness and their imagined responses to a person who has

treated them unfairly might provide insights into one of the origins of retaliatory aggression and hostility in children.

Inquiry into children's behavioural displays of hostility is the foundation for the two experimental studies included in this thesis. Research design, materials and procedure created for this study became my stepping-stone to continue an investigation of children's emotional reactions or attitudes towards unfairness of others. Thus, the following sections describes the methodology I have designed for the measurement of hostility in children, and a number of key findings from this particular study that led to the design of experimental studies on forgiveness and grudge-holding.

Designing and Piloting the Procedures

My initial study specifically focused on investigating children's perception of unfairness relating to: aspects of family disciplinary actions; children's feelings associated with unfairness; and children's subsequent reactions after experiencing unfairness. In order to answer these questions, I studied a total of 60 primarily school children, drawn from Year 1 (6 years old) and Year 3 (8 years old), who were recruited from three local primary schools in Palmerston North, New Zealand. These schools enroll children from low to middle income families. All the children were individually asked to listen to a story and then to answer a series of questions about the story. After answering the questions, they were asked to take part in three imaginary tasks. All the interview sessions were video-taped and recorded by a research assistant. Later, all video-tapes were reviewed and transcribed for scoring and coding.

Materials and Procedure

The methodology was adapted from a study conducted by Evans et al. (2001). I created two scenarios about a child who was unfairly treated by one of his/her family members. Both scenarios illustrated ordinary daily interactions between the main child in the scenario and a family member. The first story described a situation where the child protagonist was unfairly reprimanded by the mother for something he/she did not do (Parent story). The second story was about a child who was blamed by a sibling for something he/she did not do (Sibling story). These two unfair situations were recognised as common occurrences in children's day-to-day communication with their family members. Each story was read together with a series of illustrations highlighting the main theme of the story. After the story was read, the children answered a series of structured questions:

1. Do you think what the mother/sibling did was fair or unfair?
2. If unfair, how unfair was it?
3. How do you think the child would feel?
4. How strongly does the child feel this?
5. What do you think the child might do next?

Children pointed out the degree of unfairness and feelings on a simple thermometer-like, 5-point rating scale.

A new addition, designed for this study, was the introduction of three imaginary tasks, which aimed to capture the children's potential hostility towards the person who was unfair. These tasks were an indirect way of assessing the children's own feelings about an experience of unfair treatment. This was determined by asking the children about their willingness to share with, care for,

and trust a person who had been unfair. Children were requested to respond to the tasks as if they were the main child (i.e., the victim in the scenario story).

The first task was called a *sharing task*; it focused on the child's willingness to distribute slices of cake to the person in the story who has been unfair. In this imaginary context, children were given colourful pictures of different sized slices of a chocolate cake (large, medium and small) and then asked to judge which slice of cake should be given to which family members, including the person (mother or sibling) who was unfair. The children's judgement of the distribution of the slices was converted into a score, by comparing the sizes of the slices given to the mother or sibling and to themselves (i.e., the victim in the story).

The second task was called the *caring task* and this imaginary task assessed the children's willingness to care for the person who was unfair. In this task, the children were told about a situation where the mother (or the sibling) had accidentally cut their finger with a kitchen knife. The children were then asked to select the child's typical or expected response towards that family member. Each response was converted into a numerical number as follows: give mum a plaster (score = 1); not care (score = 2); or laugh at the person who has been hurt (score = 3). The children's non-empathic, uncaring response was interpreted as an expression of retaliation or hostility.

The third task was the *trusting task*, designed to examine children's willingness to trust a person with his/her most precious possession. The children were asked to imagine a situation where the child protagonist, from the original story, was thinking of the best way to keep his/her special treasure (an art project) safe. Similar to the caring task, three possible responses for the

child protagonist were presented to the children as follows: ask mum (or the older sibling) to take care of it (score = 1); put it on the wall to keep an eye on it by him or herself (score = 2); or hide it in their secret place so that nobody will take it away (score = 3). If the children preferred to hide a treasure from a person who had been unfair to them, it was interpreted as an indication of mistrust — an aspect of hostility.

The sum of the three tasks was considered to measure overall level of the children's willingness to retaliate against a person who was unfair. After completing these tasks, the children were thanked and given a sticker. The entire session took about 15 minutes, which was just enough time to maintain the participating children's concentration. Overall, the participating children were generally able to relate to the main child in the story and they responded to the questions and tasks spontaneously. Illustrations accompanied the scenarios and imaginary tasks and these were helpful for the children to follow the sequence of the stories and to imagine the situations described in the tasks.

Findings

What did the children think about the unfair treatment? Most children understood that the situations described in the stories were unfair, and the majority of the children were able to describe what made them think the situation (as described in each story) was unfair. One of the most frequently reported reasons correctly included the main principles described in the scenarios. Children responding to both the parent and sibling stories reported that outcomes associated with treatment were unfair for the child protagonist, because the child was reprimanded for his/her innocent behaviour. Other reasons included the fact that the process used by the mother or the sibling to

treat the child protagonist was unfair. Children responding to the parent story specifically pointed out that the mother's emotional expression (e.g., being angry at the child) and her lack of explanation for reprimanding the child protagonist was unfair. The children responding to the sibling story articulated how unfair it was for the sibling to lie to the mother in order to avoid his/her own responsibilities. Although the majority of children responding to both the parent and the sibling stories talked about the reasons for the unfair behaviour of the mother, based on contextual information described in the stories, some children expressed reasons for this behaviour that were not specific to the main theme of the stories. Those children, responding to the parent story thought that the main character (the child) had actually done something to make his/her mother upset.

How did the children feel about the unfairness? The children were able to express a number of feelings that the child protagonist might be experiencing after an incidence of unfairness. Since we reminded the children to answer the questions as if they were the child in the story, I inferred that this was how they would feel, when confronted with incidents of unfairness. Feelings of sadness and anger were commonly expressed in response to the parent and the sibling stories. Children expressed stronger feelings of sadness than anger in response to both the parent and the sibling stories. However, they were more likely to express feelings of anger when responding to the sibling story than to the parent story.

Does unfairness contribute to hostility in children? Children's display of hostility, in response to experiences of unfairness, was assessed through the three imaginary tasks. When I compared the children's responses to the parent

story and the sibling story, it became apparent that children were less willing to express hostility towards the mother. When I closely inspected the children's verbatim responses, I also noted that the children commented more explicitly on: why the sibling deserved to have a smaller piece of the cake than the child protagonist; why the child protagonist would care less about the sibling who had a minor cut on the finger; or why the child protagonist would hide his/her art work from the sibling. It was interesting to note in this study that parents may have earned enough positive emotional *credit* from their children, through daily interactions, for children to possibly forgive the mistakes that mothers occasionally make.

What do we need to improve? During this initial study, I and my colleagues identified a number of limitations, particularly in regards to the three imaginary tasks introduced in the study. The first sharing task worked well with the children, judging from their verbal reasoning, but the second and third tasks required further refinement. In the second caring task, for example, the majority of children were empathic towards the person who had cut his/her finger. In the third task, the children responded well, but it was difficult to capture how a sense of trust can be reduced as a result of unfairness through an imaginary task. We anticipated that the children's sense of trust might be lowered as a result of perceived unfairness and negative feelings. However, perhaps, because the concept of trust itself is a complex concept, the situation used for the task only moderately impacted on the children's responses.

Summary and Conclusion

In conclusion, aside from the above mentioned limitations, my preliminary study seemed to confirm that a perception of fairness is a subjective

matter. These subjective perceptions of unfairness do generate negative feelings, such as sadness and anger, and a perception of unfairness may contribute to children's feelings of hostility towards family members. An interesting finding was how forgiving many children can be towards their parents. Children may be tolerant of occasional mistakes made by their parents because they can also appreciate all the good things their parents do for them. These findings led me to think about the next question: What aspect of parenting practices might contribute to children's expressions of forgiveness?

CHAPTER 2

STUDY 1: EXPLORING CHILDREN'S ORIGINS OF FORGIVENESS

Introduction

Children recognise that unfairness is likely to be a part of life, and yet, they are critical of inequitable treatment. My initial study focused specifically on children's responses to an incident of unfair rewards and punishment and we revealed some of the negative responses that children might present to a person whom they considered was unfair. In that study, children indicated their desire to *get back at* a sibling for his/her unfair behaviour. Although this finding was expected, an additional pattern of response was identified and that was the opposite of what we had hypothesised: Some children were less willing to respond in a hostile manner towards the mother in the scenarios. In order to gain a better understanding of children's positive responses towards the mothers' unfair behaviour, I examined the children's verbatim response and recognised an interesting comment: *"Mother does a lot for kids and deserves the big piece of cake"* (paraphrased).

This positive comment was offered by a number of children who actually thought that the mother's behaviour was unfair and that she could make them feel sad or angry. What this comment suggested was that there is a discrepancy between children's fairness judgement of maternal behaviour and their actually behavioural reactions towards their own mother. It appears that children may be tolerant to forgive their mothers' occasional unfair behaviour

because they feel that their mothers have earned some *credits* for being hard working and caring for them in their everyday lives. In other words, children are willing to forgive their mothers' unfair behaviour because they recognise, on balance, how much their mothers are positive, rewarding, and fair in their daily lives.

Children's tendencies to forgive in response to hurt, transgressions, or unfair treatment may be closely associated with their overall emotional competence. Emotional competence in children includes their accurate expression of emotional messages, their understanding of their own feelings and what causes similar feelings in others, and their ability to regulate their feelings (Denham, 1998). Children's emotional competence is thought to be influenced by their parents' socialisation strategies. It has been reported that children whose parents talk about their own feelings and coach their children about emotions are more skilled at understanding emotions (Denham, Zoller, & Couchoud, 1994) and are more socially competent (Denham, Mitchell-Copeland, Stranberg, Auerbach, & Blair, 1997). Children learn a number of strategies to manage their emotions through their daily interactions with their caregivers, and forgiveness may be one of those emotional regulation strategies that children use to manage their negative feelings arising from unfairness. Thus, children learn to manage their feelings in the context of family relationships and it seems important to explore the origin of forgiveness more explicitly.

Conceptualisation of Forgiveness

Forgiveness is a complex concept, which has a strong connection with religious practice and teaching. North (1987, 1998), for example, described the

philosophy of forgiveness as a gift-like gesture. It is an offended person's own choice to extend their kindness or even love towards a person who has hurt them, without forcing themselves or thinking about retribution. It has been reported that people who hold higher levels of religiosity (i.e., faith, interpretation, prayer, and attendance) have greater tendencies to practice forgiveness (Fox & Thomas, 2008). Forgiveness may be an important part of personal values for some people.

The psychology of forgiveness has a short history in comparison with philosophical and religious perspectives (Enright & Coyle, 1998; Exline, Worthington, Hill, & McCullough, 2003; McCullough & Witvliet, 2002). However, psychologists have begun to investigate the potential benefits of forgiveness for people who have been unjustly hurt by others, or those who have been holding bitter feelings about a past offence since the mid-1980s, and the number of psychological studies has been rapidly increasing (Worthington, 2005).

Forgiveness can be considered an important part of everyday interpersonal relationships. The motivational processes underlying individuals' decisions to forgive somebody who has hurt them or transgressed against them in some way can be accounted for in evolutionary theory. Evolutionary principles emphasise that we humans have been selected for living in tightly knit social groups and have an inbuilt urgency to maintain in-group cohesiveness, especially for the purpose of reproductive success and survival in general (Buss, 1996; Kenrick & Trost, 2004). Further, the theory states that, through interactions with our environment, we adopt domain-specific strategies that help us to sustain our interpersonal relationships (e.g., acts of helping and altruism) (Buss, 1996). Based on this evolutionary perspective, forgiveness can be

explained as an adaptive strategy that we use to protect and facilitate our relationships. Thus, the nature of forgiveness is most likely to differ across different types of relationships, such as the parent-child relationships and the parent-parent relationships (Fincham, Beach, & Davila, 2004).

When designing psychological research, although many of us have some idea about what it means to be forgiven or to forgive, it is a complex psychological construct because an abstract idea of forgiveness is difficult to operationally define as a measurable psychological construct. In fact, a universal definition of forgiveness, as a psychological construct, is yet to be agreed upon (McCullough, Pargament, & Thoresen, 2000). Moreover, most of the forgiveness literature has agreed that forgiveness is different from condoning, excusing, forgetting, denying, or reconciling (Enright & Coyle, 1998; Enright, Freedman, & Rique, 1998; McCullough & Witvliet, 2002). In addition, regardless of theoretical background, there is a common consensus that forgiveness involves a victim's positive social responses towards his/her perpetrator, which involves complex interactions of cognitive, emotional, and motivational transformations within the victim (McCullough et al., 2000).

Forgiveness therapies. Taking into consideration the positive psychological aspects of forgiveness, clinical and counselling psychologists propose intervention models for promoting forgiveness in people who may hold emotional wounds from past offences (Worthington & Wade, 1999). Two of the major intervention models of forgiveness are Enright's developmental model of interpersonal forgiveness and McCullough's model of the motivational conceptualisation of interpersonal forgiving (Wade, Worthington, & Haake, 2009). These two models commonly emphasise that forgiveness is a choice for

a victim and it involves the victim transforming his/her own perspective and feelings about his/her perpetrator/s. However, their approaches to facilitate forgiveness appear to be different from each other.

An intervention based on Enright's model focuses on cognitive components of forgiveness, particularly individuals' reasoning about their decisions to (or motivation for) forgiveness (Worthington, 1998 a). Enright and his colleagues refer to forgiveness as a victim willingness to abandon his/her right to resentment, negative judgement, and indifferent behaviour towards his/her perpetrator/s who unjustly injured him/her, whilst still fostering the undeserved qualities of compassion, generosity and even love towards that perpetrator/s (Enright & The Human Development Study Group, 1991, cited in Enright, Freedman, & Rique, 1998). In order to forgive his/her perpetrator, this model suggests that a victim may go through a total of 21 units, which can be grouped into the following: (a) the importance of self-awareness of the negative feelings towards a perpetrator; commitment to forgiveness (cognitive restructuring); (b) development of empathy (affective aspect of reframing) towards the perpetrator; and (c) compassion (gift-like gesture) towards the perpetrator (Enright & Coyle, 1998). There seems to be no set order or amount of time that a victim spends on each unit. Nevertheless, most victims seem to have difficulty deciding if they are sufficiently committed to forgiving their perpetrators, even though they recognise how important it is (Knutson, Enright, & Garbers, 2008).

An intervention based on McCullough's model focuses on affective components of forgiveness. McCullough and his colleagues defined forgiveness as a reduction in a victim's desire to avoid and withdraw from his/her

perpetrator, in addition to a reduction in anger, desire for revenge, and/or retaliation against his/her perpetrator (McCullough, Rachal, Sandage, Worthington, Brown, & Hight, 1998; McCullough, Worthington, & Rachal, 1997; Worthington, 1999). Based on this model, forgiveness is promoted when a victim's negative feelings towards his/her perpetrator and their wish for revenge and retaliation are replaced with positive feelings. This emotional transformation can be initiated by inducing a sense of empathy, humility, and commitment towards a perpetrator (Worthington, 1998 a; Worthington 1998 b).

With growing interest in the positive effects of forgiveness on individuals' well-being, outcome studies have been undertaken to examine the effectiveness of these available forgiveness interventions. Enright and his colleagues carried out a number of clinical studies to investigate the effects of interpersonal forgiveness therapy. An early study was carried out with a group of elderly women, who had been emotionally hurt by someone they knew and they needed to work through interpersonal difficulties (Hebl & Enright, 1993). Another study looked at a group of adolescents, who had not received the necessary affection and nurturance from a young age, were exposed to a psycho-educational programme in interpersonal forgiveness (Al-Mabuk, Enright, & Cardis, 1995). Later, the intervention was used for female incest survivors (Freedman & Enright, 1996), inpatient substance-dependent clients (Lin, Enright, Krahn, Mack & Baskin, 2004) and emotionally abused women (Reed & Enright, 2006). Recently, Enright's model of forgiveness was suggested as a curriculum, which can be included as part of an educational programme, in order to teach children the basics of forgiveness (i.e., inherent worth, moral love, kindness, respect, and generosity) (Enright & Enright, 2008).

Focusing on the role of empathy in the process of forgiveness, McCullough and his colleagues carried out a number of group psycho-educational sessions (McCullough & Worthington, 1995; McCullough et al., 1997). Two recent meta-analytic studies have reported that forgiveness is, in fact, effective in comparison with a control group such as a waiting-list group, relaxation sessions, or therapeutic discussions, especially, when the victims hope to deal with issues involving angry feelings that have arisen from past experiences of unfair and unjust treatments (Baskin & Enright, 2004; Wade, Worthington, & Meyer, 2005).

Forgiveness in Children

Forgiveness is a concept that is used in everyday language and it is a familiar occurrence for children as young as six years old (Darby & Schlenker, 1982). Forgiveness may be an aspect of positive social behaviour that could assist children to develop and maintain meaningful interpersonal relationships (Asher, Parker, & Walker, 1996; Scobie & Scobie, 2000) and it may be one possible strategy to deal with a negative emotional experience of unfairness, or an experience of being hurt by somebody. Despite the potential importance of forgiveness in children's interpersonal relationships, a small number of studies on forgiveness with children are currently available.

The first experimental study was conducted by Darby and Schlenker (1982). They measured a cognitive process that underlies children's decision to grant forgiveness by asking children to listen to only a story about a boy called Pat, who mistreated other child (a victim). Whether or not Pat should be forgiven for his transgression, the children were asked to take consideration of his responsibility for his wrongdoing, his intentions of such behaviour, and his

sincerity level of apologies following his transgression. The findings from this study informed us that the children are more likely to grant forgiveness to a perpetrator if s/he takes responsibilities for his/her own misbehaviour. Children are particularly forgiving if a perpetrator makes more elaborate apologies, rather than just simple or no apologies.

Recently, Denham, Neal, Wilson, Pickering, and Boyatzis (2005) proposed their working definition of forgiveness in children, in relation to their emotional development. They empathised that the core of forgiveness as *cognitive-affective transformation*, involves cognitive, affective, and behavioural changes in a victim, following the transgression. In order to assess what type of cognitive decision-making process and affective changes are involved in children's tendencies to forgive an offender, they developed a survey called Children's Forgiveness Inventories (CFI). This survey includes short segments of hypothetical situations, which describe an interaction between a child protagonist (a victim) and his/her peer (a perpetrator). It asks children questions about their judgement of the severity of a peer's offence; their decision to forgive or not to forgive a peer; and how much the child protagonist is feeling hurt, sad and angry, following the transgression — for example: How bad was it that he did it? Would you forgive him if he did it on purpose? How hurt would you be? Based on the results from this survey, Wilson (2004, cited in Denham et al., 2005) stated that children's propensity for forgiveness is associated with their ability to empathise with a perpetrator, or whether they have a positive perspective towards the perpetrator, despite their feelings of unjustness and deep hurt, which were caused by the transgression.

Following Denham's proposal of the development of forgiveness in children, Neal (2005) carried out a survey study with children whose ages ranged from 7- to 12-years-old in the USA. This study examined whether children's tendencies for forgiveness were associated with their social interactions with their parents. She investigated whether children's tendency to forgive their peers is related to their parents' propensity to forgive their adult peers, their parents' self-reporting on their own parenting behaviour, and their judgement of their own parents' various parenting behaviour. The results from this study showed that children's tendencies to forgive their peers was predicted from their mother's propensity to forgive her peers, but the strength of this relationship was influenced by the frequency of positive maternal behaviour, reported by children (e.g., positive evaluation, time together, and positive reinforcement). These findings indicated that the strength of the relationship, between the parents' tendency to forgive their peers and the children's tendency to forgive their peers, would depend on the children's judgement of their mother's frequency of positive parenting behaviour. In other words, children probably learn to practice forgiveness in an environment where their mothers are frequently practicing positive parenting strategies.

Although this study informed us that children's tendency for forgiveness depends on their social interactions with their parents, it is interesting that they are more likely to have a tendency to forgive their peers — however, there are a few limitations. For example, all the data were collected from self-reported surveys. This means that the responses may have been easily influenced by social desirability, especially where a questionnaire asks about some specific types of parenting practices that may seem threatening for both parents and

children to answer (e.g., How often does your mother/father spank you, slap you or hit you? How often do you get mad at him/her, yell at him /her?). In addition, the children's and parents' decision to forgive was only based and measured on their cognitive/verbal response to forgiveness towards their peers (e.g., I will forgive, I maybe forgive, or I do not forgive), rather than tapping into their emotional and behavioural responses to the transgressions of their peers. Furthermore, children's willingness to forgive their mother's wrongdoing (i.e., unfair punishment) — and how this may be predicted by their own mother's endorsement of forgiveness in her parenting practice — were not directly examined in this study.

Origins of Children's Willingness to Grant Forgiveness

Having to address what is meant by forgiveness, the next question, perhaps, is how children learn to display forgiveness in their interpersonal relationships, particularly towards their family members and close friends. A foundation of children's willingness to practice forgiveness may be explained from the evolutionary perspective on forgiveness in family relationships. In a longitudinal study, Maio, Carnally, and Fincham (2008) investigated the role of relationship context in forgiveness. They argued that a process of forgiveness occurs differently across family relationships (i.e., child-mother, child-father, and parent-parent) and, in case of parent-child relationships, parents are willing to forgive their children, regardless of the severity of their transgressions, because forgiving their children helps to protect their own genetic transmission. However, unforgiving can occur within the mother-child relationship and the father-child relationship when parents are avoidant or detached from their children. These

researchers further argued that fathers are designed to be more avoidant and detached from their children in comparison with mothers.

Avoidance and detachment increase occurrences of miscommunication between parents and children. As a result, parents would limit their ability to detect and convey forgiveness in their relationships with children (Maio et al., 2008). Focusing on the dynamics of family relationships, Maio and colleagues examined the relationship-specific nature of forgiveness. A total of 114 families, including children aged 12 to 16 years old, were asked to complete a number of questionnaires which focused on the participants' tendencies to forgive the other family member and their perceptions of the other family member's tendencies to forgive them. The study also examined whether or not intrapersonal variables (e.g., personality traits such as self-esteem), quality of dyadic relationships among family members (e.g., attachment, tendencies to apologise), and quality of family environment as a whole (e.g., emotional expressiveness, conflict resolution skills) would predict the participants' perceptions of forgiveness and tendency to forgive.

The study demonstrated that each family member practices forgiveness in a relationship-specific manner. As evolutionary theory has suggested, children and fathers were more likely to misinterpret each other's tendencies to forgiveness, whereas children and mothers were more likely to reciprocate perceived forgiveness. When children's intrapersonal characteristics were taken account, higher levels of forgiveness were seen in children who were less anxious and depressed. Quality of dyadic relationships between family members also played an important role in children's tendencies to forgive. Children sensitively responded to their mothers' and fathers' tendencies to

repeat offenses and their tendencies to apologise for these offences. Children were less likely to forgive their mothers and fathers who repeated their offences and offered no apology. Further, children's forgiveness tendencies were associated with quality of their family environment. Forgiveness was more likely to be practiced when children were brought up in an emotional environment where family members openly discussed issues and positively solve their conflicts. In sum, the findings from this study suggest that the origins of forgiveness in children are closely linked with the quality of dyadic relationships that children have with their mothers and fathers, and the quality of the forgiving family environment where they live.

Another possibility is the effect of parental socialisation, such as parental disciplinary practices. It has been reported that young people's willingness to show forgiveness towards their parents can be predicted from their quality of relationships with parents (Paleari, Regalia, & Fincham, 2003). Young people who attributed positively about their relationship with their parents were more willing to forgive their parents.

Children occasionally misbehave and make mistakes in their everyday lives. These seem to be a normal part of daily activities, although certain misbehaviours can be upsetting for parents and can evoke strong emotional responses. Whether or not parents act upon their own negative feelings may be influenced by their attributions for their children's misbehaviour (Miller, 1995), and their causal attributions for their children's misbehaviour, in particular, seem to predict how negatively that parents may respond to their children (e.g., Azar, Robinson, Hekimian, & Twentyman, 1984; Dadds, Mullins, McAllister, & Atkinson, 2003; Dix, Ruble, & Zambarano, 1989). Based on those studies, it

might be possible to assume that parents who use forgiveness, as strategies to manage their feelings of frustration and anger towards their children, are possibly less likely to blame their children's character as the main cause of the misbehaviour and more likely to be empathic towards their children. In other words, those parents are more likely to think of some excuses, or give some benefit of the doubt to their children by taking into consideration their children's point of view. Some types of strategies that parents use to manage the misbehaviour of their children may thus be closely linked with the parents' attributions of the causes of their children's misbehaviour, and therefore, forgiveness may be one of those strategies that these parents use to manage the negative emotional experiences evoked by their children's misbehaviour.

Another explanation of children's willingness to forgive may be related to their daily observations of their parents' emotion interactions. Children are sensitively monitoring how their mothers and fathers treat each other and how they manage their negative feelings at the time of an emotionally charged situation. It has been well investigated that the presence of children's internal and external behaviour are most likely to be influenced by how their parents resolve their marital disputes (Katz & Gottman, 1993). Children also learn to behave towards others by modelling their parents' behaviour (Fincham, Beach, Arias, & Brody, 1998). Thus, children's strategies to deal with emotive conflict situations may be associated with their parents' ways of controlling their own negative emotions.

In summary, it seems plausible that the origin of children's willingness to forgive is linked to the attributions that parents use to interpret their children's misbehaviour. If parents have a tendency to blame their children for

misbehaving, then the children may perceive their parents as unforgiving individuals and they may learn to blame and retaliate against their parents. On the other hand, if parents are willing to give the benefit of the doubt to their children's misbehaviours, children then perceive their parents to be forgiving individuals and they are willing to tolerate their parents' occasional mistakes. In addition, children may learn to manage their negative emotions by observing their parents' approach to managing their marital disputes. If parents respond to each other in a positive manner, without bearing grudges over past events, perhaps children would then learn to behave in similar ways. The foundation of children's willingness to offer forgiveness may be the reciprocal relationships between parents and their children.

Rationale for a New Study

Unfairness occasionally happens within children's day-to-day lives. When parents are busy with their own jobs and the demands of daily living, they may find it difficult to manage their feelings and to be tolerant to their children's occasional misbehaviour. Children might be blamed or reprimanded by their parents for something they did not do. While many parents may prefer to reward than to punish their children in order to manage their behaviour, it is still a possible occurrence that parents will discipline their children rather unfairly. Feelings that accompany those unfair treatments are unpleasant and they may lead to the development of hostile moods. It seems important to gain a better understanding of children's perception of unfairness and associated emotional reactions in order to give effective help to children's pro-social skills and attitudes.

Nevertheless, in my previous study, close inspection of children's verbatim responses indicated that the negative emotional experiences of unfairness were moderated by the children's willingness to forgive their mothers, when the children recognised, on balance, how much their mothers and other caregivers were positive, rewarding, and fair. Based on this finding, the idea of *credit in the bank* may add a unique flavour to these empirically established theories of forgiveness. I conceptualised children's willingness to show forgiveness by paying particular attention to children's willingness to give some credit to their mothers for all the good things that they do for children. That is to say, children may be willing to make some excuses for their mothers rather than to retaliate against them.

The children's positive motivation to forgive their mothers is in some ways similar to the characteristics of successful marital relationships, where positive experiences and feelings are saved as credit and can then be used to manage the relationship at times of conflict and stress (Willis, Weiss, & Patterson, 1974). In the family environment, an effort to restore love and trustworthiness in relationships may be the core of forgiveness work (Hargrave & Sell, 1997; Sell & Hargrave, 1998). If children share a good balance of credit with their parents children may be willing to make some excuses for their parents and to forgive their unfair behaviour. Thus, this proposition led to the design of the first study for this thesis, which explored fairness and forgiveness within the family context.

Study 1

The purpose of the study was to investigate children's willingness to grant forgiveness, in relation to aspects of parental disciplinary practice. I

anticipated that; (a) children would be sensitive about unfair treatment by a mother; (b) their perception of unfairness would be accompanied by negative feelings; (c) they would be more willing to grant forgiveness towards a mother than a close friend.

Method

Decisions Concerning Method

An investigation of children's perceptions of unfairness involves a measurement of their subjective experience of unfairness. Taking consideration of the nature of unfairness situations between child and mother, and the negative feelings associated with such experiences, I decided that it would be appropriate to use an imaginary story to depict unfairness situations and to measure children's inferred feelings rather than to expose children to any real unfairness experiences. The use of stories to examine children's perceptions of unfairness had been used before with apparent success in Evans' research programme; it involves presentation of a hypothetical situation for a child who is gender-matched with the participant, who is of ambiguous ethnicity, and who is described as *being just like you*. It is assumed that the participant attributes reactions to the child in the story according to how he or she is responding emotionally to the imagined situation—a process that might be considered akin to *projection* of feelings onto the main character in the story.

This methodology appeared to be appropriate for the present studies, based on the assumptions that: (a) any unfairness situations described in a story are realistic and commonly experienced by children; (b) children are able to imagine themselves in the shoes of the character in the story; and (c)

children judge how the character in the story might be feeling according to their own past experiences. It is acknowledged that this methodology has limitations, however, as Fiske (1992, 1993) states, *people's social thinking is for social doing*; Children selectively construct their understanding of a situation for the purpose of their goals. Children's judgments and feelings in responses to a story are most likely to represent what they would feel in a real situation. Thus, I followed a long tradition of in social cognition research that involves cognitive judgement of hypothetical situations and making inferences regarding the feelings and motives of the story protagonists.

Pilot Work

Prior to carrying out the main part of the present study, pilot work was implemented with a small number of children, whose ages ranged from 6- to 12-years-old. Children were recruited from local primary schools in Palmerson North. This pilot work involved two stages in order to improve some of the weakness that became apparent in my earlier study.

The first stage of the pilot work was to gain some understanding of the context in which children learn to be forgiving of or to be forgiven by others. My first approach was to visit local schools and spend some time in observation. I specifically focused on how children learn or practice forgiveness (or related concepts) in their school time. I believed this was an appropriate starting point for the study, because children spend most of their day time with their classmates and teachers. Children learn a number of basic interpersonal skills through communicating with others.

A school that I visited for the present pilot work had been running the Virtue Programme as part of their school curriculum. This programme helps

children to be aware of the use of virtues and it encourages them to engage in a number of moral behaviours. On my first visit, I had an opportunity to observe their school assembly, which especially focused on the practice of virtues and was called the virtue assembly. In this school, two concepts of virtue were generally introduced to the children and teachers, during one school term. Teachers and students took turns to report their experiences and discoveries of virtuous behaviour that they had identified during their everyday lives.

At the time of my visit, they were learning about the concept of respect, and it was the teachers' turn to report back to their students about how respectful their students had been during the past few weeks. Those teachers' comments included points where they thought their students had done well as well as points they felt needed some improvement. Some good points included how respectful and thankful their students were towards people who helped them run a school activity and how respectfully their students followed the school rules, whereas a point that the children needed to improve was to be respectful to a person who is speaking to them. When teachers share their perspectives on such points, the children may learn some of the basic principals, such as learning to take on the perspective of others and being considerate to others, which are necessary behaviours for successful social relationships.

The second stage of the pilot work focused more on the development of a methodology for the study. The basics of the methodology followed my earlier study, namely which were scenario-based interview sessions followed up with three imaginary tasks designed to assess negative (hostile) affect. The purpose of this particular pilot study was to improve weaknesses in this methodology

and to ensure that newly produced materials and measures were appropriate for the study. Prior to meeting and talking with a number of children in the pilot school, I gained permission from the school principal and classroom teachers to talk with the children individually. All these children were voluntary participants in this pilot work session and their agreement was obtained before commencing the discussions.

At the beginning of the sessions, it was explained to the children that they would be asked to listen to stories and to report whether or not these stories were something that children in their age groups were likely to experience in their daily lives. They were also asked to offer some help with answering the questions about the stories. As I went through the pilot work with the children, I focused on the following points: (a) the time required for each interview session; (b) the wording and order of the questions; (c) procedure and response rate; and (d) the appropriateness of the research materials. In addition, I modified two of the three imaginary tasks — caring and trusting — and I observed how these tasks might be appropriate for assessing the children's forgiving responses.

Overall, the children were able to identify the unfairness of the incidents described in the scenarios. The children appeared to engage in a story about a friend better than a story about a mother, although they were able to make fairness judgements equally well. The children found a simple 10-point rating scale easy enough for them to indicate the degree of fairness and the feelings they associated with the story. Drawings accompanied the scenarios, which helped the children to follow the main themes. Although the methodology, generally seemed to work with children, it was noticeable that children in Year 2

(six- to seven-year-olds) found it difficult to explain their ideas about forgiveness. Thus, after some consideration, primary school children older than eight years old were included in the present study.

One of the concerns I had regarding working with older children was the suitability of experimental material. I had been using colourful drawings as a visual aid in order to facilitate the children's understanding of the scenarios. Further pilot work was needed to ensure that an unfair situation, described in scenario and the accompanying drawings, was interesting enough to keep their attention and not be too juvenile for them.

Ethical Consideration

The study involved individual interviews with primary school children about their perceptions of daily experiences of unfairness. Unfairness, however, happens occasionally in children's daily lives and I anticipated that some children might find it uncomfortable to talk about it. In order to minimise any possible discomfort the children might feel, I created a scenario that was a less threatening content for them to talk about their thoughts and feelings towards a mother or a close friend.

The present study was considered by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee and it was subjected to a full committee review. Although, as I have explained above, the methodology of the present study took careful consideration of children's vulnerable status, the initial feedback from the committees raised concerns about a number of issues associated with conducting a psychological research study with young children. One of the Committee's suggestions was to ask the children to sign a consent form. My research team considered this suggestion and we requested them to reconsider

and accept our initial proposal to obtain merely the children's verbal assent. The main confusion we could foresee was that the children were not permitted to participate in this study, regardless of whether they wished to or not, if their parents had decided that they were not to take part. We thought this situation might be misleading for the children.

The Committee and my research team finally came to an agreement that the children would receive a detailed information sheet (see Appendix A). In addition, the parents who were giving consent on their behalf were encouraged to discuss with their children the full details of their participation in the study.

Participants

The participants who took part in the study were all attending local primary schools in Palmerston North, New Zealand, a city with a population of 79,300, situated in the lower central North Island of New Zealand. Palmerston North was originally developed as an agricultural community, due to the fact that it is surrounded by a vast farmland area. Nowadays, the city is known as Student City, since it has a number of leading tertiary educational institutions and scientific research centres, in addition to a growing commercial sector of light manufacturing industries, service organisations and retail businesses. The demographic character of the city is similar the country as whole. With an increased number of immigrants from overseas, the city is growing in rich culturally diversity.

The participating schools represented a range of socio-economic backgrounds, which are classified in the New Zealand education system according to deciles. Decile 10 schools draw the majority of their students from the highest socio-economic communities. The largest population of children in

the study (35%) came from one Decile 8 school, and another large group (34%) came from a Decile 5 school. A smaller number of children were recruited from the following schools: Decile 3 (9%); Decile 4 (8%); Decile 9 (9%); and Decile 10 (6%). Although the majority of the schools represented upper middle socio-economic backgrounds, I managed to include schools with a range of socio-economic backgrounds.

The children's age groups were selected on the basis of my previous study relating to unfair punishment and the pilot work I had carried out prior to this formal study. Since this study involved children verbally describing their idea or definition of forgiveness, I found that children who were younger than eight years of age experience difficulty explaining this abstract concept. Therefore, it was decided to work with children who were older than those in the previous study. Thus, the final cohort of children who participated in the study ranged in age from 8- to 11-years-old (*Mean age = 9.5 years, SD = 1.0*). A total of 82 children, 29 boys (*Mean age = 9.4, SD = .98*) and 53 girls (*Mean age = 9.6, SD = .98*) took part.

Participant Recruitment

The recruitment of participants began with phone calls to a number of primary schools in Palmerston North. Although some school principals had indicated their interest in this study, it was found that because of busy school activities and other research commitments, not all were able to take part. However, a total of seven school principals agreed to support this study. After this initial contact, a letter to the school principal together with a consent form (see Appendix B) were posted to the schools, for discussion with their teaching a members regarding the suitability of the study. After the school principals

signed permission to recruit participants from their schools, an information pack — including a letter to parents (see Appendix C), an information brochure and a consent form for parents (see Appendix D), and an information sheet for children (see Appendix A) — was distributed to the children by the classroom teacher of the relevant age groups. In order to ensure all children would have an opportunity to participate in the study, the classroom teachers were encouraged to remind their students to give the information pack to their parents and return the consent form to the school office, where the consent form collection box was situated. The researcher regularly collected the consent forms in order to protect any invasion of privacy.

The consent form also asked one of the parents in the family to take part in the study. A total of 82 parents signed and returned the consent forms on their children and from these 50 (49 mothers and 1 father) agreed to also take part in the study. Three mothers each signed up for two of their children and completed a questionnaire for each child. Thus, a total of 53 parent-child dyads were available for the study.

At the beginning of the interview sessions, I obtained all participating children's assents. They were asked if they understood what would happen during the interview and if they were happy to proceed to the interview sessions. They were also reminded that there would be no right or wrong answers to the questions they would be asked, and they were allowed to stop at anytime, if they so wished. There were no children who indicated any discomfort at being in a scenario-based interview session or any who wished to exit the procedure.

Materials and Measures

The scenarios of unfairness. Four types of scenarios describing unfair situations were created for the purpose of the study. These scenarios were designed to be as similar as possible to children's daily interactions with their mothers and close friends. In the process of creating a scenario, it was essential for me to describe a snapshot of unfairness interaction between children their mothers in their daily lives, because it was thought that children would increase their engagement with a situation if it appeared to be close to their real life experiences.

The scenarios describe two types of unfairness situations. The first type of unfairness situation is called the *Parent Story*. It focuses on an interaction between a child and his/her mother and describes a situation where a mother reprimands her child for something s/he did not do. Children may be confronted with this type of unfair situation when their parents are busy with their own work, or when they are tired by the pressures of daily life. The second type of unfairness situation is called the *Friend Story*. It describes an interaction between the main character of the child and his/her close friend, where the child is blamed by a friend for something s/he did not do. Friends play an important part in children's daily activities and children learn many aspects of social skills as they learn to develop and maintain their friendships. However, unfortunately, unfairness does sometimes occur, and friends may occasionally try to shift their own responsibilities onto someone else, or they may blame someone for their own mistakes. The main theme of each scenario is described in Table 1 and a full text of the scenarios and their accompanying illustrations are presented in Appendix E.

Table 1 *Scenarios of Unfairness*

Story Type	Main Theme
Parent Story 1 (Scenario 1: <i>Tidying up</i>) (Blamed when innocent)	A child was watching his/her favourite TV programme in the living room after s/he has finished all his/her homework. Just then, the child's mother came into the living room and saw a big mess. She was not happy about it and told the child to tidy it up.
Parent Story 2 (Scenario 2: <i>Pudding</i>) (Violation of double standard)	A child and a mother were making some puddings for visitors. The mother said to the child that the cake was for the visitors so that s/he was not allowed to have it. The child listened to the mother, but the child saw the mother had been eating the cake before the visitors came.
Friend Story 1 (Scenario 3: <i>Making a mess</i>) (Blamed when innocent)	A child and his or her friend were tidying up their things after a class. The child was keeping things neat and tidy, but his/her friend made a big mess. Just then, their classroom teacher came into the classroom asked them who had made the mess. The friend blamed the

child for making the mess.

<p>Friend Story 2 (Scenario 4: <i>Secrets</i>) (Violation of trust/double standard)</p>	<p>A child and a friend were sharing each others' secrets. They promised each other that they wouldn't tell their secrets to anybody. Next day, in the school, the child heard the friend had been talking to other friends about his/her secrets. All child's classroom mates seem knew about his/her secrets.</p>
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I created two different versions of scenarios for each story type. The main reason for this decision was that, in the previous unfairness studies, it was apparent that the story about unfairness was not always seen that way by the children, while it seemed perfectly unfair from an adult point of view. For example, the children sometimes thought that what was happening to the main child in the story was unfair, because s/he received a disproportionate size of reward or punishment. While this can be element of unfairness, the main issue of unfairness involved undeserved punishment.

In the study, the first version of the story (Story 1) involves a situation where the child protagonist (victim) is blamed by either his/her mother or a friend for something s/he did not do (blamed when innocent). The second version of the story (Story 2) presents a situation where a perpetrator of unfairness does something that the perpetrator told the child protagonist (victim) not to do. Unfairness is the central theme within all these stories. Nevertheless,

it might be recognised that these stories are slightly different, in terms of the dynamics of the characters and violation of the principal of fairness.

Ratings for the degree of fairness or unfairness. Children were asked to indicate the degree of unfair treatment that the child protagonist had received after listening to the unfairness story. The children pointed out their perceived degrees of unfairness on a simple 10-point rating scale (10 = *very very*; 1 = *a little bit*). When some children were unsure of a question that had been asked, I prompted them with a few further questions, in order to help them understand what I meant by degrees of unfairness. Some children changed their minds from fair to unfair after going through the scenario, but some children also thought that what happened to the child was fair. In this case, instead of bringing their interview sessions to an end, I continued to ask a set of questions that were the same as those asked of the remainder of the children and consequently those children automatically received a score of 0, for not at all, for their ratings of unfairness.

Rating the type and strength of a feeling of unfairness. The children were asked, in open-ended format, to describe different types of feelings that the child protagonist might be experiencing, when s/he had been treated unfairly by the mother or the friend. The children were also asked to indicate this degree of feeling on a simple 10-point rating scale (10 = *very very*; 1 = *a little bit*).

Children's initial responses to unfairness of their mother or a friend. Children were asked to describe how they might respond to their mother or a friend if they were confronted with a similar unfairness situation, by answering an open-ended question: "What would you do if you were in a similar situation?"

Their comments were categorised into a small number of groups, based on the main theme of their responses.

Three imaginary tasks to measure children's willingness to grant forgiveness, as opposed to hostility. Three tasks — sharing, caring, and trusting — were designed to measure the children's willingness to grant forgiveness, as opposed to hostility. These three imaginary tasks were created as an indirect way of measuring the children's emotional reaction to an unfair treatment by a mother or a friend. To obtain an overall forgiveness score, the score on each task was summed (high score = *low hostility* (i.e., greater tendency to forgive); lower score = *high hostility*). In order to carry out these imaginary tasks, drawings and props were used to assist the children's responses to each task. These tasks are illustrated in Appendix F.

The first imaginary task was called the *sharing task*. Children were given pictures of three different sizes of slices of cake and asked to decide which size might be appropriate for the mother or the friend, after they had treated the child protagonist unfairly. Children were told that the child protagonist had the right to decide who should deserve the largest, medium, or smallest slice of the cake. If the children decided to give the smallest slice of the cake to the mother or the friend, it was considered as an indication of hostility in the children (score = 1). If they assigned the medium slice of the cake to the mother or the friend, it was seen as a neutral response (score = 2). If they decided to give the largest slice of the cake to the mother or the friend, it was considered as the children's willingness to grant forgiveness (score = 3).

The second task was called the *caring task*, which was designed to observe the children's concerns for the person who had been unfair to them.

The children were given a description of an imaginary situation where the mother or the friend had dropped something and hurt themselves. Children were asked to think about the child protagonist's initial response to the mother or the friend in this situation. In order to assist the children's responses, three possible responses were suggested. These three responses were: (a) the child would not show any concern towards the mother or the friend (score = 1); (b) the child takes time to decide whether or not to help the mother or the friend (score = 2); (c) the child shows immediate concern for the mother or the friend and makes sure they are not injured (score = 3). The children were asked to select one response from these three choices, as if they were the child in this situation.

The third task was called the *trust task*, since it was designed to observe the children's willingness to subsequently trust a person, who had been unfair. The children were again asked to imagine a situation where the mother or the friend asks the child protagonist for a favour, despite previously treating the child protagonist unfairly. To enact this situation I asked the child to imagine a situation where the mother or the friend asked to borrow the child's favourite DVD or a game. The DVD or game is a precious object for the child protagonist. To accede to the mother's or the friend's request means that the child protagonist incurs the risk that his/her favourite object might get damaged or lost. Similar to the caring task, the children were given the following three types of responses: (a) the child would hide his/her favourite object in a place, only s/he would know, in order to protect it from the mother or the friend (score = 1); (b) the child would think about whether it was a good idea to lend out his/her favourite object or not (score = 2); (c) the child would lend it to the mother or the

friend immediately, so that they could also enjoy it (score = 3). If a child decided to do a favour for the mother or the friend, without any hesitation, the child's willingness to forgive was assumed.

Children's understanding of forgiveness. The children were asked to describe their understanding of forgiveness, by answering an open-ended question: "What does forgiveness mean to you?" at the end of the scenario-based interview session and the three imaginary tasks. They were encouraged to explain what they meant by forgiving someone who treated them unfairly. If the children seemed to be finding it difficult to explain their ideas, then they were asked to give an example to illustrate their understanding of forgiveness.

Observations. During interview sessions, children not only actively answered a series of questions that had been asked, but they also spontaneously talked about their daily experiences of unfairness and forgiveness at home or in school. These extra verbatim comments made by children were noted by a research assistant, who also observed whether the children presented noticeable body language before and after listening to the scenarios and answering the three imaginary tasks. All interview sessions were video-taped in order to ensure that the records of the children's responses to the series of questions and the three imaginary tasks and verbatim comments were accurately recorded.

Verbatim comments. All comments made by the children were transcribed for subsequent thematic analysis by reviewing all the video-tapes and notes taken by the research assistants. Thematic analysis is a widely used method for qualitative data analysis in psychology, and being a useful method to identify group and report patterns within any given verbal set (Braun & Clarke,

2006). For the purpose of the study, in order to carry out thematic analysis, all transcribed children's verbal comments were entered into NVivo 7, a software programme designed for qualitative analysis. We searched for the main themes that appeared in the children's verbatim comments. Once the main themes were identified, the children's verbatim responses that were relevant to the present research questions were grouped into meaningful units. In order to ensure selected verbatim were truly representing the identified themes, I asked three post-graduate students, who were unaware of the purpose of the study, to classify a list of the children's comments into the main themes. The percentage of inter-rater agreement for all categories was; 61% with the first coder; 68% with the second coder; and 71% with the third coder. If any of the original analyses of the verbatim comments did not agreed with the reliability checkers, then these comments were reviewed and reclassified into more appropriate themes, or otherwise were excluded.

Parent questionnaire. This questionnaire was originally developed by Evans and Scarduia (unpublished), in order to investigate parental attributions of and responses to young children's common misbehaviour. For the purpose of this study, the common misbehaviours of children were modified to match with the age groups of the children, as well as some questions were added to tap into the parent's willingness to forgive. Thus, the final version of the survey was specifically designed to assess the relationship between: (a) parents' attributions of possible causes of children's common misbehaviour; (b) their immediate responses to their children's common misbehaviour; (c) their tendency to encourage forgiveness to their children as a strategy to overcome negative feelings of unfairness. This questionnaire is presented in Appendix G.

It consists of four sections and each section assesses an aspect of parenting practices that might be contributing to a parent's willingness to practice forgiveness in their daily interactions with their child.

The first section of the questionnaire assesses the parents' willingness to make excuses for their children's common misbehaviour, by paying attention to parents' attributions of possible causes of children's common misbehaviour. Parents who are forgiving should be more likely to attribute their children's misbehaviour to external factors (e.g., accidental factors), rather than as result of internal factors (e.g., characteristics of children). Forgiving parents may excuse the behaviour rather than blaming the children for inappropriate behaviour. In the questionnaire, five incidents of typical misbehaviours of children (refusing to tidy up, deleting a project, dropping a plate, misuse of money, and muddy footprints) were presented. For each misbehaviour, the parents were asked to indicate on a simple scale the likelihood of using the following four types of causal attributions when considering possible causes for the behaviour (0 = *very unlikely*; 3 = *very likely*): (a) S/he is naughty child; (b) It was an accident; (c) S/he did not know what s/he was doing; and (d) S/he is trying to annoy me. High score on (b) and (c) would indicate an excusing or forgiving the child, whereas high score on (a) and (d) would indicate blaming the child.

The second section of the questionnaire assesses the parents' immediate responses to their children's common misbehaviour. Using the same instances of misbehaviour described in the first section, the parents were asked to answer an open-ended question, "What would you do or say to your children?", immediately after the occurrences of the misbehaviour. Parents'

responses were coded according to their level of punitiveness through to forgiveness on a 7-point scale (low point = *punitive*, high point = *forgiving*).

The third part of the questionnaire examines how parents would respond to their children who were seemingly sorry or apologetic for their own misbehaviour. The same five instances of misbehaviour were used and the parents were asked an open-ended question, "What would you do or say if your child apologises and shows s/he is sorry?". Although the parents might immediately excuse their children for misbehaving, some parents may be more forgiving towards their children after they expressed remorse for their own misbehaviour. Parents' responses were again coded according to their level of punitiveness through to forgiveness on a 7-point scale (low point = *punitive*, high point = *forgiving*). If the parents mentioned that their emotional arousal might decrease after receiving an apology from their children, they were given an additional .5 of a point.

The fourth section was specifically designed to assess whether or not parents are willing to encourage forgiveness as a strategy to overcome negative feelings of unfairness or being hurt by others. The following three strategies were presented to the parents: (a) just tell my child to get over it; (b) encourage my child to get their own back; and (c) encourage my child to forgive the other person. Parents rated the likelihood of recommending these three types of strategies to their children on a simple scale (0 = *never*; 4 = *always*). In addition, parents were asked to write down how they encouraged their children to use a strategy that they used most often. Table 2 presents a summary of the four sections included in the parents' questionnaire.

Table 2 Overview of the *Parents' Questionnaire*

Section of the questionnaire	Brief descriptions
1). Parents' willingness to make excuse for children's common misbehaviour	Parents judged possible causes of five types of children's common misbehaviour by indicating their degrees of agreement on four items of causal attributions: Two items described parents' willingness to give some excuses for the child's misbehaviour (it was an accident, the child is too young to know any better), and two items blamed the child's negative characteristics (s/he is naughty, s/he is trying to annoy me).
2). Parents' immediate responses to their child's common misbehaviour	Following the attribution questions and using the same five instances of children's common misbehaviour, parents were asked to describe what they would say or do immediately after confronting their children's misbehaviour.

- 3). Parents' response to children's common behaviour after seeing that their children are sorry
- Parents wrote down what they would do or say if their children apologised for causing trouble, or their children seemed to be sorry for what they have done. As with the previous two sections, the five instances of children's common misbehaviour were used.
- 4). Parents' strategies to assist their children's experience of negative feelings associated with unfairness
- This section assesses how often parents recommend forgiveness to their children as a strategy to deal with negative emotions. Parents were asked to indicate the likelihood of suggesting three types of strategies to their children in order to deal with negative feelings that arise from being treated unfairly by others.
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Procedure and Design

All children who returned the consent form were included in the study. A time for a scenario-based interview and three imaginary tasks was arranged with the school principal, approximately one week after the information pack had been distributed to the children and their parents. Classroom teachers were encouraged to remind their students about giving the information pack to their parents and returning their consent forms if they wished to take part in the study. All interview sessions were carried out during regular school time. In order to minimise distractions to the children's daily activities, I drew up a timetable that listed the estimated time for the interview session with each child. A copy of the timetable was given to the classroom teacher or school management staff at the beginning of the day. A quiet room for the interview sessions was allocated by the school.

Children who returned their consent forms were individually invited into the interview room and they were introduced to me and a research assistant, who was a third year undergraduate student from the School of Psychology, Massey University, Palmerston North. The role of the research assistant was to read the two stories (one parent story and one friend story), record the children's responses, video-tape the session, and keep the sessions to the allocated time-frame in order to minimise any disturbance to the children's classroom activities.

The purpose of the present study and the procedure involved in the interview session were briefly explained to the children. They were assured that there would be no right or wrong answers to the questions and that they were allowed to stop the interview at anytime, if they so wished. If children seemed

comfortable with the interview setting and understood what would happen to them in the interview, they were asked to give their verbal assent to commence the interview session. During the interview session, the children listened to two types of stories, one *parent story* and one *friend story*, the order of which was determined by random assignment. Each story had two different versions of unfairness: blamed when innocent and subjected to a double standard. Whether or not the children heard parent story 1 or 2 or friend story 1 or 2 was arranged before the sessions by randomly. Therefore, the type of scenario (parent or friend) was a within-subject variable. All scenarios were accompanied with colourful drawings that visually highlighted the main theme of unfairness. While the research assistant read the story, I pointed out the drawings.

Once the story was read, the children were asked to describe what had happened to the main character of the child in the story, who was the victim of unfair treatment. If the children looked unsure and wished to listen to the story again, they were permitted to listen to the story one more time. After listening to the story, I asked a series of standard questions about the scenario:

1. Was what happened to the child (Josh/Emma) in the story fair or unfair?
2. How unfair was it for the child (Josh/Emma) and why?
3. How might the child (Josh/Emma) be feeling?
4. How much does the child (Josh/Emma) feel this way?
5. What would you do if you were in a similar situation?

After these questions were asked and answered, the children were further requested to respond to the three imaginary tasks, which were designed to assess the children's willingness to share with, care for, and trust a person who

had been unfair. Each task had three possible responses that the child in the story might do towards the person who had been unfair described verbally and with illustrations. The children were asked to select one of these responses and to give some reasons for the choices they had made.

The second story was read to the children, once they had completed all the tasks from the first story. The children were asked to answer a series of questions and complete the three imaginary tasks, in the same way as the first story. After completing the three imaginary tasks from the second scenario, the children responded to the final question: "What does forgiveness mean to you?" Once the final question was asked and answered, the children were thanked and given a sticker for their effort and time. The research assistant and I made sure the children had enjoyed their interview session and they were not upset in anyway. The entire session took approximately 20 minutes. Based on what I learned from the pilot work, this was a sufficient time to keep young children's concentration and to complete two scenario stories with questions and tasks.

The parents of the participating children received a questionnaire after their children had completed the interview session. These parents were encouraged to complete all sections of the questionnaire and they were also invited, at the end of the questionnaire, to comment about the topic of the present study. After filling in the questionnaire, they were asked to return it to me, using a pre -paid envelope

The parents' questionnaire tapped into four aspects of parenting practices: (a) parents' tendency to make positive causal attributions for their children's common misbehaviour; (b) their tendency to make negative causal attributions for their children's common misbehaviour; (c) their forgiving

responses towards their children's misbehaviour as opposed to punitive responses; and (d) their tendency to encourage forgiveness as a strategies to overcome negative affect as a result of unfairness. These four variables were correlated with the children's total levels of forgiveness towards the mother and towards the friend, in order to explore how parental disciplinary practice might be related to the children's willingness to forgive.

Results: Quantitative Data

Child Measures

General Observations

All the children appeared to enjoy their interview session in the study. They were well-behaved and they listened attentively to the story. They seemed relaxed in the presence of the researcher and they were excited about the idea of being videoed. All children gave verbal assent to their participation in the study and they did not express any distress or ask to terminate their interview session. The children were cooperative and actively communicated with the researchers.

Children's Basic Judgement of Fairness or Unfairness

Each scenario was created to unambiguously describe an event involving unfairness. However, when asked if the situation in the story was fair or unfair, a small number of children reported that the events were in fact fair. The percentage of children who considered the situations described to be fair, were Scenario 1, 14 %; Scenario 2, 0 %; Scenario 3, 5 %; Scenario 4, 0 %. This indicates that the theme of unfairness was consistently identified in each scenario. However, unfairness described in the scenario had a different implication for some children, particularly in Scenario 1 and Scenario 3.

Scenario 1 proved to be less clear, as a stimulus context for children judging unfairness. This scenario involved a mother blaming her child for a messy room that the child did not create. During conversations with the children who considered this fair, they explained that the mother was entitled not to want

a room to be messy and that the child had a responsibility to tidy it up, whether s/he had made the mess or not. This value of everyone in the household sharing tasks and daily chores is very likely to have been instilled in the children by their parents and probably represents a somewhat higher-order level of judgement about responsibility. Similarly, Scenario 3 contained an element of friends sharing a responsibility or duty to work together to make amends, even if they differentially contributed to a situation.

Ratings of Unfairness

All the children were asked to indicate on a simple 10-point scale how unfair the experience in the scenario would be for the child protagonist. The frequency distribution of these ratings for the parent and the friend scenarios is illustrated in Figure 1 and the mean unfairness ratings for each theme (blamed when innocent, or subjected to a double standard) are shown in Figure 2.

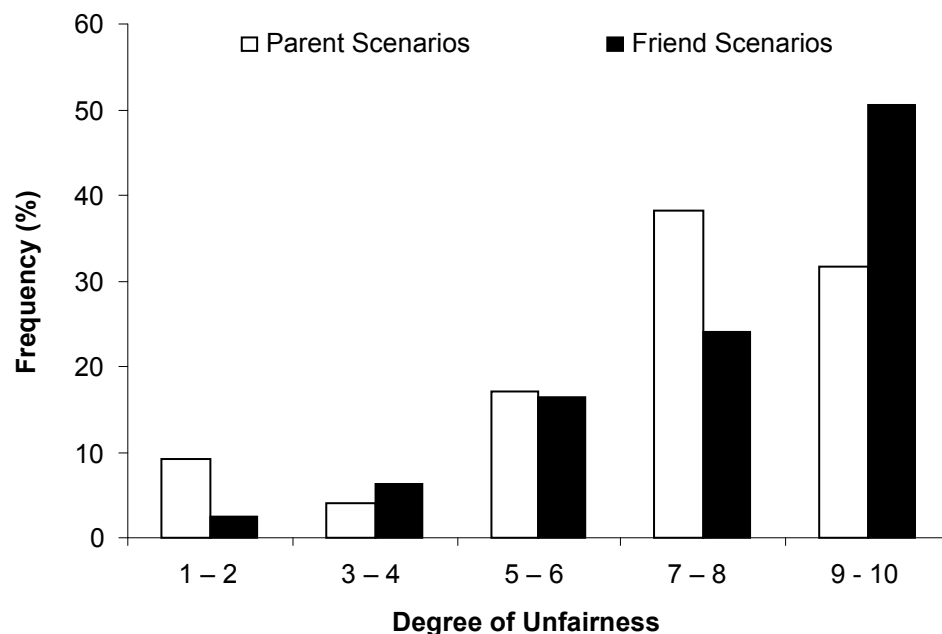


Figure 1. Frequency distribution of the ratings grouped into five categories of unfairness in both parent and friend scenarios

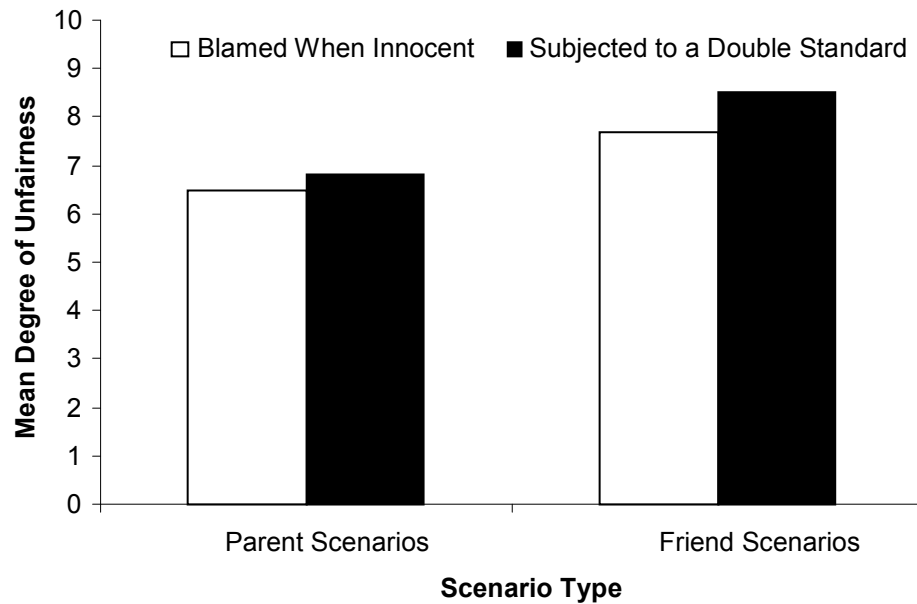


Figure 2. Mean ratings of unfairness for the two different themes in both parent and friend scenarios

Since the children were exposed to four different possible combinations of the scenarios, the differences within and between the scenario themes were analysed by *t*-tests. Within the two parent scenarios, the children who listened to Scenario 2 ($M = 7.7$, $SD = 2.1$) indicated a significantly higher degree of unfairness than the children who listened to Scenario 1 ($M = 6.5$, $SD = 2.9$), $t(74) = -2.0$, $p < .05$. The eta squared statistic (.05) indicated a small effect size. Within the friend scenarios, the children who listened to Scenario 4 ($M = 8.7$, $SD = 1.9$) rated the degree of unfairness higher than the children who listened to Scenario 3 ($M = 6.8$, $SD = 2.9$), $t(77) = -3.5$, $p < .05$. The eta squared statistic (.13) indicated a moderate effect size.

To consider the impact of the major type of perpetrator in the scenarios (parent vs. friend) on the children's ratings of unfairness, the mean rating of the

parent scenarios ($M = 7.1$, $SD = 2.6$) and the mean rating of the friend scenarios ($M = 7.6$, $SD = 2.6$) were compared by means of a paired sample t -test. Although the friend scenarios were rated as more unfair, the difference between the two mean ratings was not significant, $t(72) = 1.2$, $p > .05$. I have already noted, of course, that one of the parent scenarios did not seem very unfair or even unfair at all to these children.

Nature and Strength of Feelings in Response to Unfairness

The children gave open-ended replies to the question on how the child in the story might be feeling and how intensely they might be feeling that way. The children were able to associate as many feelings with each scenario as they wanted. We classified their specific emotional terms into six possible categories, for example unhappy included words like *hurt*, *upset* and *left out*. The other category was used for words such as *betrayed*. Sad and unhappy might logically be put together but, in any event, the feeling of sadness was identified most frequently compared to anger and annoyed, which might also be linked together. Figure 3 illustrates the frequency with which each category was mentioned. It can be seen that anger was more likely to be expressed in the friend stories and sadness in the parent stories. The other category is particularly common in the friend stories.

Children also reported how strongly they thought the child in the scenarios would be experiencing the feelings identified. Figure 4 shows the mean strengths of the four different types of negative feelings. These feelings are stronger in the friend scenarios, than in the parent scenarios.

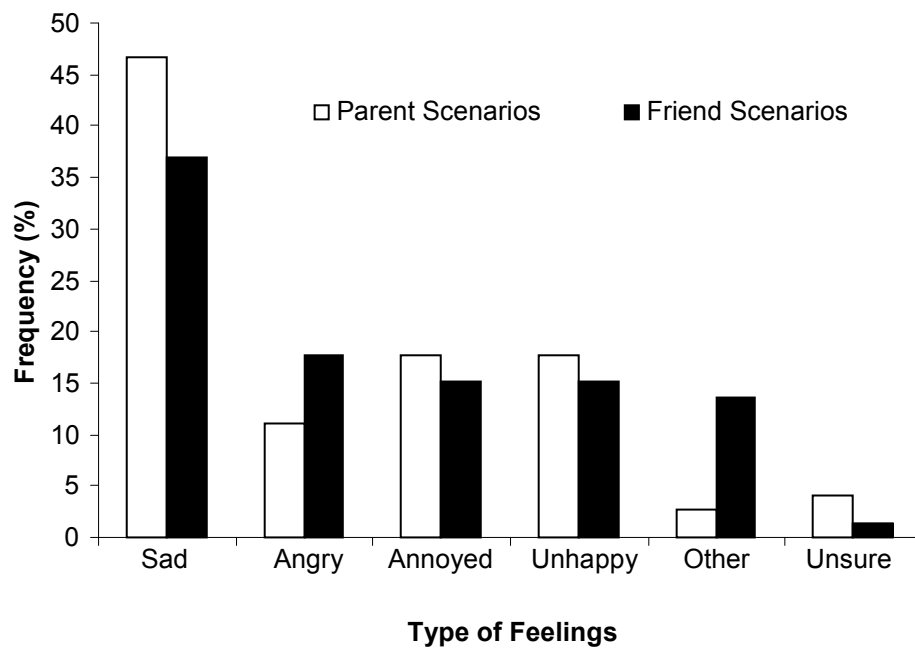


Figure 3. Frequencies of the types of feelings associated with the experiences of unfairness

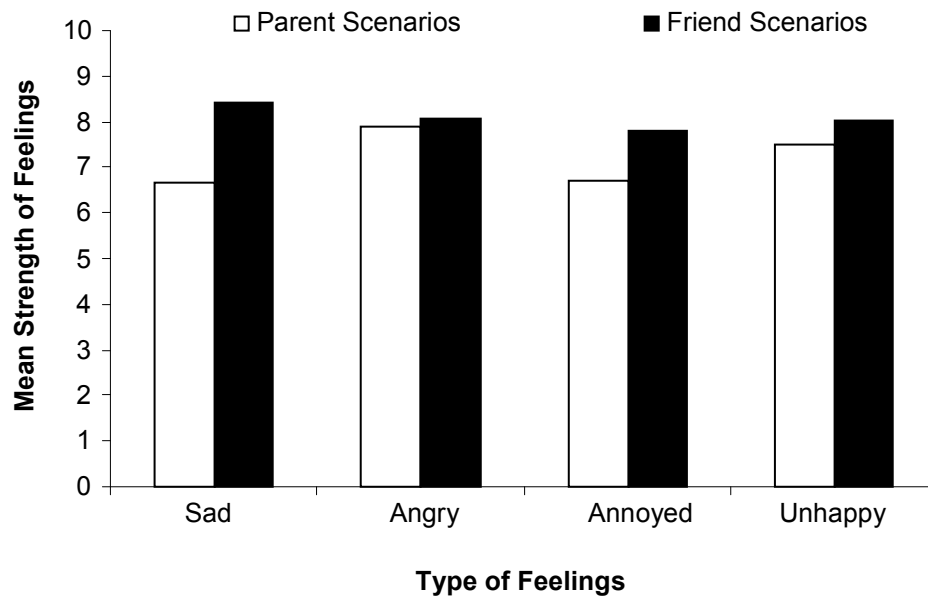


Figure 4. Mean strengths of the four types of negative feelings in both parent and friend scenarios

What Would You Do if You Were in a Similar Situation?

The children were asked to describe how they might react to their mother or a friend if they were confronted with a similar unfairness situation, just like the main character of the child in the story. The children's verbatim responses were classified into a small number of groups, based on the main theme of their responses. Table 3 shows a list of reactions identified from the children's responses and a brief description of each theme. Frequencies of the children's types of responses towards the mother's unfair behaviour are presented in Figure 5 and the children's types of response to the friend's unfairness are presented in Figure 6.

The children's type of responses appears to vary, depending on the perpetrator of unfairness. One of the noticeable differences is that children were more likely to seek or to negotiate equitable treatment with their mothers, whilst they did not report such response as a result of the friend's unfairness. Although some children preferred to talk with their parents, other children stated that they would avoid any form of confrontation with their parents.

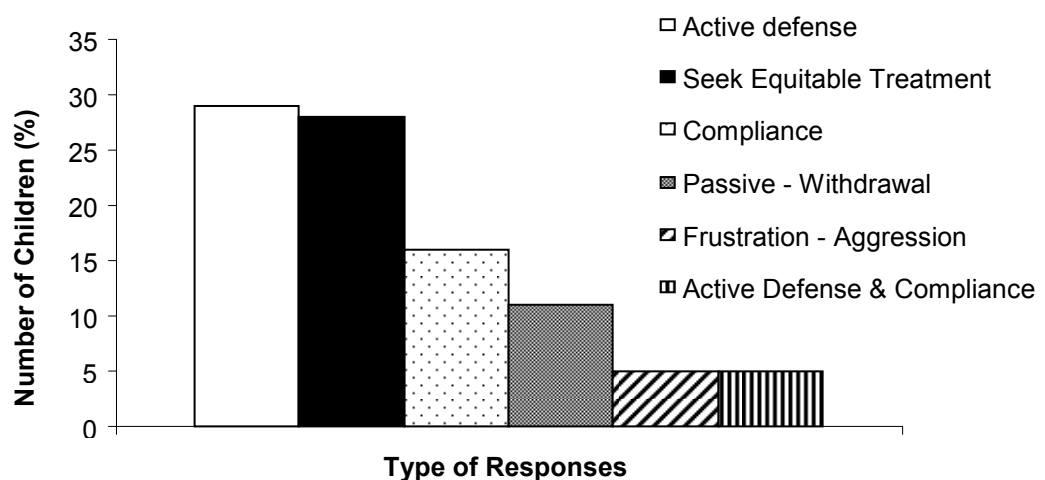


Figure 5. Children's initial responses to their own mother's unfair treatment

Table 3 Children's Responses to the Question, 'What Would You Do If You Are in the Similar Situation?'

Children's Reactions	Descriptions	Examples
Active defence – Confrontation	Children actively defend themselves against a mother's/friend's accusation.	"I did not do that so I should not be [held] responsible for the mess."
Seek equitable treatment or justification	Children may seek their mother's response to them in a fair manner. Children may also ask their mothers to explain what they needed to do and things that they did not need to do.	"I would ask her why she is eating and ask her why I cannot."
Compliance - Tolerance	Children comply with mother's request, even though they think it unfair.	"I would tell her that it wasn't my mess and I would say I would clean it up, but I did not do that."

Passive responses - Withdrawal	Children respond passively towards their mother's unfair behaviour. Children may try to avoid confrontation with their mothers.	<i>"I would just go to my room and sit there and think about it. And then, come out and just wait until my mum talks to me and I talk to her."</i>
Frustration - Aggression	Children frustrated by their mother's unfair behaviour and they might behave aggressively towards her.	<i>"I probably would get angry for a while and would not play with this person, but I probably would forgive them."</i>
Mixed of active defence & compliance	Some children may actively defend themselves first, but eventually, they will decide to listen to their mothers' request.	<i>"Well, first of all, I would say 'it is not my mess' then see what mum says, and then if she wants to clean it up, I clean it up as quickly as possible so that I can get back to the show."</i>
Seek adults' assistance	Children ask their parents or teachers for	<i>"Go to mum or dad and say Sam told my secret</i>

some help.

that makes me feel very sad so I do not think I

want to be a friend anymore."

"I'll go to tell teacher that Sam broke the promise."

Seek clarification

Children seek some explanations for the unfair behaviour from a person who was unfair.

"I might ask her why she said that and why she wasn't able to keep her promise because she was making thing under control."

Seek apology

Children seek apologies from a person who was unfair to them.

"I still clean it up because she might say sorry at the end."

"I might try to get Katie to say sorry."

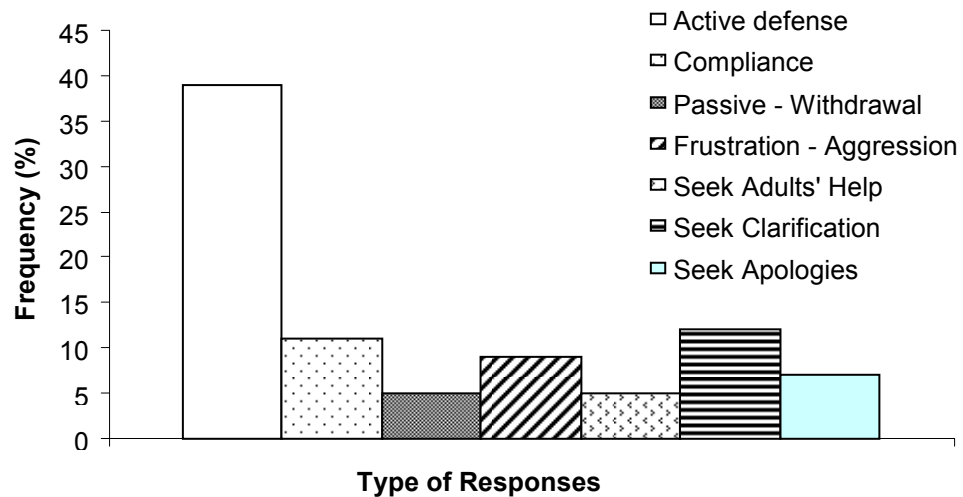


Figure 6. Children's initial responses to their friend's unfair treatment

A number of additional responses were observed from the children's responses to the friend's unfairness. As Figure 6 shows, some children preferred to seek some help from adults, such as parents and teachers, whereas some children wanted their friends to clarify reasons for unfairness. A number of children also hoped their friends would apologise to them. A small number of children offered interesting comments, which included spiritual help and unforgiving responses. For example, a child talked about praying to God to help her whenever she feels upset. Also a small number of children said they would not forgive their friends for what they had done, and they would not want to give a second chance (e.g., "I would not be a friend with her anymore.").

Children's Willingness to Forgive

The total positive score for the three tasks, which assess sharing, caring, and trusting, is considered to reflect the children's willingness to offer forgiveness to the mother or the friend in the scenarios, after the experience of unfairness. The relationships between each of these task scores and the total

scores were examined by means of Pearson product moment correlation (see Table 4 and Table 5). These tasks do not correlate very highly with each other, suggesting that the three situations tapped different elements of negative affect.

Table 4 *Intercorrelations Between the Three Tasks and the Total Forgiveness Scores in the Parent Scenarios*

Tasks	1	2	3	4
Children (<i>n</i> = 73)				
1. Share	—	.23	.27	.80**
2. Care		—	.23	.58**
3. Trust			—	.54**
4. Forgiveness				—

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 5 *Intercorrelations Between Three Tasks and the Total Forgiveness Scores in the Friend Scenarios*

Tasks	1	2	3	4
Children (<i>n</i> = 73)				
1. Share	—	.19	.20	.73**
2. Care		—	.50**	.71**
3. Trust			—	.73**
4. Forgiveness				—

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

As Table 4 illustrates, in the parent scenarios, a positive relationship is identified between Task 1 (sharing) and the total forgiveness scores, $r = .80$, $n = 73$, $p < .01$. Moderately strong relationships are observed between Task 2 (caring) and the total forgiveness scores, $r = .58$, $p < .01$, and between Task 3 (trusting) and the total forgiveness scores, $r = .54$, $p < .01$.

In the friend scenarios, as Table 5 shows, a Pearson product moment correlation matrix indicated that the sharing tasks were less likely to be related to the caring and trusting tasks. However, Task 2 (caring) and Task 3 (trusting) had a positive and relatively strong relationship, $r = .50$, $n = 73$, $p < .01$. This may mean that caring and trusting situations share some common meaning for children in the context of their friendships. These three tasks were further correlated with the children's total forgiveness scores. All three tasks consistently show positive and moderately high relationships with children's total forgiveness scores: Task 1, $r = .73$, $p < .01$; Task 2, $r = .71$, $p < .01$, Task 3, $r = .73$, $p < .01$. These findings support the assumption that the sum of the scores on the three tasks provides a meaningful overall index of children's willingness to offer forgiveness and not to feel hostile, even though this willingness is made up of separable dimensions.

The mean of the total forgiveness scores for the parent scenarios was 7.3 ($SD = 1.51$) whereas the mean of the total forgiveness scores for the friend scenarios was 6.6 ($SD = 1.63$). A t -test was conducted to determine the statistical significance of that difference: it indicated that children were more willing to grant forgiveness to a parent, than to a friend, $t(72) = 3.8$, $p < .05$. The eta squared value (.17) indicates a moderately large effect size.

Parent Measures

Parent Attributions Regarding Children's Common Misbehaviour

Parents were able to rate the likelihood of their making each of the four possible attributional judgements (s/he is naughty, it was an accident, s/he did not know what s/he is doing, s/he is trying to annoy me). Ticking *very unlikely* was given a score of 0, *somewhat unlikely* a score of 1, *somewhat likely* a score of 2 and *very likely* a score of 3. Scores were then averaged for the behaviours described in the five scenarios (refusing to tidy up, deleting a project, dropping a plate, misuse of money, and muddy footprints) and the resultant mean scores for the group, for each attribution across each scenario, are illustrated in Figure 7.

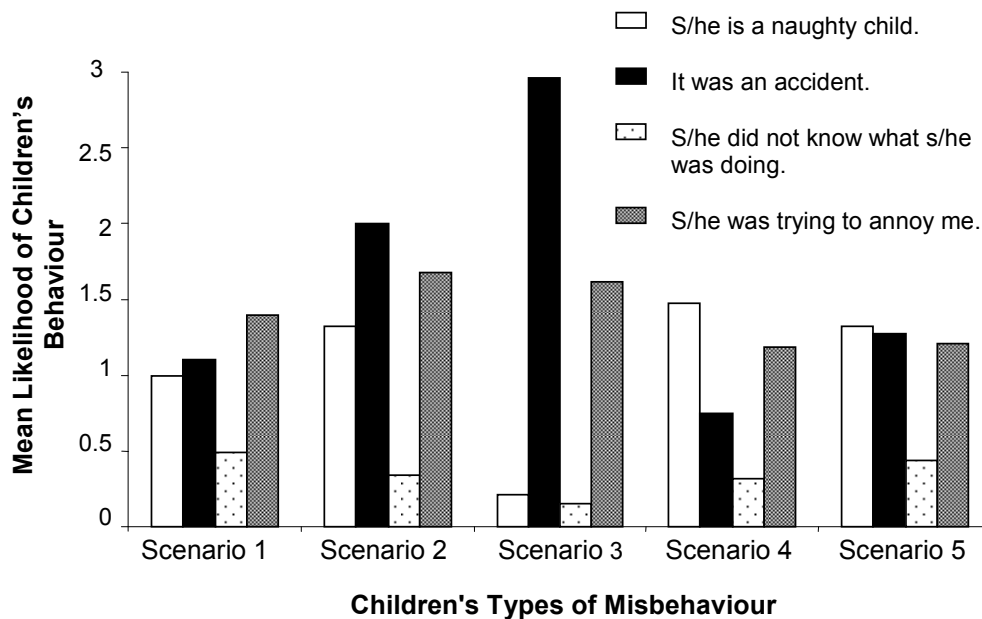


Figure 7. Parental attributional judgements regarding to children's five types of misbehaviour (mean likelihood scores)

Parents' attributions for the misbehaviours varied according to the behaviours and their contexts. Figure 8 further shows the mean score for each

attributional judgement, averaged over the five misbehaviours. It can be seen that, in general, these parents tend to make positive attributions (it was an accident, s/he didn't know what s/he was doing), rather than external, negative judgements (s/he is a naughty child, s/he was trying to annoy me).

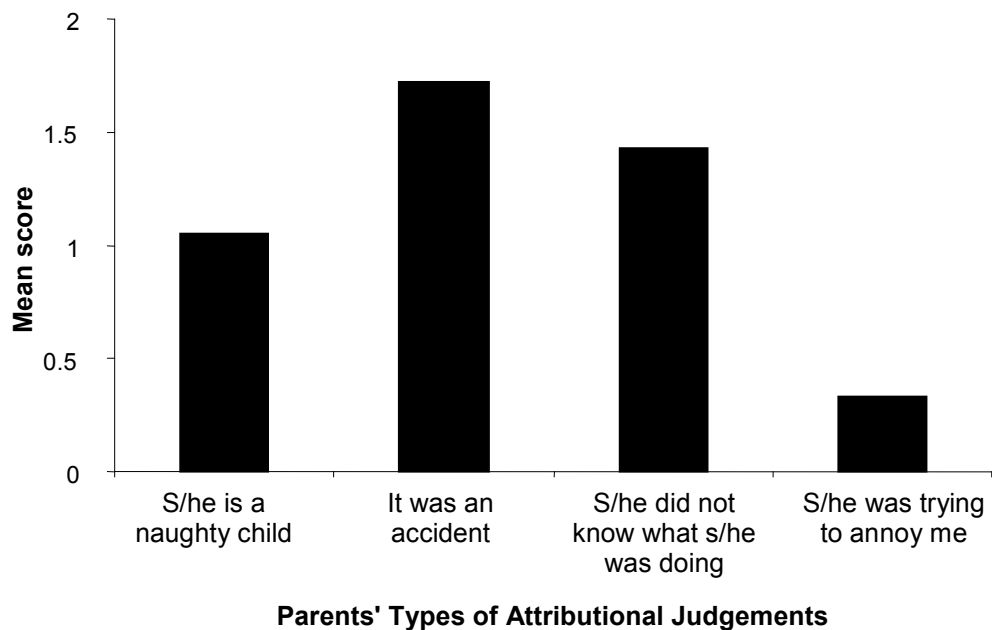


Figure 8. Parental attributional judgements over children's five types of misbehaviour (mean likelihood scores)

Parental Descriptions of How They Would Respond to Misbehaviour, Before and After the Child Apologises

Parents were asked to specify how they would respond to five instances of their child's misbehaviour, both in the first instance and after the child had apologised. There was a clear relationship between apologising and the act of forgiveness and, therefore, it was interesting that this situation potentially focuses on whether a parent who might initially have been punitive is less so after an apology. The next section summarises findings from a qualitative perspective and provides examples of these parental statements. For a

quantitative analysis, we coded responses according to their level of punitiveness, through to forgiveness. Parents were thus given a score on a 7-point scale presented in Table 6.

Table 6 *Parent's Levels of Punitiveness Through to Forgiveness*

Score	Parents' reactions to children's common misbehaviour
1	Punishment, including time-out and loss of privileges
2	Verbal reprimand, scolding
3	Threatened punishments or warnings not to do it again
4	Requiring child to put things back to rights, make amends
5	Listening to explanation or explaining why action was wrong (moral lecture)
6	Providing information about what should have been done (teaching appropriate alternative action)
7	Dismissing behaviour as unimportant, forgotten, incident is over, no harm done (absolving child from blame)

By averaging the rating given to each of the parent's reactions to the five scenarios, it was possible to give each parent an aggregate score on this punitiveness dimension. The frequency distribution of these aggregated scores is shown in Figure 9, for four blocks of score (no aggregated score was less than 2 or greater than 6, with a mean of 3.8, $SD = .8$). As Figure 9 illustrates, the majority (45%) of the parents' *punitiveness* fell in the moderate range of a threat of punishment and some type of requirement to make amends, but a

relatively large number of parents emphasised listening to their children's explanations and teaching alternatives.

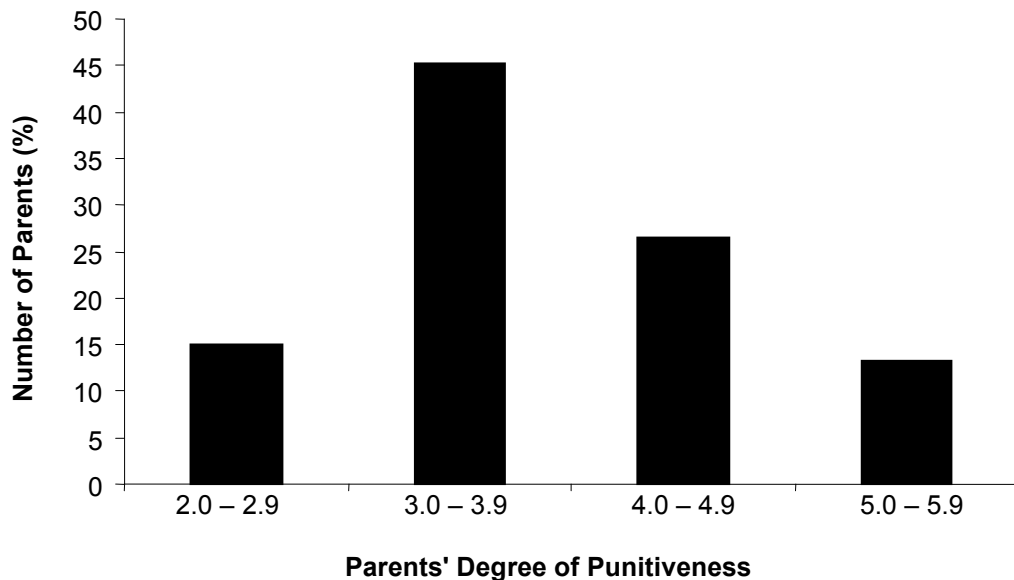


Figure 9. Parents' degrees of punitiveness in response to children's common misbehaviour

In addition to the 7-point scale described, an additional .5 of a point was given to parents who had mentioned how their emotional arousal might decrease after receiving an apology from their children. The parents' responses often included more than one of the behavioural reactions described in the above scale. It was also common for the parents to act exactly the same way to their children, regardless of the children's apologetic responses. However, what changed in these parents' reactions was their degree of emotional arousal. A number of parents commented on how their emotions would *soften*, *melt* or *calm down* after receiving an apology from their children. Thus, the parents' degree of emotional arousal was taken into account, as a part of the parents' responses to the children's apologies. Figure 10 illustrates how punitively

parents would respond to the five misbehaviours, before and after receiving their children's apologies.

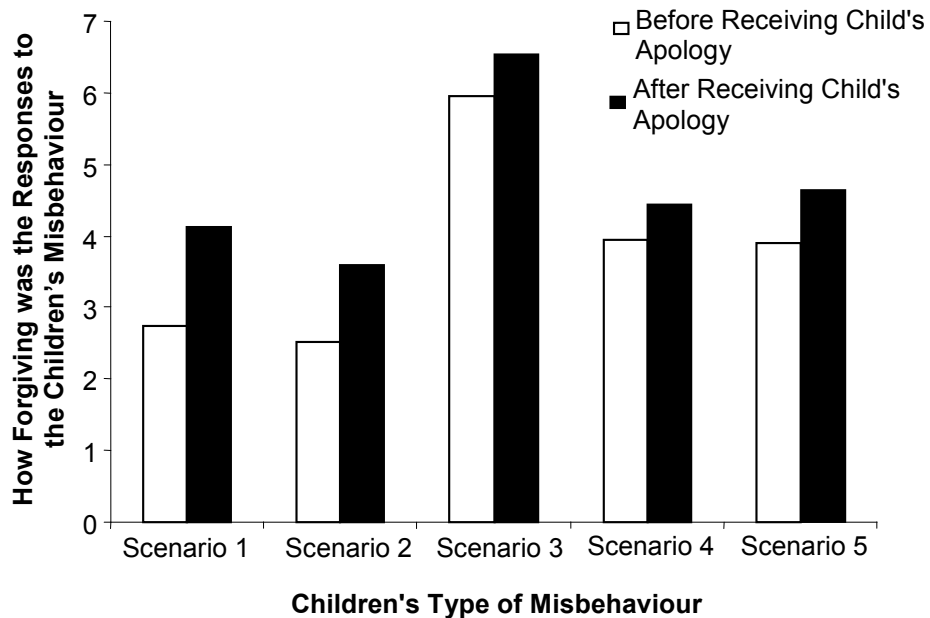


Figure 10. Parents' responses to children's common misbehaviour before and after receiving children's apologies (low scores indicate punitiveness, high scores indicate a willingness to forgive or use as a learning opportunity)

Overall, parents reported that they would act less punitively toward their children if their children were apologetic ($M = 4.7$, $SD = 1.1$) rather than non-apologetic ($M = 3.8$, $SD = 1.4$). Parents were especially less punitive for a misbehaviour described in Scenario 3 – dropping a plate (before apology, $M = 5.9$, $SD = 1.7$; after apology, $M = 6.5$, $SD = 1.0$), than for the rest of the behaviours.

Parents' Suggestions for Their Children to Deal with the Experience of Negative Emotions

Three options were presented to the parents in the questionnaire (tell them to get over it, encourage them to get their own back, and encourage them to forgive), and they were asked to rate how often they might offer these suggestions (from *never* to *always*). The frequency with which each rating was given for the three options is illustrated in Figure 11.

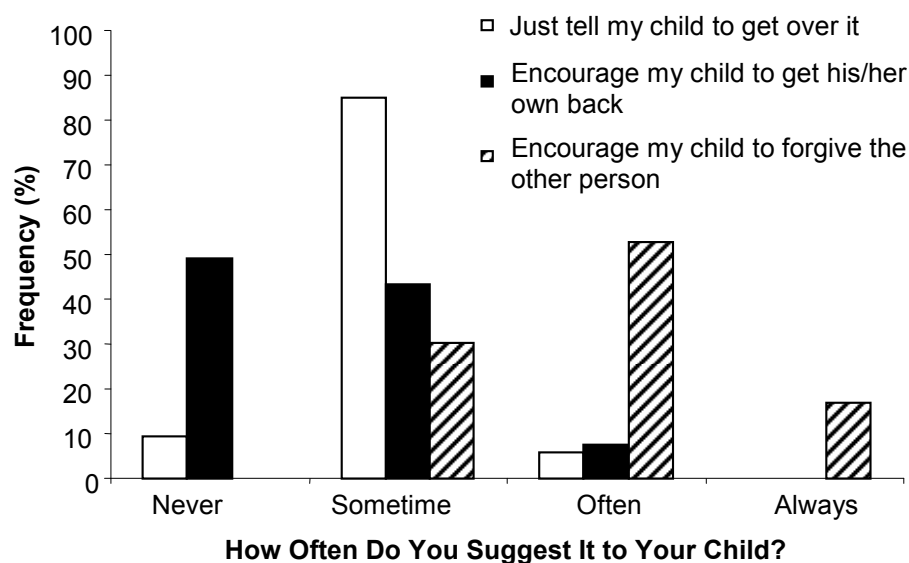


Figure 11. Parents' frequencies of using the three types of strategies to help their children's experiences unfairness

It can be seen that just over 50 percent of the parents reported that they *often* encouraged forgiveness, whereas a large percentage indicated they would *sometimes* encourage the child just to get over it. Whilst almost half the parents said they would *never* encourage their child to get his/her own back, a few would do so *often*.

In addition, parents were asked to rate the likelihood of use each of the three strategies to help their children deal with unfairness experiences. Ticking

never was given a score of 0, *sometime* a score of 1, *often* a score of 2, and *always* a score of 3. Figure 12 shows the parents' likelihood of suggesting each of the three strategies. Overall, parents were more likely to encourage their children to forgive the other person who was unfair ($M = 1.9$, $SD = .7$), rather than encouraging them to get over it ($M = 1.0$, $SD = .4$) or encouraging them to get their own back ($M = .6$, $SD = .6$).

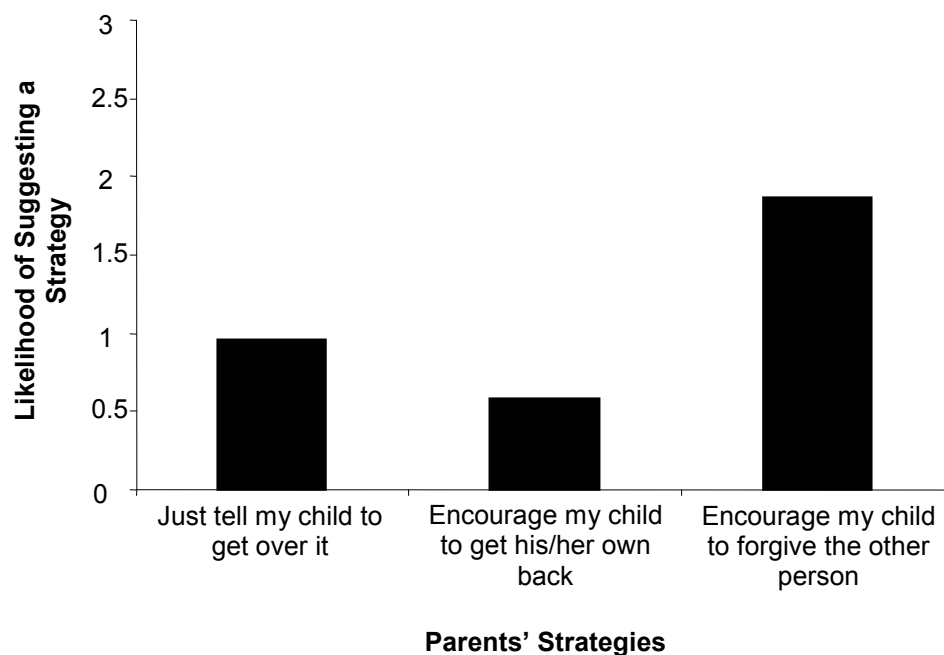


Figure 12. Mean scores of the parents' use of the three strategies to help their children's feelings of unfairness (high score = more likely to use).

Based on the parents' estimates of how frequently they use these suggestions, it is possible to give each parent a score on the degree to which they recommend forgiveness over other possible categories. Always encouraging their children to forgive earned a score of 6, often 4, sometimes 2, and never 0. Always telling them to get over it earned a score of 4, often 2, sometimes 1, and never 0. Never encouraging them to get their own back earned a score of 0, sometimes -1, often -2, always -3. Adding together their

three scores provided one overall index of the parent's self-perceived tendency to encourage forgiveness and avoid retaliation. The possible combined score thus varied from a low score of -3 to a maximum of 9. The mean score for the group of parents was 4.5 ($SD = 1.9$), which indicated that the majority of parents had moderate tendencies to suggest forgiveness to their children, when they reported experiences of being treated unfairly by others.

The Relationship Between Parents' Willingness to Grant Forgiveness and Children's Tendency to Forgive

The data reduction strategies described so far provided four relevant scores relating to the adults' self-reported parenting practices (tendency to make negative attributions; punitiveness in response to transgressions; willingness to modify that reaction in response to the child apologising; and the tendency to encourage forgiveness). Would any of these parenting style characteristics predict the way the children responded to the experience of unfairness (intensity of negative effect elicited by unfairness or, at the other end of the dimension, indication of a non-retaliatory, forgiving tendency) by a parent and by a friend? To investigate these possible relationships, these six variables were correlated for the 53 parent-child groups.

Prior to examining these relationships, however, certain modifications had to be made. Firstly, as previously noted, the parents' responses before and after the child apologises did not differ greatly, so therefore this variable was dropped from the analysis. Secondly, many researchers of attributional style will differentiate between the *external* (attributing to causes outside the individual) and the *internal* (attributing to causes inside the individual). As a slight variation

to this distinction, we assumed that parents could have a *blaming* attributional style (attributing causes to deliberate or negative features of the child), as opposed to a more *forgiving* attributional style (interpreting the causes as not the fault of the child). We correlated the parents' four attributional scores, in order to determine whether or not these variables could be reasonably grouped into these two distinctive and broader attributional types. A Pearson product moment correlation showed that there were significant relationships between attributions: the attributions A and C (s/he is naughty, s/he is trying to annoy me) were significantly related to each other, $r = .38, p < .01$ and the attributions B and D (it was an accident, s/he did not know what s/he is doing) were significantly related to each other $r = .37, p < .01$. These findings supported an assumption that these four attributions might be categorised into either positive/forgiving or negative/blaming attributional types and it was the scores on these two dimensions that were entered into the final correlation matrix, together with the children's behaviour during our tasks.

Table 7 shows the correlation between children's forgiveness tendency (children's level of forgiveness in the parent scenarios and children's level of forgiveness in the friend scenarios); their parents' tendency to make positive/forgiving and negative/blaming attributions; parents' reported punitiveness in response to their children's transgressions; and parents' tendency to encourage forgiveness in response to reports of unfair treatment. The relationships between these variables were examined by means of a Pearson product moment correlation matrix. The analysis showed that there were significant relationships amongst parents, between being less punitive and making positive attributions, $r = -.28, n = 53, p < .05$. However, the four

dimensions of parenting practices did not predict the children's tendency towards forgiveness.

Table 7 *Intercorrelations Between Parents' Willingness to Grant Forgiveness and Children's Forgiveness Tendency*

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Children's levels of forgiveness towards the mother	—	.22	-.06	-.10	-.15	-.21
2. Children's levels of forgiveness towards the friend		—	-.06	-.09	-.15	.02
3. Parents' tendency to make positive attributions			—	-.21	-.28*	-.01
4. Parents' tendency to make negative attributions				—	-.04	-.01
5. Parents' punitiveness (low score) vs. forgiveness (high score)					—	.25
6. Parents' tendency to encourage forgiveness						—

* Correlation is significance at .05 level (2-tailed)

Results: Qualitative Data

Children's Verbatim Responses

While engaged in the three imaginary test tasks (sharing, caring, and trusting) the children spontaneously talked about their decisions to respond in certain ways. In this section, their verbatim responses were analysed according to concepts that emerged as primary themes. All of the major themes extracted for the primary coding system are described under the following subheadings in bold type, and transcript extracts from the interview sessions provide definitions and examples for each theme. Words in square brackets have been added to elucidate the meaning when the child's spoken language syntax was sufficiently ungrammatical for the intended meaning not to be clear.

Children's Awareness of Their Kin System

The children's perceptions of their own position in their family system tended to underlie their reason for doing something nice to the mother in the story. Children may be making excuses for their parent (or other adults) just because they are the grown-ups who have senior status. Children are learning the boundaries between children and parents in any family system. These family hierarchies may be part of many status rules, of which they are likely to receive constant reminders from parents and other grown-ups:

"Because she [mother] is older, deserves more [slice of the cake]." (Year 4 girl, Task 1: Sharing).

“Because she [mother] is the oldest [so that she deserves a larger slice of the cake].”(Year 6 girl, Task 1: Sharing).

Children’s Willingness to Give Latitude to the Mother

This theme related to how children balanced their negative emotional experience of unfairness and their positive feelings and attitudes towards the mother. The children’s comments showed how actively they were judging seriousness (blameworthiness) of the parent’s misbehaviour in addition to the experiences of their parent’s good behaviour in their daily lives:

“Because she is a grown-up, and could also mean repaying good things she has done for him.” (Year 4 boy, Task 1: Sharing)

“Because her mum does lots of nice things for her, so she has to do some things for her.”(Year 4 girl, Task 2: Caring)

“Because the mum has [not] been that good to deserve the bigger piece, but she has not been that cruel or mean and selfish to have the small one. So, that one (she points to medium one). I think that in-between [one] because she is an adult and she should have a little bigger than kid, and she's also being OK. She is not being cruel or not making her cry or anything. She (Emma) has just been upset that she is not getting a piece of chocolate cake.”
(Year 6 girl, Task 1: Sharing)

Being Respectful of a Parent

Children often stated how important it was for them to do good things for their parents. Family plays an important part in children's lives. They respect each member of the family and they care for each other. Perhaps parents are teaching children to respect the family as a unit, thus one individual's small mistake does not make any difference to how they treat each other:

"Because if she laughs, that wouldn't be very good because it's your mum and she would be looking after her just like she looks after you." (Year 4 girl, Task 2: Caring)

"Children should care for their parents as much as their parents care for their children." (Year 4 girl, Task 2: Caring)

"Because whatever your parents do, you should not be angry with them." (Year 6 girl, Task 2: Caring)

Children's Strong Sense of Justice

Numerous children explained that their decision was based on their understanding of what was the right and wrong thing to do in a given situation. Children tended to express their strong sense of morality and equal justice, but often in phrases and language that they had probably heard from parents or teachers:

"Even though mum did something wrong, a wrong does not make it fine. He should not do something back to her. She could be hurt." (Year 4 boy, Task 2: Caring)

“Because it [is] not right to not help or to just think about it. Because two wrongs do not make a right.” (Year 6 girl, Task 2: Caring)

“Because it would be fair, because his mum already had a piece, and if he had this little tiny piece, it wouldn’t be fair, so he should get this big piece. And also he did [the] right thing in there, he should, kind of reward himself.” (Year 4 boy, Task 1: Sharing)

Justice, however, can work two ways. Although a large number of children tended to give the mother the benefit of the doubt, when she had treated the child unfairly, some children did express how upsetting it was for the child to experience such unfairness. As the experience of unfairness was associated with negative feelings, emotive factors seemed to motivate these children to act negatively towards the mother. The following two themes emerged clearly from the children’s comments, as they thought about the three imaginary tasks.

Punishment as Justice

A number of children felt that the mother did deserve to be punished, because that was the right thing to be done to her and the child should be rewarded. Basic rules of justice are that one deserves to be punished for a crime one has committed and resources are distributed according to need. Children are well aware of these rules:

“Because the mum has already had some [pudding]. So Emily gets to eat the big one. So, [that will] make it the same.” (Year 4 girl, Task 1: Sharing)

“[The mother deserves] the medium one because her mum has done something bad, but then she (Emily) felt good about helping her. So she should give her medium piece. [The child deserves] the largest piece because she does not think her mum deserves that cake and she helped out mum.” (Year 6 girl, Task 1: Sharing)

“[The mother deserves the medium piece] because she has already had a little bit of cake and Emily hasn’t. [The child deserves the largest piece] because Emily hasn’t had a piece of the cake but her mum has. [Then] it won’t be unfair.” (Year 4 girl, Task 1: Sharing)

Punishment as Revenge

Some children were mad and angry at the mother who was unfair. These angry feelings seemed to influence how they decided to act towards the mother, after the experience of unfairness:

“Because she is angry with her.” (Year 4 girl, Task 1: Sharing)

“Because he is probably mad at her.” (Year 4 boy, Task 1: Sharing)

“I think that she would probably hide it. Because this might be like ‘pay back’, like for not letting her have pudding.” (Year 4 girl, Task 3: Trusting)

Weighing Up the Options

Being a recipient of unfairness is not pleasant for children and this emotional experience made the children think about what would be the right thing to do for a person who was unfair and a person who was a victim of the unfairness. Many children took a moment to decide what the child in the story would do. The children were obviously thinking carefully about what would be the best decision regarding both the mother and the child. The children’s decision-making processes were observed from their comments:

“(On Task 2: Caring): She might think about it because I think that she might be thinking that she deserves that because her mum was being mean to her, so that she might be thinking whether she [mum] deserved to be helped or not. [She might have decided to help] because she might decide that her mum did not know, so she decides to forgive mum. (On Task 3: Trusting): She might think about it, because she might still remember what had happened. [She might give it to her] because she might decide that their mum might deserve something special.” (Year 4 girl)

“Because this is her favourite DVD and she would, like, think ‘Well, can I trust mum to look after it?’”(Year 4 girl)

“(On Task 2: Caring): I am not sure these two [helping or just thinking]. She might want to think about it because what her mum did was unfair. That one there [helping] is nice because she loves her mum and she could get things back from her mum, she could get a piece of the cake because she has been helpful to mum. (On Task 3: Trusting): Because her mum has been a bit rude and selfish, eating the cake and keeping it for herself. But I think that this one [giving mum DVD] is nice because she loves her daughter and her daughter loves her mum. And family should share things because when I go to house I help her around the house, maybe help her tidy up lounge and dishes. Then I am going to get some pay back for doing that.”(Year 6 girl)

“Because it wasn’t really his mum’s fault. His mum might have really important things that she needed to do. So John might think about it, well, it wasn’t really fair that she didn’t let me watch TV and she thinks that I made the mess. But it would be a nice thing to do to give her the DVD.” (Year 6 boy, Task 3: Trusting)

Children’s Responses to Apology

From the children’s comments, in response to a question about the likelihood and consequences of an apology by the perpetrator of unfairness, it was very easy to see the same type of words used as they would have heard from their parents and perhaps teachers. The children seemed disposed to offer forgiveness, but, like their mothers, they also requested the perpetrator not to

make the same mistake again, even when considering a mother's mistake (being unfair):

"She might probably say: 'Thank you for realising what had happened; thanks for saying that, but please don't do it again.'"

(Year 6 girl, Parent Scenario 2: Pudding)

"It's OK, people do [make] mistakes sometime." (Year 4 girl, Parent Scenario 2: Pudding)

"She might thank her mother. And tell her to do not do it again. Say 'that's all right' because she knows what she was doing."

(Year 6 girl, Parent Scenario 2: Pudding)

"Mum would say: 'Sorry I have eaten a big piece of the cake when you are not allowed to have one.' Emily might say, 'That's all right, as long as next time [you] need to be fair'." (Year 4 girl, Parent Scenario 2: Pudding)

Particularly in the case of the parent story, some children said that the child and the mother should do something nice, including helping out, after the mother apologised and the child accepted it:

"He would change to a little bit larger one. (TY: 'Why do you think so?') Because she's apologised and said 'Sorry'." (Year 4 boy, Parent Scenario 2: Pudding)

“She would give her mum a hug and say ‘I forgive you’.” (Year 6 girl, *Parent Scenario 2: Pudding*)

“Go and give her a hug and say I’m sorry also.” (Year 4 girl, *Parent Scenario 2: Pudding*)

“If she said sorry, he would help her tidy up the mess.” (Year 4 boy, *Parent Scenario 1: Tidying up*)

Children seemed to reveal a greater willingness to grant forgiveness if they had a pretext or were able to give the mother an excuse for not behaving appropriately. Again, one can hear echoes of many parental excuses:

“It’s OK, because she has done a right thing [when] her mum told her to tidy [the room] up, it probably might [have been] an emergency, like she [mum] might have to have a work interview, or special guests.” (Year 6 girl, *Parent Scenario 1: Tidying up*)

“I think that she’ll forgive her because she is her mum.” (Year 4 girl, *Parent Scenario 1: Tidying up*)

The children did appear to expect to feel better if the mother accepted their mistake and apologised to them about it, in what seemed to be a genuine way. Some children described how the child might be feeling after receiving the apology:

“That would be a good thing because John would be happy, because that wasn’t John’s mess and she is sorry. That’s good, so he could forgive her.” (Year 6 boy, Parent Scenario 1: Tidying up)

“I think that she would say: ‘I am sorry for what I have done, could [you] please forgive me for what I have done? I could just say sorry and I could take [you] out for lunch or something’.” (Year 6 girl, Parent Scenario 2: Pudding)

“She would probably say: ‘Sorry Emma, that wasn’t your mess’ [and] Emma might say: ‘That’s all right’.” (Year 4 girl, Parent Scenario 1: Tidying up)

The majority of the children accepted the mother’s apology and stated that they would forgive her. However, some children indicated that they would first need to ensure the apology was genuine and a few children were not totally convinced by the mother’s apology:

“He probably asks his mum if she really meant it – to apologise; might think about it for a while, and he might forgive her.” (Year 6 boy, Parent Scenario 1: Tidying up)

“She might... she might say: ‘That’s OK’, or she could start talking with her that it wasn’t my mess. ‘I was just doing what you told me

*to.’ Maybe start to argue; some people do that.” (Year 6 girl,
Parent Scenario 1: Tidying up)*

*“He might forgive her or might not. (TY: ‘Why might he not?’)
Because he does think that she was not really fair and she was
not nice to him.”(Year 6 boy, Parent Scenario 1: Tidying up)*

*“I think that he might say: ‘That’s all right; since you are older; I
guess you can have a bit more.” (Year 6 boy, Parent Scenario 2:
Pudding)*

There were obvious differences in how children expressed their expectations regarding responding to an apology from a mother as opposed to a friend. As peer relationships represent an important social task for children, it was not surprising that many children indicated a willingness to accept an apology for the purpose of maintaining a positive relationship and ensuring a new or renewed understanding between them and the friend:

*“Probably forgave her, and [say]: ‘Shall we start all over again?’
But not tell secrets about each other.” (Year 4 girl, Friend
Scenario 4: Secrets)*

*“She might say: ‘I forgive you’ and still be friends.” (Year 4 girl,
Friend Scenario 4: Secrets)*

"I think that he would probably say: 'That's OK, but I still [don't] appreciate it, and still [feel] that was quite mean. I forgive you, but only this once'." (Year 4 boy, Friend Scenario 4: Secrets)

"He might say: 'Oh, that's all right. Just don't do it next time. Because next time, I might not forgive you'." (Year 6 boy, Friend Scenario 2: Making a mess)

"That's all right. Just next time don't betray me, and be fair." (Year 4 girl, Friend Scenario 2: Secrets)

Generally the children indicated a belief that saying *sorry* erases any mistake one has made. By apologising, it is possible to smooth things out and be able to start all over again:

"She would say sorry and would [promise] not to tell any secrets again, and then she (Emma) would give her half of the cake. So they both have the same amount." (Year 4 girl, Friend Scenario 4: Secrets)

"He would probably take the apology and then just start to be the good friend." (Year 4 boy, Friend Scenario 3: Making a mess)

"I think that she would not mind, [and would] forgive her friend, and the person [who] did not make the mess might help the person [who did]." (Year 6 girl, Friend Scenario 3: Making a mess)

The children, however, recognised that being sorry did not erase everything that had happened to them. They indicated feeling that the perpetrator needed to set things right:

“That’s OK, [but] instead of just blaming me you can tell the teacher: ‘I made the mess’. If he gets mad, then I would get more trouble.” (Year 4 boy, *Friend Scenario 3: Making a mess*)

“I think that she might say: ‘Could you please go to the principal’s office [and explain who is to blame], I will come with you. And other than that I forgive you’.” (Year 6 girl, *Friend Scenario 3: Making a mess*)

In the case of relatively minor transgressions and simple domestic, everyday errors of fairness, such as those in the scenarios, children have probably heard grown-ups say things like *forgive and forget*. These children mentioned this frequently:

“He is going to forgive him, he’s annoyed about it, but he can do nothing about it. What’s happened has happened. Might as well go on.” (Year 6 boy, *Friend Scenario 3: Making a mess*)

“He might just say: ‘It does not matter’ or something.” (Year 6 boy, *Friend Scenario 4: Secrets*)

“She would just say: ‘I forgive you [so let’s] forget about it’.” (Year 4 girl, *Friend Scenario 4: Secrets*)

“Emily might say: ‘It’s OK, it is not the end of the world’.” (Year 6 girl, Friend Scenario 3: Making a mess)

“She might give the game to her, so that they might forget about [the incident].” (Year 6 girl, Friend Scenario 3: Making a mess)

“She would probably say something like: ‘Don’t worry about it’.” (Year 6 girl, Friend Scenario 4: Secrets)

To forgive and forget is sometimes a difficult thing to do, however, and there may be permanent damage to a relationship, if trust has been destroyed:

“I would not care because [a] promise is [a] promise, if you break it, that’s it! I would not care [about an apology].” (Year 4 girl, Friend Scenario 4: Secrets)

“I think that she would talk to her about how she would not be able to trust her anymore. Or maybe she would tell her how she felt.” (Year 6 girl, Friend Scenario 4: Secrets)

“She would probably say: ‘Thanks for [the] apology, but I don’t like being blamed. I do not know if I want to forgive you yet’.” (Year 6 girl, Friend Scenario 4: Making a mess)

Children’s Experiences of Granting Forgiveness

At the end of the interviews, the children were asked whether or not they ever had an occasion to forgive their parents, other grown-ups or their friends,

for something bad they might have done to them by mistake. This question was not an easy one for the majority of the children to answer, as they needed to take a few minutes to recall incidents. However, a large number of children did enthusiastically recount some events involving forgiveness in their daily lives. The following are some of the incidents that children themselves described, in which they had decided that they would forgive the other person.

Forgiveness in the family environment. A number of children talked about how their parents, sisters or brothers made some mistake and how they decided to forgive them:

“My mum said something, by mistake, not nice to me. But it was actually [an] accident because it was not actually mean to say it.”

(Year 4 girl)

“One of them happened yesterday. Me and my dad were trying to finish a game [when my brother came along] and he moved things around. Even though I was really upset, I said: ‘That’s all right. Just don’t do it next time’. [I] forgave him. We started a new game this morning.” (Year 4 girl)

“I forgave my mother for dropping the hair brush [and breaking it]. I know it was [an] accident. I [also] forgave my nana, because it was on Saturday, she woke me up. I hate that. I told her not to wake me up.” (Year 4 girl)

“When once my mum and dad grounded me because I was naughty. But I forgave them.” (Year 4 girl)

“Sometime I forgive my parents because they accidentally break something of mine. I get very angry, but probably forgive them because they have paid for it.” (Year 6 girl)

“At home, my sister, she was playing with my toys – this happened when I was about five – and she broken [one], but she said she didn’t. I had to clean up. But I forgave my sister.” (Year 6 boy)

“I was doing some baking and mum said that she would get it out of the oven, but she forgot to open [the oven and take it out]. But I forgave mum.” (Year 6 girl)

Forgiveness and the friendships. Children begin to spend more time with their peers during their middle childhood and it is important for them to build increasingly tolerant friendships. A large number of children talked about when and how they had decided to forgive their friends:

“I forgave my friend X. I was writing a letter to [a] friend, but X ripped it up; but I forgave her because she wrote me a letter and gave me a lollipop.”(Year 4 girl)

"I always forgive friends; because I do not want to lose friends. I just say, that's all right, we can still be friends." (Year 4 girl)

"Yes, I would of... It was a long time ago, I was playing netball in my team, and this kid tripped me over and said sorry. I forgave her because I knew that [it] was [an] accident." (Year 6 girl)

"My best friend [and I] sometimes have a fight. She takes my stuff. But I still forgive her for that. Because X and I are friends for several years now. It would be unfair for someone to, like give her a go." (Year 6 girl)

The children did sometimes report finding it difficult to fully forgive the person who may have hurt them. Depending on the seriousness of the incidents, children may take some time to let go of negative feelings about what has happened to them:

"I forgave my brother a couple of things [times]. This year my brother was playing and hit me seriously. Bruised quite badly. [It took] a few weeks to forgive." (Year 6 girl)

"Today, morning tea time, we were playing on the field, [one of] my friend started to cry but she did not tell me why either. And the other friend told us that we [my other friends and I] blamed her for something, but we did not do anything [to her]. A long time to

forgive the friend [who was crying and said something not totally true].” (Year 6 girl)

Being able to apologise for a wrongdoing is an important social skill. Children learn to say sorry for their mistakes from an early age. Some of these children mentioned an apology-forgiveness rule in their interpersonal relationships:

“Today at lunch, my friend was hurting me. So I hurt him back. Then my friend apologised to me, so I apologised too.” (Year 4 boy)

“One of my friends, yesterday, was quite mean. She told [a] new friend who she liked. I do not think I am quite [ready] to forgive her because she is not willing to say ‘sorry’; other than that, I’d forgive her.” (Year 6 girl)

Children’s Understanding of Forgiveness

Some younger children found it difficult to explain what forgiveness means to them, even though they stated that they knew they had forgiven somebody before. In spite of some difficulties, a number of children tried to describe their understanding of the concept of forgiveness. The three main themes of a concept of forgiveness reported by the children are as follows: forgiveness may mean to forget about an incident; forgiveness may involve emotional change; and forgiveness may mean accepting an apology and offering someone a second chance. Followings are some of the examples for each of the main themes.

1. Forgiveness may mean to forget about an incident.

"It means saying sorry and forgetting all about it. So that you go on with your own life." (Year 4 girl)

"Forgiveness means forget about something and try to get on[with] life and leave it in the past." (Year 6 girl)

"To me, it means to forget [the] past and move on." (Year 6 girl)

"If someone done something wrong to you, they gonna say sorry to you, then you kind of say: 'That's cool, let's move on from now'. What's happened has happened, really." (Year 6 boy)

"Forgiveness means someone says sorry. You forget about it and you are still friends." (Year 6 girl)

2. Forgiveness may involve emotional change.

"It means when they do it they feel happy." (Year 6 girl)

"[It is] like you can change someone and make you feel a lot better as well." (Year 4 girl)

"Say sorry, want to be friend or to be with her. Hopefully, not feeling angry any more." (Year 4 boy)

3. Forgiveness may mean accepting an apology and offering someone a second chance.

“When someone apologises to you and it should be [in] your best interest to accept it.” (Year 6 girl)

“If someone makes mistake or does something to upset you, you just say, ‘That is all right,’ if they really really mean it. If they don’t mean it, just don’t be friend anymore.” (Year 6 girl)

“Being able to like the person, listen to them and hear it from their [point of view]. Being able to give the second chance.” (Year 6 girl)

“It means... being able to listen to other person’s point, and being able to think whether or not they could have a second chance.” (Year 6 girl)

“Forgiveness means... when someone broke something or something wrong and you forgive them and say: ‘I hope you do not do it again’, because if it happens again you won’t be the person to help the person.” (Year 6 girl)

“Apologising and saying do not do it again. Like if you did something wrong, just say ‘I’m sorry’ to the person who [you] did to and say [you’ll] never do that again.” (Year 6 boy)

Parents' Responses

Parents' Responses to Children's Common Misbehaviour

Punishment as feedback. When parents are confronted with their children's misbehaviour, they tend to experience heightened negative emotions (e.g., anger, frustration). At the same time they try to take charge of the situation and to discipline their children, so that they will not make the same mistake again. How parents struggle with their own emotional experiences and their role as a parent may be observed from this category. Parents proposed reprimanding their child in order to give them constructive feedback to modify future behaviour. Parents tended to suggest teaching about the causes and consequences associated with misbehaviour. Feedback included expressing how disappointed mothers might be at their children's transgressions:

"Turn off the TV. Give clear and direct instructions to get him to the car. Tell him that the consequence of him not following instructions is that we are late. He will be required to tidy up when we return. That I understand he was distracted and maybe needs more time, but next time it is very important to listen and act."

(Year 4 boy's mother, *Scenario 1: Refusing to tidy up*)

"I explain what has happened, to make him aware of what was happening and what consequences have occurred due to his actions. I would then decide on a period of 'no computer time'.

Usually they are much harder on themselves if you ask what they think a good timeframe would be." (Year 4 boy's mother, *Scenario*

2: Deleting a project)

“I would send him back to return what he bought and get what I wanted. I would ring the shop to explain before he got there. If he had eaten or used what he bought I would make him pay me back from his pocket money and send him back to buy me my goods. I would probably make him pay me back double as reparations.”
(Year 6 boy’s mother, Scenario 4: Misuse of money)

“Ask for why she didn’t listen to me, help to get her muddy clothes in the wash and tell her she [must] help me clean the mud up on the floor. Explain to her it takes lots of time to clean up when we could be doing other things if she had listened.” (Year 6 girl’s mother, Scenario 5: Muddy footprints)

Some mothers are very aware of their own emotional experience. They are aware of how their own emotions may impact on their actions towards their children:

“I would tell her I am so angry she should go away from me ‘till I cool down and she had no right to be on the computer when I asked her not to. When I calmed down, I would give her a cuddle and explain why I got so angry.” (Year 4 girl’s mother, Scenario 2: Deleting a project)

“My first question would be ‘Who has been on the computer?’ as I have two children. I would let her know of my disappointment and repeat what the request had been (I would be relatively angry). I

would have a more 'relaxed' talk about why I had made the request later that day, so she understands my disappointment and anger.” (Year 4 girl's mother, Scenario 2: Deleting a project)

*“I **hate** being late. Turn off the TV myself. Tell her to leave what she's doing. Get her in the car (I assume she's coming with me) and while driving, tell her how angry I am that I am now late – while I calm down; then tell her she needs to finish her task when we get home and more calmly remind her that if I ask her to do something I expect it to be done.” (Year 4 girl's mother, Scenario 1: Refusing to tidy up)*

“I would be very angry at her and send her to her room for time out while I calmed down. Later I would explain to her how important it is to do as she was told and then she would be given a consequence/punishment.” (Year 6 girl's mother, Scenario 2: Deleting a project)

“First I am sure I would be extremely angry so I would need to calm down before addressing her. I would sit down and explain that I am disappointed with her, explain the amount of work it will take to reproduce. Some type of consequences would follow, possibly doing more housework so I have time to work on the computer.” (Year 6 girl's mother, Scenario 2: Deleting a project)

Parents' feedback was not only about cause and consequences. Some parents used this opportunity to teach their children the importance of considering the perspective of others:

"I'll tell him that I was not pleased and disappointed with his behaviour. How would he feel in a similar situation?" (Year 6 boy's mother, *Scenario 1: Refusing to tidy up*)

"[I'd say] 'I asked [you] to take off all your dirty clothes and because you ignored me, I now have to clean up your mess. Do you think that's fair? Next time please listen to me when I ask you to do something and consider my feelings.'" (Year 6 girl's mother, Scenario 5: Muddy footprints)

All five instances in the questionnaire described children's common misbehaviour. However, the seriousness of each transgression may be perceived differently by different parents. Certainly the parents' responses changed, according to the actual incidents described. The most serious misbehaviour appeared to be that described in *Scenario 4: Misuse of money*, which involved a child who selfishly used money to buy his or her own items instead of buying things that his or her mother had asked for. Parents took the child's misbehaviour in this incident particularly seriously and their feedback included nurturing morality and virtue:

"Ask him to explain what has happened, then make it very clear about how important it is to be trustworthy. He will have to pay back the money he used." (Year 4 and Year 6 boys' mother)

“Explain that she has just stolen money to buy something for herself. Take away the thing she bought; she won’t get it back. She has to pay the money back by [doing] jobs around the house. And [I’d] send her back to the shop – with a list – to get the things she’d forgotten.” (Year 4 girl’s mother)

“I would explain to her how annoying and inconvenient this was and how it was similar to stealing as the money was mine.” (Year 6 girl’s mother)

Positive responses such as giving children a second chance or a chance to explain. Perhaps harsher punishment would naturally follow when a transgression is serious. However, not all parents focused on punitive consequences and some provided possible approaches to misbehaviour – even for *Scenario 4: Misuse of money* – that seemed to have the potential to teach children the principles of fairness and forgiveness:

“Okay, let’s check the list – did you remember everything? Did they have everything? Did I give you enough money? What’s this? What’s that? Oh dear.” (Year 6 girl’s mother, *Scenario 4: Misuse of money*)

“Ask her why she didn’t get everything and tell her next time when she goes to the shop if she gets everything on my list then she can have a small treat for herself – or get one from her pocket money.” (Year 6 girl’s mother, *Scenario 4: Misuse of money*)

“I would play it down: ‘Oops, never mind. Next time you need to use two hands’ or something like that.” (Year 4 girl’s mother, Scenario 3: Dropping a plate)

“Smile and have a laugh and ask where the shops are. Make light of it as understandable behaviour.” (Year 6 girl’s mother, Scenario 4: Misuse of money)

Some parents suggested ways to manage their child’s behaviour and the environment, in order that there would be less risk of the same mistake being made again:

“Give a consequence for not listening. ‘Next time you want to watch while we get ready the TV is off.’ I feel annoyed but also aware that it is natural for her to go with the option that suited her most. Consider my part too – get more organised! Let it go – move on to more positive stuff. Make sure she knows we’re OK.” (Year 4 girl’s mother, Scenario 1: Refusing to tidy up)

“Tell child what they have done; explain how difficult it is to have information and the need to listen when I ask them not to do something. I would also learn to save information or protect my computer from child accessing it.” (Year 6 girl’s mother, Scenario 2: Deleting a project)

Forgiveness. Parents reported attitudes of forgiveness for their children's mistakes, when their children seemed to be sorry and apologetic for their misbehaviour. Some of the following comments were written in response to the added context, in which the child apologised and showed that s/he was sorry:

"Inside me, I would soften: 'I believe you X, [but] right now I feel very upset and a bit angry. I need to have 'time out', I need to go for a short walk – by myself. Then I'd go walk around the block to clear my feelings and head, and work out how to re-do the computer work, then go back to my child and do a bit of talking and listening and re-establish that she's not to do things when she's been told not to do them. I would forgive her and I would say the words 'I forgive you, let's start fresh'. I might ask her to help restore my project." (Year 4 girl's mother, Scenario 2: Deleting a project)

"Thank him, and praise him for realising the importance of doing what is asked of him straight away. Surprise him with a treat or something later in the day for doing good." (Year 4 boy's mother, Scenario 1: Refusing to tidy up)

Parents not only accept their children's misbehaviour to varying degrees, but they also recognise their own role and responsibility for their own mistake. If this recognition is expressed to the child, it confirms an important principle of

fairness, in which everyone involved in some sort of incident takes some level of responsibility:

“Thank you for that. I appreciate it. Next time TV will go off until you are ready.’ Admit my part, too: ‘Sorry, sorry’. Was it wise to give instructions and have TV on when I know how distracting that is? [Then] the feelings of annoyance would melt away.” (Year 4 girl’s mother, *Scenario 1: Refusing to tidy up*)

“Probably, scream and yell for short duration – [but] also I would have to accept some responsibility because where was I when he was on the computer that I didn’t notice?” (Year 4 boy’s mother, *Scenario 2: Deleting a project*)

Conversely, many of the parents would accept their children’s apology (but only conditionally) and the majority of them asserted that it was important to follow through with the consequences that the children deserved. This was usually justified on the grounds of simply wishing to prevent the child making the same mistake again:

“You should have listened, I accept your apology, but that does not mean I accept your behaviour.” (Year 4 boy’s mother, *Scenario 4: Misuse of money*)

“Appreciate [the] apology, but [I’d] still make certain she realises [the] link between her decision to ignore my instructions and [the] resulting problem. Still [the] same consequence, but less

aggression. Be very careful she knows I appreciate [her] apology and she is loved.” (Year 4 girl’s mother, Scenario 2: Deleting a project)

“In this case, I would thank her for apology, yet be clear it’s not OK what she did. Work out a consequence and then leave it at that.” (Year 4 girl’s mother, Scenario 4: Misuse of money)

“Thank you for your apology. I think it’s important you realise that you made a mistake. Please listen to me next time as it’s frustrating to me to have to do that work all over again.” (Year 6 girl’s mother, Scenario 2: Deleting a project)

“Thank you for apologising – next time just do what I ask [and] you won’t need to say sorry. Sorry doesn’t fix this.” (Year 6 boy’s mother, Scenario 1: Refusing to tidy up)

Some parents reported how their emotional reactions might change, as soon as they recognised how sorry their children were for their misbehaviour:

“It’s not enough to say sorry now, the damage is done. Leave me alone for a while, I’m very cross and we’ll talk about the consequences in a while when I’ve calmed down.” (Year 6 girl’s mother, Scenario 2: Deleting a project)

“I’m still annoyed, but instead of being angry I go quickly to calm and still explain about me asking her to do something, about [being] late and about her needing to finish her ‘job’ when we get home. I thank her for apologising.” (Year 4 girl’s mother, Scenario 1: Refusing to tidy up)

“I would still be angry but I would not growl [at] her as much. I’d still want my own space to calm down, then give her a cuddle and talk to her about it.” (Year 6 girl’s mother, Scenario 2: Deleting a project)

“I would do the same, probably; still irritated and grumpy, but a bit less so.” (Year 6 girl’s mother, Scenario 2: Deleting a project)

Some parents reported that they would determine the degree of punishment according to their estimate of how sorry their children might be:

“If they realise they have done something serious then it helps with dealing with it and they are usually very sorry. I would probably lessen the ‘banned’ timeframe.” (Year 4 boy’s mother, Scenario 2: Deleting a project)

“Sometimes children say they are sorry for something just to get out of being told off. I always say to my children that sorry is not just a word, but is a feeling. I would find out whether she was really sorry or not and discuss things with her.” (Year 6 girl’s mother, Scenario 5: Muddy footprints)

When children apologised and said they were sorry, some parents reported using such opportunities to remind their children of certain moral or ethical principles:

“Again, [I’d] accept the apology, but reiterate that there will still be a consequence because of the action so that he also has to make things right as well as say sorry.” (Year 6 and Year 4 boys’ mother, *Scenario 2: Deleting a project*)

“Accept her apology and ask her to explain to me why what she did was wrong. Ask her to suggest how she might make up for her wrong-doing.” (Year 4 girl’s mother, *Scenario 4: Misuse of money*)

“[I’d still] reprimand her. Tell her treats for errand-running only come ‘after’ the errand is fulfilled. Maybe explain the importance of the things that needed to be bought. Make her share the goodies with her sisters.” (Year 6 girl’s mother, *Scenario 4: Misuse of money*)

Discussion

Child Measure

Children's Judgement of Fairness

Consistent with the findings from earlier studies (Barry, 2006; Evans et al., 2001; Yamaguchi, 2005) in my research laboratory, the children in the study sensitively judged the fairness of treatment that the mother or the friend practiced in the scenario. Just how sensitively the children were observing the fairness of others' behaviour was observed when a number of children actually suggested that what the mother or the friend had done in the scenario was fair for the child protagonist. They argued that the child in the scenario story had equally contributed to causing an unfair situation and therefore the child protagonist needed to share some responsibility with the mother or the friend.

All children in the study listened to two versions of the story — Parent story and Friend story — and each story offered two different themes of unfairness: blamed when innocent and subjected to a double standard. All four versions of the scenarios were generally understood as unfair by almost all children. However, some children, who heard scenarios 1 and 3 — illustrating a child who has been reprimanded for his/her innocent behaviour — interpreted it as being fair treatment. Those children felt that what the mother or the friend had asked the child protagonist to do (i.e., told to tidy up the mess or share the responsibility) was not necessarily unfair. As I listened to the children's explanations of their decisions regarding fairness, it was apparent that these children's fairness judgments reflected the values of sharing responsibilities with their family members and friends. Possibly, this could be an aspect of desirable

qualities that parents and teachers occasionally endorse for children to learn. Degrees of unfairness were stronger towards the scenario that involved an incident of double standards, rather than the scenario about innocent behaviour, where the child was held to be responsible. The theme of double standards may be similar to the idea of lying and cheating, because they told the child protagonist not to do something and then the mother or the friend actually did it behind the child protagonist's back. Children may hold high standards of what they believe to be right and wrong, as they are often reminded by their parents not to lie and cheat. Parents set standards for their children and when parents themselves not following the standards they have set, their children are then are less likely to trust their parents' words.

Children may be able to find some excuses for the actions of their parents and friends, if they are told off for something they did not do, because children do understand that sometimes parents and friends do things that they do not really mean to do. Children, therefore, are taking consideration of the context within which the unfair treatment is happening and they are attentively assessing the degree of fairness. Fairness is not a concrete black or white construct: instead it is about a personal perception of the extent to which standards have been applied to oneself.

Children's Feelings about Unfairness

Feelings associated with the experience of unfairness showed similar findings to my previous study, and confirmed the hypothesis that feelings of sadness and anger were two major emotional states of unfairness. Sad feelings were those most often reported as associated with feelings of unfairness, followed by anger and annoyance. Feelings of anger and annoyance may be

considered as the same group of feelings and have a similar effect on a child. However, one of the noticeable differences I have noticed from this study (and similarly in my previous study) was that children occasionally express how annoying it can be when they are treated unfairly by their mothers or friends. This was different from just expressing a state of anger. When comparing the degree of each feeling reported by the children, it was noticed that they were more likely to express a higher degree of negative feelings towards the friend than towards the mother in the scenario. This could be interpreted as reflecting that unfair treatment of friends has a much stronger impact on children's emotional responses than does a mother's unfair treatment. These children may have found it easier to overtly express their feelings towards the friend than towards the mother, because fairness or equality is one foundation of friendships. Perhaps, children feel that it is important for them to share their feelings of unfairness with friends in order that their relationship can be built upon the principles of justice or fairness. Contrary, parent-child relationships generally involve a power relationship. Children may have learned to accept their status as a child who has the responsibility to listen to their parents' requests.

Children's Willingness to Grant Forgiveness as Opposed to Expressions of Hostility

The children's motivation to offer forgiveness towards an unfair person was investigated by asking them to respond to the three imaginary tasks. Implementation of these tasks followed the scenarios and questions. A number of colourful illustrations accompanied each task, in order to highlight the main themes of the events following an unfair incident, and three possible responses

that a victim of unfair treatment might show. Since the nature of the procedure involved make-believe scenarios, I anticipated that some of the older children might feel embarrassed to take part. However, almost all the children showed an interest in the tasks and they were able to maintain their concentration. Thus, in general, the procedure to assess children's willingness to forgive has seemed appropriate.

The children's motivation to offer forgiveness towards an unfair person was investigated by asking them to respond to the three imaginary tasks. Implementation of these tasks followed the scenarios. These three tasks were designed specifically to measure children's responses to unfairness of the mother and the best friend. By using these three tasks, we were able to assess children's willingness to grant forgiveness in a more subjective and situation-specific manner than the methodology used by Maio et al. (2008). Maio and colleagues (2008) relied on family members' memory of forgiveness-related situations (e.g., a situation where they forgave other family members, a situation where they were forgiven by other family members) whereas we focused more on children's subjective judgment of an unfairness situation and their immediate responses to it. Thus, these three tasks worked well to capture children's explicit emotional and behavioural reactions to a transgression of the mother and the best friend.

The children's forgiving responses, versus hostile behaviour, were assessed implicitly through these three imaginary tasks. Based on the findings of the past study, the caring and trust tasks were modified. In order to examine whether or not these new and improved tasks sufficiently contributed to forgiveness versus hostility dimensions, the mean score for each task was

intercorrelated for each story type. Each task was only weakly correlated with the others, indicating that the children's sharing, caring, and trusting responses were independent unities. However, each task did correlate with the total scores, suggesting that the tasks were each contributing to the total dimension of forgiveness versus hostility.

By looking at the total for the these tasks, it was possible to observe considerable individual differences in expressions of forgiveness. The children's explanations for their responses to each task further added justification for their willingness to forgive. In regards to the unfairness incident, where a parent was involved, the children justified their responses on a number of grounds. Their reasons for *not* retaliating (i.e., being willing to forgive) included such considerations as; (a) the parent being older (e.g., a grown up); (b) the generally good things mothers do (e.g., 'Mums are busy and have other things on their mind' so they make mistakes; (c) because mothers and children love each other; and (d) because it is a duty to share with one's mother. Some of the explanations offered by the children tapped into an aspect of morality and ethical principles. For example, one child stated that "*Two wrongs do not make a right*" and another child said that "*Families should share things*". Although a large number of children gave that type of forgiving response towards the mother, there were, of course, a small number of children who clearly indicated that the child protagonist (the victim of unfairness) would do something to get his/her own back.

One possible reason for the children's responses being more forgiving, rather than hostile, was that the mother's unfair behaviour was not serious or intense enough to arouse strong feelings of retaliation. One 11-year-old girl said

regarding the mother in the story, “*She was not **that** cruel or mean and selfish to [deserve only] the small [piece of cake]*”. It is possible that the children felt that the incidents of unfairness described in the stories were not a big concern for them. However, we have to be mindful that all the scenarios were created specifically to score the children’s willingness to either forgive or show hostile responses. These tasks were not intended to measure strong resentful responses.

Another aspect to recognise is that children were not reporting their own feelings. They were asked to report types of feelings relating to the protagonist as if that child was themselves. Similarly, the children were asked to indicate how strongly children might express feelings that the child protagonist might hold as a result of unfairness. Although it was thought that children would project their own feelings about unfairness, some degree of caution may be needed when interpreting these reports.

An open-ended question allowed the children to report ranges of feelings that the child protagonist might be feeling. Feelings of sadness and anger were the two major feelings that accompanied unfairness. The types of aroused feelings might be slightly different for children if unfair treatment was delivered by a mother or friend. Feelings of sadness were more commonly related to unfair treatment by the mother and feelings of anger were more often associated with unfair treatment by the friend. When the intensities of these feelings were taken into account, the friend’s unfair treatment was associated with stronger negative feelings. It may be that the children were able to think of a variety of reasons behind the emotional effects that a mother’s unfair behaviour had on them, and, therefore, their emotional reactions towards the

mother were less severe in comparison with their emotional responses towards the friend.

Parents' Measure

One of the main research questions was to examine how some aspects of parental disciplinary practice might be contributing to children's willingness to forgive. Given that there are individual differences in children's willingness to forgive, we might be able to deduce these are influenced by some aspects of parental practice. In order to answer this question, we asked the parents of all participating children to take part in a questionnaire study about their perceptions of their children's misbehaviour, the strategies they use to deal with this misbehaviour and their suggestions for dealing with experiences of unfairness. Not all the parents were available to answer the questionnaire but 53 parents (mostly mothers) agreed to do so.

The questionnaire tapped into four characteristics of parental disciplinary practices. The first part of the questionnaire asked for parents' causal attributions for their children's common misbehaviours. By examining the self-reported likelihood of their making these attributions, I was able to group the attributions into two types: internal and external. The parents who used internal attribution were more likely to criticise their children's fixed aspect of characteristics (e.g., s/he is a naughty child) as a cause of misbehaviour, whereas the parents who used external attributional style thought that some other variables might be the cause of the misbehaviour (e.g., s/he is too young to know any better). Parents in this study generally interpreted their children's misbehaviour in a positive way: That is, parents were less likely to blame certain aspects of their children's characteristics as a cause of the misbehaviour.

However, the parents were also considerate of contexts wherein misbehaviours were presented. For example, some parents were more likely to think that it was an accident when children dropped a dinner plate, whereas they were more critical when their children spent money on buying something they liked, instead of listening to their mothers' request. Overall, the parents in the study were less likely to blame their children's characteristics as being the main causes of misbehaviour.

The second part of the questionnaire focused on the parents' spontaneous reactions to five types of misbehaviour. An open-ended question asked the parents to describe their verbal or behavioural responses to their children, immediately after they had witnessed their children's misbehaviour. The parents gave a variety of responses and these sounded genuine rather than an attempt to offer socially desirable responses. All the parents' responses were coded and then scored on a seven-point scale, representing punitiveness through to forgiveness. There were no parents who would either punish harshly or simply dismiss their children's misbehaviour without teaching them the appropriate behaviour. The majority of parents expressed that they would ask their children to correct their behaviour and they would also give a warning. However, it must be remembered that there were a small number of parents who did actually express that they would verbally scold their children. Parents seem to struggle between their own emotional experiences and their role as a mother/father. Instead of calmly discussing issues with their children, some parents tend to give harsh feedback to their children, perhaps because of their negatively charged emotions.

Children occasionally misbehave and parents get upset when this occurs. Although a harsher punishment might be easily practiced, some parents reported using this opportunity to teach their children about the principles of fairness and forgiveness, as well as their own responsibilities. Overall, the parents talked about the importance of following through causes and consequences that were associated with misbehaviour. Although some parents may have reacted negatively, some other parents emphasised the importance of explaining to children about the causes and consequences of the events.

In the third part of the questionnaire, the parents were further asked to write down what they might do or say when their children seemed to be apologetic about their misbehaviours. When parents feel that their child is genuinely sorry for what s/he has done, they may find it easier to grant forgiveness to their child. Expressing apologies do increase a victim's willingness to show forgiveness to his/her perpetrator (Exline & Baumeister, 2000). Nevertheless, the majority of the parents emphasised the importance of following through initial responses to their children. However, at the same time, they stated that they would acknowledge their children's apology. These parents may be attempting to be consistent with what they are saying their children. Consistency is an important aspect of parenting practice.

Children's apologies to parents do have an impact on the parents' emotional reactions. Some parents were attuned to their own feelings and talked about how their initial negative feelings might be softened. Some other parents determined the degree of punishment according to the strength of the apology they received from their children. Parents who are aware of their own feelings may be better able to manage their feelings and, as a consequence,

they are able to respond to their children in a calmer manner. Children also learn some of the ways they could manage their emotions by observing how their parents manage their emotions (Katz & Gottman, 1993). If parents are able to calm themselves down without overtly expressing negative feelings, children might also be able to learn to manage their own negative emotions in a similar way.

The final part of the questionnaire asked parents to indicate the likelihood of them using any/all of the three strategies: (a) just tell them to get over it; (b) encourage them to get their own back; and (c) encourage them to forgive the other person. In addition, the parents wrote down one of the strategies that they used most often to help their children deal with experiences of unfairness. As far as these three strategies were concerned, parents often encouraged their children to forgive the other person. When parents were asked to write down openly about the most frequently used strategies in their daily lives, a large number of parents emphasised the importance of talking to their children about empathy or taking the perspectives of others. Empathy or perspective-taking skills have been recognised as an important facilitator of forgiveness (Denham et al. 2005; McCullough et al., 1998; Worthington, 1998 b). Forgiveness may be more easily offered when individuals know more about the intentions, feelings, and thoughts of a person who may have wronged them.

The Relationships between Parenting Behaviour and Children's Willingness to Grant Forgiveness

One of the main purposes of the study was to examine how parenting behaviour might be contributing to the children's willingness to grant forgiveness. The children's total scores for the forgiveness tasks and the

parents' scores for their willingness to make excuses for their children's misbehaviour did not significantly relate to each other. One of the possible reasons for this finding may be the relatively small sample size. Amongst 82 children, only 53 parents were willing to complete the questionnaire. Those parents generally made positive or forgiving attributions about their children's common misbehaviour and they were willing to make some sort of excuses for them. The parents' responses appeared to be homogeneous.

Although the statistical analysis did not show a significant relationship between parenting behaviour and the children's willingness to forgive, it was possible to recognise some clues from the children's comments about how they may be learning to forgive others. For example, the children occasionally made comments which sounded very much like adults talking (e.g., "*forget about and move on*" or "*I hope you would not do it again.*"). What we can learn from this is how children are modelling some of the ways that their parents deal with their own negative emotional experiences. As I listened to the children's comments I felt that these were a good explanation of how parental socialisation plays such an important role in children's willingness to grant forgiveness.

Children's Understanding of Forgiveness

What does forgiveness mean? This was not an easy question for the children to answer, however, they made an effort to describe their ideas about forgiveness. During listening to children's verbal comments, it was noticeable that their explanations of forgiveness were depending on whether they are taking a perspective of a perpetrator or of a victim. If children were thinking about a concept of forgiveness from a perpetrator's point of views, they have described it by referring to a situation where they offered an apology and then

being forgiven by his/her victim. On the hand, if children described a concept of forgiveness from a victim's point of views, it was explained with relation to a situation where they accepted an apology and then offered forgiveness to a perpetrator. Children seemed to be aware that apologies could facilitate a victim's willingness to forgiveness (Darby & Schlenker, 1982; Scobie & Scobie, 2000).

Although an idea of forgive someone and an idea of being forgiven by some were a little confusing for some children to explain, some children were able to take into account of emotional and behavioural changes that may accompany with these situations. In addition, many children talked about forgiveness in terms of restoring an interpersonal relationship. Both forgiveness and expression of repentance may promote reconciliation with a perpetrator (Exline & Baumeister, 2000). Perhaps children are learning a relationship between apologies and forgiveness in their everyday lives.

Strengths and Weakness of the Study

All the children who participated in the study appeared to enjoy their interview sessions and spontaneously talked about their ideas and experiences. Research materials, such as colourful drawings and a simple scale, which accompanied the scenarios, were interesting and clear enough for the children to gain a better understanding of the scenarios' main themes. Those parents whose children participated were also helpful. They openly commented about how they would respond to their children's common misbehaviours and how they might actually feel about confronting such experiences.

In spite of all these strengths, there were some limitations to the study that can be improved on in future investigations. The first limitation may be

associated with the original approach. The study was an analogue experimental study, in which children participated in an interview session involving make-believe situations. The scenarios were piloted in order to ensure that the story lines were clear enough to be comprehended by young children. However, some children appeared to find it difficult to relate to some of the situations presented in the scenarios. Because of this, their judgement of unfairness and the feelings associated with it may have been more influenced by their abstract ideas, rather than their subjective experiences.

The children were recruited from two different age groups, but the age differences were not included in the analysis because an actual number of the participants were small and a mean distribution of each age group was somehow equal. Although some of those young children found it difficult to explain the meaning of forgiveness, younger age children not only understood a concept of forgiveness well as much as the older age children, but also they were able to describe their experience of unfairness by recalling a time when they forgave someone or when they were forgiven by someone.

Summary and Conclusion

This study explored the origins of children's willingness to grant forgiveness in relation to their experience of unfairness. Although the study did not support that aspects of parenting behaviour may contribute to children's willingness to forgive, we were able to obtain some insightful comments about the children's understanding of forgiveness in addition to their parents' approach to the children's misbehaviours. These findings could be the foundation for future studies.

Studies of forgiveness in children have just begun to emerge and there are many questions that need to be asked and answered. One of the questions I would like to raise is the limitations of forgiveness. Forgiveness may be a positive social response that would promote meaningful interpersonal relationships. However, at the same time, forgiveness is not an option for some children, particularly for those children who are consistently experiencing unfairness and/or otherwise have been hurt by someone. An investigation into the limitations associated with forgiveness might be an important aspect of forgiveness studies, since it may offer an insight into those children who have a tendency to hold grudges or resent others. When we know more about children's holding of grudge, in addition to forgiveness in children, it will be possible to offer more effective ways to enhance their pro-social and emotional development. Finally, as a concluding thought, I would like to leave this chapter with a comment from one of the participating mothers:

“Love and forgiveness are two secret ingredients in life! Always try to do to others what you would want done to you. Keep being nice to people – eventually they will be nice to you or someone else.”

Reciprocal positive relationships between parent-child may be the foundation for children's willingness to grant forgiveness.

CHAPTER 3

STUDY 2: EXPLORING CHILDREN'S HOLDING OF GRUDGE

Introduction

We generally seek fair treatment that is reciprocal, reasonable, and hopefully, rewarding. Nevertheless, many people declare that *life is not fair*. In an earlier study, one of the mothers, who had a child with disabilities, stated that she would explain to her children that the inequity in their life was just part of life (Evans et al., 1996). On many occasions, we realise that other people have different perspectives on what ought to be fair and unfair, but fairness matters to us. Similarly, in children's day to day lives, parents may strive to treat their children in an equitable manner, at least in their family environment. However, children may soon realise that other people are not as fair as their parents. This discrepancy between *expectation* and *reality* may cause children to experience negative feelings of unfairness. The previous study showed that experiences of unfairness generate negative feelings of sadness and anger and that these negative emotional experiences can lead to displays of hostility (Barry, 2006; Yamaguchi, 2005). It appears that the way in which children deal with these negative feelings will have a significant influence on their current and future well-being: that is, how children manage the perpetrators of unfairness could have a significant influence on sustaining their positive social relationships.

The previous study of children's perceptions of unfairness began to explore how children manage their negative emotional experiences of

unfairness. It was shown that some children may try to *pay back* in order to restore balance to their relationships (Barry, 2006; Yamaguchi, 2005). Some children, in my pilot study (see Chapter 1) did seem to carry resentful feelings towards the sibling in the story who blamed the child protagonist for his/her innocent behaviour. In contrast, we also identified children who chose to respond positively towards the mother in the story, despite of their negative feelings of unfairness. Forgiveness was one positive responses that children appeared to endorse at the time of negative emotional experience of unfairness and it was seen as a strategy to manage their willingness to express hostility towards a person who was unfair (Yamaguchi, 2005).

Forgiveness, as Study 1 has suggested, is mainly a cognitive response. We occasionally respond verbally, by saying “I forgive you”, when we grant forgiveness to our perpetrator and to move on from our experiences of unfairness. This cognitive aspect of forgiveness has been the focus in implementing forgiveness therapy. In order to help clients to manage their feelings of deep hurt or anger, forgiveness therapy emphasises *reframing* their negative perspectives of the perpetrator (Enright et al., 1998), and fostering of their *perspective taking* skill (McCullough et al., 1997). Similarly, children’s willingness to forgive perpetrator depends on their *interpretations* of the perpetrator (Darby & Schlenker, 1982; Ohbuchi & Sato, 1993).

Through these cognitive changes, a number of forgiveness studies have suggested that forgiveness is beneficial for improving individuals’ physical and psychological well-beings (Worthington, Witvliet, Palaria, & Miller, 2007). However, from our everyday interpersonal relationships, we know that a verbal and cognitive response of forgiveness may not take away the deeper feelings of

hurt. Instead, leave a residual negative affect that can then be triggered by a further hurtful experience.

Conceptualisation of Grudge-Holding

The concept of grudge-holding has rarely been investigated as a psychological construct. However, it has been described as a mirror image of forgiveness (Baumeister et al., 1998), and one of the observable behaviours of people who are unable to forgive a perpetrator of a wrong against them (Witvliet et al, 2001). It has similar nuance to a number of psychological constructs; including resentment (Mullet et al., 2005), and rumination (McCullough et al., 2001; McCullough, Rachal, Sandage, & Joshson, 1998; Worthington & Wade, 1999). Resentment is defined as a cold emotional complex consisting of bitterness, hostility, residual fear and anger, in response to perceived harm from an offender (Mullet et al., 2005). Rumination is classified as passive cognitive responses (Worthington & Wade, 1999), which generally involve a repetitive focus on the negative and damaged feature of a stressful event (Skinner, Edge, Atman, & Sherwood, 2003). What is common in these constructs is lingering, negative feelings and attitude towards a perpetrator.

Grudge-holding may occur when individuals have not worked through their hurt and resentful feelings, even though they have verbally expressed forgiveness by saying "I forgive you" (Baumeister et al., 1998). This may be because forgiveness does not mean forgetting (Enright & Coyle, 1998) and to forgive requires remembering the hurt but managing it (Govier, 2002). We may have experienced at sometime or another, through interactions with partners, friends or family members, past wrongs that have not been entirely expunged in emotional terms. If a second wrong occurs, we may realise that negative

feelings associated with the original hurt or offence have not been entirely eliminated. Furthermore, if these negative feelings remain above some experiential threshold, these residual negative feelings can be referred to as *holding a grudge*.

Grudge-Holding in Children

Children's grudge-holding has seldom been investigated. Moreover, in Study 1, children were asked to describe their responses to the unfairness of a mother or a friend in a real situation and (from their verbatim comment) we have identified that not all the children were willing to forgive unfair behaviour. One of the children reported that he would "*go and clean up the mess so that I would not have to **put up with** my mum*". Another child stated, "*I probably still help my friend, but I **still** get annoyed*". What I observed in these comments was that some children were reluctant to respond positively towards their mother or their friend when they thought their own mother or friend had done something unfair towards them. In other words, some children appeared to hold some levels of negative feelings towards their own mother or their friend, even though they had made a decision to comply or do something nice to their own mother or friend; that is to say, their motivation to forgive was conditional, rather than a fully emotional one.

The long-term goal of this and related research was to explore the extent to which experiences of unfairness, with their automatic negative emotional consequences, might offer an insight into the emergence of hostile feelings, particularly these directed against the perpetrator (a parent, an authority figure, sibling, peers, and so on). However, forgiveness was a more dominant response to the hypothesised unfair situations, despite these situations being

able to initially arouse strong affect. However, perhaps, forgiveness has its limits and, whilst words of apology allowed the child to move on, negative feelings might linger, in the form of a grudge. The next experiment was designed to assess grudge-holding, if possible in an experimental situation.

Rationale for a New Study

We are occasionally confronted with situations where what we thought was a small argument suddenly becomes a big battle. However, we soon realise that the actual cause of the argument originated from some incident that happened a long time ago. Lingering negative feelings from the original incident remains and they are evoked when the next similar negative event or situation occurs. We occasionally meet or read about individuals who bear a grudge against past wrongs. Nevertheless, there is scarcely any empirical work on this everyday phenomenon and even less involving children. This led me to ask an interesting question.

In Study 1, indirect observations of children's responses to unfair treatment showed that these children were generally unwilling to engage in simple types of retribution. However, we must ask ourselves whether the children hold grudges against their mothers at some level. If so, then would there be some type of cumulative effect of a repeated experience, such that the grudge became hostility and then hatred? This is a complex question to answer and it is difficult to empirically investigate it with children. However, it seemed possible to make a start simply by seeing if the experimental paradigm could be adapted, in order to gain empirically-grounded insights into the phenomenon of children holding a grudge.

Study 2

The present analogue study was designed in order to explore children's grudge-holding as a result of the emotional experiences of unfairness. It particularly focused on how repeated experiences of unfairness may contribute to children's perceptions of (and emotional reactions towards) their own mother and their best friend. The primary interest was to examine whether or not negative feelings of unfairness could have accumulative effects on children's later attitudes towards a perpetrator of unfairness. Based on the previous studies on unfairness, it was expected that children would carefully judge the fairness of others' behaviour and report negative feelings of sadness and anger. In addition grudge-holding is an increase in a negative affect following a second experience of unfairness. If there was an increase in the children's degrees of hostility following the second experience of unfairness — and if this increase in degree of hostility was over and above the expected level of negative affect associated with the first experience of unfairness — it was considered an indication of a grudge effect.

Method

The Pilot Work

Pilot work was carried out prior to commencement of the main part of the study. One of the consistent challenges of designing a scenario-based interview is to create a scenario that is close to children's real life experiences. Thus, the main purposes of the pilot work were (a) to create additional scenarios describing fairness and unfairness, (b) to modify experimental tasks designed to assess caring and trusting, and (c) to observe the carry-over effects of

unfairness scenarios on children's responses and to determine a time frame for conducting two scenario-based interview sessions.

A group of primary school children, with ages ranging from 8 to 12 years (attending an afterschool programme in Fielding, Palmerston North) volunteered to take part in the session. I made an initial contact with the afterschool programme co-ordinators in order to obtain permission to visit their programme and to talk with a number of children about their experiences of fairness and unfairness in their daily lives. This group talk session was conducted in a quiet space and it lasted approximately 20 minutes. Further pilot work involved the following three stages:

The first stage was to create additional scenarios relating to fairness and unfairness. The perpetrator in each scenario was either a mother or a best friend. The children were asked to listen to four stories and to make a fairness judgement on each story. They were also asked to give some feedback about the stories, in terms of their familiarity: if the children commented that the main theme of a story was something unlikely to happen to them, they were then asked to make some suggestions by giving some examples. Each story was accompanied by a set of drawings. The children were asked to comment on whether or not these drawings were useful for them to understand the story.

The second stage of the pilot work included modification of the caring and trusting tasks. In the caring situation, I changed the main theme of the situation described, and I asked the children to respond to it, some minor changes were then made, according to the children's suggestions. Regarding the trust task, it had been a consistent challenge to improve its validity. In order to gain a better understanding of the concept of trust from the children's point of

view, I asked to answer the following question: “How do you know you can trust your mother or your best friend?” The children related their ideas or experiences of trusting their mothers or best friends and based on their comments, a new version of the trusting task was created.

The third stage consisted of observation of the children’s emotional reactions to repeated experience of unfairness. One week, two weeks and a month after their initial group session, the children were again asked to listen to the stories. Each time, the children listened to the unfairness story, which was different from the one in the initial session, and they were asked to recall what had happened to the main child character in the story since last time and how did it make the protagonist in the story feel. The children recalled what had happened to the child protagonist fairly well, one week after the initial session. Two weeks to one month after the initial session, some of the children were still able to recall what had happened to the child protagonist in the story, although they required a number of clues. Since the new experiment was to place an emphasis on children’s memories of past experiences of unfairness and their associated negative feelings, it appeared appropriate to allow one week between the first and second sessions. Thus, by the end of the last pilot session, all the unfairness scenarios had been read to the children in order to confirm the appropriateness of the themes, and, in addition, the newly modified three tasks had been tested to assess the children’s emotional reactions.

Ethical Consideration

Following the experimental design I used for Study 1, the present experimental study also involves individual interview sessions with children. The procedure used for the second study was similar to the first study. The only

difference was that a major component of the second study included repeated assessments of the emotional experiences of unfairness. I again anticipated that the children might experience some levels of negative feelings and discomfort when they talked about unfairness experiences. I attempted to this effect by creating scenarios that were less threatening for the children to talk about, and they were also reminded that there were no right or wrong answers and they could stop participating at any time during the session.

Both the children and their parents were asked to read the information brochure (see Appendix H & I) carefully to ensure that they understood the details of the study. If the children were interested in taking part in the study (and their parents were willing to give permission for their children to participate) both the children and their parents were asked to sign a consent form (see Appendix J & K). A simple consent form was prepared for the children, in order that they would have an opportunity to indicate their decision to participate in the study. At the beginning of each scenario-based interview session the children were again briefly told about what they were expected to do in their interview sessions and they then gave verbal assent.

Participants

The participating children were 55 primary school children in Wellington, New Zealand. Wellington is the capital city of New Zealand, with a population of 164,000. It is the centre of government and many international and domestic businesses have offices and retail stores in Wellington. The city has two major universities and a number of leading tertiary education institutions. There is a growing number of immigrants from overseas. The city is culturally rich and diverse compared to Palmerston North.

The participants were recruited from two schools and the locations of these two schools were dissimilar. The first school is located in the centre of the city and the second one is situated in a suburb. Based on the New Zealand education system, each school enrolls children from different socio-economic backgrounds. A large population of the children in the study (62%) came from the second school, a Decile 10 school, where they enrol children from higher socio-economic backgrounds. The lower percentage of the children (38%) came from the first a Decile 5 school, where they enrol children from middle social status backgrounds. Both schools enrol children from a variety of cultural backgrounds. The largest ethnic group reported by the parents of the participated children was New Zealander of European descent (65%), followed by Middle Eastern (15%) and Asian (11%).

The children's ages ranged from 8- to 12-years-old: 24%, eight years old; 45%, nine years old; 22%, 10 years old; 7%, 11 years old; and 2%, 12 years old. The children's age groups were selected on the basis of the findings of the earlier studies: that is, children younger than eight years old seemed to find it difficult to explain their thoughts about forgiveness. Since the main research question of the present study — grudge-holding — is closely linked with children's decisions to forgive a perpetrator, the inclusion of older aged children was deemed to be appropriate. Also, it has been suggested that: (a) Children's cognitive ability to take other's perspective increases as they grow older (Roberts & Strayer, 1996); (b) Older children are better able to take into account the intentions of others' behaviour than younger aged children (Darby & Schlenker, 1982); and (c) Older children have a cognitive capacity to reference past events, in order to make sense of an individual's current emotional state

(Lagattuta et al., 1997). Thus, the present study included children from 8 years old to 12 years old (*Mean age* = 9.2, *SD* = .95). More girls (55%) than boys (45%) took part in the study.

Participant Recruitment

The recruitment of participants followed a similar process to Study 1. The initial contact with schools was carried out by making phone calls to a number of schools in the Wellington area. I briefly talked about the purpose and significance of this study. A number of schools contacted informed me that they were busy with prior commitments and other school activities. Nevertheless, two schools showed interest in this study. In order to discuss details relating to the study with the school principal, I arranged a time for an initial meeting. In one school, I attended (with a research assistant) the first 15 minutes of a weekly staff meeting and I introduced the study to the teaching staff and sought their support for the study. Once I received permission from the school principals and support from the teaching staff, I asked the classroom teacher of the relevant age groups to circulate the information packs to their students. The classroom teachers were asked to remind their students to give the information letters to their parents and then return the consent forms to the school office, where the consent form collection box was situated. The research assistant visited the schools regularly to collect the forms, in order to avoid invasion of privacy.

The children were given an opportunity to indicate their willingness to participate in the study, once again, at the beginning of their scenario based interview sessions. After being given brief information about the study, the children were reminded that there were no right or wrong answers to any of the questions they would be asked and they were allowed to stop the interview

anytime they wished. If they were comfortable with the interview setting and ready to begin their interview sessions, they were asked to give their assent. There were no children who indicated any discomfort during the interview sessions or any who wished to exit the procedure.

Materials and Measures

The scenarios of fairness and unfairness. A total of eight scenarios were created for the purpose of the present study. Amongst these, four described a theme of *fairness* and the last of the four scenarios described a theme of *unfairness*. The fairness and unfairness scenarios had two versions, based on a perpetrator of fair or unfair treatments: one *Mother Story* or one *Best Friend Story*. In the mother story, the scenario describes a daily interaction between the mother and her child (Josh or Emma) whereas the best friend story describes an everyday interaction between the child (Josh or Emma) and his/her best friend (Sam or Katie). The main theme of each scenario is presented in Table 8. Each scenario was accompanied by a number of illustrations. The full text of the scenarios and the accompanying illustrations are presented in Appendix M.

Rating the degree of fairness/unfairness. A simple 10-point rating scale was created. After listening to a story, the children were asked to point out on the scale how fair or unfair the perpetrator was towards the child protagonist in the scenario (10 = *very very*; 1 = *a little bit*). If the children were unsure about indicating their perception of the degree of fairness/unfairness they were given some prompts to help them indicate how fair or unfair it was for the main child character in that particular story. If the children made a *fair* judgement for an

Table 8 Main Theme of Scenarios Concerning Fairness or Unfairness

Scenario	Main Theme
Parent unfairness story 1 (<i>Mum's appointment</i>)	The child is watching TV after finishing all his/her homework. His/her mother is busy with homework and late for her appointment. She is very frustrated and tells her child to hop into the car. The child complies with the mother, but the mother <i>tells off</i> her child for being late.
Friend unfairness story 1 (<i>Playing in the park</i>)	The child and his/her good friend are playing in the park. His/her classmates also come to play in the park. His/her friend had previously promised to play with the child but now s/he has decided to play with other classmates: Now the child is alone and has nobody to play with.
Parent fairness story 1 (<i>Thanks for listening</i>)	The child is watching TV after finishing all his/her homework. His/her mother is busy with her homework and late for her appointment. She is very frustrated and tells her child to hop into the car. The child complies with his/her mother. Later, the mother thanks her child for being so cooperative and says that she has taped a TV programme for him/her to watch it when they return home.

<p>Friend fairness story 1 (<i>Gossiping</i>)</p>	<p>The child is playing with his/her best friend in their classroom. His/her classmates start to gossip about the child. His/her friend finds it disturbing so s/he asks the classmates to stop gossiping. The child and his/her friend decide to talk to their classroom teacher about the gossiping.</p>
<p>Parent unfairness story 2 (<i>Mum's project</i>)</p>	<p>The child is playing with the computer after finishing all his/her homework His/her mother asks him/her to finish off the game so that she can work on her projects. Shortly after that, a grumpy faced mother comes to talk with her child and blames the child for losing her project on the computer.</p>
<p>Friend unfairness story 2 (<i>Sleeping over</i>)</p>	<p>The child was talking with his/her best about having a sleep-over one weekend. The friend promises the child s/he will invite him/her for this sleep-over. A few days later, at -school, the child hears the friend inviting other classmates — but not him/her.</p>
<p>Parent</p>	<p>The child is playing a computer game after finishing all his/her homework His/her mother asks</p>

fairness story 2

(Saving the project)

him/her to finish off the game so that she can work on her projects. Shortly after that, the mother comes to talk with the child and asks whether or not s/he has 'done something' with her work.

Later, the mother shows the child how to save a document — ready for the next time this happens.

Friend

At school, the child is tidying up his/her things after class has finished. Suddenly, his/her friend

fairness story 2

(Tidying up)

pushes him/her and the child drops all the things s/he has just piled up. Just then, their classroom teacher comes in and sees the big mess. When the teacher asks them whose has made the mess, the friend takes responsibility for the mess and starts to tidy it up.

unfair scenario story, they automatically received a score of 0, for not at all, for their ratings of unfairness. Instead of terminating their interview session, I would continue to ask a series of questions in the same way as for the remainder of the children.

Rating type and strength of fairness/unfairness feelings. The children were asked an open-ended question to elicit description of the different types of feelings that the child protagonist might be feeling after being treated unfairly by the mother or the best friend. The children were also asked to indicate the strength of these feelings on a simple 10-point rating scale (10 = *very very*; 1 = *a little bit*).

Three imaginary tasks to measure children's display of hostility as opposed to willingness to forgive. The three imaginary tasks — sharing, caring, and trusting — were designed to assess the children's display of hostility as opposed to their willingness to forgive. These three tasks were designed to measure, implicitly, the children's emotional reactions to the unfairness or the fairness of the mother's or the best friend's behaviour in the scenario. In order to obtain children's overall hostility score, a score from each imaginary task was summed (high score = *high hostility*; low score = *high forgiveness*). Each task was accompanied by a set of drawings in order to assist the children to respond to the tasks. These illustrations are presented in Appendix N

The first task — sharing — followed the same procedure as Study 1. After listening to a story, the children were given pictures of three different sizes of slices of cake and asked to decide which size might be appropriate for the mother or the best friend, after they had treated the child either fairly or unfairly. The children were told that the child protagonist has the right to decide who

should have a large, medium or small slice of the cake. If the children decided to give a large slice of cake, it was seen as the children's willingness to forgive (score = 1). If they decided to give a medium slice of cake, it was considered a neutral response (score = 2). If they decided to give a small slice of cake to the mother or best friend, it was seen as a display of hostility (score = 3).

The second task — caring — was designed to observe the children's concern for the mother and the best friend in the story. The children were given a description of an incident where the mother or the best friend had lost their favourite/precious object and they look very upset. The children were asked to imagine the child protagonist's initial response to the mother or the best friend in this situation. In order to assist the children to respond, they were given three possible responses that whether the child protagonist might react to the mother or the best friend. These three responses were: (a) the child helps the mother or the best friend to find their precious object (score = 1); (b) the child does not worry too much about what is happening to the mother or the best friend (score = 2), and (c) the child pretended s/he knows the whereabouts of the precious object, when s/he actually does not know anything about it (score = 3). If the children thought that the child protagonist deliberately tried to annoy the mother or the best friend, by saying something that was not true, then it was seen as retaliatory behaviour and an indication of hostility towards the mother or the best friend for being unfair. On the other hand, if the children decided that the child protagonist would immediately help the mother or the best friend to find their precious object, it was a display of empathic behaviour and showed the children's willingness to forgive. If the children decided that the child protagonist

would not do anything about it and just offer *silent treatment*, it was seen as a passive way of expressing negative feelings.

The third task — trusting — was designed to observe the children's willingness to trust the mother or the best friend, immediately after the child protagonist had been treated unfairly or fairly by either of them. To enact this situation, the children were again asked to imagine a situation where the child protagonist was thinking of ways of keeping safe a special letter to a best friend (containing a secret). In order for the children to share their important information with their mother or their best friend, it might mean that they would have to take the risk of losing the letter or leaking the secret. In a similar manner to the second task, the children were given three possible choices that the child protagonist might take: (a) the child would immediately share the letter/secret with the mother or the best friend (score = 1); (b) the child would think about it for a while (score =2); and (c) the child would keep it to him/herself (score = 3). If the children decided not to share the important letter/secret with the mother or the best friend, they may be questioning the trustworthiness of the mother or the best friend, thus, reflecting hostility.

Children's levels of grudge-holding. Grudge-holding was operationally defined as an increase in a negative affect, following a second experience of unfairness. If there was an increase in the children's levels of hostility, following the second experience of unfairness — and if this increase in level of hostility was over and above the expected level of negative affect associated with the first experience of unfairness — it was considered an indication of a grudge effect. We examined children's degree of grudge-holding in two ways.

Firstly, we compared the children's total level of hostility during Times 1 and 2 for each of the four experimental groups. The strength of the children's grudge holding was assessed by subtracting their total hostility score during Time 1 from their total hostility score during Time 2. A difference between Time 2 and Time 1 indicates the level of increase in (or reduction in) the total level of hostility the children displayed over the two periods of time. If the negative feelings of unfairness during Time 1 were carried over to Time 2, then the children's total level of hostility during Time 2 had a higher level of total hostility score than during Time 1.

Secondly, the children's grudge-holding was assessed, by comparing the two experimental groups' total hostility level during Time 2. Since the main interest of the study was to assess the effect of first time unfairness on the total level of hostility during Time 2, each experimental group was matched up with a group who were exposed to the same fairness/unfairness situation during Time 2. If there was accumulation of hostility from Time 1 to Time 2, it was predicted that an experimental group who repeatedly espoused to unfairness situations over the two periods of time would show a higher level of total hostility during Time 2 than another experimental group who did not expose to unfairness situation during Time 1.

Children's initial responses to unfairness of their own mother or their friend. Children were asked to describe how they might respond to their mother or a friend if they were confronted with a similar unfairness situation, by answering the open-ended question: "What would you do if you were in a similar situation?" Their comments were categorised into a small number of groups, based on the main theme of their responses.

Children's understanding of forgiveness. The participants were asked the open-ended question, "What does forgiveness mean to you?" The children were encouraged to describe their thoughts on this topic. If they appeared unsure about describing the meaning of forgiveness, they were then asked to recall and describe an experience of being forgiven by someone or a time when they forgave someone.

Observation. Aside from answering a set of questions during the interview session, the children spontaneously talked about their daily experience of unfairness and how these experiences made them feel at home or in school. These comments were recorded by the research assistant at the time. The research assistant also recorded any noticeable body language, before and after the children listened to a scenario story and the three imaginary tasks. The entire interview session was video-recorded in order to ensure my records of the children responses to the set of questions, the three imaginary tasks, and their verbatim comments are accurate.

Verbatim comments. All comments were transcribed for subsequent thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a widely used method for qualitative data analysis in psychology, being a useful method to identify, group and report patterns within any given verbal data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It emphasises the importance of capturing valuable themes, which then assists us to make sense of the overall research question. Using the transcriptions of the children's verbatim comments, I identified a number of themes and produced initial codes for these themes. Each verbal statement was classified according to these codes. In order to ensure selected statements accurately represented the identified codes, I asked a research officer (who was blind to the purpose of the

present research) to recode a list of the children's statements. The percentage of inter-rater agreement for all categories was 90%. If there were discrepancies between my and her coding, then the verbatim comments were reviewed again and recoded, in order to achieve consensus.

Procedure and Design

All children who returned their parents' and their own consent forms were included in the study. I arranged a time with the school principals to hold the first and second interview sessions with the participating children. The first interview session was arranged to begin approximately one week after the research information packs were distributed to the children and their parents and the second interview session was scheduled a week after the first session. The classroom teachers were asked to remind their students about taking the information pack home and showing it to their parents. They were also reminded to return both the parents' and their own consent forms, if they would like to take part in the present study.

All interview sessions encompassing the scenarios and the three imaginary tasks were carried out during the children's regular class times. In order to minimise disturbance to their classroom activities, a timetable for the interview sessions was created, prior to the first interview sessions. A copy of the timetable was given to the school management staff, who helped us to bring participating children from their classrooms. The school principals arranged for a quiet room to be made available for the experiment sessions.

The children who returned their consent forms were individually invited into an interview room and were introduced to myself and a research assistant, (a postgraduate student from the School of Psychology, Massey University,

Wellington). The role of the research assistant included recording the children's responses, video-taping the interview sessions, and ensuring that the session kept to the allocated time frame in order to minimise any disturbance to the children's classroom activities.

Prior to commencing the interview sessions, the children were given a brief explanation about the main purpose of the study and what they would be asked to do. They were also assured that there were no right or wrong answers to the questions and that they were allowed to stop the session at any time, if they so wished. If the children appeared to be comfortable with the interview setting and understood the procedure, they were asked to give their assent to commence the interview sessions.

During the interview sessions, the children listened to two stories, one *mother story* and one *best friend story*, the order of which was determined by random assignment. Each of the scenarios described either a fairness or an unfairness theme, and whether children heard fairness or unfairness theme of these two scenarios at Times 1 and 2 was determined ahead of time by random assignment. The children, therefore, were assigned to one of four experimental groups: Group 1 listened to an unfairness story at Times 1 and 2, Group 2 listened to an unfairness story at Time 1 and a fairness story at Time 2, Group 3 listened to a fairness story at Times 1 and 2, and Group 4 listened to a fairness story at Times 1 and an unfairness story at Time 2. Therefore, the type of scenario (mother or best friend) was a within-subject variable and the main theme of scenario (fair or unfair) was a between-subject variable.

Each scenario was accompanied by colourful illustrations, which visually emphasised the main theme. I pointed out the drawings in order to highlight the

main character in the stories and the incidents of fairness or unfairness, while reading out loud the stories. If the children appeared to be unsure about the story and wished to listen to it again, they were allowed to listen one more time.

After listening to the story, the children were asked to describe what had happened to the main child character in the story. They were then asked to answer the following set of questions relating to the scenario:

1. Was what happened to John/Emma in the story fair or unfair? If so, why was it fair or unfair?
2. How fair or unfair was it for John/Emma? Why was it fair or unfair?
3. How might John/Emma be feeling now?
4. How strongly does John/Emma feel this way?
5. What would you do or say if you were in a similar situation?

After these questions were asked and answered, the children were further requested to participate in the three imaginary tasks that assessed the children's willingness to share with, care for and trust the person who was fair or unfair towards the main child character in the story. Each task had three possible responses, and the children were asked to select one of these and give an explanation for their selection. Each choice was presented with colourful drawings that illustrated clearly the meaning of each choice.

The second story was read to children after they had completed all the tasks for the first story. The children followed the same procedure as in the first story: they responded to a series of questions about the story and the three imaginary tasks. After answering the these questions, the children who listened to the scenarios about unfairness (Groups 1 and 2) were asked: (a) whether or not the child protagonist forgives the mother and the best friend, and (b) if the

child does forgive, then what would have made them want to forgive the mother or the best friend. At the end of the session all the children were asked to respond to the final question: "What does forgiveness mean to you?" Once this final question was asked and answered, the children were thanked for their time and effort and they each received a sticker.

One week from the first interview sessions, the children were again individually invited to take part in a second session. The same research assistant was present during the second session. The children were put through the same procedure as the first time. They again listened to two stories: the parent story and the best friend story. The main child character was the same one as in Time 1. The main theme of fairness and unfairness (blamed despite being innocent and breaking a promise) were also the same, although the contexts in which these incidents happened were described a little differently from that at Time 1. Therefore, the children were not able to predict what would happen to the child protagonist, until they had listened to the end of the story. A series of questions were then asked, in the same manner as Time 1. Three imaginary tasks were also presented identical to Time 1 procedure. Once the children had completed the tasks and answered the last question, they were again thanked for their time and effort and received a sticker.

Each interview session lasted approximately 20 minutes. Based on the previous studies, this was judged sufficient time to go through two sets of scenario-based interview sessions with three imaginary tasks and also be able to maintain the children's concentration within the interview period. The research assistant was always available to ensure the entire interview sessions were an enjoyable experience and not upsetting for the children in any way.

Results: Quantitative Data

General Observation

All the children were willing to participate in the study, even though they were asked to take some time out from their classroom activities. They paid careful attention to the details of the stories and they described their own ideas and experiences of fairness, unfairness, and forgiveness very well. In addition, all the children gave their assent at the beginning of the interview sessions and none of them expressed distress during the interview sessions or wanted to terminate any sessions. The majority of the children appeared to be considerably more relaxed about being in the interview sessions during Time 2 than during Time 1. They communicated well with the research assistant and with me during both interview sessions.

Children's Basic Judgement of Fairness and Unfairness

During Times 1 and 2 sessions, each child listened to two versions of the scenarios, which described either a fair or unfair theme. These scenarios explicitly described the themes of fairness or unfairness, although a small number of children actually judged unfairness incidents as fair and fair incidents as unfair. Table 9 shows the children's general judgement of fairness or unfairness, across four different versions of the story during Times 1 and 2. During Time 1, 19 % of the children who listened to the unfairness scenarios thought that the mother's behaviour was actually fair, while all the children agreed that the best friend's behaviour was unfair. During Time 1, 11% of the children who listened to the fairness scenarios thought that the mother's behaviour was unfair and 18% of the children thought the best friends'

behaviour was unfair. Similar findings were observed from the children's judgements of fairness or unfairness during Time 2, where 14% of the children who listened to the unfairness scenarios thought the mother's behaviour was fair and 8% of the children thought the best friend's behaviour was unfair. All children who listened to the fairness scenarios thought that the mother's behaviour was fair, while 4% of the children thought that the best friend's behaviour was unfair.

Table 9 *Children's General Judgement of Fairness and Unfairness During Times1 and 2*

Story types	Children's judgement of fairness or unfairness			
	Time 1		Time 2	
	Fair (%)	Unfair (%)	Fair (%)	Unfair (%)
Mother's unfairness	19	81	14	86
Mother's fairness	89	11	100	0
Best friend's unfairness	0	100	8	92
Best friend's fairness	82	18	96	4

Overall, the children were more likely to judge the mother's unfairness behaviour as fair than the best friend's unfair behaviour. A number of children judged the mother's and the best friend's fair behaviour as unfair, particularly during Time1. The children appeared to have their own perceptions of what it is to be fair and unfair. The children's reasoning about their judgements of fairness

and unfairness of the treatment given to the child in the story are presented in the following section — the children's qualitative data.

Ratings of Fairness and Unfairness

Figure 13.1 shows the mean degree of perceived *unfairness* reported by the children who were listened to the unfairness stories during both Times 1 and 2. Figure 13.2 shows the mean degree of perceived *fairness* reported by the children who listened to the fairness stories during both Times 1 and 2. As Figure 13.1 illustrates, in the unfairness conditions, the children were more likely to judge higher degrees of unfairness by the best friend than by the mother. A paired-sample *t*-test was conducted in order to compare the impact of unfairness by the mother and the best friend on the children's indication of degree of unfairness. At Time 1, there was a statistically significant greater degree of unfairness reported when the children were exposed to the unfairness of the best friend ($M = 8.52$, $SD = 1.63$) than the mother ($M = 6.78$, $SD = 1.83$), $t(26) = -3.85$, $p < .05$. The eta squared statistic (.36) indicated a large effect size. At Time 2, although the children indicted a stronger degree of unfairness towards the best friend ($M = 8.14$, $SD = 2.4$) than towards the mother ($M = 7.48$, $SD = 2.71$), the difference was not statistically significant.

Figure 13.2 illustrates that children who listened to the fairness stories indicated a higher degree of fairness by the best friend than by the mother during both Times 1 and 2. A paired-sample *t*-test was conducted in order to compare the impact of fairness by the mother and by the best friend on the children's indication of degrees of fairness. At Time1, there was no significant differences between the children's degree of fairness attributed to the best friend ($M = 7.91$, $SD = 2.14$) and the mother ($M = 7.32$, $SD = 1.96$). At Time 2,

there was also no significant difference in degree of fairness attributed to the best friend ($M = 8.15$, $SD = 2.26$) and the mother ($M = 7.42$, $SD = 2.39$).

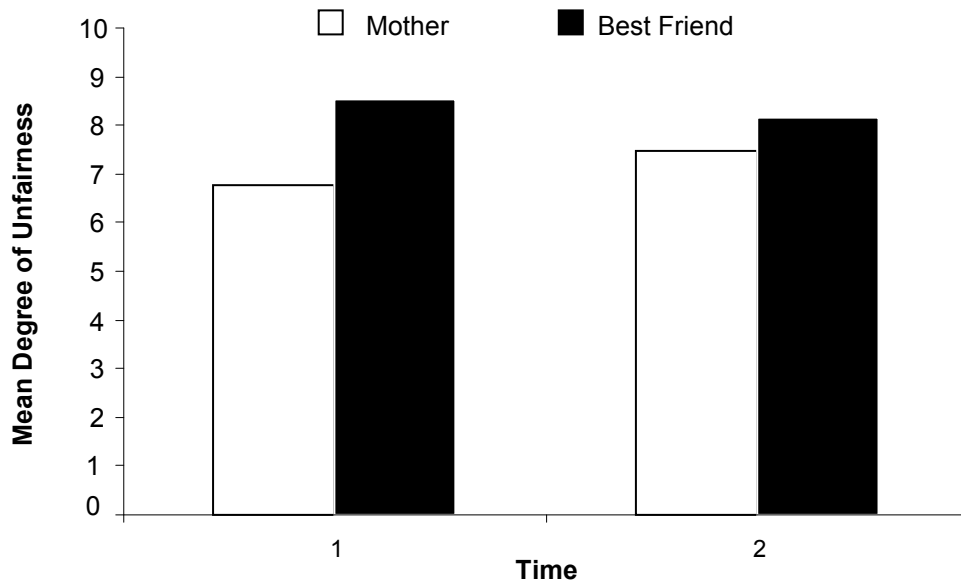


Figure 13.1. Children's mean degree of perceived unfairness during both Times 1 and 2

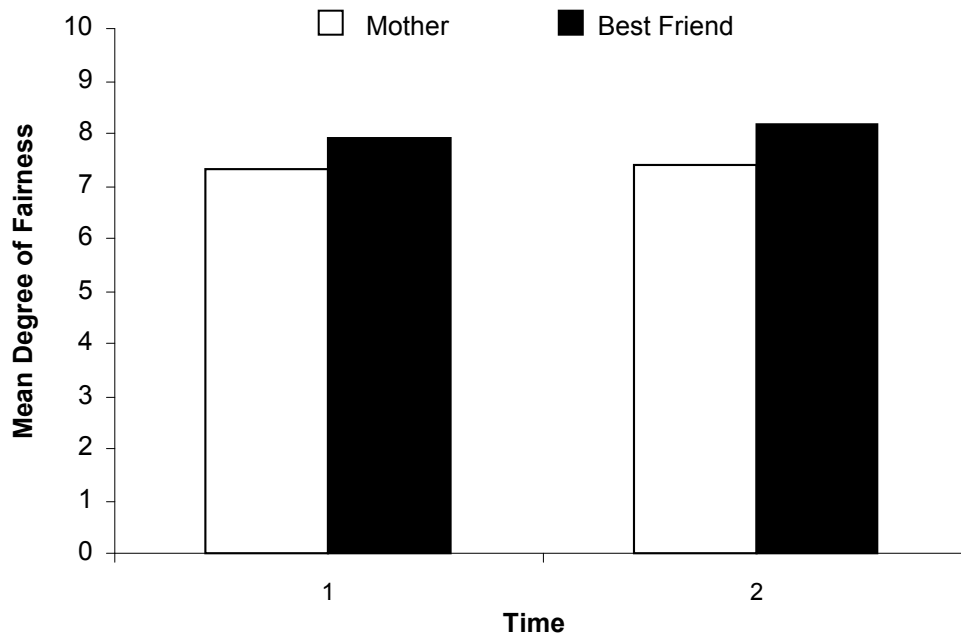


Figure 13.2. Children's mean degree of perceived fairness during both Time 1 and 2

Nature and Strength of Feelings in Response to Fairness and Unfairness

The children's reported feelings following fair or unfair treatment during Time 1 are presented in Figure 14.1 and their reported feelings during Time 2 in Figure 14.2. Their specific terms are classified into four possible categories. Sad feelings included words like *lonely* and *left out*. Anger included terms like *upset* and *annoyed*. Expressions like *good* and *cheerful* were included in happy feelings. *OK* and *fine* were considered as neutral feelings. As Figure 14.1 illustrates, two commonly reported feelings associated with the unfair scenarios were sadness and anger. Children reported feelings of sadness more frequently after listening to the best friend's unfairness scenarios (85%) than the mother's unfairness scenarios (41%) whereas they reported feelings of anger more frequently after listening to the mother's unfairness scenarios (59%) than the best friend's unfairness scenarios (30%). Feelings of happiness were reported most frequently after listening to fair treatments of the mother (71%) and the best friend (86%).

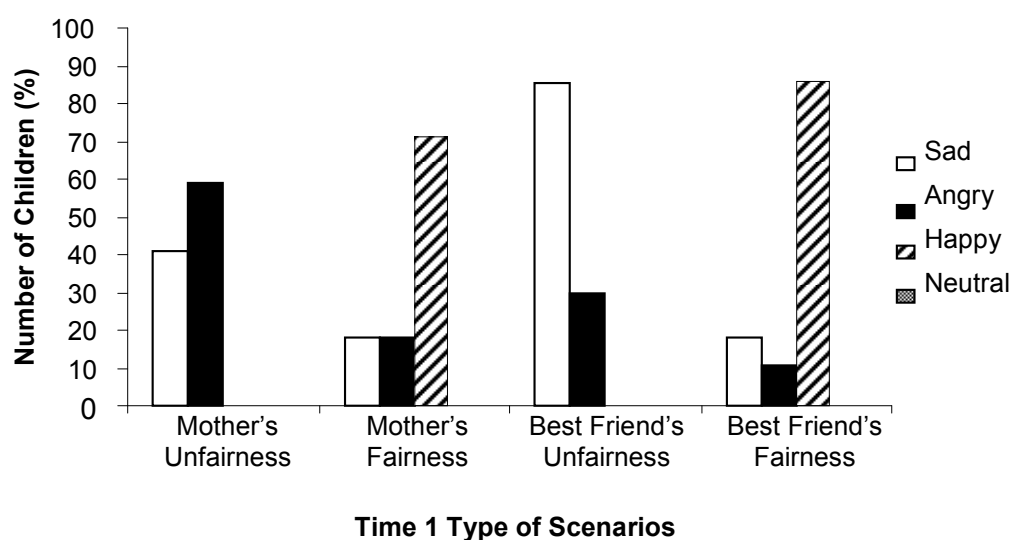


Figure 14.1. Children's frequencies of reported feelings as a result of fairness or unfairness during Time 1

During Time 2, as Figure 14.2 illustrates, similar findings were noted. Sadness and anger were two of the major feelings expressed after listening to the unfairness scenarios. For both the mother's and the best friend's scenarios, the feelings of sadness were reported more frequently (Mother: 76%; Best friend: 83%) than the feelings of anger (Mother: 31%; Best friend: 24%). With regards to the fairness scenarios feelings of happiness were again reported most frequently after listening to the scenarios about the mother (58%) and the best friend (50%). It may be worth noting that during both Times 1 and 2 more than 15% of the children reported sad and angry feelings, when they made a fairness judgement of the mother's and the best friend's behaviour.

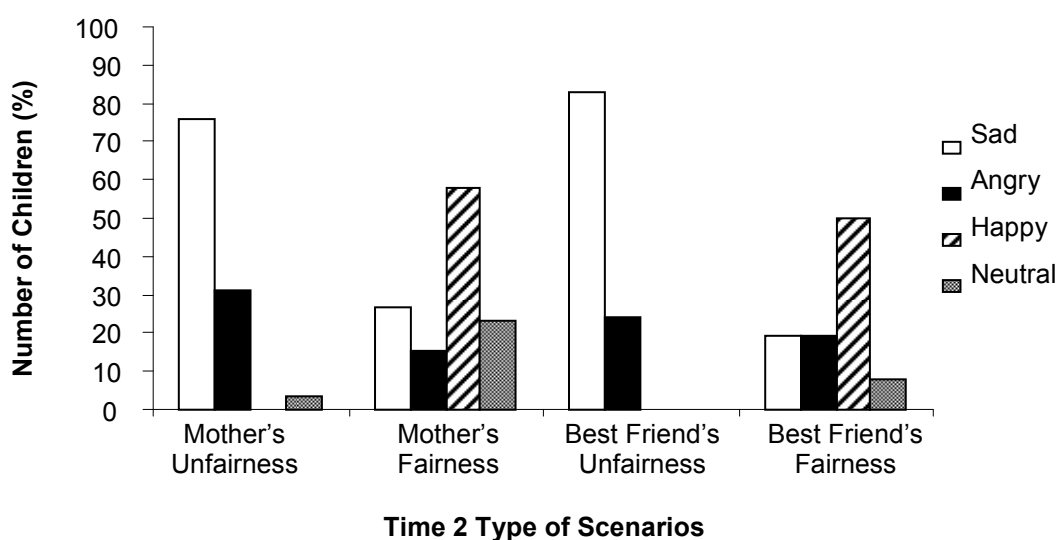


Figure 14.2. Children's frequencies of reported feelings as a result of fairness or unfairness during Time 2

Figure 15.1 and Figure 15.2 show the children's mean degree of reported feelings as a result of either fair or unfair treatments. Figure 15.1 presents the children's mean degree of reported feelings associated with the mother's and the best friend's fair or unfair treatments during Time 1. As Figure 15.1 illustrates, children's reported feelings varied according to the fairness of the

stories. When they were exposed to the unfairness scenarios, feelings of sadness and anger were commonly expressed. The mean degree of sad feelings between the mother's unfairness scenario stories ($M = 6.45$, $SD = 2.29$) was lower than the best friend's scenario stories ($M = 8.45$, $SD = 1.99$). Similarly, the mean degree of angry feelings were lower for the mother's unfairness stories ($M = 6.06$, $SD = 1.84$) than the best friend's unfairness stories ($M = 7.63$, $SD = 2.62$). With regards to the fairness stories, feelings of happiness were reported as the highest for both the mother's ($M = 7$, $SD = 2.32$) and the best friend's ($M = 8.14$, $SD = 2.2$) scenarios.

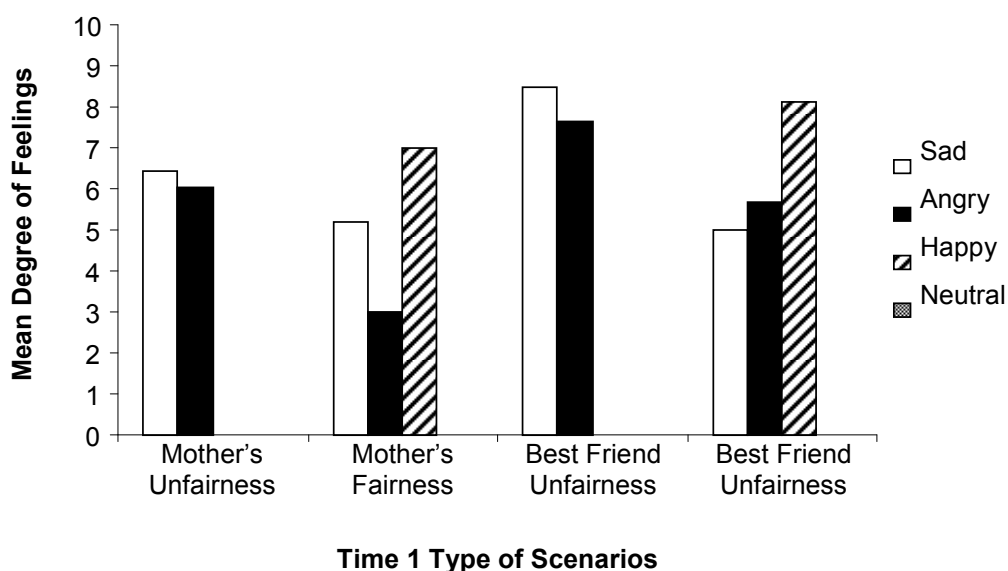


Figure 15.1. Children's mean degree of feelings as a result of fairness or unfairness during Time 1

Figure 15.2 illustrates the strength of the children's reported feelings during Time 2. Similar to the findings from Time 1, feelings of sadness and anger were commonly reported when children were exposed to unfairness scenarios. Both feelings of sadness and anger were lower for the mother's unfairness scenarios (Sad: $M = 6.89$, $SD = 2.48$; anger: $M = 6.28$, $SD = 2.46$)

than the best friend's unfairness scenarios (Sad: $M = 7.96$, $SD = 2.61$; Anger: $M = 7.71$, $SD = 1.98$). As far as the fairness scenarios were concerned, for both versions of the scenarios feelings of happiness were the strongest feeling reported by children (Mother: $M = 6.5$, $SD = 1.97$; Best friend: $M = 8.12$, $SD = 1.47$).

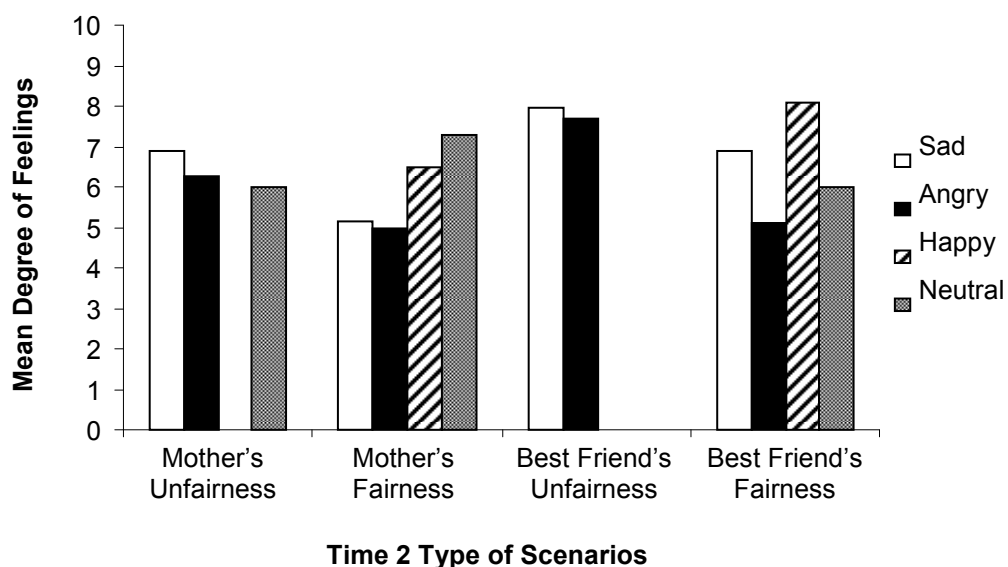


Figure 15.2. Children's mean degree of feelings as a result of fairness or unfairness during Time 2.

It may be worth mentioning that some levels of neutral feelings were identified in the mother's unfairness scenarios. Nevertheless, it was reported by only one child. Similar explanations apply to feelings of sadness and anger reported after listening to the best friend's fairness story during both Times 1 and 2. A number of children who reported these feelings were small even though their mean degree appeared to be fairly high. Interpretations of these figures may require some caution.

Children's Mean Levels of Hostility Towards the Mother and the Best Friend as a Result of Fairness and Unfairness

The total score for the three imaginary tasks — sharing, caring and trusting — was calculated as the children's hostility towards the mother or the best friend in the scenarios. In order to evaluate if the children's responses to these three tasks independently contributed to overall hostility, their responses to each imaginary task and their total score of hostility towards the mother or towards the best friend were correlated. Tables 10 and 11 show the correlations between the three imaginary tasks and the total score on hostility towards the mother during Times 1 and 2 whereas Tables 12 and 13 present the correlation between the three imaginary tasks and the total scores of hostility towards the best friend during Times 1 and 2.

Table 10 *Intecorrelations Between the Three Imaginary Tasks and the Total Score of Hostility Towards the Mother During Time 1*

Tasks	1	2	3	4
(Children $n = 55$)				
1.Share	—	.10	.15	.80**
2.Care		—	.04	.30*
3.Trust			—	.67**
4.Hostility				—

*Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

**Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

Table 11 *Intercorrelations Between the Three Imaginary Tasks and the Total Score of Hostility Towards the Mother During Time 2*

Tasks	1	2	3	4
(Children $n = 55$)				
1.Share	—	.33*	.49	.78**
2.Care		—	.48**	.70**
3.Trust			—	.63**
4.Hostility				—

*Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

**Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

Table 12 *Intercorrelations Between the Three Imaginary Tasks and the Total Score of Hostility Towards the Best Friend During Time 1*

Tasks	1	2	3	4
(Children $n = 55$)				
1.Share	—	.18	.27*	.85**
2.Care		—	-.08	.42**
3.Trust			—	.63**
4.Hostility				—

*Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

**Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

Table 13 *Intercorrelations Between the Three Imaginary Tasks and the Total Score of Hostility Towards the Best Friend During Time 2*

Tasks	1	2	3	4
(Children $n = 55$)				
1.Share	—	.25	.19	.82**
2.Care		—	-.22	.53**
3.Trust			—	.66**
4.Hostility				—

**Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

Overall, the trusting task appeared to share some common meanings with sharing or caring tasks in a specific context of mother-child relationship or friendships. However, the children's sharing, caring, and trusting behaviour were generally independently contributing to their total level of hostility.

Differences between the children's mean level of hostility towards the mother and the best friend were examined by an independent-sample *t*-test. Figure 16.1 illustrates the children's mean level of hostility after being exposed to the fairness or the unfairness of the mother and the best friend during Time 1. As Figure 16.1 illustrates, there is a significant difference on the children's mean level of hostility after exposure to the mother's fair treatment, $M = 4.04$, $SD = 1.32$, and the mother's unfair treatment, $M = 4.96$, $SD = 1.34$, $t(53) = 2.58$, $p < .05$. The eta squared statistic (.11) indicates a moderate to large effect size. A similar finding can be observed in the children's mean level of hostility after exposure to the best friend's fair and unfair treatment. An independent *t*-test

shows that significant differences existed on the children's mean level of hostility as a result of fair treatment, $M = 3.82$, $SD = .94$ and as a result of unfair treatment, $M = 5.70$, $SD = 1.23$, $t(53) = 6.36$, $p < .05$. The eta squared statistic (.43) indicates a large effect size. Overall, the children's mean level of hostility towards the mother and the best friend was much higher when unfair treatment was presented than when fair treatment was presented.

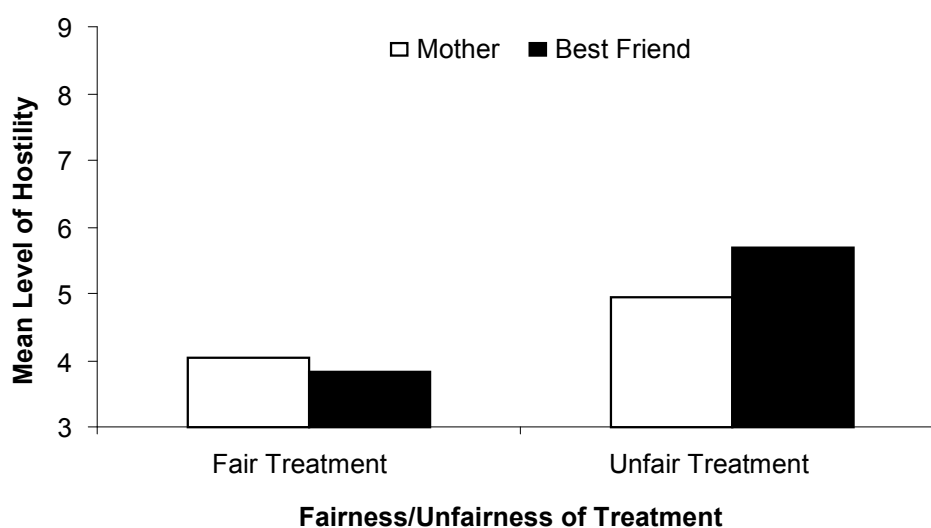


Figure 16.1. Children's mean level of hostility towards the mother and the best friend during Time 1

During Time 2, as shown in Figure 16.2, there is a significant difference between the children's mean level of hostility towards the mother as a result of fairness, $M = 4.46$, $SD = 1.24$, and unfairness, $M = 5.28$, $SD = 1.44$, $t(53) = 2.24$, $p < .05$. The eta squared statistic (.09) indicates a moderate to large effect size. Similarly, in response to the best friend's fairness or unfairness treatment, there is a significant difference between fair treatment, $M = 4.08$, $SD = 1.09$, and unfair treatment, $M = 5.83$, $SD = 1.20$, $t(53) = 5.64$, $p < .05$. The eta squared statistic (.38) indicates a large effect size. Similarly during Time 1, the children's mean level of hostility towards the mother and the best friend were

much higher, when they were exposed to the unfair treatment situation than the fair treatment situation.

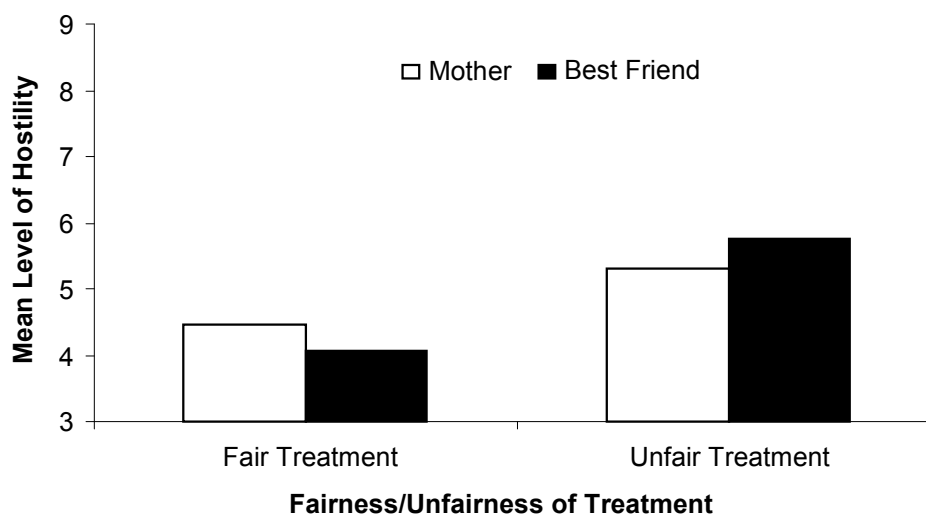


Figure 16.2. Children's mean level of hostility towards the mother and the best friend during Time 2

Children's Mean Levels of Hostility Towards the Mother and the Best Friend Over the Two Time Periods

A total score of the three imaginary tasks was considered as a reflection of the children's levels of hostility towards the mother and the best friend. In order to examine how the fairness of the mother's and the best friend's behaviour might be impacting on the children's levels of hostility, their mean level of hostility towards the mother and the best friend were compared over the two periods of time. Since the children had been classified into four experimental groups, a paired-sampled *t*-test was carried out to compare children's mean level of hostility towards the mother and the best friend during Time 1 and Time 2 for each experimental group. An overview of the scenario types for each experimental group is presented in Table 14.

Table 14 Overview of the Scenario Types for the Four Experimental Groups

Experimental Group	Participants			Type of Scenarios	
	Boy	Girl	Total	Time 1	Time 2
Group 1	5	8	13	UF	UF
Group 2	7	7	14	UF	F
Group 3	4	8	12	F	F
Group 4	7	9	16	F	UF

Note. UF = Unfairness, U = Fairness

Group 1 children listened to a story about unfairness during both Times 1 and 2. Figure 17.1 shows their mean levels of hostility towards the mother and the best friend over the two time periods.

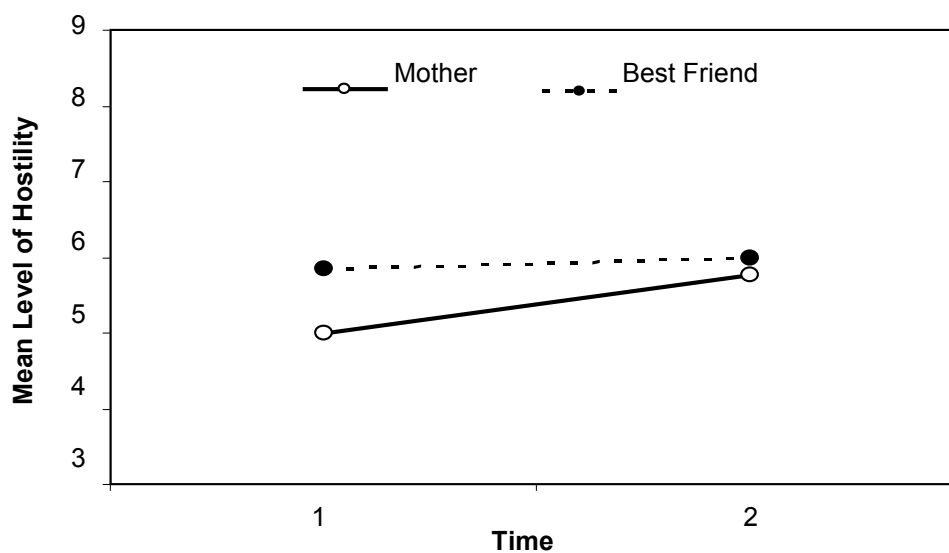


Figure 17.1. Group 1 children's mean levels of hostility towards the mother and the best friend over the two periods of time.

For the mean level of hostility towards the mother, a paired-sampled t -test showed that the difference between the mean level of hostility during Times 1 ($M = 5.00$, $SD = 1.47$) and 2 ($M = 5.77$, $SD = 1.09$) was statistically significant, $t(12) = -2.99$, $p < .05$. The eta statistic (.43) indicates a large effect size. For the mean level of hostility towards the best friend, the difference between the mean level of hostility during Times 1 ($M = 5.84$, $SD = .99$) and 2 ($M = 6.00$, $SD = 1.08$) was not statistically significant. Children's mean level of hostility towards the mother increased extensively over the two periods of time, while their mean level of hostility towards the best friend did not increase notably.

The Group 2 children listened to a story about unfairness during Time 1 and a story about fairness during Time 2. Figure 17.2 shows their mean levels of hostility towards the mother and the best friend.

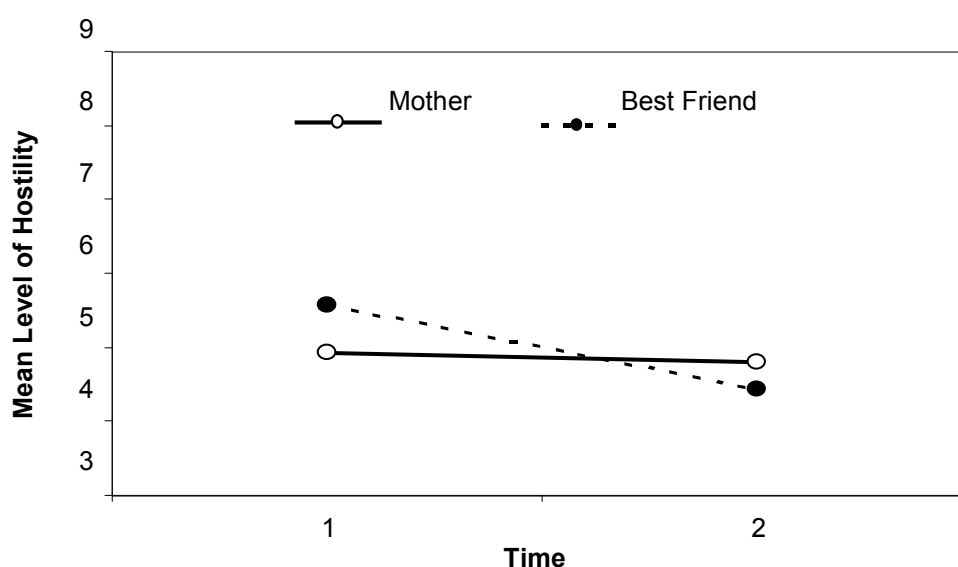


Figure 17.2. Group 2 children's mean levels of hostility towards the mother and the best friend over the two periods of time

For the mean level of hostility towards the mother, a paired-sample t -test showed that the difference between Times 1 ($M = 4.93$, $SD = 1.27$) and 2 ($M =$

4.79, $SD = 1.37$) was not statistically significant. However, for their mean level of hostility towards the best friend, a paired-sample t -test showed that the difference between Time 1 ($M = 5.57$, $SD = 1.45$) to Time 2 ($M = 4.42$, $SD = 1.22$) was statistically significant, $t(13) = 2.45$, $p < .05$. The eta squared statistic (.32) indicated a large effect size. The children's mean level of hostility towards the mother appeared to be stable over two periods of time, while their mean level of hostility towards the best friend decreased noticeably after exposed to the fairness situation.

The Group 3 children listened to the stories about fairness during both Times 1 and 2. Figure 17.3 shows their mean levels of hostility towards the mother and the best friend.

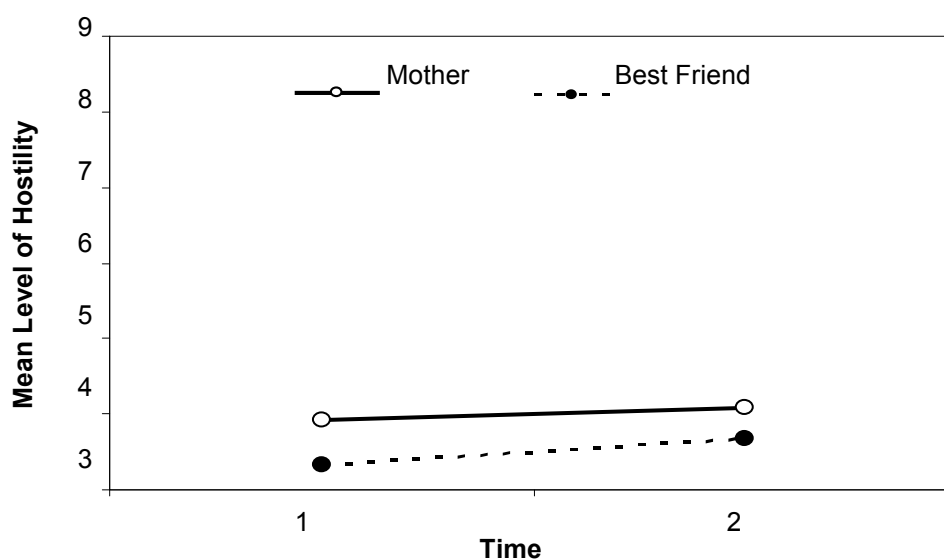


Figure 17.3. Group 3 children's mean levels of hostility towards the mother and the best friend over the two periods of time

Since the children in this group were not exposed to the unfairness incident, their mean level of hostility was fairly low and stable over the two time periods. A paired-sampled t -test showed that the differences between children's mean level of hostility towards the mother during Time 1 ($M = 3.92$, $SD = 1.24$) was

not statistically significant from their mean level of hostility during Time 2 ($M = 4.08$, $SD = 1.0$). Similarly, the children's mean level of hostility towards the best friend during Time 1 ($M = 3.33$, $SD = .78$) was not significantly different from their mean level of hostility during Time 2 ($M = 3.92$, $SD = 1.24$).

The Group 4 children listened to the stories about fairness during Time 1 and the stories about unfairness during Time 2. Figure 17.4 presents their mean levels of hostility towards the mother and the best friend during Times 1 and 2.

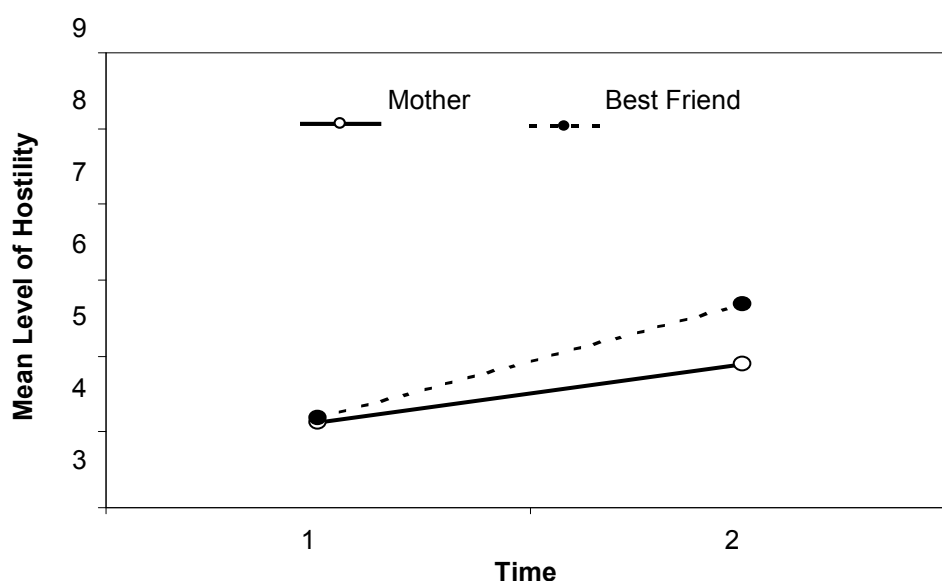


Figure 17.4. Group 4 children's mean levels of hostility towards the mother and the best friend over the two periods of time

For children's mean level of hostility towards the mother from Time 1 ($M = 4.13$, $SD = 1.41$) to Time 2 ($M = 4.88$, $SD = 1.59$), a paired-sampled t -test showed that the difference was not statistically significant. However, the children's mean level of hostility towards the best friend increased significantly from Time 1 ($M = 4.19$, $SD = .91$) to Time 2 ($M = 5.68$, $SD = 1.30$), $t(15) = -4.39$, $p < .05$. The eta squared statistic (.60) indicated a large effect size. The children greatly increased their levels of hostility towards the best friend after exposure to the unfairness situation.

Children's Levels of Grudges Against the Mother or the Best Friend as a Result of Fair and Unfair Treatment

In order to examine whether the children's experience of the fairness or the unfairness situation during Time 1 had an influence on their levels of hostility during Time 2 as a means of a grudge effect, the children's mean level of hostility during Time 1 was subtracted from their mean level of hostility during Time 2. Figure 18 illustrates the differences between the children's total hostility levels during Times 1 and 2 for each experimental group. As Figure 18 shows, the children's total level of hostility towards the mother increases significantly after being exposed to the unfairness situation during Time 2: Group 1 ($M = .79$, $SD = .93$) and Group 4 ($M = .75$, $SD = 2.1$). On the other hand, Group 2 ($M = -.5$, $SD = 1.01$) noticeably reduced their total level of hostility more than during Time 1. Group 3 ($M = .25$, $SD = 1.4$) increased their total level of hostility slightly more than it did during Time 1.

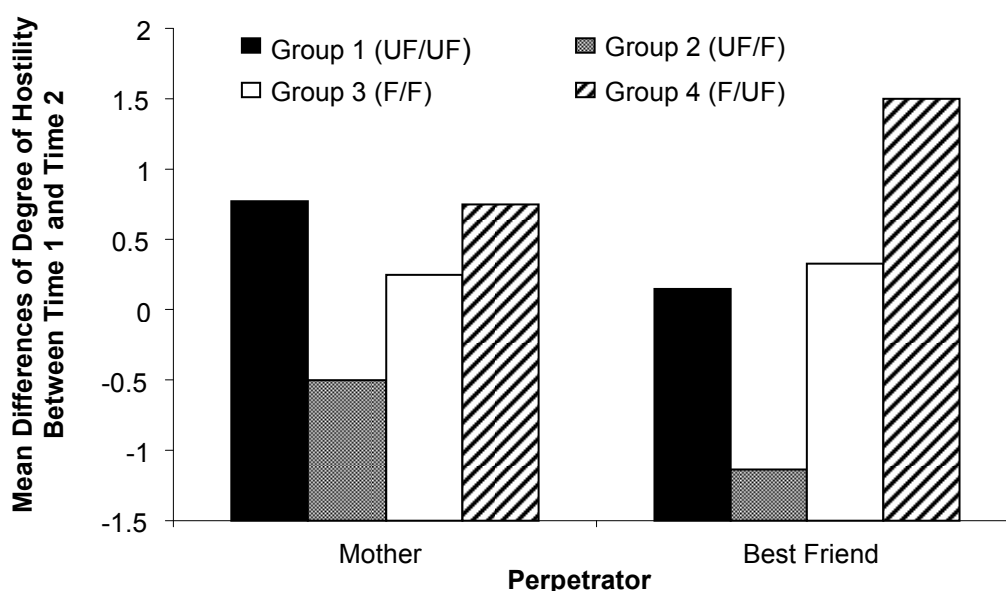


Figure 18. Mean differences of children's levels of hostility towards the mother and the best friend between Time 1 and Time 2.

Similar findings were also observed from the children's mean level of hostility towards the best friend. Group 1 ($M = .15$, $SD = 1.34$) and Group 4 ($M = 1.5$, $SD = 1.37$) increased their mean level of hostility, as a consequence of the unfairness situation during Time 2. Group 3 ($M = .33$, $SD = .78$), showed a slight increase in their mean level of hostility, which was more than during Time 1, whilst Group 2 ($M = -1.14$, $SD = 1.75$) indicated an extremely low total level of hostility than during Time 1, after being exposed to the fairness situation during Time 2.

A further statistical analysis was carried out, in order to inspect the children's holding of a grudge. Before conducting a statistical analysis, each experimental group was matched up with a group that had been exposed to the same fairness or unfairness situation during Time 2: Group 1 with Group 4, and Group 2 with Group 3. A mixed between-within subjects analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed, in order to determine whether any differences in the mean level of hostility over the two periods of time were dependent on the experimental groups.

Figure 19.1 illustrates the mean levels of hostility towards the mother, during Times 1 and 2 for Group 1 and Group 4. A mixed between-within subjects ANOVA indicated that there was a statistically significant main effect for time, $F(1, 27) = 5.94$, $p < .05$. The effect size was very large (partial eta squared = .18). The mean level of hostility towards the mother during Time 2 ($M = 4.52$, $SD = 1.48$) were significantly higher than those during Time 1 ($M = 5.28$, $SD = 1.44$). The main effect of the experimental group was also significant, $F(1, 27) = 4.32$, $p < .05$. The mean level of hostility towards the mother, was significantly higher for Group 1 ($M = 5.39$, $SD = .32$) than for Group 4 ($M = 4.5$,

$SD = .29$), with a large effect size (partial eta squared = .14). However, the interaction effect did not reach statistical significance, $F(1, 27) = .001, p > .05$.

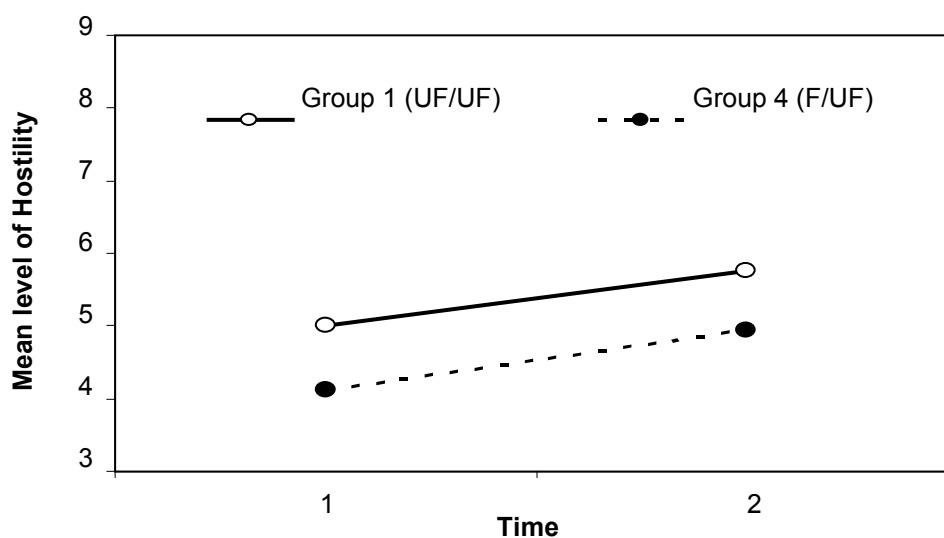


Figure 19.1. Comparison between Group 1 and Group 4 children's mean levels of hostility towards the mother over the two periods of time

Figure 19.2 presents the mean levels of hostility towards the best friend, over the two periods of time, for Group 1 and Group 4. A mixed between- within subjects ANOVA yielded a statistically significant main effect for time, $F(1, 27) = 10.66, p < .05$, with a very large effect size (partial eta squared = .28). The mean level of hostility towards the friend was significantly higher during Time 2 ($M = 5.84, SD = .23$) than during Time 1 ($M = 5.02, SD = .18$). A statistical significance was also obtained from the main effect of the experimental group, $F(1, 27) = 9.72, p < .05$, with a large effect size (partial eta squared = .27). Group 1 ($M = 5.92, SD = .24$) showed higher mean level of hostility than Group 4 ($M = 4.94, SD = .21$). In addition, the interaction effect was significant, $F(1, 27) = 7.06, p < .05$. The effect size was large, partial eta squared = .21. During Time 1, Group 1 ($M = 5.85, SD = .26$) was significantly higher than Group 4 ($M = 4.19, SD = .24$). During Time 2, Group 1 ($M = 6, SD = .34$) continued to

indicate a higher mean level of hostility than Group 4 ($M = 5.69$, $SD = .30$). This finding suggests that the Group 1 children sustained a higher level of hostility towards the best friend than the Group 4 children over the two periods of time and this indicates the children's holding of a grudge against the best friend for his/her earlier unfair behaviour.

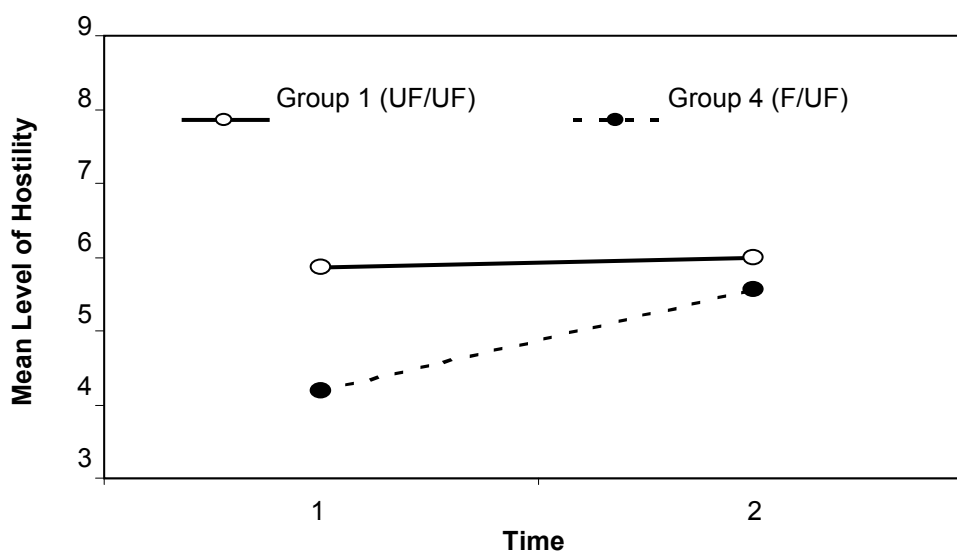


Figure 19.2. Comparison between Group 1 and Group 4 children's mean levels of hostility toward the best friend over the two periods of time

Figure 19.3 illustrates the mean levels of hostility towards the mother over the two periods of time for Group 2 and Group 3. A mixed between-within subjects ANOVA indicated that there was a significant main effect for the experimental groups, $F(1, 24) = .4.35$, $p = .048$, with a large effect size (partial eta squared = .15). Group 2 ($M = 4.86$, $SD = .28$) indicated a higher level of hostility than Group 3 ($M = 4.0$, $SD = .30$). However, there was a non-significant main effect for time, $F(1, 24) = .00$, $p > .05$, and for the interaction effect, $F(1, 24) = .36$, $p > .05$.

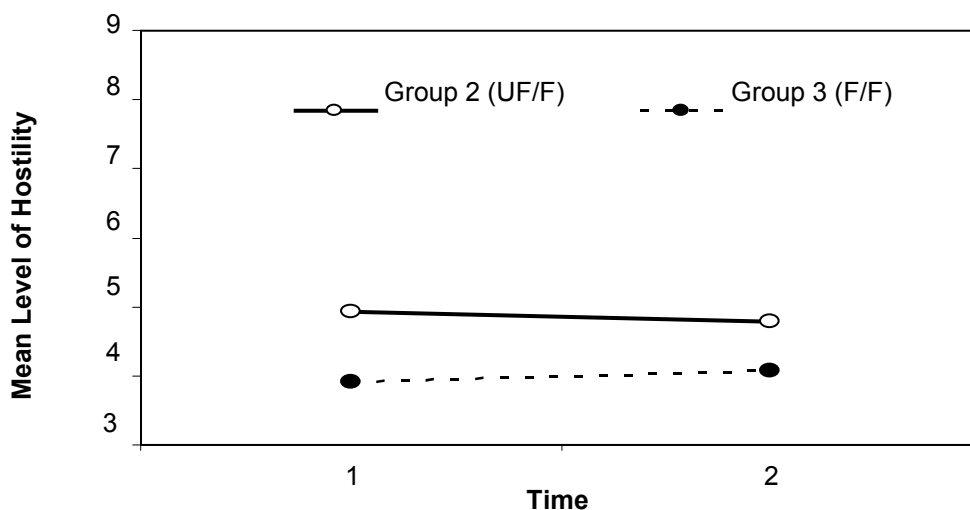


Figure 19.3. Comparison between Group 2 and Group 3 children's mean levels of hostility towards the mother over the two periods of time

Figure 19.4 presents the mean levels of hostility towards the best friend over the two periods of time for Group 2 and Group 3. A mixed between-within subjects ANOVA yielded that a main effect for time was non-significant, $F(1, 24) = 2.19, p > .05$. However, there was a significant main effect for group, $F(1, 24) = 18.86, p < .001$, and for the interaction effect, $F(1, 24) = 18.86, p < .001$. Group 2 ($M = 5.0, SD = .24$) indicated a higher level of hostility than Group 3 ($M = 3.5, SD = .25$). Whether the mean level of hostility for Group 2 was higher than Group 3 was dependent on time. During Time 1, Group 2 ($M = 5.57, SD = .32$) showed a higher level of hostility than Group 3 ($M = 3.33, SD = .28$). During Time 2, Group 2 ($M = 4.43, SD = .28$) continued to show a higher level of hostility than Group 3 ($M = 3.67, SD = .30$) although they were exposed to the fairness situation. This finding suggests that the Group 2 children sustained a higher level of hostility than the Group 3 children over the two periods of time, and that their hostile responses to the best friend during Time 2 were an indication of the grudge effect: Group 2 children were holding a grudge against the best friend for his/her earlier unfair behaviour.

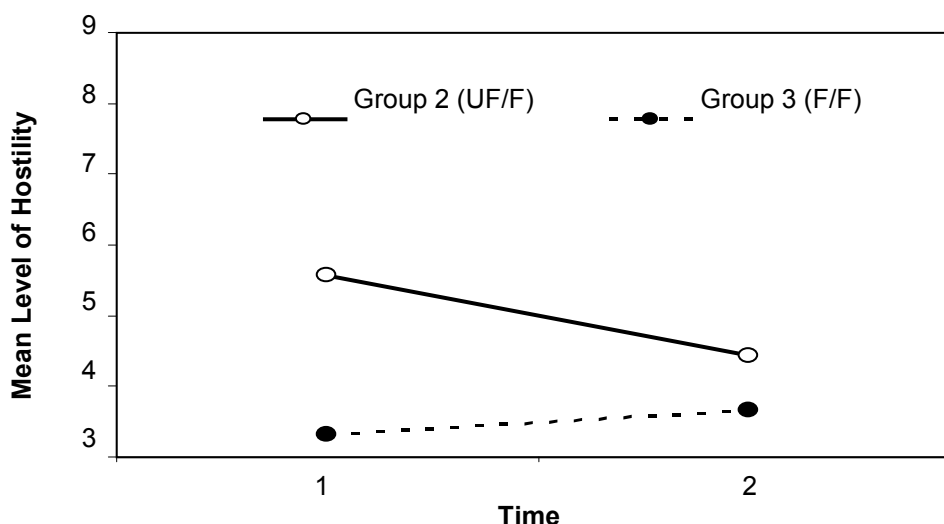


Figure 19.4. Comparison between Group 2 and Group 3 children’s mean levels of hostility towards the best friend over the two periods of time

What Would You Do or Say If You Were In a Similar Situation?

In order to investigate possibility of the children holding a grudge, their verbatim responses to the open-ended question, “What would you do or say if you were in a similar situation?” were carefully studied. I paid particular attention to Group 1, because the children in this group were exposed to the unfairness situations during Times 1 and 2. If there were some indications of a grudge against the mother or the best friend for being unfair towards the child protagonist in the scenarios, then it was thought that the children’s immediate reactions would illustrate some increased levels of hostility towards the mother or the best friend. During Time 2, in particular, the children’s hostile responses towards the mother or the best friend were expected to increase in strength. The children’s verbal responses during Times 1 and 2. were classified into eight noticeable themes presented in Table 15.

Table 15 Children's Responses to Their Own Mother's or Their Best Friend's Unfair Treatment

Children's types of responses	Examples
<p>1. Children would use face-to-face communication to communicate with the mother/best friend during Time 1, but they try to retaliate (e.g., unfair back) against them during Time 2.</p>	<p>T1 Friend: "I would probably go and ask them [friends if I can play with them]."; T2 Friend: "When Sam is having a sleep over, I won't invite Sam."</p>
<p>2. Children would use face-to-face communication to communicate with the mother/best friend during both Times 1 and 2.</p>	<p>T1 Mother: "I would say it was not my fault, it was your fault, because you are late."; T2 Mother: "It wasn't my fault because all I did was playing game and I did not touch her document." T1 Friend: "I would go up to Sarah and say, 'Katie promised me lots and lots of time [that] she'll play with me.'"; T2 Friend: "I might go up and say Katie and say, 'Hey Katie, you have promised [to play with me].'"</p>

3. Children would avoid face-to-face communication with the mother/best friend during Times 1 and 2 because of their experience of unfairness. T1 Mother: “*[I will not] say or do nothing. [I will] just accept it.*”; T2 Mother: “*I come back to my computer game and not help [mother].*” T1 Friend: “*I [will] just go home.*”; T2 Friend: “*I will not play with him for a few weeks.*”
4. Children would comply with the mother’s/best friend’s unfair request during Time 1, but they would try to communicate face-to-face with the mother/best friend during Time 2 T1 Mother: “*I would rather watch TV, but I would not mind if I have to go with my mum.*”; T2 Mother: “*I might just tell her [that] I was playing the game.*”
5. Children would think about some solutions to deal with unfair behaviour or the mother/best friend during Times 1 and 2 T1 Friend: “*I would try to find another good friend or if I cannot, I just go to do my own thing.*”; T2 Friend: “*I might just ask Katie again if I have been invited, if not then probably I will find another friends.*”
6. Children would use face-to-face communication with the mother/best friend T1 Friend: “*I would go and say to Katie, you promised to play with me. So it isn’t fair [that you are not keeping your promise].*”; T2 Friend: “*[I would] just*

- during Time 1, but they would avoid direct communication during Time 2. ignore Katie for a couple of days and let Katie to think about what she has done, showing that I am not happy.”
7. Children would use face-to-face communication with the mother/best friend during Time1, but they would think about some other ways to manage their experience of unfairness during Time 2. T1 Friend: “[I would say] ‘Hey, you promised me and you did break your promise.’”; T2 Friend: “[I would] tell other friends [how I feel and] share feelings about it [what Katie has done].”
8. Children would comply with the mother’s/best friend’s unfair request during Times 1 and 2. T1 Mother: “I would listen to what mum says. [because when similar thing had happened to me] she smacked me on my back and send me to bed.”; T2 Mother: “I promise myself I will find it [mother’s document on the computer] and finish the work for her. She can tell me what to do. [If I don’t listen to her] I will keep getting a smack on my back.”
-

Figure 20 illustrates the frequency of the responses. The majority of children reported, during Times 1 and 2, that they would confront their mother or best friend, if they were unfairly treated by them. There were only a small number of children who actually thought, during Time 2, of retaliating against the best friend. Overall, a large number of children reported that they would talk to their own mother or their best friend if they were treated unfairly by them. However, a small number of children reported that, if they were treated unfairly by their best friend, they would particularly try to *avoid* communicating with him/her or to *pay back* to their best friend. Children were less likely to give these negative comments in response to their mother's unfairness.

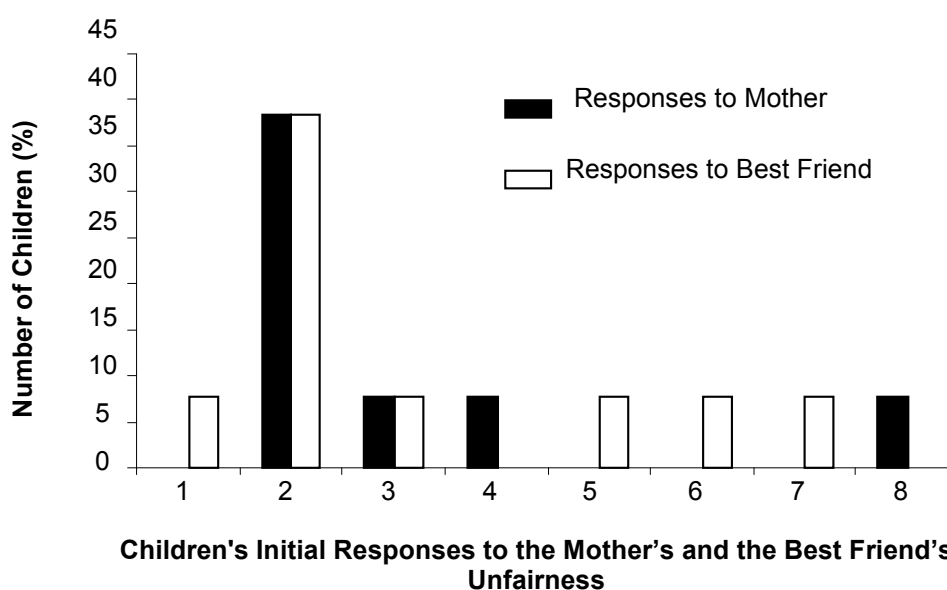


Figure 20. Children's possible response repertoire to unfairness from the mother and the best friend across the two periods of time

Results: Qualitative Data

Children's Verbatim Responses

During the scenario-based interviews and the three imaginary tasks sessions, over the two periods of times, the children shared with us about how they think about fairness and unfairness in their day to day experiences; how they deal with negative emotional experience of unfairness; and how they think about forgiveness in general. In the following, all of the major themes extracted for the primary coding system are described under the following subheadings in bold type, and transcript extracts from the interview sessions provide definitions and examples for each theme. Words in square brackets have been added to elucidate the meaning when the child's spoken language syntax was sufficiently ungrammatical for the intended meaning not to be clear.

Children's Verbatim Responses Concerning Fairness and Unfairness

Treatment

Soon after listening to a scenario story, during an interview session, the children were asked to judge whether or not the child protagonist had been treated fairly or unfairly by the mother and the best friend, and they were asked to explain their reasons for their fairness/unfairness decision. One of the interesting findings, I observed from their explanations, was the careful way in which the children were judging the fairness/unfairness of others' behaviour: that is, the children were thinking about fairness/unfairness in terms not only of an outcome, but also seeing it as a process involved in an incident.

In relation to the children's judgement of the fairness/unfairness of the mother's behaviour, over 14% of the children's actually thought it was fair

towards the child protagonist. Some children did not feel that what the child protagonist was told to do was an unfair deal for him/her, because they thought that what the mother was asking seemed fair enough, given the mother's circumstances. The children may be aware that, sometimes, depending on a situation, mothers have to ask children to do something that is unfair, in order to achieve a certain goal or to fulfil a requirement in their daily lives. Children may be learning to compromise their needs for another's need.

"[it is fair] because her mum needed to do her job and Emma was just having her free time. Job is the job. It needs to be done. Emma cannot be left alone so she has to go." (Year 6 girl)

A number of the children were also making a fairness judgement by taking into consideration the best friend's point of view. The children seemed to be aware that, sometimes, what appears to be a fair treatment, from one person's perspective, may not necessarily be fair from another person's perspective.

"I think it's both [fair and unfair]. Maybe because Emma didn't want her [Katie] to go over there [to talk to other children], [because] those people over there could start talk about Katie, maybe. But, maybe, [what she is doing is] good, because, then, she is going up to them and say 'please stop talking about my friend', then she might be happy because they goanna leave her alone and the gonna leave her friend alone as well. But, another unfair thing is [that] those other people start picking someone else. Then, what should they do?" (Year 6 girl)

“It should be fair in the sense that her friend can play with others. But it was unfair [for Emma] because she was alone.” (Year 6 girl)

Children’s Hostile Responses towards the Mother as a Result of the Unfairness.

The children talked about their reasons for selecting hostile responses or forgiving responses, whilst they were participating in the three experimental tasks. In this section, the children’s verbatim responses, explaining their reasons for choosing hostile rather than forgiving responses, are presented. I have explained the detail of each theme and included some examples, in order to illustrate how an emotional reaction of unfairness may contribute to the children’s display of hostility.

Children’s reactions to the mother’s negatively expressed emotions. Some children reported that the mother’s expression of angry feelings may increase the likelihood of the child to act in a hostile manner towards her. They particularly found the mother’s grumpiness unpleasant. The children’s feeling was reflected in their decision to give a smaller slice of cake to the mother, than to the children protagonist.

“[Emma would give her mother a smaller piece of cake than herself] because she was grumpy [towards Emma].” (Year 4 girl, Task 1: Sharing)

“[Emma would give her mother a smaller one because] her mum was really mad and she said it was Emma’s fault.” (Year 4 girl, Task 1: Sharing)

Children's expressions of angry feelings towards the mother. Some children talked about how negatively the child protagonist may be feeling about the mother's unfairness and how these negative feelings might be contributing to the child's display of hostile responses towards her.

"[Josh] would give his mum a smaller piece of the cake than his one because Josh wanted to have bigger one, because he would be annoyed [by mother]. So that he would give his mum a small one." (Year 6 boy, Task 1: Sharing)

"[Emma would give mum the smallest one] because she was feeling angry towards her [mother]. [It is] a little bit of revenge." (Year 4 girl, Task 1: Sharing)

*"[Josh would give her mother a smaller one] since how she reacted to Josh, because the way mum reacted to him sort if like **pay back**."* (Year 4 boy, Task 1: Sharing).

Some children commented that the child protagonist may be less willing to care for his/her mother because of unfair treatment by the mother. They also commented that the child protagonist would continue to feel angry towards his/her mother, because of what had happened and the child may choose to be less empathic towards his/her mother.

"He [Josh] is not going to care about mother because his mum, [she] is being cross and is unfair." (Year 4 boy, Task 2: Caring)

“Josh might not care about it. Again, because he is angry at her. So [that] he does not feel like helping.” (Year 6 boy, Task 2: Caring)

“He might say ‘I can’t be bothered looking for it for you because you have been mean to me. I do not feel like looking for it.’” (Year4 boy, Task 2: Caring).

Unsure about mother’s trustworthiness. A small number of children commented that the child protagonist might start to question his/her mother’s trustworthiness, after receiving the unfair treatment.

“Josh would remind mum, many, many, times because his mum has been unfair.” (Year 4 boy, Task 3: Trust)

One child further stated that the child protagonist may try to avoid further trouble with his/her mother, as both mother and the child protagonist might be upset by each other’s responses.

“He [Josh] might not do this [leave an important letter to mother] because he might think that his mum rips and chucks it into a rubbish bin because he has been hard on mum and mum has been hard on him. If he keeps reminding mum he gets into trouble because she already knows she has to do it. Very annoying for mum. So, he might keep it in the safe place for while.” (Year 4 boy, Task 3: Trust)

Children's Hostile Responses towards the Best Friend as a Result of Unfairness

In this section, the children's verbatim responses to unfair treatment by the best friend are examined. From observations, it seemed that the children were able to relate to the child in the scenarios and they were willing to talk about their experience of unfairness with their own friends.

Children's expressions of angry and sad feelings towards the best friend. A large number of children reported that the child protagonist would react in a hostile manner towards the best friend, because the best friend was *mean* or *unfair* towards, or *wasn't nice* to the child protagonist. They also talked about how negative feelings of unfairness might impact on the child protagonist's decision to give the smaller slice of cake to the best friend.

"[Josh would give Sam a smaller piece of the cake because] Josh is frustrated about his friend." (Year 4 boy, Task1: Sharing)

"[Emma would give Katie Smaller piece of cake because] she will be a bit angry and unhappy [about Katie]. [What Katie has done was] just unfair for Emma." (Year 4 girl, Task 1: Sharing).

Some children expressed that the child protagonist was less likely to help out the best friend because of the angry feelings that the child protagonist might be experiencing towards the best friend.

"I would ask him how much does it mean to you? I might say that 'the biggest thing they need to be helped with? I do not think so'. [I would] Ignore him [the best friend] because he has not been a

very good friend and he had not been very nice. So, [it is like a] pay back.” (Year 4 boy, Task 2: Caring).

“Josh would continue what he has been doing because his best friend did not want to play [with Josh]. He has been mean. So he is mean back [to the best friend].” (Year 4 boy, Task 2: Caring).

Unsure about the best friend’s trust worthiness. A large number of children commented that the child protagonist would be less willing to trust his/her best friend after the best friend was unfair to the child protagonist. Similar to a response concerning the mothers’ unfairness treatment, the children seemed to be wondering about the trustworthiness of the best friend.

“Emma might think about it because Katie might tell somebody, because what she did before. Katie might tell other people.” (Year 4 girl, Task 3: Trust)

“[He will give it to mum] but not to Sam because he is not trustworthy, because when he [Sam] said he will invite him [Josh] he [Sam] did not invite him[Josh].” (Year 6, boy, Task 3; Trust).

Children’s Comments on Grudge-Holding as a Result of Unfair Treatment

At the beginning of Time 2, all children were asked whether or not they remembered the two stories about Josh/Emma, from the previous week. The majority of children indicated that they did remember the stories. A number of children actually retold the stories. Those children who were unsure of the

stories were given a few cues about the stories and these clues helped them to recall the stories.

For the purpose of the present study, I was interested in how children in Group 1, during Time 2, particularly commented about the mother's and the best friend's unfair behaviour. One boy commented that the child protagonist would be feeling the same as the previous week and how *annoyed* he might be after he was again treated unfairly by his best friend. If he was in a similar situation he stated, "*I will not to play with him for a few weeks*". During the three imaginary tasks, he stated that Josh would continue to respond in a hostile way towards his best friend because "*he is annoyed and angry about what happened*".

Perhaps, the children were suspicious of the best friend's trustworthiness, especially when the best friend repeatedly broke a promise. In order to regain confidence in the best friend, one child suggested that the child protagonist might be able to *test out* whether or not the best friend could keep their promise before telling him/her some important news.

"[Josh would] think about it. [If I was Josh], I will tell Sam something different secret, and after a few days later, I'll see if he has told anybody [about it]. So, if he did not tell anyone, I will tell him [another important news]." (Year 4 boy, Task 3: Trust)

Children's Forgiving Responses towards the Mother, Despite of Her Unfairness

The majority of the children who listened to the scenario about the mother's unfair treatment perceived that her behaviour was unfair towards the child protagonist. As a consequence of this unfair treatment, those children

reported that the child protagonist would feel sad and angry. By considering these negative emotional responses associated with perceived unfairness, it was thought that the children would suggest hostile and resentful responses towards the mother. However, some children were rather forgiving towards the mother. The following children's comments seem to reflect the children's forgiving responses towards the mother who had treated her child unfairly in the scenarios.

Being grateful for what mothers do for children in their daily lives.

Some children were forgiving of the mother's unfair behaviour because they were thankful for all the good things that mothers do for their children in their day to day lives.

"[Emma would give mum the biggest slice of the cake] because her mum has done everything for her." (Year 4 girl, Task 1: Sharing)

Managing to prevent further conflicts with mothers. Some children seemed to be tolerant of the mother's unfair behaviour and suggested that the child protagonist would help the mother, in order to prevent further conflicts with her. The children commented that, by helping the mother, the child protagonist was less likely to be blamed or to be in trouble with her in the future.

"He [Josh] might try to find it. His mum will be happier and she is not going to blame him." (Year 6 boy; Task 3: Caring)

“Emma would help mum so that her mum could stay happy with her. She [Emma] is not going to be in trouble.” (Year 6 girl, Task 3: Caring)

“She (Emma) might say ‘o.k., would you like me to help you?’ Just to help out, so that mum does not get angry anymore.” (Year 4 girl, Task 2: Caring)

Some children talked about how sorry the child protagonist might be feeling about the mother who had lost her favourite jewellery. The children’s empathic responses towards the mother were observed.

“Emma might help her find it [her favourite jewellery] because she [Emma] is kind of feeling sorry for her mum [as she has already] lost her project [earlier].” (Year 6 girl, Task 2: Caring)

Furthermore, one child talked about how the child protagonist might try to manage his/her angry feelings towards the mother because, it was suggested that, expressing negativity against parents could only increase the possibility of receiving a punishment.

“After [she has a piece of] the cake, she might calm down a bit and help her [mum] find it. Because if you get angry with parents, you cannot get angry for so long, because they might give you some extra [punishment].” (Year 6 girl, Task 2: Caring)

Children's confidence of trustworthiness relating to the mother. A number of children stated that the child protagonist would not mind leaving an important letter with his/her mother because they thought that the mother can be trusted and she is a reliable person to ask for an important request.

"Give it to mum because you can normally trust your parents to do that sort of thing." (Year 4 girl, Task 3: Trust)

"Give it her right away because she probably knows that she can trust her mum and she just wants her to post it." (Year 4 girl, Task3: Trust)

Children's Forgiving Responses towards the Best Friend, Despite of Unfairness

In comparison with the children's forgiving responses towards the mother, forgiving responses towards the best friend were observed from only a limited number of children. Nevertheless, it is still interesting to learn that the children thought there were some forgiving responses that the child protagonist might show towards the best friend who had been unfair.

Maintaining friendships. The children talked about the value of their friendships and how they tried to solve problems and to maintain their friendships even during a conflict situations. As far as sharing behaviour was concerned, a small number of the children reported that the child protagonist might give the best friend a bigger slice of cake, because the child protagonist would like to continue with his/her friendship.

"They [Katie and Emma] are still friends and it is only fair [for them to share the cake]." (Year 4 girl, Task 1: Sharing)

“Emma is not going to have a bigger ones [a slice of the cake] because Katie might feel that Emma does not like her anymore.”

(Year 4 girl, Task 1: Sharing)

Some children reported that the child protagonist would continue to care for the best friend, even though the best friend might have treated the child protagonist unfairly.

“Emma might help her [Katie] find it [her favourite jewellery] because no matter what she does, she is her best friend.” (Year 6

girl, Task 2: Caring)

“Josh would help Sam because the best friends help each other.”

(9 Year old boy, Task 2: Caring)

Furthermore, some children talked about the possibility of forgiving the best friend because the child protagonist may have learned to let go of his/her negativity towards the best friend

“Even though what Katie did wasn’t nice, it would be nice to help.

It is like forgiving.” (Year 4 girl, Task 2: Caring)

“Emma will help her find it because she might be forgiving her for what she has done. Sleeping over is not that important [in comparison with have a good friendship].”(Year 4 girl, Task

2:Caring)

Giving a second chance. A number of children commented that the child protagonist might be willing to get past the best friend's unfair behaviour, but with a warning or a request. The children may have been willing to give the best friend a chance — but with some conditions. Perhaps, the children thought that the child protagonist may become fully forgiving of the best friend once fairness had been restored in their relationship.

“I would say, ‘I will find it for you if you invite me to the sleep over’.” (Year 4 boy, Task 2: Caring)

“Emma might say ‘I am going to help you because you are my friend. I am going to help you, so if I lost something you help me’. [It is like] give and take.” (Year 4 girl, Task 2, Caring)

What Does Forgiveness Mean to You?

At the end of the interview sessions, all the children were asked about their understanding of the concept of forgiveness. If the children found it difficult to describe what they meant by forgiveness, they were invited to talk about their experience of being forgiven or forgiving someone else in their daily lives.

Accepting apologies. A large number of children talked about their understanding of forgiveness, in relation to accepting apologies.

“When someone does something, they might give you an apology and you accept the apology.” (Year 6 boy)

“Forgiveness means people apologise and [you] say ‘it’s alright’.”
(Year 4 girl)

"[Forgiveness means say sorry. [If] someone says sorry, you recognise that and be nice [to this person] again." (Year 4 girl)

"Forgiveness means you have appreciated people. Even when you say sorry, it doesn't mean it didn't happen. They are saying how they felt about it, like expressing themselves, how much they are sorry." (Year 6 girl)

Rebuilding interpersonal relationships. Some children talked about forgiveness in terms of rebuilding their relationship with a person with whom they have had a conflict. Particularly with a friend, forgiveness seems to involve restarting the friendship.

"It means recreating bond between your friends and yourself."
(Year 4 boy)

"If you fight with your friends you forgive them and become friends again and you won't be mad at each other anymore." (Year 6 girl)

"It means when somebody does something annoying or bad thing to you, then [you] say 'That's fine. Next time please do not do that. Let's be friends again'." (Year 4 boy)

Some children stated that forgiving someone does not necessarily involve the verbalisation of granting forgiveness. They suggested that forgiveness may involve *doing something* to reconsolidate the broken relationship.

“When someone annoyed me it is quite hard to forgive. It [forgiveness] could be action or something you do. It does not have to say ‘I forgive you’.” (Year 4 girl)

“If someone has done something, you will forgive [them] for what they have done, regardless of what they have done, and do something to repair it.” (Year 6 girl)

“Forgiveness is loving and caring.” (Year 4 girl)

Perhaps forgiveness for these children involves regaining faith in the person who has hurt you. One 9-year-old child stated that forgiveness may mean *“being able to trust this person and you are forgiving, then the person doesn’t do it again”*. Similarly, another 9-year-old child suggested that forgiving a person may involve giving this person the benefit of doubt. She stated, *“When someone makes a mistake, you forgive them because you know that they probably made a mistake and they probably do not do it again”*.

Forget about what had happened and move on. Some children stated that forgiveness may involve leaving past mistakes in the past and focusing on the present relationship.

“Forgive someone and forget about it, really. If somebody has done wrong to you, you would say ‘that’s o.k. Please don’t do it next time’. Just forget about it and carry on.” (Year 4 girl)

“If you forgive a person, it means you are a good person because you are to forget and forgive. It might be a mistake and [this person might] feel bad about it. You might feel sorry [for the person].” (Year 4 girl)

Discussion

This second study was designed to explore the children's holding of a grudge against a person who had treated them unfairly. It focused on whether the children would hold a grudge against a person who treated them unfairly and therefore made them feel sad, angry and hurt. Following the methodology used in my earlier studies, the children's grudge holding effect was assessed by measuring an increase in the children's negative affect, following a second experience of unfairness. During the two interview sessions, all participating children engaged actively with me and they spontaneously expressed their own ideas and responded (with understanding) to the three imaginary tasks.

Children's General Judgement of Fairness

Although we were confident that each of the scenarios clearly described a situation of fairness or unfairness, the children did not necessarily perceive these situations in the same way as adults. In fact, during Time 1, more than 10% of the children actually thought that what had happened to the child protagonist was unfair when it was supposed to be fair, and 19% of the children thought the mother's behaviour was fair when in fact it was supposed to be unfair. During Time 2, 4% of the children actually thought that the best friend's behaviour was unfair when it was supposed to be fair, and more than 10% of the children actually thought that what had happened to the child protagonist was fair when in fact it was supposed to be unfair. These findings were consistent with our previous studies and confirmed that children have their own ways of making sense of different situations in their everyday lives.

Children's degrees of fairness and unfairness. The findings from this study indicate that the children's judgement of unfairness on the best friend, is greater than the mother's unfair behaviour, especially during Time 1. When they were asked to judge the fairness of the mother's and the best friend's behaviour, they thought that the mother's behaviour and the best friend's behaviour were equally fair. These findings are consistent with my earlier studies. Children's judgment of the mother's behaviour was, overall, less strict than the judgement of the best friend. This is because the nature of the relationship between a child and a mother, and between a child and a best friend, is obviously very different.

Children's Feelings about Fairness and Unfairness

In the fairness situations, as we had expected, the children generally reported positive feelings. A small number of children talked about the sad or angry feelings that the child protagonist may have experienced as a result of the unfairness treatment. These participants were generally happy about how the situation had turned out for the child protagonist, but they were critical of the process that the mother or the best friend had followed. For example, some children reported that they were happy that the mother had taped a TV programme for the child protagonist, but they felt sad that the child protagonist could not watch it on live TV. I recognised that children have their own unique perspective of what ought to be fair or unfair and their feelings may vary based on these perspectives.

In regards to unfairness situations, the children commonly reported feelings of sadness and anger. These findings were consistent with previous studies and this confirmed that unfairness generates negative feelings. Feelings

of sadness, in particular, were more frequently reported than feelings of anger, after being treated unfairly by the mother and the best friend. However, when the strength of these two feelings was taken into account, the children reported a higher degree of anger and sadness, after exposure to the unfair treatment of the best friend than the unfair treatment of the mother during both two time periods. Sadness and anger were two commonly associated feelings that resulted from the unfair treatment of the mother and the best friend, with sadness being more frequently reported than anger, following unfairness situations.

One possible explanation for these findings is that the unfairness situation described in the story elicited some sense of disappointment. A sense of disappointment is recognised as one cause of sadness and it can be a result of a response to a situation, where individuals are unable to achieve an important goal (Izard, 1991). A number of participants, in fact, have spoken to me about how disappointing it would be for them if they cannot have free time to play on a computer or go to a sleep-over with their friends and how these situations would make them feel sad. Anger is often interacted with sadness, but it is more likely to be expressed in response to an interruption of a goal achievement (Izard, 1991). One of the unfairness themes, included in the best friend's story, was about a promise that had been broken by the best friend. When a close friend does not keep his/her promise, it interrupts a person in their journey to fulfil their goal — and this may cause anger.

How willingly children expressed their negative feelings was influenced by the perpetrator who practiced unfairness. The participants reported stronger negative feelings towards the best friend than towards the mother. This may be

because, in the front of parents or peers, children tend to think about how much negative impact their emotional expression of negative feelings might have on their parents or peers (Zeman & Garber, 1996). Children are perhaps worried about receiving negative responses, such as reprimands and rejection, from their mother than from their best friend, because (as our participants reported) the consequences of expressing negative feelings towards friends are less serious, since they are always able to find other friends if they are not able to work out conflict with their current friends.

Children's Levels of Hostility

These three imaginary tasks worked well with the children, although it had been a significant challenge for us to make improvements in order that the tasks would be a more valid measurement of the children's presentations, regarding hostility. The first task — the sharing task — was designed to present the children's willingness to share a slice of cake with the mother or the best friend. One of the noticeable verbal responses from children who listened to the unfairness stories was their willingness to give a large piece of cake to the mother (rather than a smaller piece of cake), despite the previous unfairness. When the children were asked about the reason for such a decision, their comments generally reflected their appreciation towards the mother. This finding was consistent with our earlier study.

Although the majority of the children responded positively towards the mother in the scenario story, some children suggested that they would quietly express their angry feelings towards the mother, such as giving the *silent treatment* to the mother. Some children also talked about indirectly induced feelings of guilt towards the mother, so that she would feel sorry about what she

had done to the child protagonist. It may be because these children might find it difficult to express angry feelings towards their parents. Perhaps, passively expressing angry feelings might be one of the less threatening strategies, through which they can manage their negative emotional experiences of unfairness.

The second task — the caring task — was designed to assess the children's willingness to care for the mother and the best friend, who had lost their favourite object (jewellery/precious sports card). Despite the mother's unfair behaviour, the majority of children were empathic towards her and indicated their willingness to help her look for her favourite jewellery. When we examined the children's reasons for this caring behaviour, it appeared that the children were more considerate of the mother who appeared to be disappointed about losing her precious object, and they expressed how sorry they would feel for her. Contrary to these empathic responses, some children reported they would care for the mother in order to avoid being involved in further trouble. This response may be one of the behavioural strategies that children may use to protect themselves from confronting negatively expressed feelings from their mother, in addition to their own negative emotional experience.

The third task — the trusting task — was designed to assess the children's willingness to trust the mother and the best friend who were unfair. In this study, I have attempted to show how children's sense of trustworthiness, in a person who was unfair, might be influenced by their experience of unfairness. In response to this task, the children, generally, thought that the mother or the best friend could be reliable and trustworthy, despite the fact that they had mistreated the child protagonist in the stories. Nevertheless, interpretations of

the children's comments need careful consideration, because these two stories may have tapped into slightly different dimensions of trust. The mother's situation appeared to be more about the reliability of the mother, whereas the best friend's situation was more about the trustworthiness of the best friend. This slight difference in the theme might have impacted on the children's interpretation of the two situations and it may have affected their selected reactions towards the mother and the best friend.

Children's mean level of hostility towards the mother and the best friend over the two periods of time. Whether children's mean level of hostility changed from during Time1 to during Time 2, the mean level of hostility towards the mother and the best friend at Time 1 and Time 2 were compared for each of the four experimental groups.

From inspection of these four groups, the findings indicate that the Group 1 children showed an increase in their mean level of hostility towards the mother and the best friend after repeated exposure to the unfairness situations. They indicated especially higher level of hostility towards the mother at Time 2 than at Time 1. This may mean that children's negative feelings of unfairness towards the mother at Time 1 were carried over to Time 2. As we have already learned from Study 1, children are generally willing to forgive a mother, but with some conditions such as asking her not to make the same mistake again. It might be possible that children become hesitant to let go of a mother's mistake when she repeatedly make the same error after she has been given a second chance.

The Group 2 children, who also listened to an unfairness situation during Time 1, but listened to a fairness situation during Time 2, indicated a greater

reduction in their level of hostility, particularly towards the best friend. This finding suggests that the fairness of the situation considerably impacted on the children's display of hostility and therefore, unfairness contributes to a display of a higher level of hostility than fairness.

Unlike the above two experimental groups, the Group 3 children were exposed to the fairness situation during Times 1 and 2. As we expected, the children's levels of hostility towards the mother and the best friend did not change extensively over the two periods of time. In contrast, the Group 4 children, who were also exposed to a fairness situation during Time 1, but to an unfairness situation during Time 2, indicated a great increase in their level of hostility during Time 2, particularly towards the best friend. This finding was opposite to Group 2 and again it suggests that a higher level of hostility is associated with the unfairness of a situation than with the fairness of a situation.

These findings, thus, confirmed that children's levels of hostility, over the two periods of time, are most likely to be influenced by the fairness or unfairness of the situation, and children tend to react to the best friend's unfair treatment with a higher level of hostility than to the mother's unfair treatment.

Children's Levels of Grudge-Holding

Based on the children's mean level of hostility towards the mother and the best friend during Times 1 and 2, we examined whether the children would hold a grudge against the mother and the best friend for being unfair. The results indicated that the best friend's unfair behaviour contributed to the children's holding of a grudge, while the mother's unfairness behaviour did not. A possible explanation for these findings may be the nature of the relationships that children have with their friends, in comparison to that with their mothers.

Children's friendships are generally based on equality and reciprocity, whereas parent/child relationships are based on a power relationship (Hartup, 1992). When a best friend violates this shared equality based relationship, a child may experience negative feelings and seek a way to *get even* with the friend. These hostile feelings may linger, until the child is willing to rebuild or restore the friendship.

Another possible explanation for the children's presentation of grudge-holding against the best friend is that the children may have begun to hold negative perceptions of the best friend, because of repeated experiences of unfair treatments to the child protagonist. It has been suggested that when the damage of transgression is above and over a victim's manageable emotional level, it is difficult for a victim to make him/herself go back to the old relationship with his/her perpetrator (Baumeister et al., 1998). It seems that children may find it difficult to see a best friend in the same light again and they may be reluctant to rebuild their friendship, while they are more willing to give the benefit of doubt or a second chance to their mothers for treating them unfairly.

Children's Understanding of Forgiveness

A number of open-ended questions were asked of those children who had made unfairness judgment and those who had expressed the possibility of forgiving the mother or friend. The children described a concept of forgiveness, from the perspective of a person who either *seeks* or *grants* forgiveness. When the children talked about asking for forgiveness from their mother or friends, for what they had done, the majority of them talked about showing remorse, such as apologising.

Since this study was interested in children's reactions to a person who has being unfair, we have emphasised the children's meaning of granting forgiveness. From the children's comments (as presented in the qualitative results) a number of themes were identified. One of the most frequently identified themes included accepting an apology: This finding was consistent with the last study. The children were more easily able to grant forgiveness, when the person who hurt them had sincerely expressed their regret.

Strengths and Weakness of the Study

This study is a first step to exploring possible displays of grudge-holding in children. The methodology used in this study was based on my earlier studies and it continued to work successfully with primary school children. The results from this study indicate that there were noticeable levels of grudge-holding, as a result of unfairness, particularly towards the best friend. Through inspection of the children's levels of hostility, over the two time periods and their verbal responses about their experiences of unfairness, the findings provide valuable additional information about children's responses to repeated experiences of the fairness or unfairness of a situation.

However, in spite of some strengths, there is still space for some improvements. All eight scenarios included in the study were designed to capture similar themes of fairness or unfairness. However, when identifying the children's reasons for their judgments, we realised that the children were sensitive to the smaller details of contextual information presented in the scenario stories. An improvement could be made by taking some time to observe children's actual interactions with their parents and/or friends and by interviewing parents about their memories of incidents, where their children

actually said *that's not fair* or *I hate* someone, for causing some emotionally charged incidents.

The measurement of grudges, which children may hold, is complex. However, it is an important area of study and in order to further tap into children's levels of grudge-holding, the three imaginary tasks, which we used to assess an aspect of grudge-holding, may require further improvements, especially the caring and trusting tasks. One possible way to improve these tasks would be to use a laboratory-based experimental design that includes some physically observable tasks, in addition to a number of scenario-based tasks. Chapman et al., (1987), for example, included both physical tasks and a scenario-based task, in order to objectively measure the young children's motivation to be helpful to others. Although it would be difficult to control extraneous variables and some practice effects in this type of laboratory-based experiment, it might be possible to observe some emotional consequences associated with repeated experiences of unfairness.

Another limitation of the present study is the sample size. The present study only involved 55 children and each experimental group consisted of a minimum of 12 children. In order to increase the statistical power and generalisability of the findings, it would be ideal to have a larger sample size. It would also be ideal to recruit an equal number of boys and girls. In this study, the number of participating boys was much less than the number of participating girls, and, therefore, a statistical analysis based on children's gender was not included. Boys and girls may manage their experience of negative feelings and related behaviour differently (Chung, & Asher, 1996; Rose & Asher, 1999). It would be ideal to include an equal number of both boys and girls, in any future

study. In addition, it would be useful to include children, not only from a very high decile school, but also from a lower decile school, in order that children from a range of socio-cultural backgrounds could participate.

The time period between Times 1 and 2 may need further consideration. When the children were asked about the child protagonist's willingness to forgive they occasionally made reference to the length of time that the child protagonist may require, in order to let go of negative feelings towards the mother or the best friend. In the same way that people may take some time to fully forgive another person — other people may hold a grudge for a long period of time. Thus, the measurement of holding a grudge might be best achieved by the use of a longitudinal study.

Summary and Conclusions

The findings from this study confirm that children are active observers of fairness within their daily lives and that their experiences of unfairness may generate negative feelings. In addition, this study shows that emotional experiences of unfairness contribute to children's holding of a grudge, particularly towards a best friend. The focus of this study — grudge holding in children — is important because negative emotional experiences associated with unfairness could have an accumulated affect on children's displays of negativity towards others — feelings such as hate. Grudge-holding is a complex concept, but it is also an everyday phenomenon. It would be valuable for us to continue an investigation into children's grudge-holding in order that we could gain a better understanding of the hostile and antisocial behaviour that some children present towards others when they are confronted with emotionally challenging, everyday, interpersonal situations.

CHAPTER 4

GENERAL DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

General Background to the Present Research Project

Fairness, Forgiveness and Grudge-holding describes a series of research projects concerning children's perceptions of and emotional responses to day-to-day interpersonal experiences. The two major analogue experimental studies included in this thesis were based on a number of experimental studies carried out by Evans and his colleagues, in addition to being informed by my Master's research project. These earlier studies were concerned with how children might judge the behaviour of others as fair or unfair, how they might feel if they became a recipient of unfairness, and how they might react as a consequence. My earlier study, in particular, suggested that children did not think that retaliating against the unfair person was appropriate and specifically when the perpetrator of the unfairness was described as a mother. This discernment, which emerged from my previous study results, led me to the present research: What does forgiveness mean to children? Is it related to family experiences? Is it permanent or does resentment linger on in the form of holding a grudge?

The method used to answer these questions consisted of simple experimental tasks, which were presented to children aged 8- to 12-years-old. While it is possible to subject children to actual unfair experiences, ethical and practical restrictions on such an approach are seen as unjustifiable. I thus relied on hypothetical situations that were presented to the children in a form of a scenario, to which they were able to respond by answering questions and rating

the strength or intensity of likely reactions. I also produced a task (again in an imaginary context) in which the children's choice concerning a certain courses of action presented to them, was used as a way of indirectly measuring their feelings of hostility or antagonism towards the person who had perpetrated the unfairness. In addition, in order to gain a better understanding of relationships between children's response patterns and their experiences within their family environments, I attempted to measure parental attitudes towards forgiveness and whether they exercised these attitudes in the home and if they encouraged such behaviour outside the home. Finally, by asking the children open-ended questions about what certain ideas or concepts meant, I was also able to gather more qualitative, descriptive information about the meanings ascribed to common concepts related to unfairness.

Despite certain limitations, these various methods worked reasonably well for the children. The children who were invited to participate in the present research project were from junior classes in primary schools. I deliberately selected these age groups based on previous pilot testing. It had informed me that they would be at a suitable age for answering the tasks: that is, they were able to understand stories, able to recognise the themes and contexts of the, stories, and able to provide complex verbal answers. In addition, they seemed to be very able to relate the stories to their own experiences.

The children appeared to appreciate the number of illustrations that accompanied the scenarios. A set of illustrations captured the main themes and the children were able to imagine what might be happening to the child protagonist in the story by using these visual cues. A number of children even offered compliments about the illustrations and the majority of the children kept

focussed on what was happening to the child protagonist in the stories. As the children listened to the story, memories of similar events were triggered and they openly talked about their past experiences. Some children even thought through alternative solutions to a given situation.

Observing the children's responses to the three imaginary tasks was interesting. The children were given three choices for each of the tasks. Some children responded immediately after the choices were presented, while some other children took some time to work out their answer. A number of children changed their answers a couple of times, especially when they were making the decision about choosing a certain size of chocolate cake to give the mother and the child protagonist in the scenario. A typical response was that first, deciding to give the smallest slice chocolate cake to the mother, but they then changed their minds and decided to give a larger piece of cake to her, as if their first decision was not a correct action towards a mother. It was interesting to recognise how carefully the children thought about finding a way which they thought was appropriate for them when responding towards the mother.

From the children's responses to these three tasks, we have identified a number of ways in which children may respond to an unfair person and identified that offering forgiveness was one noticeable response towards the mother. Despite her unfair behaviour, the children showed their appreciation towards a mother because she does many good things for them in their everyday lives. This response was important for us in order that we could have an understanding of the origins of forgiveness within children and that understanding led us to explore what aspects of parenting practices might contribute to children's expressions of forgiveness.

Forgiveness is a complicated experience that has not been explored in children to any great extent. One possible explanation for this lack of investigation may be because children do seem to easily *get over* their experiences of hurt, injustice or unfairness. In fact, the participating children in the present research project recognised that forgiveness is something they need to do in order to continue their relationships with others. However, I began to reflect on whether forgiveness may not completely remove the underlying feelings of *resentment* or *ill-will* against a perpetrator, especially since children's understanding of forgiveness is determined by a verbal/cognitive act. In other words, is it possible that children hold grudges as a result of their past negative experiences? This question was important for understanding the general rationale that underlies the main theme of the present research project: Is it possible that past experiences of unfairness can generate a more general attitude of negativity or hostility towards the perpetrator? Can holding an emotionally loaded grudge be the basis for emerging hostility in children?'

To explore this issue of holding a grudge, my general idea was that, if a grudge/s was being held, then negative affect after a repeat experience of unfairness accumulate. In other words, a second experience of unfairness would produce greater levels of hostility than the initial experience of unfairness, even if this perpetrator had ostensibly been forgiven. Thus, based on this assumption, in the second experimental study, I exposed the children to two sets of scenarios, which involved following four possible sequences: unfairness followed by unfairness; unfairness followed by fairness; fairness followed by unfairness; and fairness followed by fairness. The first set of scenarios was presented one week prior to the second scenario stories. I anticipated that this

may not exactly replicate holding a grudge, but it appeared to be a reasonable analogue that could tap into the children's presentation of a grudge/s as a result of unfairness.

Findings of the Present Research Project

The two experimental studies were inspired by comments and thoughts that children shared with me during earlier studies. I had been impressed by the quality of comments and thoughts that the children shared with me, concerning their perceptions of others' behaviour and their responses to the misbehaviours of others.

The first question was formulated from my interest in investigating the children's rating of unfairness as described in the scenarios. In the same way as adults are concerned about receiving fair treatment, children are also actively judging how fair and reasonable others actions may be towards them. In the two experimental studies, we identified that children do not always agree with adults' perceptions of fairness. Specifically, when the children in a group perceived the fairness of the mother in the scenario, some of the children did not find the mother's unreasonable requests as being unfair. On the contrary, the children's judgment of fairness was more apparent. That is to say, the majority of children agreed that the friend in the story, who did not keep his/her promise or take responsibility for his/her own misbehaviour, displayed unfair behaviour.

The children's degree of fairness judgement appeared to be influenced by the character of the perpetrator. The children were more empathetic towards the situation of the mother, which had made her behave unfairly, rather than the situation that had made the friend behave unfairly. This may be because of the

nature of the parent/child relationship, which is characterised as *attachment*, whereas friendship is described as *affiliation* (Hartup, 1992). In children's daily lives, parents play an important role and they share even more history as a unit with their parents than with their friends. Although the development and maintenance of good friendships are also important for children — as commented upon by some children in this research project — if things do not work out with a friend, then they can always find some other peers and begin forming new friendships. These qualitatively different relationships between parent/child and between child/friend reflected the children's judgement of fairness on the mother and on the friend.

The children were also asked to imagine how the child in the story might feel. Their response to this question was thought of as projection of how they might feel about the unfairness of the mother and the friend's behaviour. They commonly reported that the child protagonist would feel sadness and anger; the anger being particularly strong towards the friend. These findings were consistent with the earlier studies and suggest that maternal unfairness may lead to children's expressions of sadness and cause them to engage in a self-blame response pattern, whilst unfairness from a friend may lead to expressions of angry feelings and encourage them to blame the friend for being unfair. My earlier study had suggested that the experience of these negative feelings of unfairness may lead to presentations of hostility in children. However, the children's subsequent emotional reactions towards the mother or the friend may be dependent on their initial feelings associated with the unfairness.

Aside from these findings, it was apparent (from learning about the children's reported feelings of perceived unfairness) that there was a

heightened awareness of feelings associated with the unfairness; that is, it seemed that the children were able to put themselves into the child protagonist's shoes and think through possible emotional responses, based on their own past experiences of similar situations. Being able to make fairness judgements means that children are considerate of other people's perspectives and this is an important pro-social skill. Educating children about the meaning of being fair (and demonstrating to them how to be fair to others) might be a valuable lesson for them.

When the children were given an opportunity to suggest retaliatory strategies as a reflection of hostility, it was found that they were more willing to *pay the unfair person back* or *pay back* the friend, rather than the mother in the story. By interpreting the children's hostile responses, we realise that their responses are somehow similar to a couple. Partners' degrees of commitment each to other, or whose attributions that each partner held towards the other tend to influence their responses to each to other at a time of distress and emotionally charged conflicting situations (Fincham et al., 2004; Finkel, Rusbult, Kumashiro, & Hannon, 2002). Children's degree of commitment to their friends and their beliefs about friendships may have contributed to their responses to the best friend's unfair treatment.

Both from the qualitative measure of hostility (negative comments) and from the type of justification that the children provided when they explained why they might react in a certain way, it was seen that an expression of hostility reflects a lack of forgiveness. In other words, the children were more charitable and benevolent towards the mother, whereas they were more harsh towards the best friend for being unfair. Thus, from the children's responses to the three

imaginary tasks and their comments, I can conclude that children are more likely to express forgiveness towards a mother than towards a friend.

When children were asked to explain their understanding of forgiveness, one of the most frequently identified themes was accepting an apology. An acceptance of apology involves cognitive and behavioural responses. A number of children stated that they would say "it's OK" if someone asked for their forgiveness. It is a temporary solution for the child to reconnect with the person who had hurt them. An apology can be accepted but at the same time, if the child does not fully appreciate the perpetrator's regret, then they are most likely to hold a grudge. Adults occasionally suggest to young people that they express their apology and *really mean it*. That may occur because they have experienced situations where they thought that they have forgiven someone a long time ago, but later it had triggered further interpersonal conflicts. Apologies make the progress of forgiveness easier, but it does not necessarily mean that the negative lingering feelings are easily eliminated.

The study showed individual variations in the presentation of forgiveness: that is, some children demonstrated a more forgiving orientation, than others. This led to further examination of whether the children's forgiveness orientation was related to the way that the parents of these children tended to respond to their transgressions at home. We assumed that, if parents perceive their own child's misbehaviour as a simple mistake (not really being the fault of the child), it is much easier for the child to show forgiveness. I expected to observe that some parents tended to blame their child for a mistake, whereas they would actually attribute such mistakes to unfortunate accidents. Based on this assumption, I anticipated that parents who are more likely to interpret their

children's misbehaviour as less blameworthy (and state that they would forgive their child), would be more likely to have children with a forgiveness orientation. Although parents are more likely to attribute their children's behaviour positively, they are less likely to be punitive towards their child/ren. However, this parenting practice did not predict the children's tendencies towards forgiveness.

Since forgiveness is more likely to be practiced if apologies are offered, it was expected that the mothers who are more likely to show forgiveness following their children's apologies would be more likely to have children with a forgiveness orientation. It appeared that parents were less punitive towards children who were apologetic for their misbehaviour than towards children who were non-apologetic for their misbehaviour. However, this parenting practice did not predict the children's tendencies towards forgiveness. In addition, it was of interest to discover what suggestions mothers offer to their own child, if the child tells them about an unfair experience. Do they encourage retaliation or active forgiveness — or do they dismiss it? The majority of mothers stated that they would encourage forgiveness through empathy, but some parents encouraged their children to retaliate. A large number of parents encouraged their children to forgive the other person, who had treated them unfairly or hurt them. However, these parents' self-reported responses did not predict individual differences in their children's presentation of forgiveness.

Children might forgive voluntarily and possibly find it easy, since they recognise its significance for rebuilding relationships. However, what might be seen when children are exposed to repeated experiences of the same, or similar, injustices or unfair treatment? Could that activate emotionally charged negative memories? What do we mean by the everyday term *holding a grudge*?

Some suggestive evidence emerged from the children's verbatim comments, which described how reluctantly some children do things that are contrary to their basic feelings, or best interests. There appeared to be some level of bitterness underlying the children's responses. This phenomenon emerged from those children who were repeatedly exposed to unfairness situations over the two time periods. The children indicated noticeably higher levels of hostility, after exposure to the second unfairness situation, especially towards the best friend.

Furthermore, supporting evidence (of children holding a grudge) was observed from those children who were exposed to the unfairness situations, prior to the fairness situations. Their mean degree of hostility remained higher, than those children who were only exposed to the fairness situations, especially towards the best friend. These results suggest that it was more likely that the unfair behaviour of the best friend contributed to the children's presentation of grudge holding than the unfair behaviour of the mother. These findings, therefore, supported my main argument that children's accumulation of hostility, as a result of unfairness, contributes to children's presentation of holding a grudge.

Implications

Fairness, retaliation, forgiveness and grudge-holding – these are highly significant elements of everyday experience. The general meaning associated these concepts appears to have a certain religious connection. The major religions — and particularly Christianity — promote the concept of forgiveness, not only as a moral or ethical standard, but also as an action that people should take, in order to deal with sin and misjudgement of themselves by others. It is a

powerful belief and act towards self and others. These ideas provided valuable background information that enabled me to think deeply about the main topics of the present research project. Nevertheless, investigations into forgiveness and grudge-holding, in relation to unfairness, are not easy at the empirical level. Moreover, this thesis demonstrates that there are many interesting aspects, which can be investigated in the future, relating to fairness, retaliation, forgiveness, and grudge-holding in children.

The children were able to identify and explain a variety of unfairness experiences in their day-to-day lives. When the children were asked to talk about the meaning of forgiveness, for example, the majority of children were at least able to give me an example of a time when they were forgiven by others, or a time when they had offered forgiveness. They recognised that sometimes they try to *forget about* a person or an event that has caused them to feel angry, hurt or sad. They also explained that, for some people, accepting their apology and giving them a second chance might be the best possible solution, even though the children themselves might have to bear a certain level of negative feelings. These conversations with the children meant that I could obtain a much richer understanding of what these concepts meant to them. Of course, children struggle to find words to explain highly abstract concepts, but since I allowed them adequate time to think through their ideas and examples, they often generated remarkable insights: for example, *“forgiveness means to rebuild relationships”* or *“forgiveness means to trust a person once again”*.

Strengths and Weakness of the Preset Research Project

The children’s perceptions of unfairness situations were manipulated by introducing a snapshot of unfairness situations, and their feelings about these

situations (and the behavioural consequences of it) were measured, by asking the children to reflect on their perspective of the child protagonist in the scenarios. Although this methodology was an indirect way of studying the children's cognitive judgement of, affective response to, and behavioural reaction to unfairness, it generally served as a suitable methodology.

It was ethically important to create an experimental environment where children would feel sufficiently comfortable to openly talk about their thoughts, feelings and reactions to the unfair behaviour of a mother or a close friend. Over the course of the research project, the children responded well to the research environment. The majority of children were able to maintain their concentration for at least 20 minutes and they appeared to enjoy the scenario-based interview sessions and the three imaginary tasks.

Although this method was an interesting and novel way to study the children's emotional reactions to the unfairness of a mother and a close friend, as with any research, there are issues that still need to be addressed. The themes and content of the scenarios and tasks proved to be highly important. Each session, the children were carefully listening and actively thinking about the situations I had described. They would pick up on any minor nuance of wording, or objects in the pictures: for example, some children pointed out that sharing a secret does not necessarily mean that it is a bad or unfair thing to do, because secret can be good and/or bad. They suggested to me that their judgement of fairness would be dependent on the content of the secrets.

The quality of the children's responses varied in accordance with their age group. I did not attempt to analyse these differences from a developmental perspective. The children's age or cognitive development was not manipulated

as a formal dependent variable because the actual number of participants was small and a mean distribution of age groups was somehow equal. If I had done so, I might have found slight age differences in the children's understanding of forgiveness. Although a developmental model of forgiveness strongly emphasised maturation of cognition and the presence of forgiving behaviour (Enright et al., 1998), we cannot dismiss powerful influences of social experiences. Mullet, Houdbine, Laumonier, and Girard (1998) examine a life-span development of forgiveness, and they suggested that individuals become more forgiving as they grow older. Perhaps, children of younger age groups have different perspectives on the concept of fairness. For example, the younger aged children made much of the child protagonist in the scenario not being able to watch TV, because of the mother's unreasonable request, whereas the older aged children did not see it as significant.

It was somewhat unfortunate that the way the stories were told sometimes meant that there was a degree of imbalance between the perpetrators of the unfairness, in that the best friend stories did not really match the mother stories as closely as they might have done. Future studies should attempt to develop scenarios in which there is only one perpetrator and one victim of the unfairness.

Finally, it is possible that some of the relationships I had expected to find are present, but this study lacked sufficient statistical power to demonstrate these effects. It would be ideal to study a larger number of children, in order to increase statistical power and improve the generalisability of the findings. Conversely, the qualitative data that were gathered, did, in many cases, support the general conclusions being drawn from the quantitative analysis.

The research topic of this thesis follows a long research tradition, investigating concepts of morality and justice in children. Both Piaget's (1932) classic observational studies with children, and Kohlberg's (1969) theory of moral development discuss children's reasoning of fairness, justice and morality, in relation to their cognitive capacity and maturation. These studies focus on how *abstractly* children are able to discuss these concepts and some of the findings from these studies are interesting. A number of justice studies have led to the realisation that children's *perceptions* of fairness overlap closely with their concepts of morality and justice. Following on from these theories, I remain confident that fairness reflects on children's everyday experiences and that is a topic of interest.

Suggestions for Future Research

The findings from this research project suggest that there is place for further research. One promising line of research would be a cross-cultural study of children's perceptions of fairness and associated emotional reactions, such as forgiveness and grudge-holding. In this research project, there were a number of children and their families who came from overseas, while the majority of the participants were New Zealanders of European descent. We have recognised that some of the comments reflected cultural differences. For example, children from the Middle East talked about how important it was for them to *do the right thing* towards their mother, even if their mother had been unfair. However, the present research project did not include the participants' ethnical background as a viable for a statistical analysis because the distribution of their cultural backgrounds was somewhat unequal.

Nevertheless, culture is a factor that appears to have a strong impact on individuals' perceptions of fairness and unfairness, in addition to their decisions to forgive a perpetrator (Sandage & Williamson, 2005; Takaku, Weiner, & Ohbuchi, 2001). As Hook, Worthington, and Utsey (2008) recently proposed, people from a collective cultural background may make decisions relating to forgiveness, in order to maintain social harmony, whereas people from individualistic cultural backgrounds are more likely to forgive, because of their need for peace of mind. It is possible that children's perceptions of fairness or unfairness of treatments, their willingness to show forgiveness, and their reasons for and likelihood of holding a grudge against a perpetrator are influenced by their cultural context. Culture is likely to shape how children manage their emotional experiences of unfairness, and this may be a promising area for further investigation.

Conclusions

The children were attentively recalling how fairly they had been treated by others. In particular, they responded sensitively to the unfairness of others and that caused strong negative affect. Although unfairness caused unpleasant negative feelings in children, they were willing to extend their forgiveness towards a person who was unfair, particularly if this person was a mother. However, some children were obviously reluctant to let go of their negative feelings and they continued to hold some level of hostility towards the person for being unfair. This was especially apparent when unfair treatment occurred repeatedly from a best friend. The children's level of hostility towards the best friend continued to increase extensively in strength over the two time periods. Overall, the children were more willing to forgive a mother for being unfair, while

they were more likely to hold a grudge against a best friend for being unfair. Forgiveness and grudge holding are two distinctively different responses; however, children endorse them both, when they experience a negative emotional reaction to unfairness.

POSTSCRIPT

When I began the present research, *Fairness, Forgiveness and Grudge-Holding*, as explained in the Foreword, I was hoping to implement a series of investigations that would reflect children's voices, especially about experiences in their lives and within their families. Unfairness occurs, however well-meaning the parents, and children have learned to cope with it. In the course of this research project, I was able to learn a great deal about how children think about issues of unfairness; how they emotional react to them; and how willing many of them are to forgive and move on. I sincerely hope that many children and their families practice fairness and forgiveness in their daily lives. However, there is a small group of children who have experienced considerable unfairness or who may have not necessarily able to let go of their experiences, and this left them with a considerable degree of negative feelings. These lingering negative feelings need to be ameliorated or resolved before they develop into hateful feelings. The findings from the present research project could be used to ensure that parents, teachers and society in general recognise the emotional consequences associated with unfairness and that they continue with their endeavours to reduce such experiences in the lives of children. In this way, children may be able to extend their capacities and skills and, as a result, they will be benevolent towards themselves and others.

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APPENDICIES

Appendix A: Information Sheet for Children



Massey University

You are invited to join my research project ...



Children's Understanding of
Forgiveness

Information Sheet to Children

Hello!

My name is Tomoko. I am a student at Massey University. I will be visiting your school and meeting children in Year 4 and in Year 6 to do a research project.

My research project is about how children forgive their parents and peers. The word forgiveness is a big word and I find it difficult to explain. But, it might be something you feel, think, or do.

For my research project, I am hoping that you can help me to find out more about this.

When I visit your school, I will ask your school principal or your classroom teacher when might be a good time for us to meet and talk about forgiveness.

When we talk about forgiveness, I would like you to listen to two short stories about a child. I have some drawings that you can see while listening to these short stories. After the short story, I would like you to help me to answer some questions about the short story. You can point out your answers on my special scale.

Do not worry if you are not sure about the answers to my questions because there are NO RIGHT or WRONG answers!

After listening to the short stories, you can share with me your own story. When we finish our talk, you can have a sticker for your hard work and time.

I have a helping person _____ . She is also a student at Massey University.

_____ will keep her eyes on the time so that you do not miss out too much of your class. She will videotape our talk so that I can write down what we talked about later.

During our talk, if you do not feel happy, if you want me to stop videotaping our talk, or if you want to go back to your class, you can tell me. That is not a problem!

If you have any questions about helping my project, you can talk to me about it or ask your parent about this. Your parent has my phone number.

I hope we can do this together. I am looking forward to meeting you and learning from you.

Many thanks,

Tomoko 😊

Appendix B: Letter of Introduction to School Principals



Massey University
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY
Te Kura Hinengaro Tangata
Private Bag 11 227
Palmerston North
New Zealand
T 64 6 356 9039 extn 2540
F 64 6 350 5673
www.massey.ac.nz
http://psychology.massey.ac.nz

Letter to School Principal

Research Project: "Children's Understanding of Forgiveness"

September 2006

Dear

My name is Tomoko Yamaguchi and I am a graduate student currently working on a series of research projects for my PhD in Psychology at Massey University. My supervisors are Professor Ian Evans, in the School of Psychology, and Dr Jullana Raskauskas, from the College of Education, at Massey University.

Thank you very much for agreeing to meet me so that I can explain my project to you. The purpose of this letter is to put my request in writing so that you can judge the suitability of my study for your school and decide whether you wish your school to participate.

This research project looks at forgiveness from the perspective of both children and their mothers/female guardians.

The first part of the present research project is a study of what forgiveness means to children. We are particularly interested in how children regulate their feelings when they are confronted with unfair/unjust situations and how this contributes to their behavioural display of forgiveness in their everyday lives. Attitudes of forgiveness and regulation of emotion are important in children's relationships with peers and others.

The second part of this research project looks at mothers'/female guardians' perceptions and displays of forgiveness behaviour in their interactions with their children. We are especially interested in how mothers/female guardians respond to their children's common misbehaviour. Expressions of forgiveness may be one of the essential elements of positive parental behaviour.

In the study, we are inviting 70 children, 35 in Year 4 and 35 in Year 6, and their mothers/female guardians. If your school participates in this research then I would meet with children individually and go through the following procedures:

FOR CHILDREN: Each child will listen to two scenarios about an unfair situation that has happened between a child of his/her age and that child's parent, or between friends. The scenario is make-believe. After the scenario story has been told, the child will be asked to respond to a series of questions about emotional experiences that the main character of a scenario has. The questions include how the events depicted would make the main character of the story feel, and how likely the main character of the story would be to forgive the person who was unfair. Each scenario is presented with simple and colourful drawings and an answer to each question can be pointed out on a pictorial scale. After this, children are given an opportunity to share their own experience of a time they forgave another's mistake.

The entire session will take about 20 minutes. To ensure the safety of your pupils, I will be accompanied by _____, a student in the School of Psychology, as a research assistant. She will be trained in her ethical responsibilities and her duties as a research assistant. She will video-record every session in order to obtain a really accurate record of the children's responses and also to ensure that this project will have no harmful or risk effects for your pupils. All records will be completely confidential. We will ensure that each child is willing to participate and will not be upset by the experience, as each child will be told that he or she is free to withdraw at any time.

FOR MOTHERS/FEMALE GUARDIANS: They will be asked complete two small questionnaires. The first questionnaire is called "Parents' perceptions of children's common misbehaviour". In this questionnaire, there are five hypothetical scenarios describing everyday interaction between a parent and a child. Each hypothetical scenario has four possible reasons that they usually think of when their children do something naughty, bad, or exhibit other misbehaviour. They will be asked to tick the most suitable answer on a scale. The second questionnaire is called "Parents' responses to children's common misbehaviour". In this questionnaire, there are five hypothetical scenarios, which are identical to the first questionnaire. Mothers/Female guardians will be asked to write down what sorts of things they typically do or say when your child misbehaves. The questionnaires should take less than 40 minutes to complete. The questionnaires will be posted to mothers/female guardians' homes once I have received a consent form from them. A freepost envelope will be provided to return them to me.

FOR THE SCHOOL AND THE TEACHERS: The role I would ask of you is that you discuss the project with your teaching staff and encourage them to assist by distributing the consent letters to children in class to take home to their parents. I would also ask you to assist me in finding a quiet location in your school where I can conduct a scenario story and an interview session, and record the children's responses.

At the conclusion of the study I will prepare a report of the findings, which discusses the implications they have for schools. I will prepare another version that can either be sent to the parents who participated or written up for your school newsletter, whichever you prefer.

By this letter, I am asking for your permission for your school and your students to be part of our study. The study of children's ability to forgive and regulate emotion in response to parent and peer actions is important as it can influence the children's behaviour with peers and their attitudes toward the world in general. For these reasons, I hope you will agree to your students being part of our study.

Approval from Ethics Committee:

This project has been reviewed and approved by Massey University Campus Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 06/07. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Karl Pajo, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 06 350 5799 x 2383, email humanethicssouthb@massey.ac.nz

Researcher: Tomoko Yamaguchi, School of Psychology, Massey University, Private Bag 11-222, Palmerston North, who can be contacted by phoning 3505799 extension 2516. Alternatively you can email me at Tomoko.Yamaguchi.1@uni.massey.ac.nz

Supervisor: Professor Ian Evans, School of Psychology, Massey University, Private Bag 11-222, Palmerston North, who can be contacted by phoning 3505799 extension 2070.

Co-supervisor: Dr Juliana Raskauskas, College of Education, Massey University, Private Bag 11-222, Palmerston North, who can be contacted by phoning 3505799 extension 8621.

Thank you very much for considering our project. Your time and effort is appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Tomoko Yamaguchi
Researcher

CONSENT FORM**SCHOOL PRINCIPAL**

Name of School: _____

On behalf of the School named above permission is given / not given for the children associated with our school to participate in your project.

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Designation: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C: Letter of Introduction to School Parents



Massey University
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY
Te Kura Hinengaro Tangata
Private Bag 11 222
Palmerston North
New Zealand
T 64 6 356 9039 extn 2240
F 64 6 359 5673
www.massey.ac.nz
http://psychology.massey.ac.nz

Letter to Parents / Guardians

Research Project: "Children's Understanding of Forgiveness"

September 2006

Dear Mother/Female Guardian

This letter is being sent to you with the approval of the Principal of _____ School.

My name is Tomoko Yamaguchi and I am a female graduate student currently working on a series of research projects for my PhD in Psychology. I am supervised by Professor Ian Evans, in the School of Psychology, and Dr Juliana Raskauskas, from the College of Education, at Massey University.

This research project looks at forgiveness from the perspective of both children and their mothers/female guardians.

The first part of the present research project is a study of what forgiveness means to children. We are particularly interested in how children regulate their feelings when they are confronted with unfair/unjust situations and how this contributes to their behavioural display of forgiveness in their everyday lives. Attitudes of forgiveness and regulation of emotion are important in children's relationships with peers and others.

The second part of this research project looks at mothers'/female guardians' perceptions and displays of forgiveness behaviour in their interactions with their children. We are especially interested in how mothers/female guardians respond to their children's common misbehaviour. Expressions of forgiveness may be one of the essential elements of positive parental behaviour, so we wish to know what you think about it.

In the study, we are inviting 70 children, 35 in Year 4 and 35 in Year 6, and their mothers/female guardians. An outline of this study is presented in the enclosed information brochure. Please take some time to read it over and discuss it with your child.

If you and your child chose to participate in this research, I would go through the following procedures:

FOR CHILDREN: I will meet with them individually at their school and carry out a scenario-based interview session. The entire session will take about 20 minutes.

Please note that, as specified in the information brochure, I will be accompanied by _____, a student at the School of Psychology, as a research assistant to ensure the safety of the children. She will be trained in her ethical responsibilities and her duties as a research assistant. She will video-record every session in order to obtain a really accurate record of the children's responses and also to ensure that this project has no harmful or risk effects for the children. We will ensure that your child is willing to participate and is not upset by the experience, as your child will be told that he or she is free to withdraw at any time.

FOR MOTHERS/FEMALE GUARDIANS: I will ask you to complete two small questionnaires. The first questionnaire is called "Parents' perceptions of children's common misbehaviour". In this questionnaire, I am interested in some of the possible reasons that parents usually think of when their children do something naughty. There are five hypothetical scenarios. Each hypothetical scenario has four possible reasons that parents usually think of when their children do something

naughty, bad, or exhibit other misbehaviour. You will be asked to tick on a scale best suited to your answer.

The second questionnaire is called "Parents' responses to children's common misbehaviour". In this questionnaire, I am interested in what sort of things you typically do when your child misbehaves. There are five hypothetical scenarios, which are identical to the first questionnaire. This time, there are two questions that you will be asked to write down briefly about your response to your child. The questionnaires should take less than 40 minutes to complete. I will post the questionnaires to your home once I have received a consent form from you. A freepost envelope will be provided to return them to me.

CONFIDENTIALITY

I will be sure to maintain strict confidentiality. I will use a code number to replace your and your child's name and remove all identifying names from the recorded documents. Information from the questionnaires, and the scenario story and the interview session will not be released to your child's school or anyone else. If you do not wish your child to participate, there will be no consequences for you or your child, and it will not influence your relationship with your child's school in any way.

I am, therefore, asking for your consent and your permission for your child to be part of our study. In the information brochure, there is a participation consent form for you and your child. Please fill it out and return it to your child's classroom teacher as soon as convenient.

Approval from Ethics Committee:

This project has been reviewed and approved by Massey University Campus Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 06/07. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Karl Pajo, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern A, telephone 06 3505799 extension 2383, email humanethicssouthb@massey.ac.nz.

Researcher: Tomoko Yamaguchi, School of Psychology, Massey University, Private Bag 11-222, Palmerston North, who can be contacted by phoning 06 3505799 extension 2516. Alternatively you can email me at: Tomoko.Yamaguchi.1@uni.massey.ac.nz

Supervisor: Professor Ian Evans, School of Psychology, Massey University, Private Bag 11-222, Palmerston North, who can be contacted by phoning 06 3505799 extension 2070.

Co-supervisor: Dr Juliana Raskauskas, College of Education, Massey University, Private Bag 11-222, Palmerston North, who can be contacted by phoning 06 3505799 extension 8621.

If you have any queries or require further information please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you very much for considering our project. Your time and effort is appreciated.

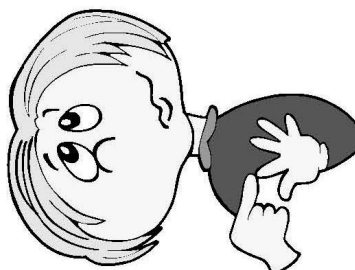
Yours sincerely,

Tomoko Yamaguchi
Researcher

Appendix D: Information and Consent Brochure Sent to Parents



**You are invited
to participate...**



**Children's
Understanding
of Forgiveness**

ABOUT THE RESEARCHER

- My name is Tomoko Yamaguchi. I am a PhD student in the School of Psychology at Massey University.
- I will be assisted by _____, a student in the School of Psychology at Massey University.
- This research is supervised by Professor Ian Evans, School of Psychology, and Dr Juliana Raskauskas, College of Education, at Massey University.

ANY QUESTIONS?

- If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me.
- I can be contacted by phone, on (06) 3505799 ext. 2516. If I am not available, please leave a message and I will get back to you. Or you can write to me:

Tomoko Yamaguchi
PhD Student,
C/o School of Psychology,
Massey University,
Private Bag 11-222, Palmerston North
Alternatively my email address is
Tomoko.Yamaguchi.1@uni.massey.ac.nz

- This project has been reviewed and approved by Massey University Campus Human Ethics Committee. Southern B, Application 06/07. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Karl Paio, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 06 3505799 x 2383, email humanethicssouthb@massey.ac.nz

**Thank you for considering our project.
Your time and effort is appreciated!**



Consent Form

Name of research project:

Children's Understanding of Forgiveness

- I have read the information sheet and have understood the details of the study
- I have had the chance to ask questions and these have been answered to my satisfaction.
- I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.
- I understand my right to withdraw myself and my child from the study at any time

YES, I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the information sheet.

YES, I give permission for my child,

_____ (please print the name of your child here), Boy Girl (tick appropriate box) to participate in this research project under the conditions set out in the information sheet.

Signature: _____
Date: _____
Full Name (printed): _____
Relationship to child: (e.g., mother, father, legal guardian) _____

Yes, I would like a summary of the findings from this study.

Please provide a postal address where you would like your questionnaires and summary sent to:

(If you would like to receive a summary via email, please provide this address as well)

.....

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO YOUR CHILD'S CLASSROOM TEACHER AS SOON AS CONVENIENT.



PLEASE CUT ALONG LINE



WHAT IS THE STUDY ABOUT?

- We are interested in how children deal with emotionally conflicting situations in their everyday lives.
- We investigate how children regulate their feelings when they are confronted with unfair/unjust situations and how this might contribute to their behavioural display of forgiveness.
- This study focuses on forgiveness from children's own perspectives - What does forgiveness really mean to children?

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

- Being able to manage angry feelings in emotionally conflicting situations is an important social skill for both adults and children.
- Being able to forgive another's mistake means children are learning to develop and to maintain healthy interpersonal relationships.
- When we have a better understanding of children's feelings and thoughts that might be associated with their forgiving behaviours, we can provide more effective help with their emotional and social development.

WHAT WILL YOUR CHILD DO?

- Your child will hear two scenario stories about typical or common life experiences of unfairness that have happened between a child and his/her mother, and between friends. Each scenario story will be presented with colourful drawings, so that your child can easily understand the main theme of the story. After the scenario story has been told, your child will be asked to imagine that he/she was the main child in the story, and then to answer a series of questions. The questions include how the main character in the story might be feeling and how likely the main character in the story would be to forgive a person who was unfair. When your child answers the questions, there will be a pictorial scale for him/her to point out his/her choice. Please note that there are no right or wrong answers. Once your child has answered all the questions, he/she will have an opportunity to share his/her own experience of forgiveness.

- At the end of the session, your child will be given a sticker for his/her effort and time in helping this study.
- The entire session is designed to be an enjoyable experience for your child. To ensure the safety of your child the researcher will be accompanied by a research assistant. The research assistant will video-tape the session to ensure that the responses your child has given are recorded accurately.

HOW MUCH TIME WILL BE INVOLVED?

- The entire session will take about 20 minutes and will take place in a quiet room organised by the principal of your child's school. Participation by your child will take place at a time during the school day that suits your child's teacher and this will limit the amount of disturbance to their daily routine.

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

- You will be asked to complete two questionnaires; your perceptions of children's common misbehaviours and your responses to children's common misbehaviours. The questionnaires will be posted to your home once I have received a consent form from you.
- The questionnaires should take less than 40 minutes to complete. A freepost envelope will be provided to return them to me.

WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT FROM THE RESEARCHER?

- Massey University Human Ethics Committee has prepared a statement of participant's rights as follows; if you are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you agree to participate, you have the right to:
 - decline to answer any particular question;
 - withdraw from the study at any time;
 - ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
 - ask for the video-tape to be turned off at any time during the session;
 - access a summary of the results.

These rights apply to both you and your child.

- If you or your child do not want to participate, it will not affect your relationships with the school in any way.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

- This research project involves YOU and YOUR CHILD. We are inviting 70 children and their parents, 35 Year 4 and 35 Year 6 school children and their mothers/female guardians.
- If you wish your child to take part, please go through the study information with your child and make sure he/she is willing to be included in this study.
- If you and your child choose to participate, please fill in the consent form and return it to your classroom teacher. Your classroom teacher will put your form into a collection box and the researcher will regularly collect the box.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE INFORMATION YOU PROVIDE?

- Your child's videotape and your questionnaires will only be used for the purpose of this research project. Tapes and the questionnaires will be kept confidential in a locked filing cabinet in the School of Psychology, Massey University. A code number will be used instead of your and your child's name in order to keep strict confidentiality.
- Your child's video-tape will be deleted and your questionnaires will be destroyed after analysis. Tapes will only be listened to and seen by the researcher and the female research assistant, who participates in the session, and if necessary the researcher's supervisors, Professor Ian Evans and Dr Juliana Raskauskas.
- You are welcome to receive a summary of the results. If you want a copy of the results, please tick the request box for a brief outcome report to be sent to you. Please remember to fill in your contact details so I know where to send the information to when the project is finished.

If you have any comments or thoughts about this project or the topic of my research, please feel free to write them below:



.....

.....

.....

Appendix E: The Unfairness Scenarios and the Accompanying Pictures

Parent story (Scenario 1: *Tidying up*)

Just imagine this is a story about John. He is 8/10 years old, just like you.

One day, John was quietly watching TV in the living room after finishing all his home work. John's mother always says to him,

"John, you have to finish your school work before you watch the TV."

So, John listened to his mother and did all the school work before coming to watch the TV. He was behaving very well.

Shortly after John's favourite TV programme had started, his mum came into the living room and saw a big mess. She said, "Oh No! What a mess!!"

John was not sure whose mess it was. He certainly did not make the mess!

John's mother was unhappy. She said to John, "John, What a mess!! Tidy it up right now." She then turned off the TV and said, "You can't watch the TV until you tidy it up!!"

Parent story (Scenario 2: *Pudding*)

Just imagine this is a story about John. He is 8/10 years old, just like you.

One day, John was helping his mother around the house. She said to John, "John, there are some visitors coming, I want the house to be clean and tidy."

So, John helped his mother a lot to tidy up the house.

He was behaving very well.

John's mother was getting tea ready. She was also making some puddings.

They looked very yummy! She said to John, "John, I made some puddings for the visitors, but you cannot have any until tea time!"

John listened to his mother's request. He did not touch the puddings.

When he went to the kitchen, he saw his mother had already tried some puddings! John's mother turned to John and said to him,

"John, you have to wait until the visitors come. Go to your room and stay there until I call you for tea!"

Picture of the Parent Story 1 (Scenario 1: *Tidying up*)



Pictures of the Parent Story 2 (Scenario 2: *Pudding*)

Friend story 1 (Scenario 3: *Making a mess*)

Just imagine this is a story about John. He is 8/10 years old, just like you.

John and Sam are good friends.

One day, John and Sam were working on their art work.

John was keeping his things neat and tidy. But Sam was not. Sam knocked over a few things and they spread over the floor. He made a big mess!!

Just then their classroom teacher, Mrs Smith, came into the room and saw a big mess on the floor.

She was not very impressed by the mess. She said, "Oh, no. What is going on here?" Sam quickly responded to Mrs Smith and said,

"I didn't do it. John and I were playing and John knocked over these things."

Mrs Smith looked unhappy. She said to John and Sam,

"Well you guys, you have to tidy it up right now. Otherwise, you can't go out to play during the nextplaytime!"

Friend story 2 (Scenario 4: *Secrets*)

Just imagine this is a story about John.

He is 8/10 years old, just like you.

John and Sam are very good friends.

One day, John and Sam were talking about each other's secrets.

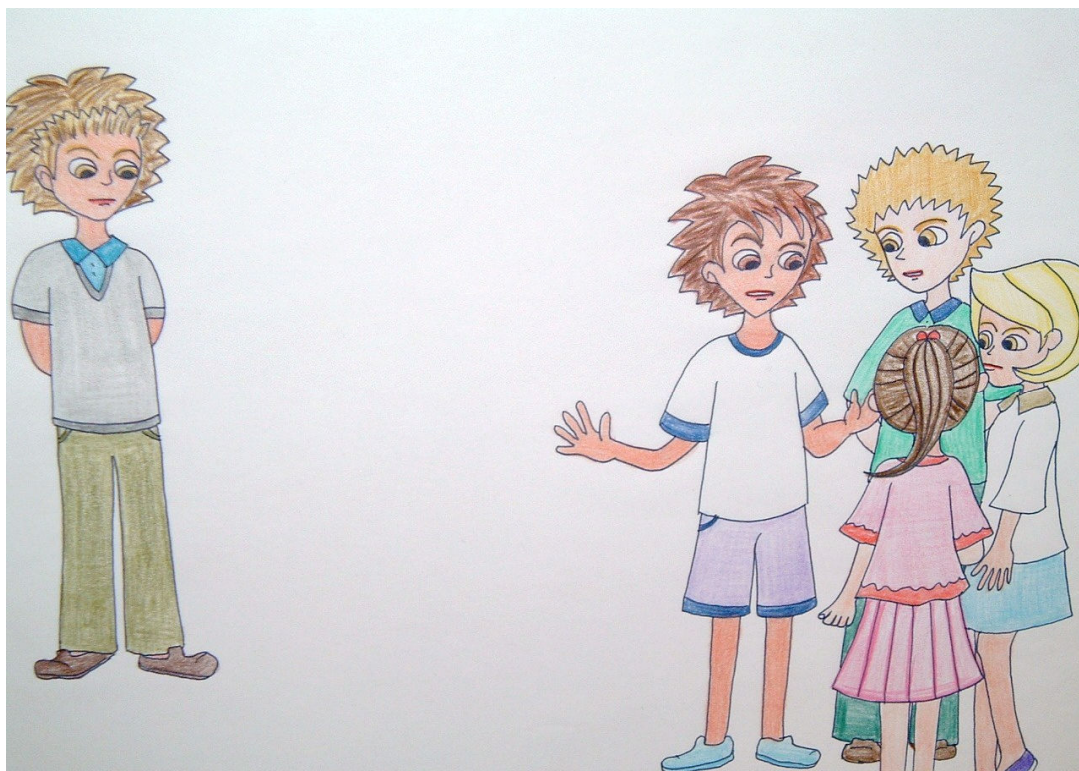
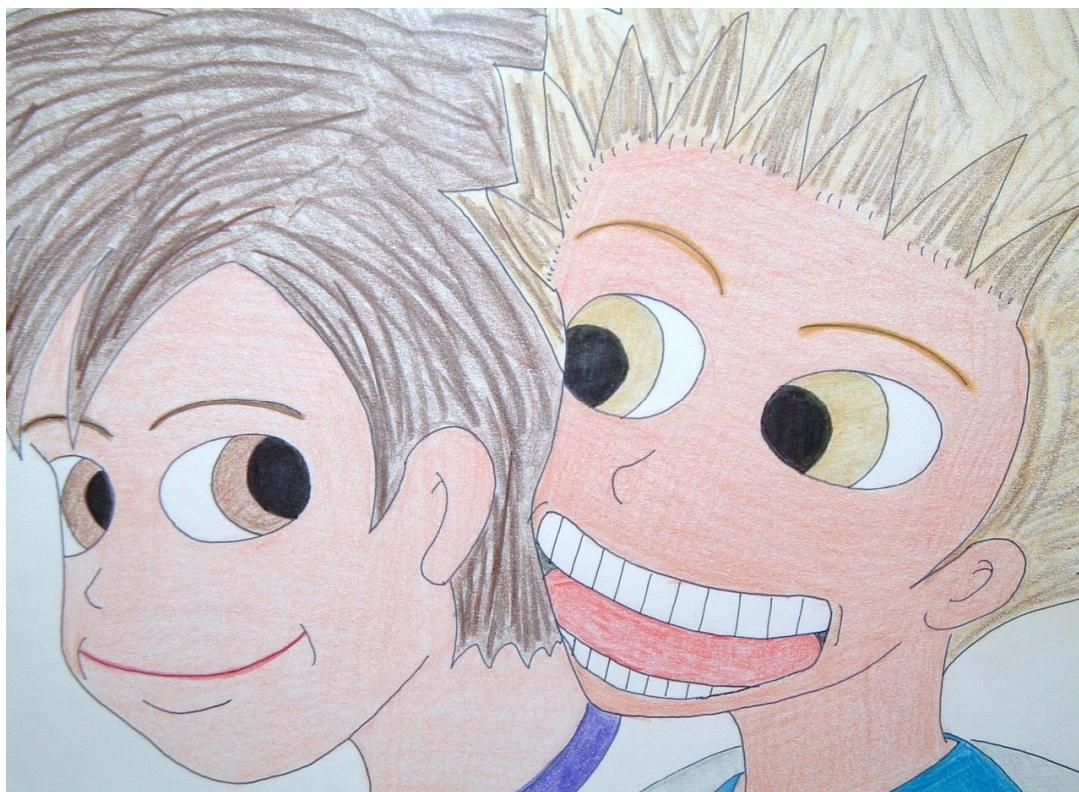
John and Sam both promised many many times that they wouldn't tell anybody about their secret.

John did not tell anybody about Sam's secrets. He was keeping his promise.

But one day, in school, John heard Sam talking with other children about their secrets. Now John knows that many of his classmates know his secret!

Pictures of the Friend Story 1 (Scenario 3: *Making a mess*)



Pictures of the Friend Story 2 (Scenario 4: Secrets)

Appendix F: Tasks Assess Forgiveness vs. Hostility

Parent Story (Task 1: Sharing)



Parent Story (Task 2: Caring)



Parent Task (Task 3: Trusting)



Friend Story (Task 1: Sharing)



Friend Story (Task 2: Caring)



Friend Story (Task 3: Trusting)



Appendix G: Parent Questionnaire

GENERAL INFORMATION

♣ Date: _____ / _____ / 2006 ♣ Your relationship to child: _____

“Parents’ Perceptions of Children’s Common Misbehaviour”



INTRODUCTION

All children occasionally do things that you may consider as naughty, bad, or rude. When you encounter your child’s misbehaviour, you might find yourself asking a question, “Why did he do something that he has been asked not to do?” or “Why did he fail to do something he has been told to do?” In this questionnaire I am interested in some of the possible reasons that **you** usually think of when your child does something naughty.

HOW TO DO THIS QUESTIONNAIRE?

There are five hypothetical situations that might occur with a primary school aged child. The situation described in the scenarios might be familiar or unfamiliar to you. As you read each situation, try to imagine that it is **your child**, _____, even if he has never done these things. For each situation, there are four reasons parents might use to explain their child’s behaviour. Please tick on the scale how likely each of the four reasons could explain your child’s behaviour. The four reasons are given below. We would appreciate it if you rated ALL FOUR reasons.

Example: Situation X

- A. **He is a naughty child:** He tends to misbehave most of the time, especially if he is tired; he always wants his own way; it is in his nature to be a bit naughty.

Very Unlikely		Somewhat Unlikely		Somewhat Likely		Very Likely	✓
---------------	--	-------------------	--	-----------------	--	-------------	---

- B. **It was an accident:** It was an unfortunate accident or a genuine mistake; perhaps he did not hear my request; it could happen by chance with any child.

Very Unlikely		Somewhat Unlikely	✓	Somewhat Likely		Very Likely	
---------------	--	-------------------	---	-----------------	--	-------------	--

- C. **He was trying to annoy me:** he was trying to provoke me: he wanted to make me upset or get back at me in some way; he was deliberately irritating me.

Very Unlikely		Somewhat Unlikely		Somewhat Likely	✓	Very Likely	
---------------	--	-------------------	--	-----------------	---	-------------	--

- D. **He did not know what he was doing:** he’s still learning; he hasn’t yet developed the skills, so he can’t be expected to behave any better.

Very Unlikely	✓	Somewhat Unlikely		Somewhat Likely		Very Likely	
---------------	---	-------------------	--	-----------------	--	-------------	--

REMINDER: There are NO RIGHT or WRONG ANSWERS. Everything you say in questionnaires in our project is strictly CONFIDENTIAL!

1. Imagine you are in a hurry to go out. You ask your child to put his things away and turn off the TV quickly, but it seems to be taking a long time. He puts some away but keeps watching TV, so that the job is not getting done! You are now late for your appointment.

A. He is a naughty child

<i>Very Unlikely</i>		<i>Somewhat Unlikely</i>		<i>Somewhat Likely</i>		<i>Very Likely</i>	
----------------------	--	--------------------------	--	------------------------	--	--------------------	--

B. It was an accident

<i>Very Unlikely</i>		<i>Somewhat Unlikely</i>		<i>Somewhat Likely</i>		<i>Very Likely</i>	
----------------------	--	--------------------------	--	------------------------	--	--------------------	--

C. He was trying to annoy me

<i>Very Unlikely</i>		<i>Somewhat Unlikely</i>		<i>Somewhat Likely</i>		<i>Very Likely</i>	
----------------------	--	--------------------------	--	------------------------	--	--------------------	--

D. He did not know what he was doing

<i>Very Unlikely</i>		<i>Somewhat Unlikely</i>		<i>Somewhat Likely</i>		<i>Very Likely</i>	
----------------------	--	--------------------------	--	------------------------	--	--------------------	--

2. Imagine you are working on an important project on your computer. You ask your child to stay away from the computer. Later, you find out that your child has been playing with your computer and your work has been deleted. You now have to start it all over again.

A. He is a naughty child

<i>Very Unlikely</i>		<i>Somewhat Unlikely</i>		<i>Somewhat Likely</i>		<i>Very Likely</i>	
----------------------	--	--------------------------	--	------------------------	--	--------------------	--

B. It was an accident

<i>Very Unlikely</i>		<i>Somewhat Unlikely</i>		<i>Somewhat Likely</i>		<i>Very Likely</i>	
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C. He was trying to annoy me

<i>Very Unlikely</i>		<i>Somewhat Unlikely</i>		<i>Somewhat Likely</i>		<i>Very Likely</i>	
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D. He did not know what he is doing

<i>Very Unlikely</i>		<i>Somewhat Unlikely</i>		<i>Somewhat Likely</i>		<i>Very Likely</i>	
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3. Imagine you ask your child to help you to set the table for tea. He picks up a plate of food you have just made and carries it to the table, but he drops it and it falls all over the floor.

A. He is a naughty child

<i>Very Unlikely</i>		<i>Somewhat Unlikely</i>		<i>Somewhat Likely</i>		<i>Very Likely</i>	
----------------------	--	--------------------------	--	------------------------	--	--------------------	--

B. It was an accident

<i>Very Unlikely</i>		<i>Somewhat Unlikely</i>		<i>Somewhat Likely</i>		<i>Very Likely</i>	
----------------------	--	--------------------------	--	------------------------	--	--------------------	--

C. He was trying to annoy me

<i>Very Unlikely</i>		<i>Somewhat Unlikely</i>		<i>Somewhat Likely</i>		<i>Very Likely</i>	
----------------------	--	--------------------------	--	------------------------	--	--------------------	--

D. He did not know what he is doing

<i>Very Unlikely</i>		<i>Somewhat Unlikely</i>		<i>Somewhat Likely</i>		<i>Very Likely</i>	
----------------------	--	--------------------------	--	------------------------	--	--------------------	--

4. Imagine you give your child \$10 and ask him to get a few things from a shop. When he comes back from the shop, he had not bought everything you've asked him to buy. It looks as if he bought a thing for himself and he did not have enough money to buy every thing you've asked him to buy.

A. He is a naughty child

<i>Very Unlikely</i>		<i>Somewhat Unlikely</i>		<i>Somewhat Likely</i>		<i>Very Likely</i>	
----------------------	--	--------------------------	--	------------------------	--	--------------------	--

B. It was an accident

<i>Very Unlikely</i>		<i>Somewhat Unlikely</i>		<i>Somewhat Likely</i>		<i>Very Likely</i>	
----------------------	--	--------------------------	--	------------------------	--	--------------------	--

C. He was trying to annoy me

<i>Very Unlikely</i>		<i>Somewhat Unlikely</i>		<i>Somewhat Likely</i>		<i>Very Likely</i>	
----------------------	--	--------------------------	--	------------------------	--	--------------------	--

D. He did not know what he is doing

<i>Very Unlikely</i>		<i>Somewhat Unlikely</i>		<i>Somewhat Likely</i>		<i>Very Likely</i>	
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5. Imagine your child has just come back from outside. He is very wet and dirty. You tell him to take off wet and muddy clothes before coming into the house. But, you find muddy footprints all over the house.

A. He is a naughty child

Very Unlikely		Somewhat Unlikely		Somewhat Likely		Very Likely	
---------------	--	-------------------	--	-----------------	--	-------------	--

B. It was an accident

Very Unlikely		Somewhat Unlikely		Somewhat Likely		Very Likely	
---------------	--	-------------------	--	-----------------	--	-------------	--

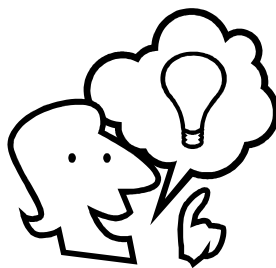
C. He was trying to annoy me

Very Unlikely		Somewhat Unlikely		Somewhat Likely		Very Likely	
---------------	--	-------------------	--	-----------------	--	-------------	--

D. He did not know what he is doing

Very Unlikely		Somewhat Unlikely		Somewhat Likely		Very Likely	
---------------	--	-------------------	--	-----------------	--	-------------	--

If you have any comments or thoughts about this project or the topic of my research, please feel free to write them below:



.....

.....

.....

.....

This is the end of the Questionnaire 1.

Please continue to do the Questionnaire 2. Thanks 😊

GENERAL INFORMATION

♣ Date: ____/____/2006 ♣ Your relationship to child:

"Parents' Responses to Children's Common Misbehaviour"



INTRODUCTION

Every parent has their own way to deal with their children's misbehaviour; some parents might punish, some parents might ignore, some parents might teach, and some parent might forgive. As parents we interact with children in a variety of ways.

In this survey we are interested in what sort of thing you typically do when your child misbehaves.

HOW TO DO THIS QUESTIONNAIRE?

There are five hypothetical situations describing common behaviour that you might consider as naughty, bad, and rude. You already have seen these five hypothetical situations in the first questionnaire. When you answer the questions, please imagine that **you and your child**, _____, are in the presented situations.

There are two questions that you will be asked to **WRITE DOWN BRIEFLY** about your response to your child.

The first question will ask you to write down briefly about your reaction to a child. You can write down what you would **say** to your child and/or what you would **do**, or what you would **feel**.

The second question asks you to imagine as if you are responding to your child right after the situation described. **But, before you had a chance to say or do anything, your child seemed to be sorry, he apologised and said he wouldn't do it again.** If this happened, would you respond any differently to your child? You might not, but please write down if you would behave differently and what you would do. If you wouldn't do anything different, just say so!

REMINDER: Please note that, there are **NO RIGHT** or **WRONG** answers, so please write down your first opinion. Everything you say in questionnaires in our project is strictly **CONFIDENTIAL!!**

1. **Imagine you are in a hurry to go out. You ask your child to put his things away and turn off the TV quickly, but it seems to be taking a long time. He puts some away but keeps watching TV, so that the job is not getting done! You are now late for your appointment.**

♣ What would you DO/SAY?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

♣ Before you do something, your child apologises and shows he is sorry.
What would you DO/SAY?

.....
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.....

2. **Imagine you are working on an important project on your computer. You ask your child to stay away from the computer. Later, you find out that your child has been playing with your computer and your work has been deleted. You now have to start it all over again.**

♣ What would you DO/SAY?

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♣ Before you do something, your child apologises and shows he is sorry.
What would you DO/SAY?

.....
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.....
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.....

3. Imagine you ask your child to help you to set the table for tea. He picks up a plate of food you have just made and carries it to the table, but he drops it and it falls all over the floor.

♣ What would you DO/SAY?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

♣ Before you do something, your child apologises and shows he is sorry.
What would you DO/SAY?

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4. Imagine you give your child \$10 and ask him to get a few things from a shop. When he comes back from the shop, he had not bought everything you've asked him to buy. It looks as if he bought a thing for himself and he did not have enough money to buy every thing you've asked her/him to buy.

♣ What would you DO/SAY?

.....

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.....

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♣ Before you do something, your child apologises and shows he is sorry.
What would you DO/SAY?

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5. Imagine your child has just come back from outside. He is very wet and dirty. You tell him to take off wet and muddy clothes before coming into the house. But, you find muddy footprints all over the house.

♣ What would you DO/SAY?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

♣ Before you do something, your child apologises and shows he is sorry. What would you DO/SAY?

.....

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.....

.....

Please help me answer the final question!

Children sometimes find it difficult to let go of their upset or angry feelings after someone had treated them unfairly or otherwise hurt their feelings. Parents tell us they use various strategies to help their children get over these experiences. Please rate how often you use each of the following strategies:

1. **Just tell them to get over it** (e.g., life is unfair; just forget about it)

Never		Sometime		Often		Always	
-------	--	----------	--	-------	--	--------	--

2. **Encourage them to get their own back** (e.g., stand up for yourself)

Never		Sometime		Often		Always	
-------	--	----------	--	-------	--	--------	--

3. **Encourage them to forgive the other person** (e.g., it might have been a mistake; try to see it from their point of view)

Never		Sometime		Often		Always	
-------	--	----------	--	-------	--	--------	--

For the strategies that most often use, please state what you would actually do or say to your child?

.....

.....

.....



This is the end of all questionnaires!

Thank you very much for taking a part in this research project.

Appendix H: Information Brochure Sent to Parents


If your child agrees to take part please help your child to fill in his/her consent form. If you are willing for them to help this research project please fill in this consent form and return both consent forms to your child's classroom teacher. Your classroom teacher will put the consent forms into a collection box and the researcher will regularly collect them.


WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE INFORMATION YOU PROVIDE?

Your child's videotape will only be used for the purpose of this research project. Tapes will be kept confidential in a locked filing cabinet in the School of Psychology, Massey University. A code number will be used instead of your child's name to keep strict confidentiality.

Your child's video tape will be deleted after analysis. Tapes will only be listened to and seen by the researcher and the female research assistant who participates in the session, and if necessary, my supervisor, Professor Ian Evans.



You are welcome to receive a summary of the results. If you would like a copy of the results, please tick the request box for a brief outcome report to be sent to you. Please remember to fill in your contact details so I know who and where to send the information when the project is finished.





Massey University

You are invited to participate...

“That’s not fair!”

Exploring children’s expressions of forgiveness and resentment

ABOUT THE RESEARCHER

My name is Tomoko Yamaguchi. I am a PhD student in the School of Psychology at Massey University.

I will be assisted by a student in the School of Psychology at Massey University.

This research is supervised by Professor Ian Evans, in the School of Psychology, at Massey University.

ANY QUESTIONS?

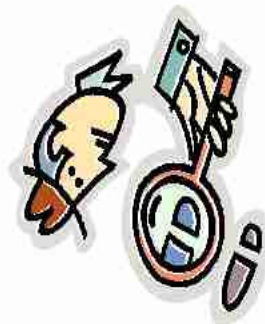
If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

I can be contacted by phone, on (06) 3505799 extension 2516. If I am not available, please leave a message and I will get back to you. Or you can write to me:

Tomoko Yamaguchi,
PhD Student,
School of Psychology,
Massey University,
Private Bag 11-222,
Palmerston North

Alternatively my email address is Tomoko.Yamaguchi.1@uni.massey.ac.nz

This project has been reviewed and approved by Massey University Campus Human Ethics Committee: Southern A, Application 07/65. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Professor John O’Neil, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern A, telephone 06 3505799 x 8771, email humanethic.southa@massey.ac.nz



WHAT IS THIS RESEARCH PROJECT ABOUT?

My name is Tomoko and I am interested in how children deal with emotionally conflicting situations in their everyday lives.

We are investigating how children manage their feelings when they are confronted with fair/unfair situations, and we are focusing on how this might contribute to their expressions of forgiveness or resentment.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Being able to manage angry feelings in emotionally conflicting situations is an important social skill for both adults and children.

Being able to forgive another's mistake means children are learning to develop and to maintain healthy interpersonal relationships.

When adults have a better understanding of children's feelings and thoughts that are associated with their resenting and forgiving behaviours, we can provide more effective help with their emotional and social development.

WHAT WILL YOUR CHILD DO?

Your child will be invited to participate in a scenario-based interview session at two different times. The first session will be scheduled one week prior to the second session.

At each time, your child will hear two scenarios (stories) about typical or common life experiences of unfairness that have happened between a child and his/her mother, and between friends. Each story will be presented with simple drawings, so that your child can easily understand the main theme of the story.

After the scenario has been described, your child will be asked to imagine that he/she was the main child in the story, and to answer a series of questions followed by three judgment tasks. The questions include how the main character in the story might be feeling and how the main character in the story would respond to a person who was unfair. The judgment tasks ask the child to state how he/she might react to a person who might have treated them unfairly.

When the children answer the questions, there will be a simple scale for them to point out their choice. Please note that there are no right or wrong answers.

At the end of the session, your child will be given a sticker for his/her effort, and time in helping this research project. The entire session is designed to be an enjoyable experience for your child. To ensure the safety of your child the researcher will be accompanied by a research assistant. The research assistant will also video-tape the session to ensure that the responses your child has given are recorded accurately.

HOW MUCH TIME WILL BE INVOLVED?

Each session will take about 20 minutes and will take place in a quiet room organised by the principal of your child's school. Participation by your child will take place at a time during the school day that suits your child's teacher and limits the amount of disturbance to their daily routine.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

Talk to your child and make sure he or she is willing to take part. If so, sign the consent form and in this way we can obtain sufficient numbers of children to make the research meaningful.

WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT FROM THE RESEARCHER?

Massey University Human Ethics Committee has prepared a statement of participant's rights as follows:

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you agree to participate, you have the right to:

- decline to answer any question;
- withdraw from the study at any time;
- ask any questions about the study at any time during the participation;
- access to a summary of the results
- ask for the videotape to be turned off at any time during the session.

Note that these rights apply equally to your child.

If your child does not want to participate, it will not affect your relationship with the school or Massey University in any way.

If you are happy for your child to take part, please go through the information brochure with your child and make sure he/she is willing to be included in this research project.

Appendix I: Information Brochure Sent to Children

Children's Information Sheet



Massey University

Can you help me?



Studying about
Children's Expressions
of Forgiveness and
Angry Feelings

What will happen to what I say?

- Your teacher will not see, hear, and read what you said.
- Your video tape will be deleted and destroyed after I finish this research project.
- I hope we can do this research project together. But, if you have any questions about helping my research project, you can talk to me about or ask your parents about this. My phone number is listed on the back of this information brochure and your parent also has my phone number



About the researcher

- My name is Tomoko Yamaguchi. I am a PhD student in the School of Psychology at Massey University.
- I have an assistant who helps me. Her name is Maria Lilloa. She is also a student at Massey University.

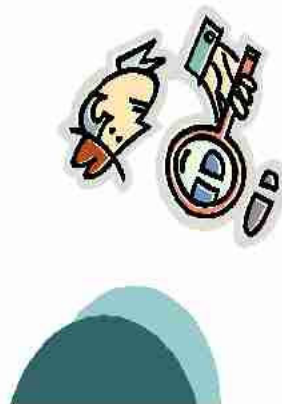
Any questions?

If you have any questions or concerns about this research project, please contact

Tomoko Yamaguchi
PhD Student,
School of Psychology,
Massey University,
Private Bag 11-222,
Palmerston North.
Phone: (06) 3505799 ext 2516 or
Email me at
Tomoko.Yamaguchi.1@uni.massey.ac.nz

Thank you very much for your time.
I am looking forward to learning from you.





What is this research project about?

- o "That's not fair!" - Unfairness often happens to children as well as adults in their everyday lives.
- o This research project tries to have a better understanding of experiences of fairness and unfairness from children's own points of view.
- o This research project also studies how children manage their angry feelings and what they say and do to with a person who was unfair.
- o **Why study this?**
- o When people experience unfairness, they might feel unhappy and might find it difficult to manage with their own negative feelings, thoughts, and actions.

- o Being able to communicate with other people in a fair way may mean we are being considerate of their feelings and thoughts.
- o When adults learn more about children's thoughts, feelings, and actions relating to experiences of unfairness, they can help children to feel better and show good behaviours.

Who am I wanting to talk to?

- o I would like to meet and talk to children who are aged from 8-years-old to 12-years old.

What you will be asked to do?

- o You will be invited to meet and talk to me twice.
- o Each time, you will be asked to listen to two scenarios about a child, just like you. I have some simple drawings that you can see while listening to these scenarios.
- o After each scenario, I want you to help me answer some questions about fairness/unfairness, and feelings and thoughts that the child in the scenario may have.
- o Do not worry if you are not sure about the answers to my questions because there are NO RIGHT or WRONG answers!

- o After listening to these scenarios, you can share with me your own story. When you finish our talk, you can have a sticker for your hard work and time.



- o If you want to stop during our talk, that is O.K. You can leave at any time and I won't mind at all.

- o I have an assistant, Maria Ulloa. She is a student at Massey University. She will keep her eyes on the time so that you do not miss out too much of your class. She will videotape your talks so that I can write down what we talked about later.

How much time will it take?

- o When we do our talk, I will ask your school principal or your classroom teacher when might be a good time for us to meet and talk.
- o We are meeting two different times and each time takes about 20 – 25 minutes.

Appendix J: Consent Form for Parents



Massey University
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY
Te Kura Hinengaro Tangata
Private Bag 11 222
Palmerston North
New Zealand
T: 04 6 556 5039 ext 12043
F: 04 6 556 1673
www.massey.ac.nz
http://psychology.massey.ac.nz

CONSENT FORM

Name of research project
Exploring children's expressions of forgiveness and resentment

- I have read the information sheet and have understood the details of the study
- I have had the chance to ask questions and these have been answered to my satisfaction.
- I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.
- I understand my right to withdraw my child from the study at any time
- YES, I give permission for my child, _____ (please print the name of your child here), Boy / Girl (tick appropriate box), to participate in this research project under the conditions set out in the information sheet.
- YES, I give permission for the researcher to video tape my child's scenario based interview sessions.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Full Name (printed) _____

Relationship to child (e.g., mother, father, legal guardian)

What cultural/ethnic group(s) does your family identify with? _____

My child's class room is _____

YES, I would like a summary of the findings from this research project.

Please provide a postal address or an email address if you want a summary of the results.

Postal address: _____

Email: _____

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM AND YOUR CHILD'S CONSENT FORM TO YOUR CHILD'S CLASSROOM TEACHER AS SOON AS CONVENIENT.



Appendix K: Consent Form for Children



Massey University
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY
Te Kura Hinengaro Tangata
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Palmerston North
New Zealand
T: 04 6 556 5039 ext 12043
F: 04 6 556 1673
www.massey.ac.nz
http://psychology.massey.ac.nz

CONSENT FORM

Name of research project:

Studying about children's expressions of forgiveness and angry feeling.

- I have read the information brochure and have understood what it is about.
- My parents and I know what I would be doing in the scenario-based interview sessions, and I would like to join in. I know I can ask any questions any time.
- I would like to join in the interview sessions and I understand that I can leave at any time.

Here is a space for you to sign your name if you want to join this research project.

• My name is _____

• Today's Date is _____

• My school is _____

• My class is _____

- My parents know about this and are happy that I join:
 - YES NO
- I know Tomoko is video taping our interview sessions and I am happy about it:
 - YES NO

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO YOUR CLASSROOM TEACHER.



Appendix L: Letter of Introduction to School Principals



Massey University
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY
Ta Kura Hinangaro Tangata
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F: 61 6 350 5673
www.massey.ac.nz
<http://psychology.massey.ac.nz>

Research Project: "Exploring children's expression of forgiveness and resentment."

Letter to School Principal

April 2008

Dear

My name is Tomoko Yamaguchi and I am a graduate student, currently working on a series of research projects for my PhD in Psychology at Massey University. My supervisor is Professor Ian Evans, in the School of Psychology, at Massey University.

Thank you very much for agreeing to meet with me so that I can explain my research project to you. The purpose of this letter is to put my request in writing so that you can judge the suitability of my research project for your school and decide whether you wish your school to participate.

My research is about fairness, forgiveness, and resentment. I am interested in how children deal with emotionally conflicting situations in their everyday lives. It is of most interest to know how children regulate their feelings when they are confronted with unfair/unjust situations and how this contributes to their expressions of forgiveness and resentment. Children's ability to forgive and to regulate their negative emotion in unfair situations is a vital part of positive peer relationships.

In the study, I hope to meet with 90 students aged from 8-years-old to 12-years-old. If your school participates in this research then I would need to meet and talk with each child individually at two different times. The two scenario-based interview sessions will be scheduled a week apart. The research will involve the following procedures:

FOR CHILDREN: Each child will listen to two scenarios about fair/unfair situations that have happened between a child of his/her age and that child's parent, and between friends. After the scenario has been told, the child will be asked to respond to a series of questions about the main character in the scenario. The questions include how the events depicted would make the main character of the scenario feel, and how likely the main character of the scenario would express forgiveness or resentment to the person who was unfair. Each scenario is presented with simple drawings and an answer to each question can be selected from a simple scale.

The entire scenario-based interview session should take about 20-25 minutes. To ensure the safety of your pupils, I will be accompanied by Maria Ulloa, a student in the School of Psychology, as a research assistant. She will be trained in her ethical responsibilities and her duties as a research assistant. She will video record every session in order to obtain a really accurate record of the children's responses and also to ensure that this project has no harmful or risk effects for your pupils. All records are completely confidential. We will ensure that each child is willing to participate and will



not be upset by the experience, as each child will be told that he or she is free to withdraw at any time.

FOR THE SCHOOL AND THE TEACHERS: The role I would ask of you would be for you to discuss the project with your teaching staff and encourage them to assist by distributing the consent letters to children in class to take home to their parents. And, I would like to ask you to assist me in finding a quiet location in your school where I could conduct the scenario-based interview session and record the children's responses.

FOR PARENTS/CAREGIVER: Parents will be sent a consent form, in accordance with Massey University Policy, that will explain the study and ask their permission. Parents will be encouraged to go through the study information with their child and to make sure their child is willing to take part in this study. They will be asked to sign their consent form for their child's participation in the study. Children will be also asked to sign their consent form if they wish to take part in this research project.

At the conclusion of the study I will prepare a summary of the findings for you and the teachers that discusses the implications they have for schools. I will prepare another version that can be sent to the parents who participated.

By this letter, I am asking for your help by giving permission for the researcher to approach your pupils who may be interested in taking part in my research project. The study of children's ability to deal with emotionally conflicting situations and to regulate their own emotion in response to parent's and peer's actions is important as it can influence the children's behaviour with peers and attitudes towards the world in general. For these reasons, I hope you will agree to your students being part of our research project.

Approval from Ethics Committee:

This project has been reviewed and approved by Massey University Campus Human Ethics Committee: Southern A, Application 07/65. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Professor John O'Neill, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern A, telephone (06) 350 5799 x 8771, email humanethicsoutha@massey.ac.nz.

Researcher: Tomoko Yamaguchi, School of Psychology, Massey University, Private Bag 11-222, Palmerston North, can be contacted by phoning (06) 3505799 extension 2516. Alternatively you can email me at Tomoko.Yamaguchi.1@uni.massey.ac.nz

Supervisor: Professor Ian Evans, School of Psychology, Massey University, P O Box 756, Wellington, can be contacted by phoning (04) 8015799 extension 62125.

Thank you very much for considering our project. Your time and effort is appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Tomoko Yamaguchi
Researcher

CONSENT FORM**SCHOOL PRINCIPAL**

Name of School: _____

On behalf of the School named above permission is given / not given for the children associated with our school to participate in your project.

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Designation: _____

Date: _____

Appendix M: The Unfairness and Fairness Scenarios and the Accompanying Pictures

Parent Unfairness Story 1 (*Mum's appointment*)

This is a story about Emma. She is 8-years-old, just like you.

One day, after school, Emma has finished all her homework and was watching her favourite TV programme in the living room.

Meanwhile, Emma's mum was doing lots of the things around the house, so that she was getting late for her appointment. She said Emma, "Emma, we must go very soon. Turn off the TV right now and hop into the car!"

Emma listened to mum's request and hopped into the car.

A few minutes later, mum came into the car, looking grumpy.

She yelled at Emma, "Emma, when I ask you to do things, do it quickly.

You see, I am now late for my appointment!"

Parent Fair story 1 (*Thanks for Listening*)

This is a story about Emma. She is 8-years-old, just like you.

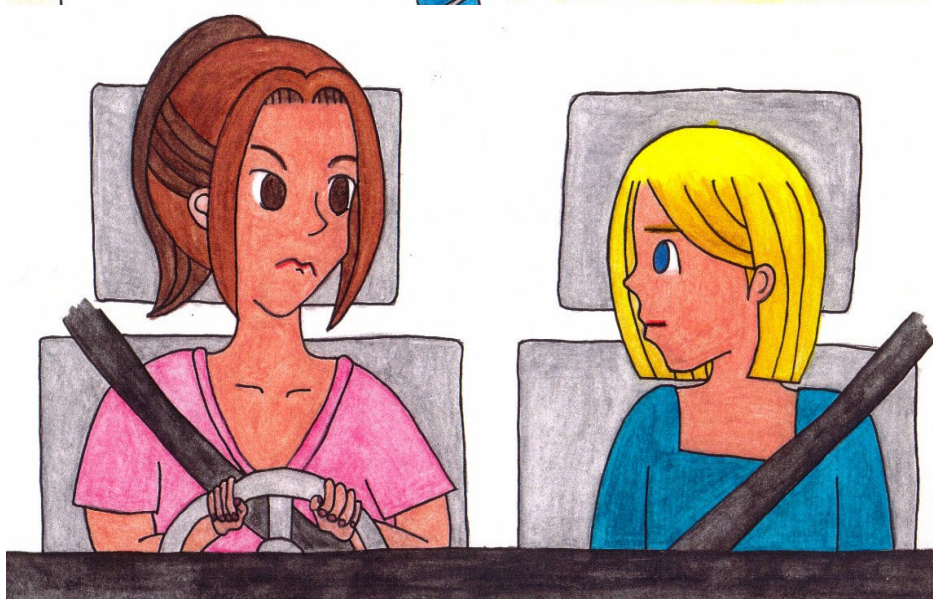
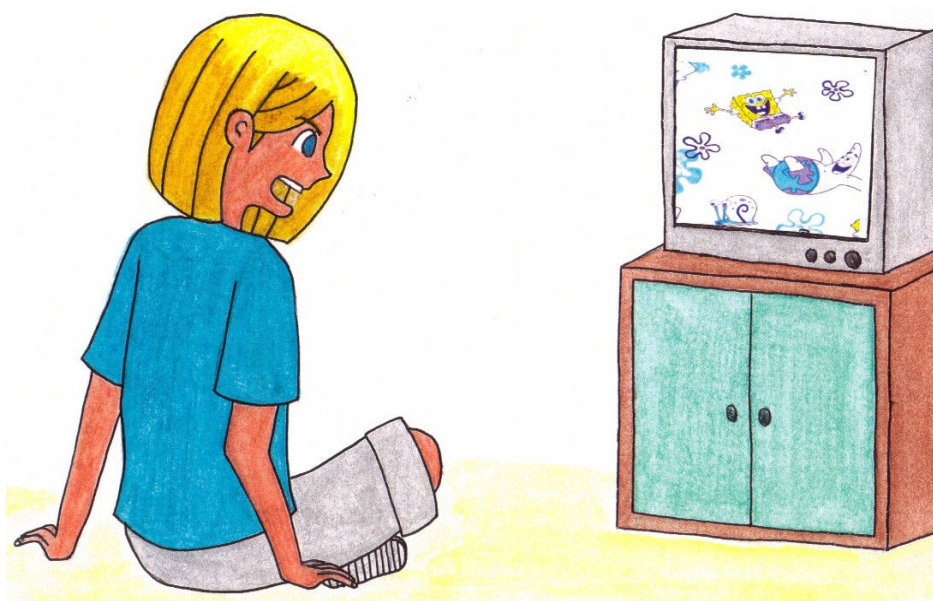
One day, Emma was watching her favourite TV programme after finishing all her homework.

Meanwhile, Emma's mum was doing lots of the things around the house, so that she was getting late for her appointment. She said Emma, "Emma, we must to go very soon. Turn off the TV right now and hop into the car!"

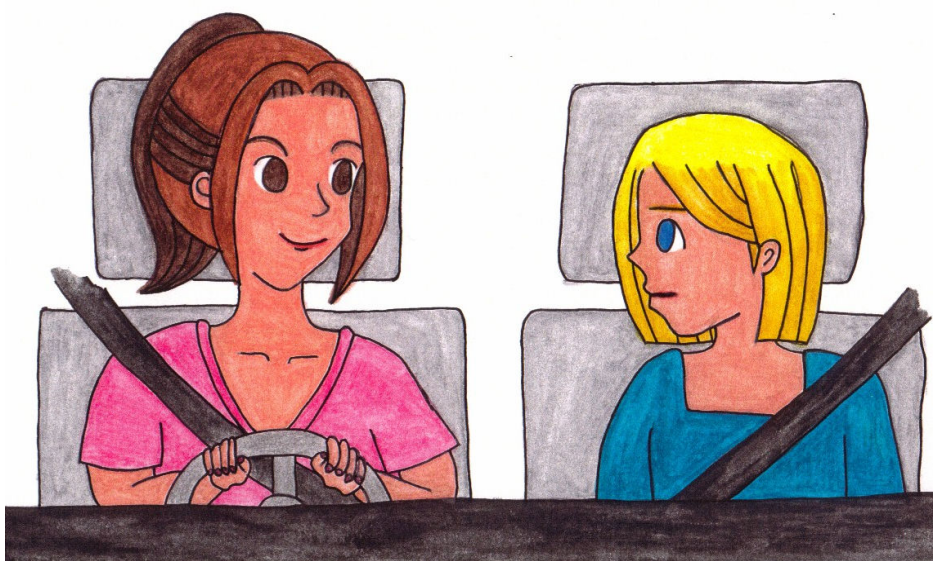
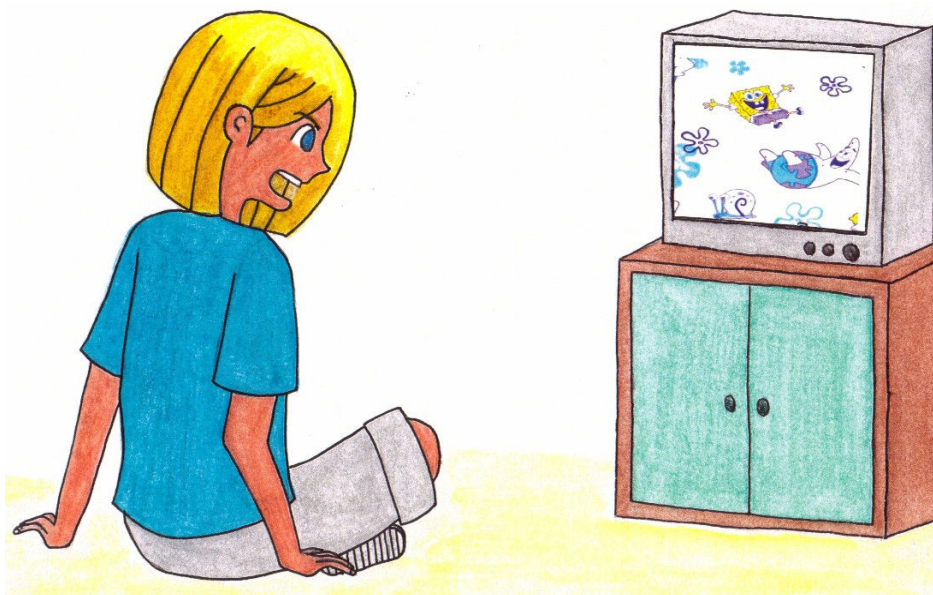
Emma listened to mum's request and hopped into the car.

A few minutes later, mum came into the car and said, "Emma, thanks for listening my request and tidying up the rooms. You have been very helpful. I have taped your programmed for you so that you can watch it when we get back."

Pictures of the Parent Unfairness Story 1, (*Mum's appointment*)



Pictures of the Parent Fairness Story 1 (*Thanks for listening*)



Friend Unfairness Story 1 (*Playing in the park*)

This is a story about Emma. She is 8-years-old, just like you.

Emma and Katie are very good friends.

They know each other for a long time.

One day, Emma and Katie were playing in the park.

Shortly after they started to play, Sarah and her friends came to play in the park as well.

Sarah asked Katie whether or not she would like to join them for a game.

Katie promised Emma that she would play with her, but now, she has changed her mind and has gone to play with Sarah and her friends.

Emma is now alone, nobody to play with.

Friend Fairness Story 1 (*Gossiping*)

This is a story about Emma. She is 8 years-old, just like you.

Emma and Katie are very good friends.

They know each other for a long time.

One day, during a play time, Emma and Katie were playing a game.

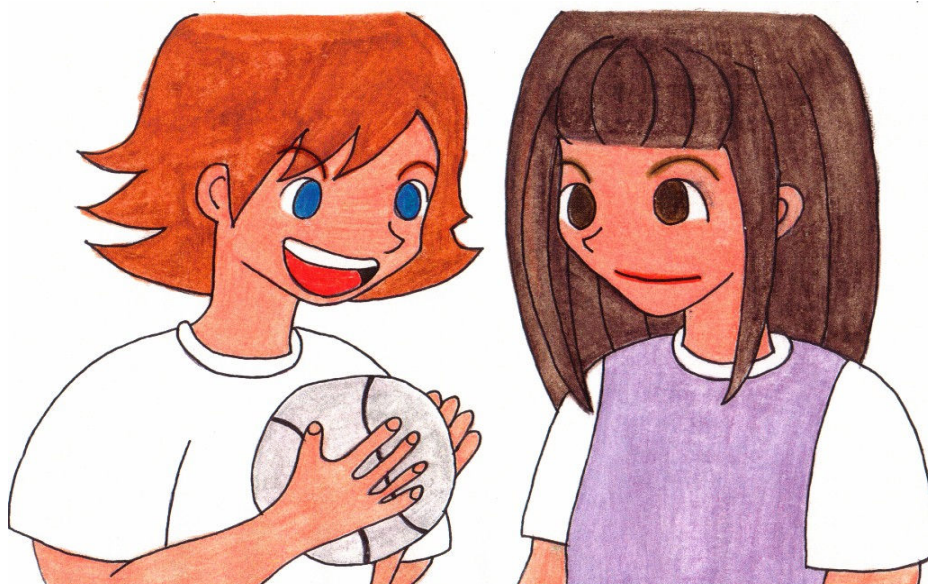
Emma and Katie have noticed that a group of children are looking at them and gossiping about Emma.

Unfortunately, those kids did not stop gossiping about Emma for a while.

So, Katie walked up to those children and said them to stop talking about Emma.

A little while later, those children stop gossiping about Emma and went off to outside. Emma and Katie decided to talk with their classroom teacher about those children.

Pictures of the Friend Unfairness Story 1 (*Playing in the park*)



Pictures of the Friend Fairness Story 1 (Gossiping)



Parent Unfairness Story 2 (*Mum's Project*)

This is a story about Emma. She is 8-years-old, just like you.

One day, after she has finished all her homework, she was playing her favourite game on the computer.

A short time later, Emma's mum asked Emma to finish her game because she has an important project that needs to be completed. Mum has been spending a lot of time on this project.

A few minutes later, mum came to talk with Emma, looking grumpy. She yelled at Emma, "Emma, what did you do to my project! I told you not to touch anything! My project is now all gone. I have to start it all over again!"

Parent Fairness Story (*Saving the Project*)

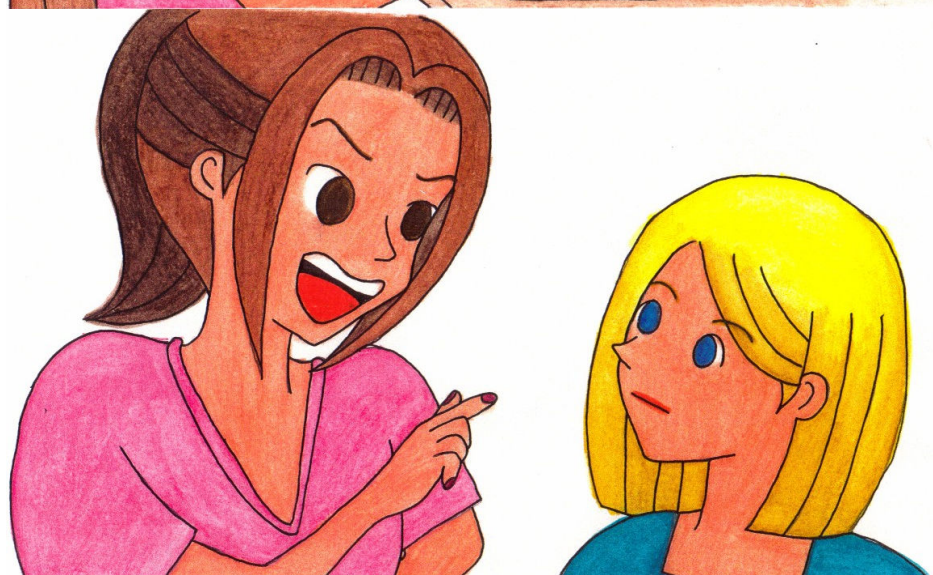
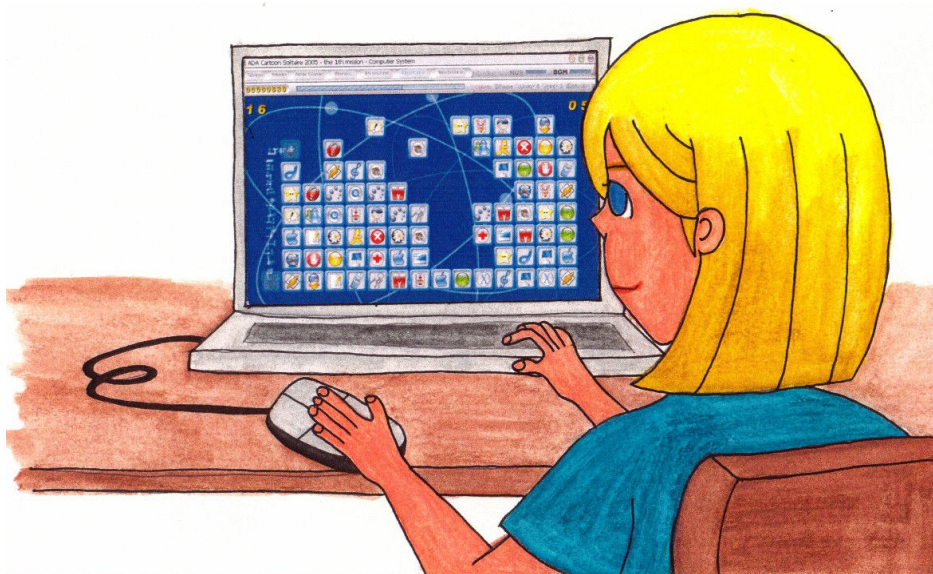
This is a story about Emma. She is 8-years-old, just like you.

One day, after finishing all her home work, she was playing her favourite game on the computer. A short time later, Emma's mum asked Emma to finish her game because she has an important project that needs to be completed. She has been spending a lot of time on this project.

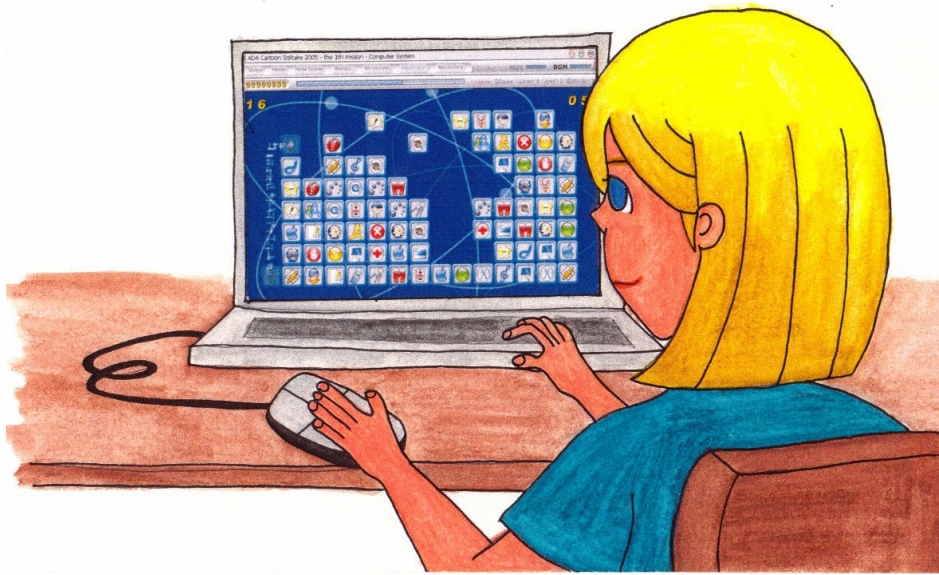
A few minutes later, mum came into see Emma, looking a little upset. She asked Emma, "Emma, did you touch any of my projects while you were playing the game? I cannot seem to find my projects."

Emma said to her she did not do anything.

Later, she showed Emma how to save a project, so that next time if she sees her project has been unsaved she could save it for her.

Picture of the Parent Unfairness Story 2(Mum's project)

Picture of the Parent Fairness Story 2 (Saving the Project)



Friend Unfairness Story 2 (Sleep Over)

This is a story about Emma. She is 8-years-old, just like you.

Emma and Sarah are very good friends.

They know each other for a long time.

Katie always promised Emma that she will invite Emma for a sleep over for a weekend. Emma was looking forward to it.

One day, after school, Emma noticed that Katie is inviting a number of classmates for a sleepover in her place. Emma was playing with Katie everyday, but Katie does not ask Emma anything about a sleep over any more.

Friend Fairness Story 2 (Tidying up)

This is a story about Emma. She is 8-years- old, just like you.

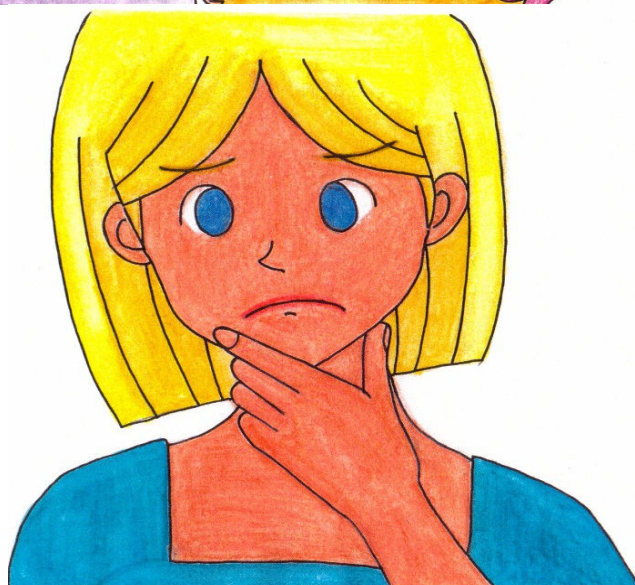
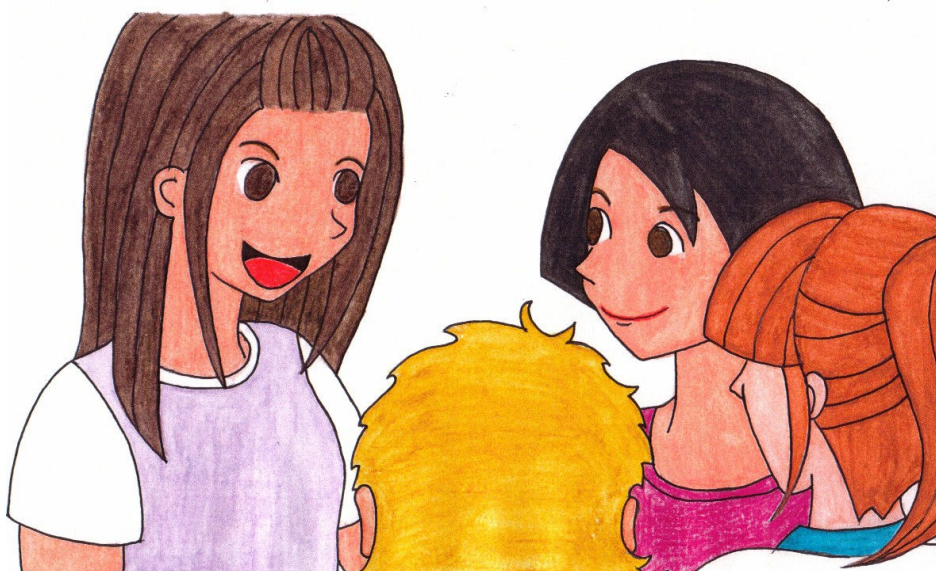
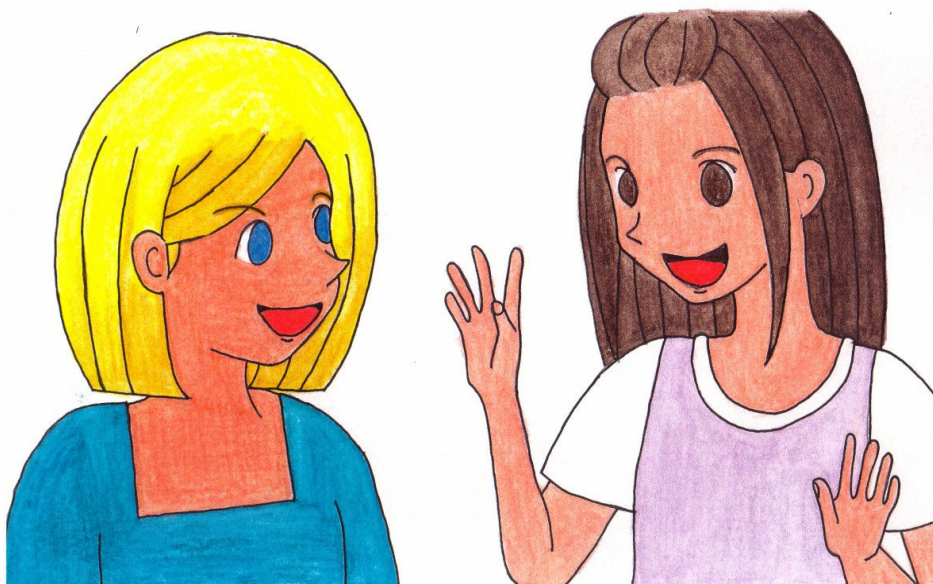
Emma and Katie are very good friends. They know each other for a long time.

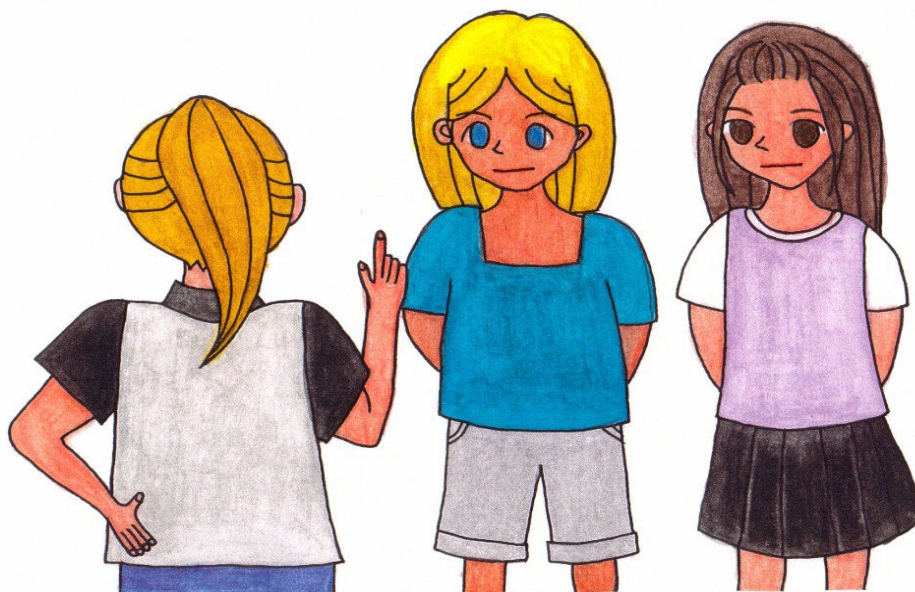
One day, Emma was tidying up her desk after an art class. Just then, Katie pushed Emma. All the things that Emma had tidied up dropped on the floor and it made a big mess.

Just then, their classroom teacher came into the room. She asked both Emma and Katie what had happen to the big mess in the room.

Katie said to the teacher that it was her fault and she will tidy them up before she is going to play.

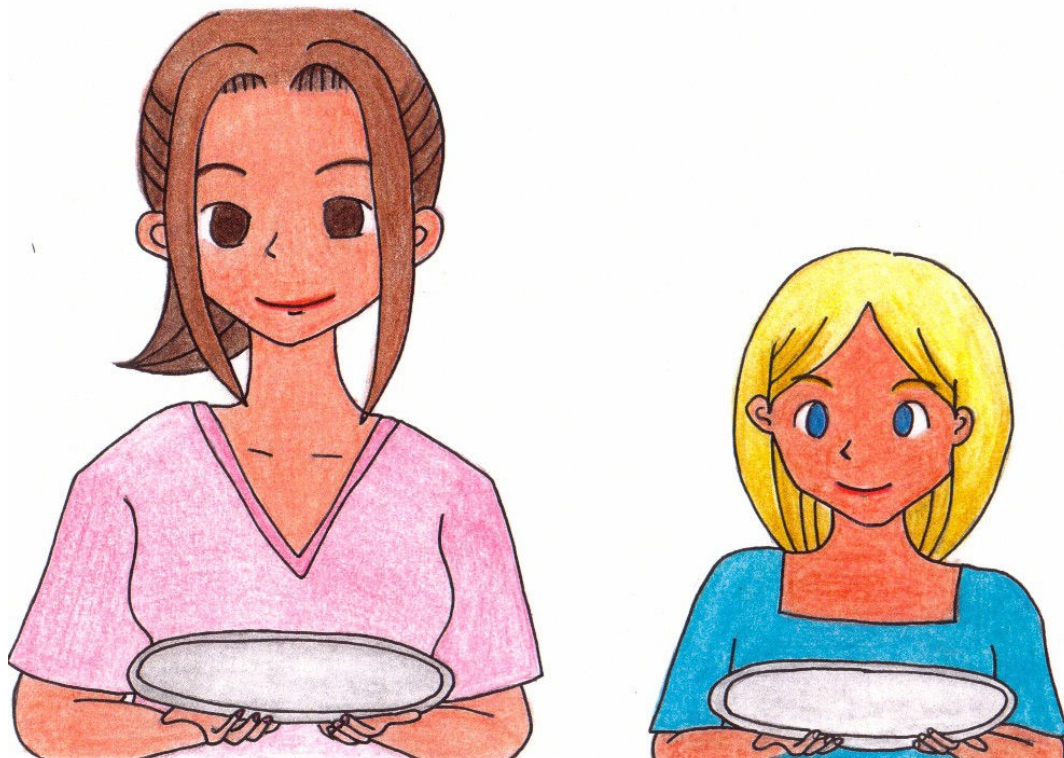
Katie quickly started to tidy them up and Emma helped her out so that they would not miss out too much of their play time.

Pictures of the Friend Unfairness Story 2 (Sleeping over)

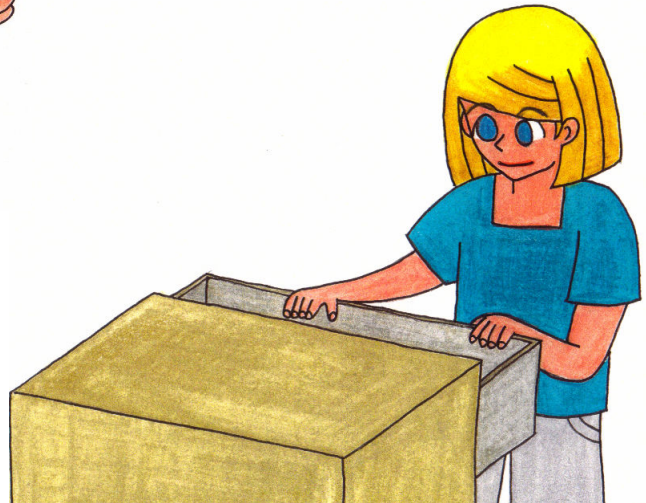
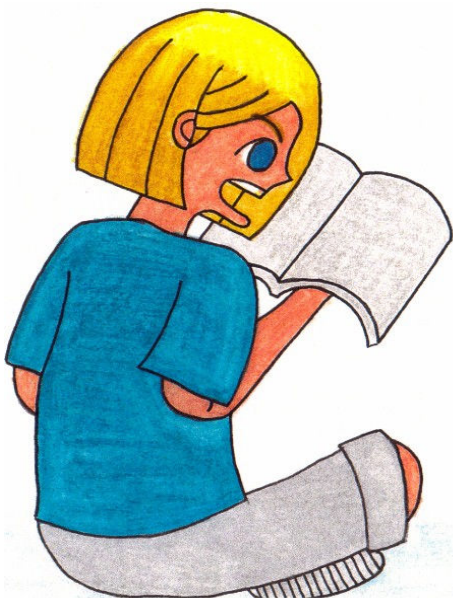
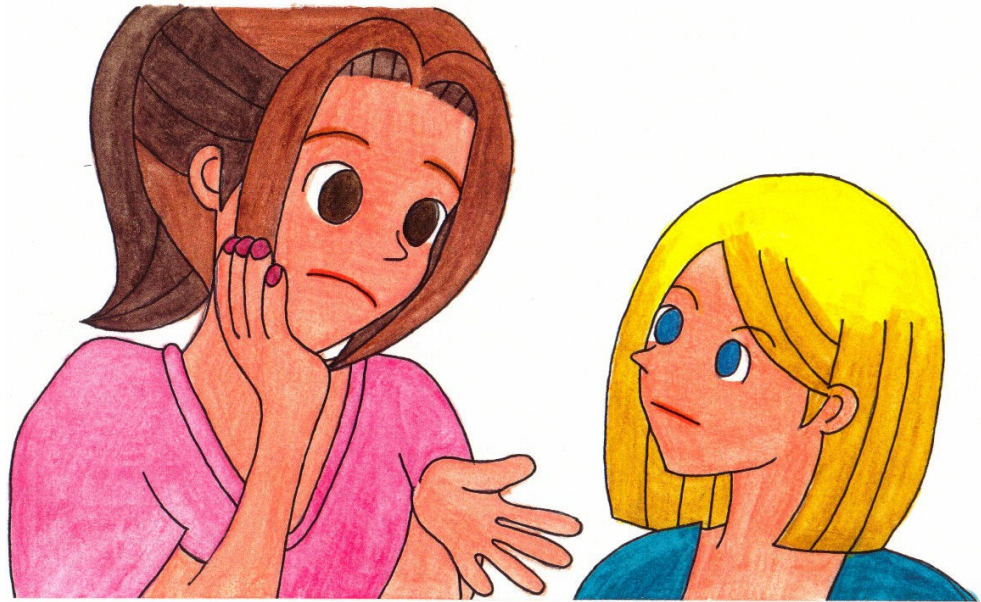
Pictures of the Friend Fairness 2 (Tidying up)

Appendix N: Tasks to assess Hostility vs. Forgiveness

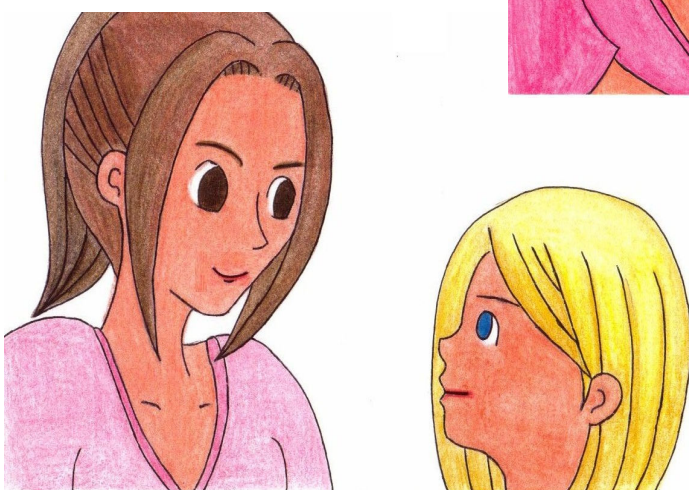
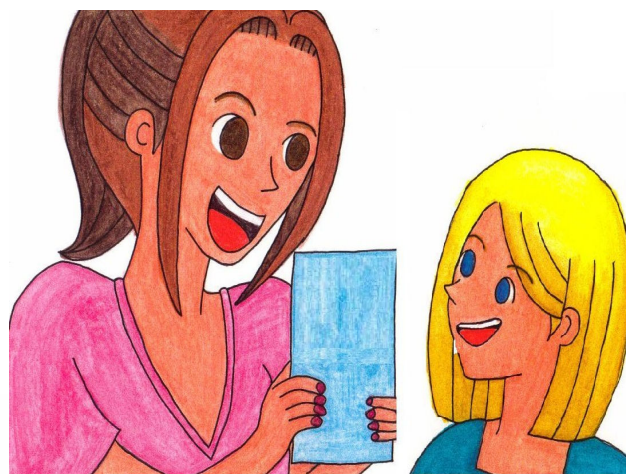
Parent Story (Task 1: Sharing)



Parent Story (Task 2: Caring)



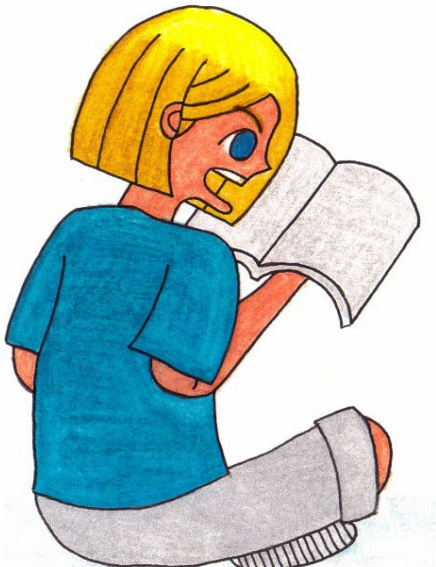
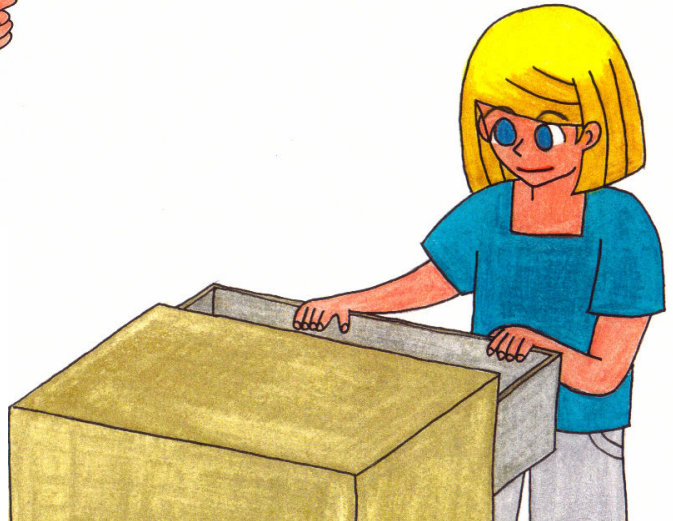
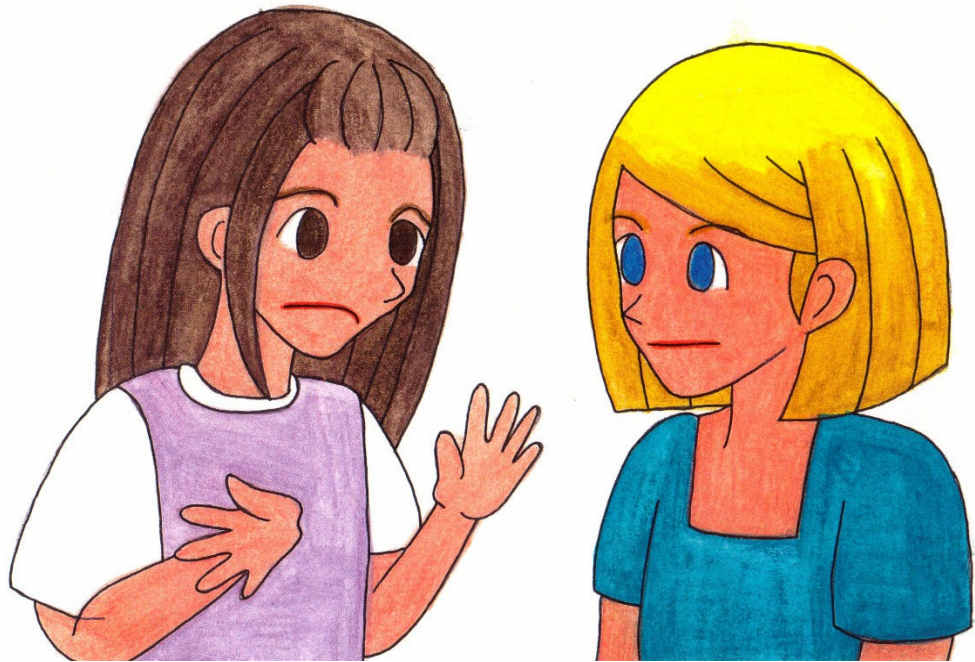
Parent Story (Task 3: Trusting)



Friend Story (Task 1: Sharing)



Friend Story (Task 2: Caring)



Friend Story (Task 3: Trusting)

