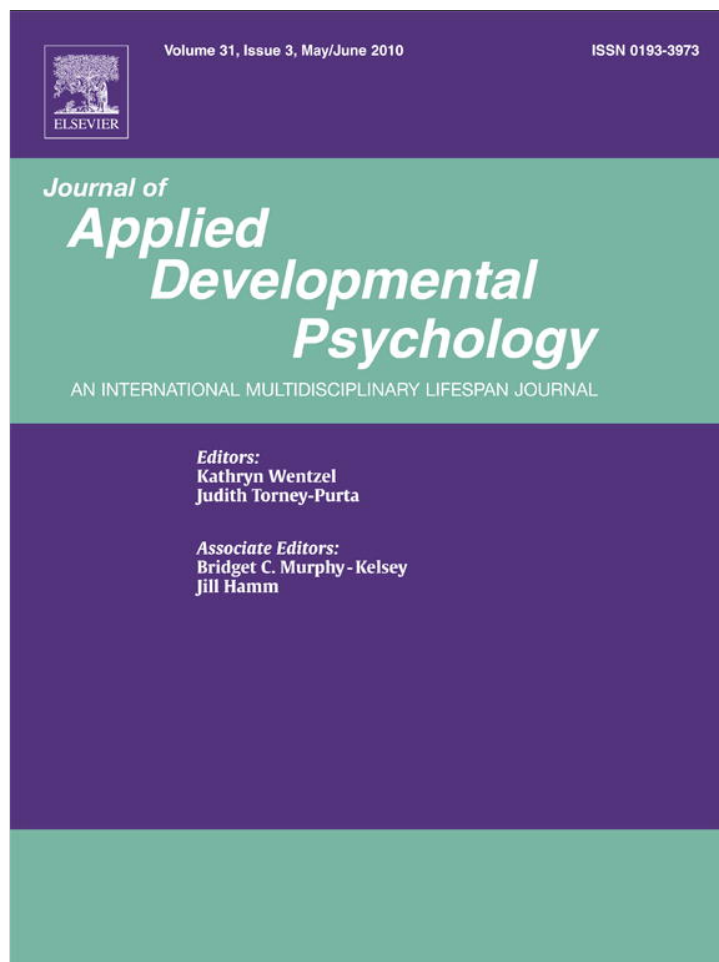


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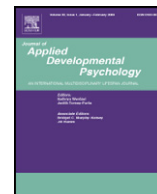
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Children's assessments of corporal punishment and other disciplinary practices: The role of age, race, SES, and exposure to spanking

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ABSTRACT

African-American and Anglo-American children's assessments of four disciplinary methods (spanking, reasoning, withdrawing privileges, and time-out) were investigated with 108 children ages 6–10 years old and one of their parents. Children watched videos depicting a child being disciplined and then rated each discipline method. Reasoning was rated as most fair, spanking as least fair. Spanking was regarded most effective for immediate compliance but not for long-term behavior change. Children with medium high levels of exposure to spanking were more likely to regard it as the best disciplinary technique compared with children with low or high exposure levels. Younger children rated spanking as fairer than older children. No differences were found between African-American and Anglo-American children's assessments after controlling for exposure to spanking and socioeconomic status. Implications about the role of children's assessments of discipline for internalization are discussed.

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Introduction

Child discipline and its effectiveness have been studied for more than half a century. However, the 1990s marked a decade of change in conceptualizations concerning the purpose and effectiveness of punishment. This transformation was largely due to the increased recognition of the role of children's social cognitions. An influential article by Grusec and Goodnow (1994) led the way. They proposed that internalization is the key to long-term behavior change. Internalization occurs when a person takes the values of society as one's own and thus, appropriate behavior is motivated by internal rather than external factors. Grusec and Goodnow proposed internalization to be a two-pronged meditational process. A child must first accurately perceive the parental message, and then, in order for behavioral change to occur, the child must accept it. This recognition of the child's role in effective discipline and internalization is in stark contrast to the unidirectional view that has characterized much of the research on the topic (Dobbs & Duncan, 2004; Grusec & Kuczynski, 1997; Maccoby, 1992).

The goal of discipline is to shape the child into being an appropriately self-regulated individual. Self-regulation occurs when the child has internalized a moral norm and thus believes that

compliance with the norm is self-generated rather than imposed. Central to the behavioral change process outlined by Grusec and Goodnow (1994), and subsequently refined by Gershoff (2002), is the child's evaluation and acceptance of the parental regulatory message. Acceptance requires that the child perceives the message as appropriate for the circumstances and that the child is motivated to comply with the message. Children's views of the legitimacy and fairness of their parents' requests or punishments are thus likely to be a key determinant in children's acceptance of and potential compliance with such demands (Laupa & Turiel, 1986; Tisak, 1986). However, relatively few studies have examined children's evaluations of discipline. Most investigations have focused on disciplinary practices and effectiveness from the parent's point of view. That creates a limited understanding of the role of discipline in children's lives, given that parents and children sometimes interpret discipline events very differently. For example, Dobbs and Duncan (2004) and Willow and Hyder (1998) found that while adults often interpret spanking as "a gentle tap or a loving slap" (Dobbs & Duncan, p. 376), most of the children defined it as a "hard hit" or a "very hard hit." The children in these studies also reported that adults are usually angry when they spank, whereas parents often report that they do not spank while angry. Thus, in order to get a more complete picture of the context and experiences of discipline, it is important to also understand children's perspectives. This study was designed to investigate children's assessments of several commonly used disciplinary techniques with a focus on corporal punishment.

Children's reaction to corporal punishment, most frequently operationalized as spanking, is a useful variable to study for several reasons. First, corporal punishment is salient and memorable so children are likely to have formed opinions about it. Second, across

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families, there is wide variability in its use (Holden, Coleman, & Schmidt, 1995). Third, few investigators have studied children's opinions about corporal punishment. In the work that has been done (e.g., Carlson, 1986; Dobbs & Duncan, 2004; Herzberger & Tennen, 1985; Rohner, Bourque, & Elordi, 1996; Willow & Hyder, 1998), children's assessments of corporal punishment have generally not been studied in relation to other less severe disciplinary techniques. It is useful to include reactions to other discipline methods along with spanking, because comparisons can be made to better gauge children's evaluations. Finally, given the continuing controversy over the use of corporal punishment, collecting children's opinions adds their voice to the debate.

Variables related to children's evaluations of discipline

In studying which variables impact children's evaluations of discipline, most research has centered on five independent variables: type of transgression preceding the discipline (Catron & Masters, 1993; Chilamkurti & Milner, 1993), disciplinary agent (Catron & Masters, 1993), child's gender (Sorbring, Deater-Deckard, & Palméus, 2006), child's age (Barnett, Quackenbush, & Sinisi, 1996; Catron & Masters, 1993; Siegal & Cowen, 1984; Wolfe, Katell, & Drabman, 1982), and prior exposure to the disciplinary technique (Barnett et al., 1996; Deater-Deckard, Lansford, Dodge, Pettit, & Bates, 2003; Wolfe et al., 1982). To limit the number of independent variables, we focus here only on the impact of child's age and several types of prior exposure to corporal punishment.

Child's age

Not surprisingly, age has been found to be an important determinant of children's evaluations. For example, Catron and Masters (1993) found that preschool children viewed spanking as acceptable for any transgression, whereas fifth graders were less willing to accept this form of discipline and only found it acceptable for prudential violations (behaviors that pose a threat or danger to oneself) and moral violations (behaviors that involve harm to others or violate certain rights). Younger children tend to consider reprimands to be an authority figure's affirmation of transcendental, immanent morality (Mancuso & Lehrer, 1986; Turiel, 1983), and therefore accept punishment more readily across situations (Catron & Masters, 1993; Turiel, 1983). As children's cognitive abilities expand, their reasoning skills increase, their sense of autonomy grows, and they are likely to view adults as less fear-evoking and having limitations to their authority (Catron & Masters, 1993). Thus, older children are less likely to consider spanking and other manifestations of coercion to be legitimate and fair forms of discipline.

Prior exposure

It is becoming increasingly clear that an important determinant of children's perceptions of discipline is the child's history of exposure to the particular discipline method. This variable has received little explicit attention but can be operationalized at two levels. First, there is an individual's own experience. Supporting evidence comes from studies that have found young children tend to endorse the disciplinary methods used by their parents. More specifically, children who experienced corporal punishment or other coercive forms of discipline in the home were more likely to approve of its use (e.g., Barnett et al., 1996; Deater-Deckard et al., 2003; Wolfe et al., 1982).

A second type of personal exposure a child may have is by vicariously experiencing a punishment. Children who frequently see or hear about a sibling or peer getting spanked will most likely then perceive the discipline as "normative" (e.g., Gershoff, 2002; Lansford et al., 2005). This view is consistent with social cognitive theory which highlights the role of observational learning through both direct and vicarious experiences (Bandura, 1986). There are few previous efforts to quantify children's exposure, and those that have been published have limited

their assessments of exposure to parents' or children's reports of the children's own disciplinary experiences. Consequently, it was expected that children's assessments of corporal punishment will be influenced by not only whether they are spanked but also their perceptions of how frequently siblings and peers are spanked.

Exposure to corporal punishment can also be considered at a more distal level, such as a cultural or subcultural level. Two variables that relate to exposure are race and socioeconomic status (SES). Both variables have been associated with differential rates of corporal punishment. In particular, a well established finding is that lower SES parents endorse harsher disciplinary responses, such as spanking, more frequently than higher SES parents (Bornstein, Hahn, Suwalsky, & Haynes, 2003; Flynn, 1994; Gunnoe & Mariner, 1997; Jackson et al., 1999; Pinderhughes, Dodge, Bates, Pettit, & Zelli, 2000; Straus & Stewart, 1999). Similarly, a number of researchers have found that African-American parents are more likely to report they spank than Anglo-American parents (Day, Peterson, & McCracken, 1998; Deater-Deckard, Dodge, Bates, & Pettit, 1996; Deater-Deckard et al., 2003; Flynn, 1994; Giles-Sims, Straus, & Sugarman, 1995; Pinderhughes et al., 2000; Straus & Stewart, 1999).

However, a closer reading of the literature reveals both heterogeneity and confounding in results comparing African-American and Anglo-American parents' use of spanking. Several researchers have not found racial differences despite using large samples (Ellison, Thompson, & Segal, 1995; Hemenway, Solnick, & Carter, 1994), or discovered considerable variability within racial groups (e.g., Kelley, Power, & Wimbush, 1992; Kelley, Sanchez-Hucles, & Walker, 1993). Other researchers have either confounded race and SES or have neglected to include information about the SES levels within racial groups (e.g., Day et al., 1998; Deater-Deckard et al., 1996, 2003; Flynn, 1994; Giles-Sims et al., 1995). Given that African-Americans are often disproportionately represented in lower socioeconomic groups, the apparent racial differences found in prior studies may in reality be due to socioeconomic differences (Hoffman, 2003). Thus, it remains an open question whether there are racial differences in the use of spanking in African-American and Anglo-American families who are of similar socioeconomic status. If a racial or SES group difference does emerge in a sample, then that would mean the children have different exposure levels and this, in turn, should translate into different evaluations.

The present study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate children's assessments of corporal punishment — specifically spanking — in comparison with three other disciplinary techniques commonly used in American homes: reasoning, withdrawal of privileges, and time-out (Caughy & Franzini, 2005; Larzelere, Schneider, Larson, & Pike, 1996). We had five hypotheses. Our first prediction concerned child age. Based on research on cognitive developmental differences in children's views of authority figures and their evaluation of fairness (e.g., Catron & Masters, 1993), we predicted a main effect for child age, with younger children more likely to endorse spanking. Children aged 6 to 10 years were chosen because they have demonstrated their ability to articulate opinions about disciplinary practices (Catron & Masters, 1993). Children younger than 6 years were not recruited due to their difficulty in expressing their views about discipline (e.g., Buck, 2003; Konstantareas & Desbois, 2001).

Our second hypothesis was that children would select reasoning as the most fair and most effective form of discipline, as well as the best overall method when compared to other discipline alternatives. This expectation was based on previous studies (e.g., Barnett et al., 1996; Chilamkurti & Milner, 1993) and because reasoning is a non-coercive technique and thus is more respectful of the child's autonomy. Third, based on prior work indicating children's dislike of spanking (e.g., Barnett et al., 1996; Carlson, 1986), we expected the children would judge spanking as the least fair, least effective, and worst overall method when compared to other

methods of discipline. Our fourth hypothesis concerned exposure to spanking. We predicted that children with greater exposure to spanking, including both direct and vicarious experiences, would be more likely to evaluate spanking as fair and effective. This prediction was based on social cognitive theory and previous research indicating that both direct and vicarious experiences influence children's perceptions of "normativeness" (Gershoff, 2002; Lansford et al., 2005). To enhance the validity of the data, parental self-reports of spanking were also collected and compared with children's reports.

The final hypothesis concerned socioeconomic status (SES). It was expected that children from lower SES families would have more exposure to spanking, regardless of race. Due to this exposure, we predicted these children would have more positive views about spanking than higher SES children. No racial group differences were expected.

Method

Participants

A total of 108 children (56 boys) aged 6–10 years and one of their parents participated. There were seventeen 6-year-old children (15% of the sample), nineteen 7-year-olds (18%), twenty-four 8-year-olds (22%), twenty 9-year-olds (19%), and twenty-eight 10-year-olds (26%). This age range allowed for grouping of children into younger (6 to 7 years old) and older (8 to 10 years old) groups. This division was based on theories of moral development and internalization (Brody & Shaffer, 1982; Grusec & Goodnow, 1994; Nucci, 1984; Piaget, 1932; Walden, 1982), and it merges age groups often combined in other studies. All participants resided within the metropolitan area of a large city in Texas. Ninety-two of the adult participants were mothers; 16 were fathers or father figures. The participating fathers/father figures were from families where the mother did not participate; thus, there was only one participating parent or caregiver per family. Fifty-seven percent of the parents were currently married or living with a partner, 21% were never married, 20% were divorced or separated, and 2% were widowed. The average number of persons per household was about four ($M = 3.9$; range = 2–8) and 73% of the children had siblings.

Approximately half ($n = 57$, or 53%) of the participants were African-American and the rest were Anglo-American. Participants were further divided into groups of lower and higher socioeconomic status, as measured by an adapted version of the Hollingshead Four-Factor Index of Social Status (Hollingshead, 1979). Placement into SES groupings was determined by occupational status, level of education, and income (Bornstein et al., 2003). Of the African-American participants, 30 were classified as lower SES and 27 as higher SES. Seventeen of the Anglo-American were categorized lower SES, and 34 were labeled higher SES. The average education score for the lower SES group was 2.59 (out of 5; $SD = 0.66$), a score that indicates the amount of formal education attained was between 9th–12th grade and some college (44% had less than a high school degree). The average annual family income score was 2.18 (out of 5; $SD = 0.95$), indicating less than \$25,000 (32% reported an income of less than \$15,000). The average education score for the higher SES group was 3.96 ($SD = 0.85$), denoting that most parents had at least a 4-year college degree, and their average income score was 4.49 ($SD = 0.81$), corresponding to an income of \$75,000 or above.

Materials

Parent questionnaires

Parents filled out a basic demographic survey and the Parental Response to Child Misbehaviors questionnaire (PRCM; Holden et al., 1995). The PRCM consisted of 10 questions concerning the frequency with which parents had used various disciplinary methods. Only two

items relating to corporal punishment were used for this study: How frequently parents had spanked their child in the past week, and how frequently they spanked when the child was 5 years old. The latter question was included because spanking rates decrease as the child gets older (Giles-Sims et al., 1995; Straus, 1991). Each question was rated on a 5-point scale (*Never to 6 or more times per week*).

Videotapes and child interviews

Videotaped disciplinary scenes were developed for this study as the stimulus material. Videos, compared to orally-presented vignettes, are more engaging and easier to understand for young children (e.g., Barnett et al., 1996). Four sets of videotapes were created so that the child depicted in the video matched the race and gender of the participant, and the race of the mother shown in the video also matched that of the participating child. Only mothers were shown as disciplinary agents, because mothers are the most common disciplinary agents (Day et al., 1998; Jackson et al., 1999; Straus & Stewart, 1999), and to avoid the possible confound of parent gender.

The 2-minute video began with a scene of a child misbehaving. This was the video "stem." The stem consisted of a child playing with a basketball in a living room. After several seconds of the child bouncing the ball, the mother entered the room and told the child to stop playing with the ball because he (or she) might break something. The mother then left but the child continued to bounce the ball. After several more seconds, the ball bounced onto a table, knocking over and breaking a vase. This type of misbehavior (ignoring parental directive and destruction of property), previously used in other studies, is classified as moral transgression and merits punishment according to most children (Brinker, Goldstein, & Tisak, 2003; Catron & Masters, 1993; Chilamkurti & Milner, 1993; Smetana, 1981). For a complete description of the video vignettes, see Appendix A.

After watching the video stem, which was shown only once, the child was asked questions about the misbehavior as a comprehension check and to be sure the child could relate to the videotaped child (e.g., "Describe what happened to the child in this video and why?"; "How much is the child in the video like you?"). Following those questions, the first maternal disciplinary response was shown. For each of the four discipline methods, a scene was videotaped that depicted the mother entering the room and disciplining the child by utilizing that particular method (time-out, withdrawal of privileges – no TV for two days, reasoning, and spanking; see Appendix A).

The core of the child interview, asked after each disciplinary scene was watched, consisted of seven questions. These questions were divided into two categories: Fairness of Discipline Method and Effectiveness of Discipline Method. The two fairness questions assessed how reasonable the method was. Children were asked "How right" they thought it was for the mother to discipline her child this way, as well as "How fair" they thought the particular discipline method was, given the child's misbehavior. A picture board depicting five temperature scales with corresponding happy or frowning faces was used to visually portray the levels of fairness. The happy and frowning faces were added next to the temperature scales to aid in children's understanding of the levels on the scales. Both questions were asked to assess whether children interpreted the words differently. However, because the two ratings were significantly (all $ps < .01$) correlated ($r = .68$, for spanking; $r = .43$, for time-out; $r = .50$, for reasoning; $r = .37$ for withdrawal of privileges), and the means and variances for the two questions were similar for each disciplinary method, the two "fairness" scores were averaged.

Four questions related to the effectiveness of the punishment observed were then asked. The first two were predictions of whether the video child would misbehave again. Previous research has indicated that 6- to 10-year-old children are able to make predictions about future events (e.g., Friedman, 2000). The two questions addressed the effectiveness of the discipline technique for preventing misbehavior in the short- and long-term. ("How likely do you think it is that the child

will do this again tomorrow?" and "How likely do you think it is that the child will do this again in 6 months?" A second picture board, depicting only the five temperature scales, was used to portray the increasing likelihood of misbehavior (explained as "Definitely will not;" "Probably will not;" "Maybe;" "Probably will;" "Definitely will"). Children's response to each question was followed with a probe ("Why?" or "Why not?").

Children's answers to the follow-up probes were coded into categories by two independent raters. Raters agreed on 95% of the categorizations, and in the few instances where they did not, a third rater made the determination. The response categories, based on the children's responses, for why the child might misbehave again were: *May forget*, *May not understand*, *Angry about being punished*, *To get attention*, *Thought it was fun*, and *Other*. The response categories for why the child would not misbehave again included: *Promised not to*, *Doesn't want to be punished again*, *Doesn't want a harsher punishment*, *Remembered what mom said/learned a lesson*, and *Other*.

To assess direct and vicarious exposure to spanking, five questions were asked after the child responded to the effectiveness questions following the spank scene. Direct exposure was determined by asking the children how often they were spanked using a 7-point scale (0 = *Never*, *A few times per year*, *1–2 times per month*, *Once a week*, *2–3 times per week*, *4–5 times per week*, *More than 5 times per week*). Four questions were summed to form the vicarious exposure score: whether their siblings (if they had them) were spanked (and if so, how often) and whether their friends were spanked (and if so, how often). One point was assigned if a sibling was spanked; the same held for a friend. Children then rated the frequency their siblings and friends were spanked using a 3-point scale (*Less than me*; *The same as me*; *More than me*). Thus, the total score possible for each of the two vicarious experience scales was 4. The theoretical range for the direct exposure scores was 0 to 6, and 0 to 8 for the combined vicarious exposure scores.

At the end of the child interview, after all the disciplinary scenes had been viewed and the final set of core questions answered, two additional questions were posed. Children were shown a picture board with drawings of the four discipline methods and were asked to choose which method they thought was the overall best disciplinary technique, and then explain why they selected that method. If they chose a method other than spanking, they were asked why spanking would not be the best.

Procedure

Participants were recruited from local after-school programs and a database of birth records kept at a university research laboratory. Recruitment letters were sent home or handed out to parents. Parents were subsequently called and invited to participate. Participation rate in the after-school programs ranged from 10% to 25%, depending on the site. Approximately 38% of the parents recruited from the database participated. The ethnic and socioeconomic diversity of the participants was representative of the population in the area, with one exception: Mexican-American families were not recruited.

Participation occurred in one of two types of locations. Children from after-school programs participated there, in a spare classroom. Those children recruited from the database came to the research laboratory. Parents completed an Informed Consent Form and the questionnaires either at home before the child's interview (for those in the after-school program) or at the laboratory while the child was in a separate room. Children were told the purpose of the study was to learn children's opinions about different disciplinary methods.

Prior to seeing the videotapes, the children were trained to use the rating scales. Practice questions were posed, including "If someone steals something from you, how wrong do you think that is?" Children were then shown the video stem and asked questions about their opinions of the child's misbehavior and what they thought their own

parents would do given that scenario. The remainder of the videotape was then shown, one discipline method at a time, in one of two orders (order #1: time-out, withdrawal of privileges, reasoning, & spanking). Half of the children saw the scenes in the reverse order. Before showing each new discipline scene, children were told to pretend that the mother in the video had not previously disciplined the child. This instruction was included to ensure that the children did not think that each discipline event happened sequentially. Once the tape-recorded interview was complete, the children were thanked and given \$5.

Results

Before testing the hypotheses, preliminary analyses were conducted for three purposes: to check children's comprehension of the video stimuli, to evaluate video order effects, to assess possible differences in mothers' and fathers' responses, and to test for gender effects. For the main analyses, the results section will be organized around the five hypotheses.

Preliminary analyses

Comprehension check

All children were able to accurately describe what happened to the child in the video and why the child was punished. Only 9 children reported they did not think the video child was like them; however, the reasons given were all based on superficial, situational factors (e.g., they did not like to play basketball or they did not own a basketball). Consequently, it was concluded that all 9 children understood and were able to relate to the video disciplinary scenes, so these children's data were retained.

Video order

To determine whether the order of video presentation affected the results, a 2 (Video order: #1, #2) \times 4 (Discipline method: spank, reason, withdrawal of privileges, and time-out) mixed model repeated measures ANOVA was conducted for each of the three key dependent variables that used a rating scale (fairness, short & long-term effectiveness). A significant order effect was found only on children's rating of fairness of spanking, $F(1, 106) = 4.02, p < .05$. Children who viewed video order #1, in which the spanking scene appeared last, rated spanking as more fair ($M = 4.05, SD = 1.16$) than the children who viewed the reverse order ($M = 3.54, SD = 1.49$). Consequently, video order was added as a covariate in the analyses of fairness ratings.

Parent gender

Because the video vignettes only included a mother as disciplinary agent, and there were 16 father respondents who filled out the discipline questionnaire, we conducted descriptive statistics on their use of discipline. Results did not show large differences in mothers' and fathers' reported use of spanking ($M_s = 0.55$ and 0.60 , respectively), reasoning ($M_s = 2.90$ and 2.80 , respectively), withdrawal of privileges ($M_s = 1.77$ and 1.66 , respectively) and time-out ($M_s = 1.01$ and 0.80 , respectively). Independent sample *t*-tests were computed on their ratings of spanking (in the last week and when child was 5), time-out, withdrawal of privileges, and reasoning, as well as their children's reports of how often they were spanked. Mean differences between mothers' and fathers' ratings ranged from 0.12 to 0.33 (with standard deviation differences ranging from 0.26 to 0.43), and none of the tests revealed significant differences ($t_s = -0.44$ to $-1.46, ps > .05$), and therefore we decided to include the fathers in all future analyses.

Child gender

To test for gender effects, a 2 (Gender: boys and girls) \times 4 (Discipline method: spank, reason, withdrawal of privileges, and

time-out) mixed model MANOVA was conducted for the three key dependent variables with discipline method as a repeated measure. No significant gender main effects or interactions were found. Consequently, child gender was not considered further.

Child age

Younger children were expected to evaluate spanking more favorably than older children. Based on a 2 (Child age: younger, older) × 4 (Discipline method: spank, reason, withdrawal of privileges, and time-out) repeated measures ANOVA, a main effect for child age was found, $F(1, 107) = 4.35, p < .05$. Younger children rated spanking as more fair ($M = 4.18, SD = 1.22$) than older children ($M = 3.64, SD = 1.32$). Ratings on one other disciplinary method – withdrawal of privileges – showed an age effect, $F(1, 106) = 4.66, p < .05$. Older children rated withdrawal of privileges as more fair ($M = 4.04, SD = 0.86$) than younger children ($M = 3.76, SD = 1.50$). Descriptive statistics can be found in Table 1.

To test for age effects on effectiveness ratings, a 2 (Child age: Younger, older) × 4 (Discipline method: Spank, reason, withdrawal of privileges, and time-out) repeated measures MANOVA was computed for both short-term and long-term effectiveness. A significant age × discipline interaction was found for short-term effectiveness, $F(2, 105) = 4.08, p < .05$. Older children reported lower likeliness for repeated misbehavior following reasoning ($M = 1.96, SD = 1.22$) compared to younger children ($M = 2.26, SD = 1.64$), meaning they regarded reasoning as more effective. Conversely, younger children reported lower likeliness for repeated misbehavior following time-out ($M = 1.68, SD = 1.25$) compared to older children ($M = 2.06, SD = 1.19$). No age effect was found for long-term effectiveness. Due to this significant interaction, child age was added as a covariate in subsequent analyses.

Children's evaluations of the disciplinary techniques

The next two hypotheses concerned whether the children would consider reasoning to be the best technique and spanking the worst. Children's evaluations were based on three dependent variables: whether it was selected as the best method, its fairness, and its long-term effectiveness. Although reasoning was selected most commonly as the best technique, there was no strong consensus. Thirty-seven percent of the children chose reasoning, followed by withdrawal of privileges (27%), spanking (23%), and time-out (12%), $\chi^2(3, n = 108) = 14.81, p < .01$.

To examine the influence of the independent variables (child age, race, SES, and exposure to spanking) on the choice of the best method, a multinomial logistical regression analysis was computed. Household size was added as a covariate to account for effects of vicarious exposure on children with many siblings. The model was significant, $\chi^2(24, n = 108) = 40.56, p < .05$. Post-hoc analyses revealed that age

and exposure to spanking (both direct and vicarious) were significant contributors to the model; however, race and SES were not. Age was a significant predictor of differences in children's choice of withdrawal of privileges as the best method, $\beta = -2.214, p < .05$. Older children were more likely to endorse withdrawal of privileges (32%) than were younger children (18%). Direct exposure to spanking was a significant predictor of differences in children's choice of spanking as the best method, $\beta = -2.300, p < .05$, as was vicarious exposure level, $\beta = -2.457, p < .05$. This finding will be described in further detail in the section on exposure to spanking effects. Table 2 lists selected quotes from children about which methods they thought were best and why, as well as why some of them did not think spanking was the best method.

To examine children's fairness evaluations, a one-way repeated measures ANOVA was conducted, with video order and child age included as covariates. The main effect for discipline method was significant, $F(3, 107) = 5.68, p < .01$. As hypothesized, reasoning was rated as most fair ($M = 4.26, SD = 1.10$) and spanking was rated as least fair ($M = 3.81, SD = 1.34$). Individual *t*-tests revealed significant differences between reasoning and spanking, $t(107) = -3.17, p < .01$ as well as spanking and time-out ($M = 4.12, SD = 1.05$), $t(107) = -2.32, p < .05$.

The two types of effectiveness ratings were assessed with a 4 (Discipline method: spank, reason, withdrawal of privileges, and time-out) × 2 (Effectiveness: short-term, long-term repeated measures MANCOVA with child age as a covariate. Both short-term and long-term

Table 2
Examples of children's responses to questions about discipline methods.

Which method do you think is best (and why)?	
Withdrawal of privileges	
"Two days is a long time without TV. His favorite show could be on.... Spanking won't last for two days." (6 years old [yo])	
"Because it's boring when you can't watch TV." (9 yo)	
"She may really like to watch TV so it would teach her a lesson." (10 yo)	
Spanking	
"Because it hurts. Time-out doesn't hurt and he will forget." (6 yo)	
"Because spanking is simple and you can do whatever you want afterwards." (7 yo)	
"Whooping goes faster. You can still have TV and go outside." (8 yo)	
"It teaches her a lesson and it hurts more." (8 yo)	
Reasoning	
"Because you can talk to him about what he did that was wrong." (6 yo)	
"They can tell about their feelings and can apologize. The person can say she is really sorry." (8 yo)	
"You really need to talk to your child if they don't listen to you. You need to sit down and talk to them. If that doesn't work, take a privilege away." (8 yo)	
"Because you make the person sad, so you won't do it again." (9 yo)	
"Because it makes him talk about what he did wrong. It makes him feel better that he has someone to talk to about the problem." (9 yo)	
"Do lectures every time he does something wrong because kids hate lectures." (10 yo)	
"Because it's not unfair and she can still get a strong message across to her daughter because she puts trust in her daughter." (10 yo)	
Time-out	
"Because you can think about what you did." (6 yo)	
Why not spanking?	
"Spanking doesn't show him how to do something better; it just shows you have more power over him." (9 yo)	
"Because it's not really nice and doesn't work and doesn't teach kids anything." (9 yo)	
"Because he may throw a tantrum and start throwing things." (10 yo)	
"Spanking doesn't solve anything. It just makes you cry." (10 yo)	
"Because it hurts." (common answer expressed by many children)	
"Some kids can get really hurt." (9 yo)	
"Some kids don't care if they get a spanking" (8 yo)	
"Sometimes it doesn't work because it will be over soon." (10 yo)	
"Violence is not the answer." (9 yo)	
"Because if a cop sees the spanking, parents could go to jail. And spanking is bad because the parents get angry and could hurt the child." (9 yo)	
"I don't know any kids who like spankings. And Mom says she doesn't like to spank me either." (10 yo)	

Table 1
Ratings (means, SD) for each disciplinary method, by child age groups.

	Spanking	Reasoning	Time-out	Withdraw privileges
Fairness	Y: 4.18 (1.22) O: 3.64 (1.32)	Y: 3.86 (1.52) O: 4.37 (0.85)	Y: 3.74 (1.50) O: 4.03 (1.08)	Y: 3.76 (1.50) O: 4.04 (0.86)
Short-term effectiveness	Y: 1.82 (1.29) O: 1.66 (1.01)	Y: 2.26 (1.64) O: 1.96 (1.22)	Y: 1.68 (1.25) O: 2.06 (1.19)	Y: 1.94 (1.52) O: 1.80 (1.07)
Long-term effectiveness	Y: 2.68 (1.47) O: 2.57 (1.31)	Y: 2.03 (1.29) O: 2.59 (1.38)	Y: 2.41 (1.44) O: 2.72 (1.36)	Y: 2.24 (1.35) O: 2.61 (1.33)

Note. $N = 108$ (36 younger, 72 older). Y = Younger age group, O = Older age group; effectiveness is measured as likelihood of repeated misbehavior (i.e., a lower mean score indicates a higher effectiveness rating).

effectiveness ratings were included in the analysis. A significant discipline method \times effectiveness interaction was found, $F(3, 105) = 2.99, p < .05$, indicating that the pattern of responses varied depending upon whether the evaluation concerned the short-term or long-term. Children rated spanking as more effective in preventing a repeat of the misbehavior in the short-term ($M = 1.69, SD = 1.09$) than reasoning, which received the highest mean recurrence rating ($M = 2.03, SD = 1.34$). Most (80%) of the children indicated that following a spanking, the child would *definitely not* or *probably not* misbehave, whereas 68% selected the same responses for reasoning. A very different pattern of results was found for ratings of long-term effectiveness. Children thought that the likelihood of repetition of misdeed in the long-term would be higher following a spanking ($M = 2.61, SD = 1.37$) than reasoning, which had the lowest mean likelihood of any of the discipline methods ($M = 2.34, SD = 1.38$). Fifty-eight percent of the children believed the child *definitely would not* misbehave in the long-term after being reasoned with, whereas 49% gave the same rating for spanking. This finding was in line with the hypothesis that reasoning would be rated as most effective method but also indicates that the children were pragmatic and did not think any method would be highly effective in the long-term.

When the children were asked why they thought the video child would misbehave in the future after a spanking, 58% said that the child might forget what he or she did that was wrong and another 21% thought that the child would not learn from the punishment. Compared with the other disciplinary methods, spanking had the highest percentage of “may forget” answers, $\chi^2(3, n = 79) = 7.82, p < .05$. Almost 60% of the children thought a child might forget the transgression after a spanking, in contrast to 37% following reasoning (see Table 3).

The children were queried specifically about why a spanking would be effective or not. Almost three-quarters (70%) of the children said that following a spanking, the child would be afraid that he or she might get another spanking and therefore would not misbehave again. Fear as a motive for good behavior was given significantly more often in response to spanking than for any of the other methods, $\chi^2(3, n = 108) = 32.64, p < .01$ (see Table 4). The children were much more likely to think a child would learn a lesson and refrain from a misbehavior if the discipline method involved reasoning rather than spanking (73% vs. 18%), $\chi^2(3, n = 108) = 27.15, p < .01$.

Exposure to spanking

The third hypothesis concerned the role of exposure to spanking in evaluations of spanking. Children with more exposure, either direct or vicarious, were expected to have more positive evaluations of

Table 3
Percent of children predicting why the child would misbehave again by discipline method.

	Discipline method				χ^2
	Spanking	Reasoning	Time-out	Withdraw	
Forgot why the misdeed was wrong	58	37	36	33	7.82*
Didn't understand/didn't learn	21	19	8	13	3.48
Punishment was not hard enough	8	37	12	15	10.27*
Angry at mother	4	2	10	6	3.18
Thought playing ball was fun	1	2	18	13	11.00*
Thought mother forgot	4	0	6	2	3.33
Other	4	3	10	17	7.5

Note. $N = 108$.
* $p < 0.05$.

Table 4
Percent of children predicting why the child would not misbehave again, by discipline method.

	Discipline method				χ^2
	Spanking	Reasoning	Time-out	Withdraw	
Afraid; doesn't want another punishment	70	10	42	54	32.64***
Doesn't want harder/different punishment	7	14	15	8	3.25
Learned lesson	18	73	39	30	27.15***
Other	5	3	4	8	3.31

Note. $N = 108$.
*** $p < 0.001$.

spanking than other children. Before describing those results, we review children's and parents' reports of spanking.

Children's reports of spanking

For direct exposure, 82% of the children revealed that they had been spanked. A one-way ANOVA revealed a significant age group effect on children's reports of how often they were spanked, $F(1, 107) = 4.78, p < .05$. Younger children reported being spanked more frequently than the older children (e.g., 70% of 6-year-olds reported being spanked at least once a week on average, compared to only 15% of 10-year-olds).

Exposure scores spanned the full range: 0 to 6 for direct exposure ($M = 1.97, SD = 1.50$) and 0 to 8 for vicarious exposure ($M = 3.48, SD = 1.57$). In order to analyze the influence of exposure levels, we partitioned the exposure scores into three levels. Direct exposure scores of 0 to 1 (44% of the children), 2–3 (36%), and 4 to 6 (20%), were grouped as low, medium, and high direct exposure, respectively. For vicarious exposure, scores of 0–2 (49%), 3 to 4 (31%), and 5 to 8 (20%), were classified as low, medium, and high, respectively. Children's reports of how often they and their siblings were spanked were significantly correlated $r(78) = .50, p < .01$, but not how often they and their friends were spanked, $r(98) = -.08, p > .05$. Only ten children reported they did not know whether or how often their friends got spanked.

Parental reports of spanking

Overall, 71% of parents reported that they had spanked their children at least once. Parents' reports of spanking for the past week and when their children were 5 years old were correlated, $r(108) = .60, p < .01$. The reports were also significantly correlated with children's reports of how much they were spanked, $r_s(108) = .50$ and $.41, ps < .01$, respectively. Reports of spanking within the past week were significantly higher for the younger children compared to the older children, $F(1, 107) = 2.98, p < .05$. For example, 53% reported spanking their 6-year-old child at least once, compared to 33% of parents of 10-year-olds.

Exposure and discipline evaluations

To follow-up on the results from the multinomial logistic regression described in the previous section on children's evaluations of discipline techniques, a chi-square analysis was conducted for both direct and vicarious exposure. Direct exposure to spanking was significantly associated with children's choice of best method, $\chi^2(2, n = 108) = 12.84, p < .05$. However, the effect was not linear. Children with medium direct exposure scores were more likely to endorse spanking (38%) compared to children with low and high direct exposure scores (15% and 17%, respectively). Similarly for vicarious exposure, the chi-square analysis was significant, $\chi^2(2, n = 108) = 17.17, p < .05$, and again the effect was not linear. Children at the medium exposure level were more likely to endorse spanking (33%) than children with low or medium levels (19% and 12%, respectively). For a depiction of children's choice of best overall discipline method based on exposure levels, see Figs. 1 and 2.

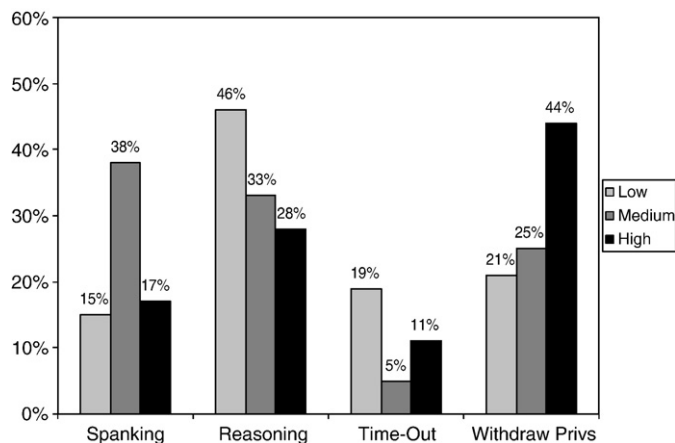


Fig. 1. Children's choice of best method, by direct exposure level.

Evaluations of fairness and effectiveness also showed some evidence of exposure effects. A 2 (Exposure type: direct and vicarious) × 3 (Exposure level: low, medium, and high) × 4 (Discipline method: spank, reason, withdrawal of privileges, and time-out) repeated measures mixed model ANCOVA was conducted on the influence of direct and vicarious exposure on children's evaluations of fairness. Video order and child age were included as covariates. The multivariate test for vicarious exposure was significant, $F(6, 101) = 2.71, p < .05$ but not for direct exposure. Children with lower levels of vicarious exposure rated reasoning as more fair ($M = 4.52, SD = 0.92$), compared to children with medium ($M = 3.75, SD = 1.11$) and high ($M = 3.46, SD = 1.48$) levels of exposure. There were no other significant differences in ratings of the other discipline methods, nor were there any interactions beyond the discipline method by age effect described previously in the section on age differences.

To test whether exposure level was related to short-term effectiveness ratings, a 2 (Exposure type: direct and vicarious) × 3 (Exposure level: low, medium, and high) × 4 (Discipline method: spank, reason, withdrawal of privileges, and time-out) repeated measures mixed model ANCOVA was conducted with child age as a covariate. Neither direct nor vicarious exposure levels had a significant effect on children's short-term evaluations. A similar analysis was conducted on children's evaluations of long-term effectiveness. The multivariate test for direct exposure was significant, $F(6, 101) = 3.31, p < .05$. Children who had experienced high levels of direct exposure rated spanking as more effective ($M = 3.60, SD = 1.38$) in the long-term, compared to children with low ($M = 2.45, SD = 1.32$) or medium ($M = 2.41, SD = 1.27$) exposure levels. No

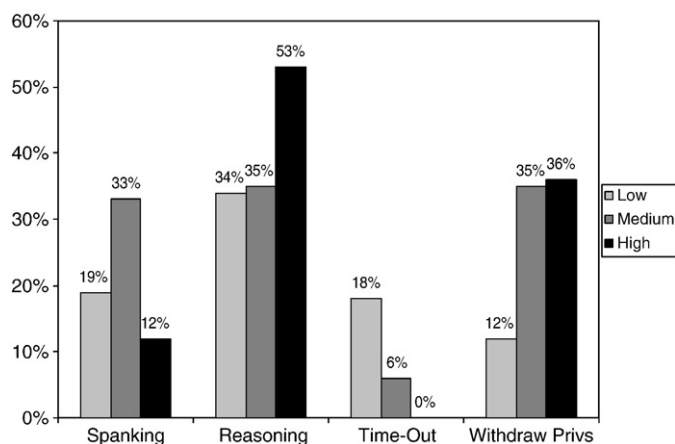


Fig. 2. Children's choice of best method, by vicarious exposure level.

Table 5
Correlations of variables related to exposure and ratings of spanking vignette.

	Direct exposure	Vicarious exposure	Child age	Fairness	Short-term effectiveness	Long-term effectiveness
Direct exposure	–					
Vicarious exposure	.29**	–				
Child age	–.32**	–.12	–			
Fairness	–.14	–.09	–.09	–		
Short-term effectiveness	.13	–.05	–.02	–.10	–	
Long-term effectiveness	.27**	.06	–.06	–.04	.42**	–

** $p < .01$.

significant main effect or interaction was found for vicarious exposure. Table 5 shows correlations for the variables related to exposure and ratings of fairness and effectiveness of spanking.

SES and race

The final hypothesis concerned the expectation that children from lower SES families would be more likely to endorse spanking as a good disciplinary technique due to their expected greater exposure to spanking. SES effects were indeed found on reports of spanking. A 2 (Race: African-American and Anglo-American) × 2 (SES: lower and higher) ANCOVA, with child age as a covariate, resulted in a main effect for SES for both the children's reports, $F(1, 104) = 13.04, p < .05$, and the parents' reports of spanking, $F(1, 104) = 9.65, p < .05$. For example, lower SES children reported being spanked an average of once per week, compared to their higher SES peers' reports of once per month.

To assess SES and race effects on children's fairness and effectiveness ratings, a 2 (Race: African-American and Anglo-American) × 2 (SES: lower and higher) × 2 (Exposure type: direct, and vicarious) repeated measures ANCOVA was conducted for the three primary dependent variables (fairness, short-term effectiveness, long-term effectiveness). Exposure type was added as a factor in order to test whether perceptions of vicarious exposure to spanking, in addition to own experiences with spanking, would be related to race and SES, as has been postulated in the literature (e.g., Deater-Deckard et al., 1996; Lansford et al., 2005). Child age was included as a covariate in all three analyses; video order was also a covariate in the fairness analysis. The model was not significant for either of the dependent variables: fairness, $F(1, 74) = 3.24, p > .05$, short-term effectiveness, $F(1, 74) = 3.37, p > .05$, or long-term effectiveness, $F(1, 74) = 0.03, p > .05$. No main effects for race ($F_s = 1.77–2.39, p > .05$), SES ($F_s = 1.27–4.42, p > .05$), or exposure type ($F_s = 0.07–2.96, p > .05$) were found, and there were no interactions between the variables ($F_s = 0.20–2.71, p > .05$).

Discussion

Current developmental theory about socialization and internalization processes highlights the central role of children's perceptions and evaluations of their parents' child-rearing behavior (e.g., Grusec & Kuczynski, 1997). In contrast to adult-centric approaches to the effectiveness of discipline, it is now increasingly recognized that children's evaluations of such variables as the fairness and legitimacy of the discipline are critical to its efficacy (Grusec & Goodnow, 1994). Toward that end, this study was conducted to investigate children's assessments about spanking and other common disciplinary methods in the context of their parents' disciplinary practices as well as their racial and socioeconomic background. New information about children's views of discipline and the source of those views has been discovered.

The 6- to 10-year-old children in this study had developed clear and nuanced views about disciplinary practices. The first hypothesis concerned age effects. Several child age effects were detected. Considering that spanking rates peak around ages 2–4 (Straus & Stewart, 1999; Vittrup, Holden, & Buck, 2006), with a slow decrease as children age (Giles-Sims et al., 1995), it was expected that the younger children would report being spanked more. The 6- and 7-year-old children did indeed report being spanked more frequently than the older children. As predicted, the younger children were more likely to rate spanking as fairer than older children. This finding fits with Piaget's theoretical view (1932) that preoperational children accept punishment more readily across situations, whereas concrete operational children are more likely to question their parents' disciplinary methods and to disagree with them (Catron & Masters, 1993; Grusec & Goodnow, 1994; Turiel, 1983). It also mirrors results from previous studies (e.g., Barnett et al., 1996; Catron & Masters, 1993). Older children were more likely to recognize the effectiveness of reasoning for long-term compliance, and they were also more likely to choose withdrawal of privileges over spanking as the best method. We assume that these age effects reflect developmental changes, although longitudinal research is needed for verification.

Our second and third hypotheses concerned children's evaluation of reasoning and spanking. As hypothesized, children generally considered reasoning as most fair and spanking as least fair in response to the moral transgression presented on the video. When evaluating the effectiveness of the four disciplinary methods, the children indicated that spanking would be the most effective method in preventing the recurrence of the misbehavior in the short-term. However, a majority of the children predicted that reasoning would be the most effective in preventing repeated misbehavior in the long-term, in contrast to spanking which, as hypothesized, received the lowest average rating.

These results echo Gershoff's (2002) meta-analytic review findings that spanking may be effective in obtaining immediate compliance, but it is not effective in eliciting long-term internalization. The children recognized the power of spanking for ensuring immediate compliance but also doubted its effectiveness for long-term behavior change. Reasoning, on the other hand, was recognized as effective for long-term change. Presumably this is because reasoning involves communicating with the child why the misbehavior was wrong and how the child should behave, thus increasing the likelihood of acceptance of the message (Grusec & Goodnow, 1994). The importance of a dialogue was expressed by an 8-year-old girl: "You really need to talk to your child if they don't listen to you. You need to sit down and talk to them. If that doesn't work, take a privilege away. [Spanking] doesn't teach the kid a lesson."

When asked to select the single best disciplinary method, reasoning was most frequently chosen (37%), followed by withdrawal of privileges (27%), and spanking (23%). Surprisingly, time-out was only selected by 12% of the children. Central to children's assessment of the quality of the technique appeared to be its instructive role. Almost three-quarters (73%) of the children who thought reasoning was effective recognized its pedagogic value. In contrast, only 18% of the children who thought that spanking was an effective long-term technique believed it would teach someone how to behave. Rather, according to the children, the power of spanking lies in its fear factor. Seventy percent of the children said the child would be afraid of getting another spanking and therefore would not misbehave. As one astute 9-year-old child observed: "[Spanking] doesn't show him how to do something better; it just shows that you have more power over him." Another problem with spanking, according to a majority (60%) of the children, was that following a spanking, a child is likely to forget about the incident. In contrast, only 37% of children thought that the discipline incident would be forgotten if parents used reasoning.

In addition to revealing children's views about particular disciplinary techniques, one of the contributions of this study was to empirically document the role of exposure of spanking on children's thinking about discipline, something that has recently been done with older children (Lansford et al., 2005). To test for that influence, we used children's reports of being spanked to indicate direct exposure and reports of how often their siblings and friends were spanked to reveal vicarious exposure. While it might have been expected that children's reports of siblings' and peers' exposure would be correlated with their own, this was only found for sibling exposure. We thus assume that the children were able to make judgments about their peers' level of exposure independently of their own exposure, rather than merely projecting their own experiences. Thus, reports of perceptions of peer exposure can be seen as a fairly valid measure of external normativeness.

As hypothesized, we found some evidence for an exposure effect. When asked to select the best discipline method, children who had a medium level of direct exposure to spanking were about twice as likely to endorse spanking as the best method compared to children at the low or high level. It may be the case that children who receive or observe periodic spanking are more likely to consider it to be normative and acceptable. However, if children are rarely spanked or if they are spanked too frequently, then the spanking is less likely to be regarded as normative and therefore less likely to be regarded as a good method. The vicarious exposure results provided a similar picture. Some researchers (e.g., Deater-Deckard & Dodge, 1997; Lansford et al., 2005) assert that spanking may have fewer negative consequences if it is considered normative in their communities. However, according to our results, this effect may have a limit. In other words, the more normative the practice – calculated as more frequent use – the less likely it is children are to accept it due to the curvilinear effect. It may be perceived as too punitive if it occurs too often, and children who have many friends and siblings who are spanked may be exposed more to the negative comments about it from those friends and siblings. Additional research is necessary to further investigate this curvilinear result, as well as examine the impact of exposure to different disciplinary practices.

The influence of exposure on children's perceptions has been documented in other domains, including teachers' use of discipline technique on perceptions of discipline (Brinker et al., 2003), television viewing on aggression and stereotype development (e.g., Comstock, 1993; Graves, 1999), and family influences on the development of racial and political attitudes in children (e.g., Dalhouse & Frideres, 1996; Katz, 2003). The present results provide impetus for further investigations into children's exposure to spanking and its influence on their perceptions of normativeness, fairness, and effectiveness of discipline.

In addition to examining the influence of exposure, another goal was to examine the contribution of socioeconomic status and race to children's discipline assessments. In line with previous research, and as hypothesized, lower SES parents in both racial groups reported spanking more frequently than higher SES parents (e.g., Bornstein et al., 2003; Waters & Crandall, 1964). For example, more than a third of lower SES Anglo-American parents and a quarter of lower SES African-American parents reported spanking two or more times per week, whereas only about 10% of higher SES parents reported spanking that frequently. However, based on both parent and child reports, no racial differences in spanking were detected once we controlled for SES. We conclude that there are no robust racial differences with regard to the use of spanking although we recognize this issue remains controversial and unresolved (Bradley, 1998; Caughy & Franzini, 2005; Hoffman, 2003). Furthermore, the argument has been made that race may moderate the effects of spanking due to differences in the normativeness of its use within different cultures (Deater-Deckard et al., 1996; Lansford et al., 2005). However, we did not find an interaction of race and exposure and

thus conclude that exposure alone – both direct and vicarious – influenced children's perceptions of spanking, regardless of their racial background.

Based on the impact of exposure to spanking, we predicted that lower SES children would rate spanking as fairer and more effective, and that they would be more likely than higher SES children to select spanking as the best method. However, contrary to our predictions, no significant differences were found between the evaluations of lower and higher SES children. Our inability to find differences mirrors that of *Konstantareas and Desbois (2001)*, who were unable to detect SES effects on children's perceptions of harsh discipline. Perhaps greater power from a larger sample is needed to reveal such effects.

Several limitations of this study should be recognized. First, the children were 'past their prime,' at least with regard to being recipients of corporal punishment (*Straus, 1991; Straus & Stewart, 1999*). However, we needed children who were cognitively and verbally advanced enough to articulate their evaluations of disciplinary methods. In addition, the study was cross-sectional, so the age effects we identified should be confirmed in a longitudinal study. Another limitation is that the children's responses were based on reactions to videotaped disciplinary scenes, rather than discipline they experienced. Similarly, it is not clear from this study whether children's assessment of the different discipline methods would affect their own behaviors, which would be a further indication of the internalization process. This is something that should be explored in future research, preferably via a prospective study of children's assessments and later behaviors. In addition, it is still unclear exactly what children are thinking and feeling during their discipline experiences. Thoughts and attitudes collected too far removed from the event may be different than the cognitive processes taking place during and right after a discipline encounter. While this type of research would be extremely difficult to conduct, it would aid our understanding of the effects of such in-the-moment cognitive processes on the effectiveness of various types of discipline.

Only one child transgression was used in order to provide a uniform basis for comparing children's assessments. Including different types of transgressions would have complicated the analyses but provided a richer view of how different types of transgressions affect children's evaluations (see *Brinker et al., 2003; Catron & Masters, 1993*). Future research may also benefit from inclusion of the combination of discipline techniques, such as reasoning combined with power assertive techniques. It is possible that children may evaluate power assertive methods more positively if they are combined with reasoning and explanations.

A methodological issue was that a videotape order effect was found for the children's fairness ratings of spanking. Although the order effect was relatively small, it is interesting that it occurred only for this particular item. Children who viewed the spanking scene last of the four discipline methods rated it as slightly fairer than the children who viewed it first. This effect may be a result of how spanking is used in the home. Typically, parents spank as "a last resort" after trying other methods (*Vittrup et al., 2006*). Although the children were told that each discipline scene was independent and not a sequence in a disciplinary incident, some children may have considered the spanking as the last effort to obtain compliance. These children then may have rated spanking as more fair because it appeared as if the video mother had already tried other methods. Although this order effect did not affect the results, the issue could be avoided by using different actors for each disciplinary scene. A final limitation is that parental reports of spanking came from only one parent and only two racial groups. If both parents had provided such information, it would give a fuller picture of the extent of exposure. Future research should include additional racial groups in order to investigate the presence of cultural differences in the use of and attitudes about various discipline methods.

Despite the limitations, this study provides new information into children's views about discipline. *Qvortrup, Bardy, Sgritta, and Wintersberger (1994)* pointed out that "children are often denied the right to speak for themselves either because they are held incompetent in making judgments or because they are thought of as unreliable witnesses about their own lives" (p. 2). Because children are the major recipients of discipline, including corporal punishment, it is important to add their voices to the debate. As this study reaffirms, young children are able to articulate their views about parental child-rearing behavior and those assessments likely influence the effectiveness of various discipline methods. Researchers and parents need to recognize this, as well as daycare workers, school personnel, and other individuals who discipline children.

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Appendix A. Transcript of child discipline videos

Video stem

Child bounces a basketball in a living room. Child's mother enters.

Mother "[Child's name], you know the rules. No playing with balls inside the house. Something could get broken
Mother exits. Child continues playing with the basketball and ends up accidentally knocking over a vase sitting on a table. Camera shows broken vase on the floor. Mother re-enters room.

Time-out scene

Mother "You broke my vase! I told you not to play with balls in the house. Now look at what you did. You're gonna have to be punished. Go to your room and don't come out until I tell you to."
Child looks sad/upset and exits room.

Withdraw privileges scene

Mother "You broke my vase! I told you not to play with balls in the house. Now look at what you did. You're gonna have to be punished. There will be no TV for two days."
Child looks sad/upset and exits room.

Reasoning scene

Mother "You broke my vase! I really liked that vase, and I'm very sad that it's broken. Do you understand that?"
Child looks at the ground and nods.
"You have to listen to me when I tell you not to play with balls in the house; playing balls is for outside."
Child nods while still looking down.
"Can you promise me that you won't do it again?"
Child nods.

Spanking scene

Mother "You broke my vase! I told you not to play with balls in the house. Now look at what you did. You're gonna have to be punished. You're gonna get a spanking."
Mother goes behind child, so that she is partially blocking him/her from camera view. Mother's hand and arm moves in a motion that simulates spanking. The spank consists of two swats, the sound of which was simultaneously created off-scene.

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