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Understanding the Roots of Violence in Elementary School Children

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Understanding the Roots of Violence in Elementary School Children

Disciplines
Anthropology
UNDERSTANDING THE ROOTS OF VIOLENCE IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDREN

By

Lauren E. Gulbas

AN UNDERGRADUATE THESIS

In

Anthropology

Submitted to the
Department of Anthropology
University of Pennsylvania

Thesis Advisor: Frances K. Barg

2001
Dedications

I would like to dedicate this work to my parents, Ellen and Paul, whose endless love and support have allowed me to reach for dreams I never thought possible; to my siblings, Jeff, Debbie, and Shale, who give meaning and laughter to my life; and to the children at Penrose Elementary School, who have let me into their lives and shown me the beauty of mine.
Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge my advisor, Dr. Fran Barg. Her guidance, support, and encouragement gave me hope when I needed it most. Her endless motivation has given me the fuel I need to reach my goals. She is my inspiration. I would also like to acknowledge the contribution of Bob Carrozza. Without his help and guidance, this work would have never been completed.
Abstract

The purpose of this study is to demonstrate that children adopt a specific set of values during play, which conflict with the values imposed upon them by adults. The increasing epidemic of violence in schools is forcing faculty members to enforce structured play during recess. To do so, I hypothesize, is dangerous. A more applicable approach to preventing violence in schools would be to incorporate the cultural values of childhood within the policies set by school authorities. Methods: In order to identify the importance of children’s cultural values in constructing play during recess and the conflicts that arise when these values are disregarded, an ethnographic study of recess at Penrose Elementary School in Southwest Philadelphia was conducted for seven months. During this time, two focus groups were formed in order to interview the students about their perspectives on violence. A survey was distributed to 116 students to determine how students quantitatively react to different playground scenarios. Cultural consensus analysis was used to identify the cultural models for recess among students. Results: Students at Penrose share cultural knowledge about violence during recess. Shared task solutions provide ways for responding to different playground scenarios. On average, incidents that occur by accident are ignored by the students, while they say that intentional actions should be reported to an adult. Furthermore, children incorporate into their worldview about recess a set of unstructured games that are not organized by the school faculty. In recognizing the developmental and cultural construction of recess, I am able to suggest that peer mediation is a more suitable approach to preventing violence in schools.
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Introduction

All the children were very excited to go outside for recess. The past week the children were forced to stay inside due to the snow. The boys played basketball, as usual. It was an intense, aggressive game between the two teams. One boy, Dan* played in a very disruptive manner. He intentionally pushed other players and hit them. He threw the ball at his teammates whenever the chance arose. His teammates tolerated this behavior for some time although it bothered them a great deal. The supervising lunch aide overlooked Dan’s actions. Many children left the game because Dan was playing too rough. Another boy, Steve, decided to intervene. Steve was known throughout the school as a good student, and he was a helper during recess, collecting and organizing the games at the end of recess. Steve realized that Dan’s behavior was not tolerable. He asked Dan to “cut it out” and play by the rules. In response to Steve’s request, Dan pushed Steve down. Steve tried to get up and stand his ground, but Dan was much larger than Steve. Dan proceeded to kick Steve in the stomach and face for five minutes before the lunch aide intervened.

Incidences such as these are not unusual within elementary schools, especially those located in economically disadvantaged urban areas. Violence has become a pressing issue in schools, and an analysis of violence is fundamental in order to develop intervention programs on behalf of the students. In this paper, I will analyze the problem of violence using a cultural models perspective. Cultural models provide children with shared perceptions of play and violence. The cultural models for play influence a child’s

* All names have been changed
responses to different situations. Thus, when a child finds himself in a situation where violence is an option, he uses culturally shared modes of analysis and response to determine how to act. The cultural models about violence in children can be identified and aid in an understanding of violence in children.

In the review of literature, I will first explain how cultural models help identify the shared knowledge of children that exists within a specific social context: recess. With an understanding of cultural models, the developmental aspects of violence and the formation of values during childhood becomes explicit. Then I will discuss the risk factors associated with violence in children, including the biological, psychological, environmental, and cultural elements that may predispose a child to act violently. I will conclude by describing a policy implemented by the school district of Philadelphia to reduce violence: Socialized Recess.

I will then move on to explain the cultural anthropology research methodologies used in this study. These include participant observation, structured interviews, surveys, and cultural consensus analysis. The results of the study illustrate the distinct culture of childhood, which incorporates shared knowledge about play and violence at Penrose. These values are reflected within Socialized Recess. I will conclude with a discussion about Socialized Recess and adjustments that can be made to the program, which can potentially reduce violence at Penrose.
Review of Literature

In response to the sensational acts of violence committed by today's youth, the government assures us that violence in schools has declined in recent years (Surgeon General 2001: 3). Yet, this claim does not make the problem any less severe. In 1999, persons under the age of eighteen comprised 104,000 of the arrests for robbery, rape, aggravated assault, or homicide (Surgeon General 2001: 3-4). In fact, between 43 and 55 percent of urban adolescents have observed a violent event on school grounds. Moreover, an estimated five percent of inner-city youth have brought a gun to school (Fenning et al. 2000: 175). The “Indicators of School Crime and Safety” reports that in 1997, fifteen percent of high school students were in a fight on school property (2000: 1). Teachers identify that physical conflicts are the most serious problems that exist in schools today, primarily because children are not the only individuals placed at risk, but because violence harms faculty members as well. Teachers in elementary schools report that physical conflicts and verbal abuse are the most severe threats that occur in the hallways. Teachers in urban schools are more likely to cite violence as a problem as opposed to teachers in suburban and rural areas (Shen 2000: 18-20).

It is necessary to address the issue of violence in schools because violence kills and injures many children each year, and because it seriously hinders the educational quality and social development of children (Fenning et al. 2000: 175-6). Surprisingly, most studies of violent behavior are isolated to adolescence and beyond. Yet, a study of violence in elementary school-age children is appropriate in order to provide children with preventative resources they can use as they mature. Through studying violence in preadolescent children, we learn that it is a multifaceted issue that requires a multifaceted approach.
Cultural models of playtime and the social development of children

Geertz writes "culture...is not just an ornament of human existence but--the principal basis for its specificity--an essential condition for it" (Shore 1996: 33). Culture can be defined as shared knowledge. This shared knowledge is constructed in the mind as models. These cultural models, structured within the social context of the group, allow individuals to make meaning in the context of everyday life (Shore 1996: 45-9). The cognitive processes of the individual govern cultural models. Culture, in turn, shapes cognitive process through socialization and enculturation. Socialization defines the conflicts that arise between individuals and the behavioral values enforced by society, while enculturation distinguishes how cognitive processes are shaped within a culture. Cultural models not only vary cross-culturally, but they can differ among sub-groups of a single society (Schultz et.al. 1998: 116-22). Thus, cultural models are shared, socially patterned views of the world. The construction of these models in the mind, with the influence of the environment, provides members of a given culture with different guidelines for behavior. Such guidelines include shared task solutions (Barg 2000: 9-12). In children, these provide shared ways of responding to different situations. For example, when a child finds himself in an unfamiliar situation, he is able to use a set of patterned "rules" to help him decide how to react. As a child develops, he/she incorporates views of the world into these models. Situations within a strong emotional context will have a stronger impact upon the worldview of a child. Thus, violent acts are shaped by the cultural models for behavior, and these models, in turn, are shaped by the child’s perceptions of violence.

Hence, the experience and definition of violence differ for school age children and adults. For elementary school-age children, violence is displayed through aggressive behavior. Thus,
hitting, kicking, and verbal abuse are considered violence. Though this type of behavior may not warrant the attention of police officials, it damages the physical and emotional well being of children. Not only are the offender and victim injured, but children who witness violent acts are hurt as well. As the child grows, reactions towards violence change according to their developmental stage. Children consistently exposed to violence are more likely to construe ambiguous social situations as hostile. They focus on aggressive cues and tend to respond in aggressive ways. Thus, violence leads not only to physical injury, but it can lead to impairments in the child's behavioral and cognitive development. It is important, therefore, to understand violence during childhood (Flannery et al. 1999: 1-4).

The Social Development of Children

The development of children takes place in a particular social setting. Children participate in a peer culture, which, through the development of unique relationships, allows them to learn about basic principles such as reciprocity and open communication. As children develop in a school setting, groups of children develop themes that constitute their everyday play. These themes provide the foundation for group identities, which children learn to recognize. As these group identities solidify, children determine which interactions become acceptable, and they determine which interactions are not permissible. Communication between children, hence, becomes more explicit. When a child infringes upon “the rules, other children could use the authority of shared knowledge to sanction the offender,” (Youniss 1999: 19). Thus, children understand the need for a specific form of order, made explicit by their shared understanding of what is and is not acceptable, which are consented upon by the group. The shared knowledge, or culture of childhood, allows children to attach meaning to a sequence of
events (Youniss 1999: 18-23). This helps children to distinguish their culture from that of adults. Children understand when they are supposed to apply an adult set of rules versus their own set of rules. Youniss claims that children, "by creating their own cultural system with peers,...establish a culture in which their own interests can be tended apart from the adult culture in which there are other interests operating, such as those specified by the school curriculum," (1999: 20). However, the culture of childhood and the culture of adulthood are not completely distinct as two separate entities. In fact, elements in one culture may exist in the other. For example, when a child asserts seniority over another child, the child is incorporating ideas from adult categories (Youniss 1999: 18-23).

The values of the child’s culture become especially evident during recess. Recess is a time for children during which they behave in an environment relatively absent of adult control, and thus, they interact in a setting which is their own. However, most views on recess are negative because, to adults, unsuitable behavior arises more often than in the classroom setting. One such example is the prevalence of aggressive behavior and violence that occurs during recess. Sometimes, however, the level of violence is overestimated by supervisors simply because adults have a difficult time recognizing play fighting from aggressive fighting. It is necessary to identify that certain behaviors and the meanings behind these behaviors will vary among participants, and the interpretation of such acts will vary according to numerous factors (Blatchford 1999: 101-9).

Beyond such negative views of recess, recess is a valuable time for children. The peer relations formed during recess aid in the social and cognitive development of children (Blatchford 1999: 108). Peer relationships also prove to have a psychological impact on children; often, a child’s emotional state is determined by the quality of the friendships that he/she
possesses (Smith et al. 1999: 120). Reciprocity, cooperation, and equality define peer relations, which differ from child-adult relationships. Recess allows for the “cultural transmission... into adult roles,” (Blatchford 1999: 108-12).

The majority of peer relationships are supportive and positive (Smith et al. 1999: 120). To some extent, aggression and conflict can have a valuable effect on peer relationships by teaching children how to settle their differences. Children are able to acquire tactics in order to help them handle problems. Fighting may teach children methods to avoid violent acts in the future (Blatchford 1999: 108-15). Moreover, anger and aggression are natural and healthy emotions. When balanced with positive emotions, such as empathy and affection, these emotions allow children to set goals and accomplish them. They also serve to enforce the sense of self in a child as they help the child distinguish between his/herself and other selves. When anger or aggression is put into action, a child may learn that because he loses he is not necessarily hated or bad. The child learns that there are degrees to another’s abilities: some people are better at some things than others, and this is okay. Thus, children need to be allowed the chance to win and lose within a social setting so that they learn to deal with the outcome (Greenspan 1993: 30-2).

Play fighting provides an example of adaptive aggressive behavior. It appears very similar to real fighting, except that it is sometimes punctuated by laughter, and the children do not carry out the event in full force. Children perceive play fighting as enjoyable, and it provides positive aspects in the development of a child. First, it helps the child improve his/her fighting skills. Second, it aids in the participant’s social skills. It helps children demonstrate and realize communication abilities. It allows them a time to manage their emotional and physical state. For example, for all participants involved in a play fight, the children control the desire to
become overtly aggressive and refrain from using their full strength. Because role reversal is common in play fighting, children discover how to understand another child's point of view. But for the untrained eye, it sometimes appears that play fighting is not play at all. Thus, supervisors may prevent play fighting, and in doing so, they eradicate this adaptive behavior (Smith et al. 1999: 122-3).

However, when fighting becomes chronic, the effect of the relationship upon the child's development, both as offender and victim, is no longer adaptive. Play fighting can escalate to violence when children overreact to obscure social cues or when children lack the necessary social skills to interpret events accordingly (Smith et al. 1999: 120-5). Fighting, which can benefit the social and cognitive development of children, becomes a danger and actually hinders their development when it becomes chronic. Thus, a conflict arises. School officials must control the behavior of children in order to prevent violence. In the absence of such control, the consequences could be disastrous. Yet is the school faculty over-structures the behavior of children, children may be unable to react to situations when the control is missing. The results of this are just as harmful. School authorities need to structure recess without infringing upon the independence of the child (Blatchford 108-15). Yet, school officials throughout the United States have banned recess in an attempt to control the amount of aggressive behavior that occurs among kids. Some officials think the best way to do this is to banish the activity in which this behavior is most prevalent: recess time. In more than forty percent of the school districts nationwide, recess has been abolished or structured according to the favor of the adults (Mulrine 2000: 1-2). The school personnel must recognize that a conflict exists between the values of the child and school. For children, recess is fun, but for adults, playtime is chaotic and a period
during which injuries result. Thus, school faculty should adapt methods to prevent fighting that ensure the culture of childhood is left intact (Blatchford 1999: 108-15).

**Risk Factors for Violence: An overview of risk factors within the realm of public health**

In order to prevent violence in schools, it is necessary to recognize the factors that put a child at high risk for violent behavior (Flannery 1999: 24-6). A risk factor, which is a concept essential to the realm of public health, is any element that increases the likelihood that a person will undergo harm. Thus, a risk factor for violence increases the possibility that a child will become violent. Risk factors for violence depend on the developmental stage of the child, the social context within which they occur, and can vary within the individual, family, and environment. Risk factors are statistically determined for violence by measuring how particular characteristics of childhood influence the frequency of violence. However, most risk factors are determined from studies on white males and may not be applicable to other populations. Risk factors are not causes for violence because there is no scientific evidence supporting that changing a risk factor modifies the onset of violence. Thus, risk factors are solely used to predict the onset and/or perpetuity of violence. Furthermore, risk factors cannot predict with certainty that because the risk factor is present violence will occur. Risk factors are mostly applied at the population level, but may not be relevant to a particular individual. Thus, programs designed at preventing violence in individuals should proceed with caution. In addition, certain risk factors cannot be changed, and preventative efforts should target factors that can realistically be reduced. Certain situations also influence the likelihood of violence but are not considered risk factors. For example, in the event that a child may bring a gun to school may force others to feel they have to protect themselves by using aggressive force (Surgeon General 2001: 1-8).
A Biopsychosocial Approach

Anthropologists use a biopsychosocial approach to understand the interrelationships among biological, psychological, sociological, and cultural factors. Certain scholars would argue that some factors prove to be a better predictor of violent behavior than others, but the fact remains that violent behavior is the consequence of each of these factors interacting within an individual child resulting in a complex and quite mysterious relationship. Because violence behavior is best understood in the realm of the interaction of all of the factors, preventative strategies must follow suit, and such methods should work to incorporate such mechanisms (Flannery 1999: 24-6).

Biological Risk Factors

Biological risk factors may cause a child to be more susceptible to violent behavior. This is not to say that children are born violent. However, certain factors have been shown to influence an aggressive temperament. Moreover, it has been ascertained that the heredity of these factors is the result of complex interactions between multiple genes, and most often, the surrounding environment of the child pays a large role in regards to whether these genes will be expressed. Biological factors include both medical and psychiatric conditions, and a brief overview of these elements will be presented (Flannery 1999: 29-30).

Biological predictors of violence begin with prenatal care. Complications during pregnancy and birth may be a factor contributing to violent behavior. However, it should be cautioned that such prenatal trauma could be indicative of an unstable home environment, which
may play a greater role as a predictor in violence. Another medical factor is a low resting heart rate, which may be a weak indicator of possible violent behavior. A low resting heart rate may influence an aggressive disposition that increases a child’s likeliness of participating in violent behavior (Hawkins et al. 2000: 2). Damage to areas of the central nervous system has also been shown to lead to violent behavior. The cortex controls mechanisms of social learning, including the development of moral judgement and analyzing outcomes of certain behavior. Thus damage to this area, whether through birth defects, head injuries, or pathogens, will disrupt a child’s ability to comprehend morality and the resulting outcomes of certain behaviors. In some cases, this leads to violence. Additionally, the limbic system is involved in the experience of emotions. The hypothalamus and amygdala, organs found in the limbic system, are stimulated when negative emotions arise. Violent behavior secondary to anger or other negative feelings may be result from disruptions in the limbic system. Furthermore, violent behavior may be linked to an imbalance of the neurotransmitters in the brain, leading to irritability and hyperactivity. Each of the states may make a child more likely to respond violently, although such chemical imbalances are not conclusive to violent behavior (Flannery 1999: 30-1).

Biological factors also include gender differences. Boys are, on average, more likely to participate in aggressive and/or antisocial behavior than girls. Where boys are more likely to threaten and/or inflict physical harm, girls participate more often in social aggression that damages peer relationships. Thus, aggressive behavior appears to be different in boys and girls, and such a difference needs to be considered (NIMH 2000: 3).

Biological risk factors include behavioral and mental disorders, which may lead to violent behavior, and some conditions are linked specifically to preadolescence. Nervousness, detachment, worrying, and fearfulness are all signs of the presence of internalizing mental
disorder that may predict violent behavior. Externalizing disorders exhibit more observable, behavioral symptoms. Hyperactivity, difficulty concentrating, restlessness, and risk-taking behavior identify the possible presence of such a disorder. Teachers report that children who have a problem sitting still or staying quiet predict later violent behavior. Aggressive behavior may be more indicative of violent behavior in boys than girls. Boys rated as having excessive aggressive behavior are estimated to be six times more likely to act violently (Hawkins et al. 2000: 2-3).

Beyond these behavioral factors, specific disorders may predict violent behavior. Mental retardation limits the cognitive functioning of the child, and due to their limited capacity of understanding, they may result to angry and aggressive behavior when frustrated. Attention Deficient Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a disorder represented by extreme energy and hindered cognitive capacity and behavioral skills, which can lead to violent behavior.

Depression, a disorder that puts children at risk for violent behavior, is an important issue to discuss because it leads to violence against self and others. Depression in young children is characterized by a variety of symptoms. The diagnostic signals for depression for children under the age of thirteen are: depressed mood, anhedonia, irritability, anorexia, weight loss, increases appetite, weight gain, insomnia, hypersomnia, psycho-motor agitation, psycho-motor retardation, fatigue, excessive guilt, concentration difficulty, and suicidal ideation (Williamson et al. 2000: 1253-6; Flannery 1999: 74-6). It is estimated that as many as four percent of children under the age of twelve are diagnosed (VanTine 2000: 44). However, research predicts that thirty percent of school age children have depression that goes undiagnosed. Additionally, evidence supposes that seventy-nine percent of depressed children also have another mental illness, in addition to anxiety. These illnesses may include social conduct disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, and
attention deficit hyperactive disorder. The presence of depression also relates to problems with concentration. Boys appear more likely to experience academic and social difficulties. It is important to recognize the onset of depression early in a child’s life because it can jeopardize psychological and social capacities later in life. Because social and academic development are impeded in children with depression, psychosocial skills necessary in later life are not attained (Steele et al. 2000: 76-7).

There are two types of depression: major depressive disorder (MDD) and dysrhythmic disorder (Flannery 1999: 75). MDD has a variety of symptoms. These include: feelings associated with sadness and/or emptiness, the perception that activities are no longer fun, problems with appetite, lack of energy, fatigue, feelings of worthlessness, problems thinking clearly, feelings of restlessness, thoughts about death, desire the remain motionless, and troubles with sleep patterns (Chorpita et al. 2000: 387-43). Dysthyrmic disorder is a less severe state of depression. The feelings and emotions are similar to children with MDD, yet somatic symptoms are usually not present. If left untreated, this condition could last for many years. Preadolescence with depression may perceive that violence is the only option to regain respect and control. This can lead to suicide, aggravated assault, and even homicide (Flannery 1999: 75).

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) also puts a child at risk for violent behavior. PTSD in children is the result of a traumatic event in a child’s life, such as physical and/or sexual assault, homicide, seriousness illness, and natural disasters. Such children experience extreme fear and helplessness. These experiences may manifest as aggressive behavior in young children. Likely characteristics of PTSD include thoughts, daydreams, and/or nightmares of the traumatic event; feeling as if one is re-experiencing the event; loss of interest in daily activities,
sense of shortened future, distress in the presence of symbolic reminders of the traumatic event; hypervigilance, insomnia, concentration difficulties, irritability, and angry outbursts (Flannery 1999: 80-2).

The traumatic event results in disruption in the developmental skills of children, often resembling early warning signs. The child fears that the world is not safe and hence, others may not be trusted. The child withdraws from most social contacts. As the child grows older and reaches adolescence, substance abuse may become a severe problem in an attempt to numb the distressful feelings. Sometimes, in an effort to regain control after a traumatic event, a child may intentionally put his/herself in violent situations. Not only does PTSD result in disruptions of psychological development, but there are biological changes as well. After a traumatic event, permanent changes in the limbic system may develop due to constant presence of norepinephrine, a neurotransmitter. Because of this, a child may constantly relive the event during certain activities, and this forces the child to withdraw even further. PTSD is further complicated by the fact that most victims of a traumatic event develop depression as well. Ultimately, children may learn that violence solves certain conflicts after exposure to a violent event. Without proper treatment, the child may never recover from the traumatic event (Flannery 1999: 81-6).

Reactive Detachment Disorder is the result of severe neglect of a child’s basic emotional and physical needs, most often a consequence of parental neglect. A child with this condition often abandons regard for authority and society. Oppositional Defiant Disorder can also arise in children of severe neglect or those youth who have multiple, successive caregivers. The symptoms of this disorder range from open disobedience, severe anger, animosity towards authority, and failure to except one’s mistakes. A more extreme case of this disorder is conduct
disorder, which results in extremely violent youth. Signs of conduct disorder in children signal the need for immediate intervention on behalf of the child. Violence towards other people and property are exhibited in children with conduct disorder, and such acts include homicide, rape, assault, and vandalism. These children do not accept responsibility for their actions and often manipulate others. They have complete disregard for societal regulations and have poor academic and social skills. They are frequently truant from school or act impulsively; for example, the child may constantly run away from school. Underlying disorders, such as ADHD and/or PTSD, are likely. Careful assessment of such behavior is necessary in order to determine whether the child is acting in a socially non-compliant way or maybe the child is simply reacting to a hostile environment. In each of these disorders, appropriate treatment should be sought in order to reduce a worsening prognosis of the disorder (Flannery 1999: 30-5, 90-4).

**Psychological Risk Factors: The development of morals and values**

Psychological factors may influence violent behavior in preadolescence. Throughout development, a child learns coping mechanisms, interpersonal skills, and academic knowledge. Each of these elements allows a child to grow and act appropriately in today's society (Flannery 1999: 41-4). By the age of six, children are able to understand behavior according to the intents of behavior and the consequences of actions. Children also consider the power and righteousness of authority in determining whether they will consent to the authority (King 2000: 429). A failure to develop in any of these areas may result in a child’s inability to function in certain situations. This disability can lead to feelings of frustration, resentment, and anger (Flannery 1999: 41-4). The failure to develop moral reasoning prevents a child from anticipating both negative and positive consequences of an action, and it reduces the child’s ability for self-
regulation towards morally wrong actions. Self-regulatory mechanisms are influenced by temperament, state of arousal, and pressures of culture and authority (King 2000: 429). For example, a child who can control his/her aggression is able to identify the problem in a particular situation and develop strategies to change the circumstances. A child who is unable to identify angry or aggressive emotions and who fails to manifest those emotions in an appropriate manner will have a difficult time interacting with other children. The preadolescent may return to coping mechanisms that were useful as a toddler to express these emotions, such as hitting and kicking. Moreover, without the ability to think of the consequences of such violent behavior, the child will have little reason to control his violent behavior (Greenspan 1993: 34-6). The violent child may also believe that retaliation is justified, and he/she may not develop emotions of empathy and/or guilt (King 2000: 429). However, careful, professional assessment is needed before a child can be labeled as developmentally inept, such that actual pathology is not confused with cultural differences (Rosser 1978: 100).

Furthermore, the incorporation of certain values in a child’s life can also lead to violent behavior. For example, low self-esteem and the need to belong may lead a child to join a gang, where violent activity may be present. Jealousy and shame, or feelings of revenge, may also spur a child towards acting out in a violent manner if these values are not directed in a suitable way (Flannery 1999: 41-4).

**Sociological Risk Factors**

It should be understood that because a disorder or behavioral attribute exists in a child, it does mean that they are predisposed to acts of violence. To assume so would result in a stigma against such children, and instead, it should be understood that violent behavior is the result of a
variety of factors, including environmental factors. Such factors include poverty, inadequate education, family atmosphere, peer influences, school environment, community and society influences (Flannery 1999: 35-6; Hawkins et.al. 2000: 3; Petrie et.al. 1999: 8-11; NYVPRC 2001: 2-4). Such environmental stresses are particularly harmful to minority groups living in an urban environment as they frequently experience multiple stresses. Urban families are also more likely to compound the effects of such factors more frequently. Moreover, there is a dearth of resources to provide resiliency and aid in coping mechanisms (Tolan et.al. 1997: 80-3).

Children raised in low-income families are more likely to partake in violence and criminal offenses (Flannery 1999: 36; Hawkins et.al. 2000: 5). Poverty results in the lack of adequate resources to provide for the basic needs of human life, such as food, clothing, and shelter. The constant effort to make ends meet can result in broken families, poor parenting, domestic violence, and crime. For some youth living in an impoverished area, violence may simply be a way of life. Some children may feel the need to carry weapons as a form of protection (Flannery 1999: 36).

Inadequate schooling may also lead to violence. The school environment provides an arena within which children not only gain academic knowledge, but it becomes a place where social and emotional development takes place and where the values of culture and society are enforced. However, many schools lack the resources to incorporate all of these needs into a child's schooling. Inadequate schooling can lead to a low socioeconomic status, and is possible that such a person may result to crime in order to make a living. Furthermore, a poorly educated child may result to violence simply due to feelings of inferiority (Flannery 1999: 37).

The family environment proves to be a salient factor in predicting violent behavior. Families that have a positive attitude towards antisocial behavior, deviance, substance abuse, and
violence may transmit these dispositions to their children. Furthermore, children who have criminal parents are more likely to engage in violent behavior and/or become criminals themselves (Hawkins et.al. 2000: 3-4).

Families characterized by disturbances in social bonding can put a child at risk for violence, as well. Divorce, separation, single parenting, and foster care are all examples of disruptions in the familial support network. Additionally, dysfunctional families alienate the child from forming appropriate bonds. Factors such as physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, financial stresses, unemployment, low socioeconomic status, and/or caregivers with substance abuse disturb family attachments. However disruptions in attachments can extend past the boundaries of a family and may include peers, community members, and other adults or authoritative figures. In fact, violence in other youths or community members can work to disrupt such social bonds (Flannery 1999: 60-2, Hawkins et.al. 2000: 2-7).

Families with poor parenting mechanisms may predict later violent behavior. Parents who neglect an active role in child-rearing, who fail to incorporate proper limit setting, behavioral expectations, supervision, and disciplinary action are more likely to have their children participate in violence (Hawkins et.al. 2000: 3-4). Another important issue that takes place within the context of the familial environment is abuse. Domestic violence includes not only physical acts of violence towards one's family, but is also are defined by verbal abuse. Domestic abuse is found in all classes, gender, and age. Children who witness or are victims to such abuse may harbor angry and resentful emotions (Flannery 1999: 38). This can lead them to a life of violence as well, whether towards others or one's self (Flannery 1999: 38; Hawkins 2000: 3).

Peer influences, including association with siblings and other children, are a risk factor for violent behavior. Children with violent siblings are more likely to become violent, and this
affect appears to be greater for girls (Hawkins et.al. 2000: 5). Peer influences from other children are reported to be a major factor that induces violence outside of the home environment. Aggressive children are often socially rejected or isolated at school, and they may act aggressively to assert status or to gain attention. Children who feel rejected may associate together to foster and reinforce antisocial behavior (NIMH 2000: 2). Studies show that children who associate with prosocial peers are less likely to be delinquent (Hawkins et.al. 2000: 5).

The environment of the school and classroom has also been identified as a factor that influences the behavior of children. Disorderly schools may incite disorderly and aggressive behavior (Petrie et.al. 11). A study by Fenning et.al of public and private schools in both urban and rural areas revealed that physical aggression in schools is rarely emphasized in disciplinary policies. This leads to ambiguous definitions of misbehavior and appropriate disciplinary action, which may lead to inappropriate behavior (2000: 177-90). Disorderly schools are also characterized by teachers with ambiguous attitudes, poorly enforced rules, erroneous responses to misbehavior, faculty conflict over rules and punishment, and lack of resources for the school and teachers (Petrie et.al. 1999: 11).

Community and society influences are factors for youth violence. If firearms, drugs, and violent acts are frequent within a community, such as low-income urban communities, it may influence the onset of violent behavior. Communities characterized by high crime rates, poor housing, and lack of recreational facilities also influence violent behavior. Such communities decrease the emotional well being of a child and inhibit proper social, moral, and cognitive development. Violence in the media and television may encourage violent behavior. Children may perceive violence as normal action or as a solution to a problem. Furthermore, violence in the media can make children less sensitized towards violent acts (NYVPRC 2001: 2-4).
Cultural Risk Factors

Biological, environmental, and psychological factors must all be considered within the realm of culture. The technological revolution has created a shift in the cultural values of modern America. The emergence of the global economy has led to an emphasis on self with a disregard to other social networks. Thus, one's personal needs come before an obligation to surrounding peers. Prosperity and achievement are then defined as the ability of one's self to gather the greatest number of material goods. America is also defined by a sense of "instant gratification" and the need for a fast-paced lifestyle. Throughout the post-industrial era, the feelings of tightly woven social networks have been replaced. In the face of this loneliness, the capacity for society to articulate social norms is lost, and anomie develops. Because it seems that there are no explicit social control mechanisms, it is possible that preadolescence result to violence due to a sense of hopelessness. Because they may feel helpless, bewildered, and deserted, violence appears to be an alternative solution (Flannery 1999: 26-9).

Furthermore, the current decentralization of American cities has resulted in a shift of resources to more affluent suburban areas, leaving an inner-city underclass. Residential segregation is a strong factor is the isolation of the underclass. As the minority populations, namely African Americans gain in social status, they usually move out of the city. This leaves the underclass with a lack or role models and can result in feelings of hopelessness, making the underclass particularly susceptible to violence (McClafferty et.al. 2000: 3-7). Despite that the mainstream American culture strongly values individuality, minority groups find themselves clinging on to culture of origin for a sense of identity. Group membership becomes more
important, and these groups may feel isolated or segregated from the mainstream culture (Schneider 1999: 72-3). This may reinforce the anomie that exists in the underclass.

Children living in urban environments, particularly those who live among the underclass, learn to fight as a “shared task solution”. They learn these solutions through observation, play and social confrontations. Anderson comments:

[urban] children test one another, pushing and shoving others, and they seem ready to hit other children over matters not to their liking. In turn, they are readily hit by other children, and the child who is toughest prevails...As the violent resolution of disputes...gains social reinforcement, the child is more completely initiated into a world that provides a strong rationale for physically campaigning for self respect...These experiences reinforce the lesson many children have learned at home: might makes right, toughness is a virtue, humility is not (2000: 69-70).

The cultural values of fighting are re-enforced in urban school culture. School authorities exercise a large amount of control over a child’s behavior within the classroom setting. Yet, when the school faculty’s prospect for appropriate behavior is in conflict with the social norms of the child, problems arise. A child’s behavior does not occur in disconnection with social contexts of the school and surrounding environment. For example, when a teacher inflicts verbal abuse upon a student for poor behavior, this contributes to the proliferation of violence as the child is required to learn in a negative social atmosphere (Fenning et.al. 2000: 176-91). In an attempt to reduce violence in schools, many school officials have enforced rigid policies. A survey of public schools throughout America reveals that many school authorities employ measures such as full-time security guards, metal detectors, closed-campus orders, and a “zero tolerance policy” to prevent violence (). However, this only leads to an immediate reduction in
violence. The actual problem of violence within the social context of the environment of the school is never addressed. For example, universal policies are implemented with little or no regard for the school’s environment, which include elements such as socioeconomic status, school size, and the ethnic composition of the entire school (Fenning et.al. 2000: 176-91). By basing the policies around the values of mainstream society, such a policy may conflict with the values of the culture within which the school is set. Without identifying the school culture, the adoption of universal violence prevention policies may not fit the interests of the surrounding community (Fenning et.al. 2000: 176-91, Tolan et.al 1997: 82-3).

The Implications for Prevention: Socialized Recess in Philadelphia

Thus, it is important to recognize risk factors in an attempt to prevent violent behavior. However, in some cases the child may exhibit signs that reveal he/she is about to lose control despite that a proper assessment of the child has not be made. Signs that indicate a child is about to lose control, which may result in violence, are disordered appearance, tense facial expressions, glazed eyes, warm dress in warm weather, and behavior that signals an agitated state. The child may become verbally defiant, make threats, and have a previous history of violence (Flannery 1999: 94-6).

These warning signs signal that proper intervention is necessary for the child. It is important to prevent violent acts before they start, and early intervention is the best. Preventing violence would primarily reduce the physical injuries and possible impending death. It would also reduce the legal and medical expenses associated with violence. Children who are victim of violence frequently miss school due to punishment, which infringes upon their education. Parents, who may need to miss work to care for the harmed child, may experience a decreased
income. Teachers, in order to address the needs of the victims and witnesses, may lose important instructional time. Furthermore, the mental trauma that violence imposes on a child is troubling. It may take many months or years to help a child overcome the psychological trauma, and if the child does not seek help, then further problems arise as discussed above (Flannery 1999: 20-2). Moreover, children who frequently witness violent acts at school fear for their safety. This may lead them to stay home from school. While in school, the child may become so focused on his/her safety; he/she will be unable to learn. Thus, violence inhibits the educational quality not for offenders and victims, but for bystanders as well (Fenning et.al. 2000: 176). A final word about the warning signs: even though some of the early warning signs may seem harmless, early intervention is still necessary because it may not only prevent violent behavior, but it could ease the pain experienced by a child going through a difficult time (Flannery 1999: 20-2).

School personnel across America, in an effort to prevent violence in schools, have implemented violence prevention programs. The school setting is well suited for intervention programs because it provides a potential support network and access to mental health professionals (Wallen 1993: 24-28). In addition, as families and religious support networks decline as role models, schools become an increasingly important place to provide social support, particularly among disadvantage students (Shen 1997: 18-20).

Socialized Recess

A number of schools have focused on preventing conflicts during recess as this is reported to be the time during which physical conflicts arise most often. Because experts argue that recess is significantly needed to allow children time for physical activity, school faculty have turned to structured play as the answer. Structured play allows children to release energy
that has been stored through long hours of sitting in classrooms. It gives children the opportunity to exercise, and it prevents conflicts from arising between children (Education Reporter 1998: 1).

Thus, some school officials have turned to Socialized Recess as the answer. Socialized Recess allows students to participate in a variety of physical activities that are separated according to the activity. Each activity is highly supervised by adults. However, critics of the program argue that recess isn’t just about getting physical activity, but that it is also a time to learn social skills (Mulrine 2000: 1-2). Unstructured recess is needed for children to grow both emotionally and intellectually. It teaches children to mediate and collaborate (Education Reporter 1998: 1).

When recess is structured so severely, children do not learn how to solve conflicts on their own. This can become dangerous when children find themselves in a controversial situation without an adult to help them (Mulrine 2000: 1-2).

Sixty-five public schools in the Philadelphia school district have adopted the Socialized Recess program (Snyder 2000: 1). Philadelphia is the fifth largest school district in the United States. Eighty percent of the 210,000 children enrolled are from low-income families. About sixty-four percent of the school population is African American, twenty percent is Caucasian, eleven percent is Hispanic, and about five percent is Asian American. In an effort to improve the educational quality of students, the school district has adopted a number of goals, including an attempt to decrease and prevent the number of violent incidents among youth (http://www.ed.gov/PressRelease/09-1999/pa-phil.html). Thus, the adoption of Socialized Recess by schools throughout Philadelphia is a way in which this goal may be met. One school that adopted the Socialized Recess program is Penrose Elementary School in Southwest Philadelphia. Although Socialized Recess was previously funded by the Department of Mental Health in Philadelphia, the current program (2000-2001) is no longer funded. Despite the goal to
reduce violence, continuing the program within Penrose has proven to be difficult. In fact, violence has been on the rise. An anthropological approach to studying the Socialized Recess program at Penrose can help identify reasons why the program is not functioning as it should. Once these problems are identified, I am able to suggest ways to make the program more suitable within the social context of Penrose.
Methods

Setting

Penrose has a student population of 627 students ranging from kindergarten to fifth grade. An estimated eighty-five percent of the students are African American, eleven percent Caucasian, one-half percent Asian, and the remaining three and one-half percent are of another ethnicity. Roughly 125 children live in government subsidized housing, while approximately twenty-five students live in foster care. The school is currently under construction with the addition of a new building to incorporate the growing student population. As of 2000, the fifth grade was a newly added group of students, and until the new building is finished, the current building cannot comfortably house the number of students. Because of the construction, the students are forced to play in the front of the schoolyard.

Procedures – Participant Observation

From September to April, 2000-2001, I observed the students at Penrose. I was a volunteer lunch aide in the Socialized Recess program, working three times a week, five hours a day. An advantage of participant-observation, or “continuous monitoring,” with children is that children do not usually change their behavior when being observed (Bernard 1988: 280). The school nurse was my primary contact, and I spent time in his office where children received their medication and treatment for illnesses and injuries. I also observed recess while participating as a lunch aide. During my time at Penrose I kept detailed field notes of my observations at the school and kept documented notes of unstructured interviews with students, the nurse, and other faculty members. Because I was working within a school environment, the use of a tape recorder was strongly discouraged by the school faculty. As time progressed, I developed an extensive
rapport with the school nurse, his assistant, and numerous students, which allowed me to observe important interactions among the nurse, students, and faculty. Many teachers let me come into the classroom and talk to the children about recess. I would ask them to tell me what they liked and disliked about recess. Other teachers, when learning about my project, gathered written notes from children explaining what they liked and disliked about recess.

Focus Groups

As the year progressed, I conducted sets of structured interviews with two different focus groups. Edmonson et al. (2000: 135) developed a interview about violence in schools. This interview was adapted for use in this study (Appendix). The focus groups were formed according to gender, and each was comprised of four students. According to Krueger et al., focus groups should be small and consist of members who have an extensive idea of the subject matter discussed in the interview. When forming focus groups, one should be aware of gender, social, and cultural differences. Although multiple focus groups should be conducted until there is a saturation of information (2000: 69-93), I conducted two focus groups. Because the focus groups were conducted during recess, I had a difficult time getting children to participate. Due to a lack of space where I could conduct the interviews, I held the male focus group in an isolated hallway. The female focus group was carried out in the school trailer. I entered my field notes and interview notes into QSR NUD*IST (QSR 1997) for coding and analyzed data using the grounded theory method. Grounded theory allows the researcher to classify themes within the data. Using these themes, the researcher develops theories from the coded data (Bernard and Ryan 1998: 607).
Survey

In addition to participation observation, I developed a survey for the students asking questions about recess (Appendix). Using my observations from recess as a foundation, I asked questions about particular situations that could arise during recess. From these, I listed possible responses that a student might offer. After submitting the survey to the nurse and principal for permission, I performed a pre-test of the survey with a fifth grade class to test the appropriateness of the questions. After slight modifications, I gave the survey to one class in each grade ranging from first and fifth grade (n=116). Table 1 shows the distribution of students in the school. Classrooms were selected by the willingness of the teacher to participate as the survey took place during class-time. I was present during all surveys. Personal administration of a survey allows informants to ask questions if they do not understand ambiguous terms, and it also makes it possible to survey informants who are illiterate (Bernard 1988: 244). Because reading was difficult for the first, second, and third grade, I read the questions aloud. The teacher, the teacher's assistant, the nurse, and I would check students as they were filling out the survey in order to answer any questions they might have. However, administering a survey in person may also make informants feel they have to answer the question "correctly," (Bernard 1988: 244). I emphasized to the children that I would not know which questionnaire they filled out so they could answer the questions honestly. I also reminded them that there was no correct answer. Some children were grateful because it took up class-time otherwise directed towards learning. Others took it as an opportunity to tell me about personal experiences. One child told me "Man, if anyone ever said anything about my mom, man, I'd beat him up." One child praised me for conducting the interview, saying "Hey Ms. Lauren, this is decent. I'll do another."
coded the survey results and entered the results into Microsoft Access. These were exported to Microsoft Excel for analysis.

**Cultural Consensus Analysis**

Finally, I gathered a convenience sample of students (n=40) to complete freelists for use in cultural consensus analysis. Freelisting allows researchers to identify how different cultural groups categorize different elements in a given domain (Bernard 1988: 227-8). Each child wrote down as many words as he/she could think of when I said the word “recess.” In the first and second grade, I worked with each child individually to aid in completing the list. They would tell me the words and I would write them down. If the child had difficulty thinking of words, I would ask them to imagine recess on a previous day and describe what they imagined to me. There was no time limit, and the activity took place in the lunch room. Although this did not provide an ideal setting for creating free lists due to the noise in the lunchroom, the children were delighted to form separate groups. They liked the idea that they could not share answers and that "secrecy" was needed. Sometimes the children would cover the paper with their hands to prevent "cheating." The children were excited to play this "game." Some students called it the "recess club." After gathering my lists from each student, I entered my data into Anthropac 4.0 (Borgatti 1996), analyzed it using the cultural consensus analysis procedure, and identified the salient features within the domain of interest. A cultural consensus analysis allows the researcher to determine the level of cultural knowledge held by each respondent (D'Andrade 1995: 215-6).
Results

Participant Observation

“Real Fighting”

Since the end of the funded Socialized Recess program, there has been an increase in aggressive behavior and violence during recess at Penrose. During the school year (2000-2001), I observed aggressive behavior at during recess.

I found that fighting occurred in many different situations. First, fighting occurred over games. Occasionally, physical conflicts occurred in the jump rope area, and they usually occurred between girls and boys. For example, Dwayne stole a jump rope from Sharon. Sharon responded by hitting Dwayne, and Dwayne then retaliated by pushing Sharon down. There was not a verbal rebuke or punishment from school officials. A similar example occurred between a first grade boy, Tyson, and Diane. Tyson intentionally hit Diane in the face with a jump rope. Tyson was forced to apologize to Diane, and Diane was lectured for being so dramatic about the event. Fights would also occur when the appropriate rules of play were not followed. During hockey, for example, if a child did not trade the hockey stick when the whistle blew (signaling the end of the round), the child would be yelled at, pushed, or hit. During basketball, the offender would be called derogatory terms, pushed, or hit. The lunch aides respond to this behavior by instructing the retaliating child to “stop it.” Usually, no formal punishment methods are used.

Frequently, when a child is bullied verbally, the child retaliates physically. One student, Jon, came to the nurse with a large bump on his head. Jon explained that when he made a joke directed at another boy, the student responded by hitting him on the head with his lunch bag.
Physical conflicts could also occur when one child took another’s place in line. When a child is “sacked,” the victim may retaliate by pushing. This can escalate to hitting and fighting on the playground.

Before the nurse identified children as helpers, physical conflicts would occur over helping with recess. In one situation, Catrina, tried to take the game basket away from Ben, who was helping. Catrina refused to let Ben have the basket because she wanted to help, and she was told by a lunch aide that she could help. Ben kicked Catrina when she grabbed the basket, and a lunch aide stepped in to hold back the two students. Catrina would continue to aggravate Ben by walking up to him and “getting in his face.” When Catrina was close enough, Ben would kick her. Eventually, Catrina was taken inside, and Ben was taken to the nurse’s office to calm down.

Occasionally physical conflicts would occur with a child and a special education student. The children understand that a child in special education is different, but they do not understand that these mentally handicapped children cannot process situations normally. For example, one child, Danny, was a victim of the aggressive behavior of a mentally handicapped student, Robert, during recess. Danny told a lunch aide, and the lunch aide gathered both boys to try to determine the cause of the situation. During this time, Robert repeatedly poked and laughed at Danny. Danny finally responded by punching Robert in the stomach. Neither boy was punished, although the nurse did try to explain to Danny that Robert did not understand his own actions.

Sometimes, children bring conflicts that occur in the housing community to the playground. Two boys, Tyson and Benjamin, are first graders who are known throughout the school as “troublemakers.” The boys mimic the conflicts that occur between their two older brothers in the housing community, and fights between the two young boys occur often. When they are not fighting, however, they are friends. Yet, the violence between the two can escalate
to enormous proportions. One day a fight led to serious injury. Tyson had a bleeding scratch on his face as a result of the fight. Because Tyson and Benjamin would not stop fighting, the school authorities called the police from the neighboring high school. The police explained to the nurse that he could arrest a child if goes beyond simple assault...simple assault gets three to five days suspension.

Aggravated assault—they get arrested. Anytime there’s blood, it’s aggravated assault.

An attack on a teacher—that’s a felony...it doesn’t matter if the kid is protecting theirself or if he’s the aggressor, they get suspended...[but] if you’re in the act of breaking up a fight, and they are not attacking us, well, that’s a work hazard. It’s a shame, but hey, we don’t want to get hurt either.

The nurse commented to the police official that “the parents aren’t getting the message...people don’t know what’s happening in elementary schools—they don’t want to think about it—no one realizes the gravity of that.” Tyson and Benjamin were suspended from school for a week.

In many cases, violence was directed toward an adult official. The nurse reported to me that a child had thrown a hockey stick at him, and when instructed to pick it up, the child stared at the nurse defiantly. The nurse’s assistant claimed she had rocks thrown at her by a student.

The principal has also been in physical conflicts with children. One example took place in the school hallway during recess. A boy had taken a piece of candy from a girl. The girl was upset, and the principal became involved in the situation. When the principal pulled the child aside to talk to him, the boy kicked the principal. “Don’t fight me,” she said. “You fight me and I’ll suspend you.” The boy continued to kick and scream. The lunch aides told the child witnesses to stop watching because “it’s none of [their] business.”
I also became involved in a violent interaction with a young girl, Catrina. Catrina asked me repeatedly to leave the basketball area that I was supervising. I explained that I could not leave because I had to watch the children. She pulled my sweater, trying to get me to leave. She pushed me and slapped me. She would get close to me and pretend as if she was going to punch me. This continued until the end of recess. When I collected the basketballs, she threatened to harm another boy if I did not let her carry the basketballs into the building. I became very frustrated that I could not control the situation. I told the nurse, and he told me that she was picking on me “as a symbol for something else.” The following day I sat with Catrina and asked her why she had acted so violently towards me. She told me she did not like me. I explained to her that is okay if she did not like me, but it was not a reason to act violently towards me. She received a suspension from recess for one week.

Sometimes adults encourage youth violence at Penrose. One day Sam, a popular male fifth-grader, fought with another boy during morning recess. News spread rapidly among the school faculty. One member, upon hearing the news, asked Sam’s friends, "Well, who won?" The group of boys laughed and said that Sam won, "of course." Months later after this incident, one of the boys approached me, saying, "hey, Ms. Lauren, wasn't it funny when Ms. ---- asked who won the fight with Sam?" The children received mixed signals because instead of reproaching the fight, the faculty member expressed interest.

The “Problem Child”

Many of the aggressive situations that arise at Penrose frequently occur between the same students. For example, Tyson is frequently involved in violent acts at school. Tyson is also at high-risk for violent interactions. Tyson has ADHD, and Tyson has no impulse control. The
nurse said he has made great improvements in the current school year because last year, a wrong look by a student would “set him off.” He lives in welfare housing. He is frequently upset because his mother is never home after school; she must work two jobs in order to keep her welfare benefits. Tyson’s biological father is no longer present. Although these circumstances cannot be changed, the nurse and the nurse’s assistant work with Tyson to help him control his anger. When Tyson is feeling upset, he is encouraged to separate himself from the situation and go to the nurse’s office to calm down.

Aggressive Play and “Play Fighting”

Sometimes aggressive actions are not hostile, but simply a product of the type of play. For example, basketball becomes very aggressive between the older boys. The lunch aide cautioned me to be careful because the boys would “bowl me over” if I was in the way of the game. Many accidental injuries result as a consequence of this rough behavior. Children fall down or are pushed by accident, and they may hit their head or scrape their knee. More often injuries would occur in younger children and girls.

I also found evidence for “play fighting.” “Play fighting” appears similar to “real fighting,” yet it is actually a game played by the students. At first, I was unsure whether the children were “play fighting” or “real fighting.” Nevertheless, certain cues indicated that it was play fighting. In the younger children, smiling and laughter accompanied wrestling. They would try to pin each other to the ground. In older children, most often boys, play fighting was not wrestling. Instead, the boys box, but their movements are slow and methodical. They dramatize each hit and reaction to hits.
Sometimes, however, even children misconstrued signs of play fighting. One boy, Didi told me about of fight he had with “the karate kid.” Didi was playing with a girl, and the karate kid thought he was “beating the girl up.” The karate kid kicked Didi in the chest, and Didi said the karate kid was trying to show off. Didi fell to the ground, and then went to the nurse’s office complaining of chest pain.

Socialized Recess at Penrose, 2000-2001

Because such events occur at Penrose, the nurse is trying to keep Socialized Recess functioning despite that there is no longer funding for the program. During the previous school year, 1999-2000, color-coded wristbands were given to the students by the teachers. Students who misbehaved were not allowed to get a wristband, and thus, Socialized Recess provided incentive to behave during school. Each color coordinated to a different play area: Quiet Area, Dodge Ball, Basketball, Wall Ball, and Jump Rope. When I first began my fieldwork at Penrose, wristbands were no longer used. The playground was still divided into play areas; however, these play areas were not physically marked. Because there is a greater number of students playing on a smaller surface area, there is an increase in the physical interactions that occur between students. The nurse frequently expressed frustration over the fact the program was “falling apart.” The program is now disorganized, and there is an overall lack of participation from school faculty. The kids no longer have an activity to look forward to, and the nurse reported that there were higher rates of aggressive behavior. The nurse would often ask me if other volunteers were coming, and he would express his concern that there was a lack of support of the program, even from the principal. “It was so beautiful last year,” he said, “It was art work. I mean the injuries last year were next to nothing.” He said it was a shame that the school had
become so reduced in quality. In the past years, the academic program at the school was very strong, the children were learning a lot, and the children were very smart. Teachers concur with the nurse, and they often comment that the school environment is not as positive as past years. However, the nurse concluded that the reason for a decrease in school quality was the teacher’s lack of participation in the student’s lives, whereas teachers and lunch aides attributed the problems to lack of parental involvement in the children’s lives.

The nurse would meet with the lunch aides occasionally to discuss ways to improve recess. The nurse assigned the lunch aides to specific positions so that they would not congregate together in one area. The introduction of new activities was suggested, such as hockey, tug-of-war, and an obstacle course. The only new activity implemented was hockey. In the meeting, the lunch aides expressed that the teachers were not coming to get the students on time. Because of this, the students were forced to wait in line for an extended period. During this time, the children become agitated and anxious and begin to push and hit. The lunch aides felt that if the teachers would come on time, many physical conflicts would end. We also discussed nominating older children to be station leaders, and they could help the lunch aides supervise.

In an attempt to use the resources the school had, colored posters were implemented into the Socialized Recess program. The idea was that when the wristbands would be used again, they would be color-coded with the posters, which designate the specific areas. Thus, for example, the basketball poster was orange, which would then correspond with the orange wristband. For some time, only the posters were used. These worked well for children who could read. A group of boys came to play wall ball in the jump rope area, when one of the boys pointed out that “no, this isn’t wall ball. Look stupid, can’t you read? It says jump rope.” Yet
the adverse winter weather conditions of Philadelphia frequently blew the posters from the wall, and they became dirty and wrinkled.

It was not until January that the wristbands were used. To begin the program, the nurse went to classrooms in order to talk to the children about Socialized Recess. The nurse also talked to the entire lunchroom to explain the system. The nurse explained that a certain colored wristband would go to a specific play area. If they misbehaved or were not quiet, they would not receive a wristband. I would hand out the wristbands during lunch. The teachers proclaimed that they did not want to distribute the wristbands because it took away from valuable class time. However, I was not able to hand out the wristbands fast enough, and children often went outside without a wristband. The nurse and I decided to get groups of children to be helpers. The helpers would pass out the wristbands in addition to help setting up the games and hockey. Previously, any child could help if they asked, but now helpers were assigned to assist with Socialized Recess. Still, the wristbands were not getting to all the children. In addition, children with wristbands played at wrong areas because the wristband color was often ignored on the playground. Furthermore, the lunch aides were not collecting the wristbands at each area. Soon there were no longer enough wristbands to pass out to the children. Towards the end of winter, wristbands were no longer used, areas were no longer marked, and we found ourselves back at square one. However, we now had a group of helpers.

Throughout this time, the nurse researched different types of games suggested by experts to teach children appropriate behavior. However, he was not certain that the programs would work at Penrose. “I don’t know if our kids could handle it,” he said. “The kids we have are bad—well, they’re just really, really bad.” The nurse also read about violence prevention programs at other schools, but he claimed that “this stuff one size fits all doesn’t cut it anymore.”
In summary, results from participant observation revealed numerous factors about violence at Penrose. First, violence occurs in many different situations. For example, fights may occur over games, issues of disrespect, and by ignoring the shared rules of play. Fights may also occur because a child is at high risk for violent behavior. “Play fighting” also exists during recess, and it is a distinct form of play separate from that of violence. Furthermore, despite efforts by the nurse to organize Socialized Recess, many elements hinder its success, namely lack of participation by the school faculty and limited resources.

Focus Groups

These observations and informal interviews with faculty staff allowed me to understand violence and Socialized Recess from the perspectives of the adults. However, because violence occurs at the level of the child and Socialized Recess directly affects their methods of play, understanding violence and recess from the child’s point of view is necessary. My formal interviews with children elicited such information. The boys described violence as “fighting,” “arguing,” and “gun talk.” Gun talk involves a situation within which another person threatens harm through use of a gun. The boys also mentioned “fresh talking,” or profanity in the definition of violence. The girls defined violence as “hurt,” “bad,” “killing,” “destroying,” “stabbing,” “a threat,” “makes you feel scared,” and “frightened.” Both genders claimed to have seen a fight during recess. Both groups concluded that such events occurred because “instigators” wanted to fight. Fights could also occur when there was “trash talkin,” which occurs when another child says something hurtful. Fights could also start over “silly things, like over a jump rope,” or when a child perceives an action as hostile when it occurred by accident. Fights could result if a child has “temper problems.” The interviewees described violent children
as "buck-wild," "instigators," "angry," "humiliated," "embarrassed," "mean," and "guilty." The children agreed that to prevent violence, one should ignore the situation, walk away from the situation, or discuss it with an adult. The girls said that if a child cannot control his/her actions, the child should not be allowed to participate in activities. The boys said that children should stop using "fresh" language. The boys mentioned that one should say no when someone wants to fight them. But children don't do this because "they don't want to be called a chump," "because they want to be cool," and "because they want to show off." The boys replied that the school faculty could prevent violence by "getting more stuff so everyone can be happy" and "keep people busy." The boys also mentioned hiring more lunch aides as a way to prevent violence. Both boys and girls agreed that teachers should listen to the students' problems with violence. The girls said that teachers should listen because if the conflict is not settled at school, then "the kids are just going to take it home." The girls also mentioned that the teachers should not handle conflicts by yelling at the children because it causes more "irritation."

Written notes from children about what they liked and did not like about recess were informative. The majority of children responded they did not like recess because there was too much fighting. Students wrote "When I'm outside, people are always fighting," and "Fights are about everyday." All the students wrote that they liked the different games available during recess. Talking to entire classrooms also revealed how children perceived recess. The older children agreed that when young children play "older children" games, such as basketball, it creates frustration and causes injuries.

In summary, results from the focus groups portray the cultural knowledge children share about violence. Violence is broadly defined as any action that results in harm, whether physical or emotional. Violence can occur over trivial matters, because a child has an aggressive
temperament, or because an "instigator" initiates the fight. Although it is possible to "just say no" to fighting, the children revealed that this results in diminished self-respect. The students revealed that more supervision is needed during recess, and teachers need to listen to the concerns of the students.

Survey Results

The survey results provided a quantitative analysis of the number of children involved in fighting; how children felt about fighting, safety, and Socialized Recess; and how they react to different situations. Figure 1 shows that fifty-four percent of the students had never been in a fight, while thirty-four percent had been in one or more fights in the past school year. Figure 2 portrays that ninety-two percent of the students surveyed had seen at least one fight during recess in the past school year. Forty percent of the students stated that they did not feel any emotion when witnessing a fight (Figure 3). Nineteen percent felt scared when they saw a fight, ten percent felt angry, sixteen percent felt sad, and six percent felt happy. Despite that the majority of students had witnessed a fight, over half of the children stated that they felt safe during school (Figure 4). When asked how they felt about Socialized Recess, forty-three percent reported that they really liked the program (Figure 5). Twenty-seven percent of the students felt the program was okay, and the remaining students had mixed feelings about the program. The students differed in how they felt about the adult supervision during recess (Figure 6). Forty-seven percent thought the lunch aides were very helpful or helpful, while thirty-three percent felt that the lunch aides were only tolerable. Ten percent of the students reported that the lunch aides were below tolerable.
When the students were asked how they would respond to different playground scenarios, numerous trends were found based upon the severity of the interaction and whether the interaction that occurred was by accident or on purpose. In general, students were compelled to ignore a situation if it occurred by accident (Figure 7). As the severity of an incident worsened; from being hit with a toy, then being pushed by another student, and finally to being hit by a child; the children claimed they would ignore the accidental situation more often as the scenario became more physical. However, when the interaction was on purpose, most of the students reported that they would tell an adult. Of the children who claimed they would retaliate by hitting, most children said they would hit if first hit on purpose. If a child was verbally abused or cut in front of in line, the students were generally divided between ignoring the situation and telling an adult.

In general, boys would report pushing or hitting another child (Figure 8) more often than girls (Figure 9). Yet, both genders generally followed the trends mentioned above. However, when hit by an object, girls were more likely to ignore it if the scenario was by accident. The girls were also more likely to tell an adult if a child intentionally hit them with an object. One notable difference occurred between genders concerning how to react when abused verbally by another child. Boys would ignore the situation, but girls were divided between ignoring the situation and telling a teacher. Girls would tell slightly more often than they would ignore the situation.

Age differences between the children revealed slight differences in the way the child would react toward different scenarios. Figure 10 depicts how children at the age of six would react to different scenarios. At this age, the children are least likely to respond to a situation violently (3%), whether by yelling, pushing, or hitting. Seven year-old students act violently
more often towards a situation whether the scenario arose by accident or on purpose (14%) (Figure 11). At the age of eight, 24 percent of the children may react to a situation violently (Figure 12). Eight year-olds are more likely to respond violently towards another student, regardless of whether the victim was hit by accident or on purpose. However, at the age of nine, students responded less violently (8%) to different scenarios and were more likely to ignore the situation or tell a teacher (Figure 13). At age ten, the children revealed a slight increase in acting violently (12%) during different situations (Figure 14), and eleven-year-olds appeared to respond the most violently than any given age group (31%) (Figure 15).

In summary, the results from the survey indicate that, on average, children accept a specific set of “shared task solutions” concerning different playground scenarios. In general, children will ignore a situation if it occurs by accident. When an action is intentional, the students report that they would tell an adult. However, there are children who do not partake in these “shared task solutions,” and they will physically retaliate as necessary during different playground scenarios. This appears to occur most frequently among eight-year old and eleven-year old students.

Cultural Consensus Analysis

A cultural consensus analysis of the children's freelists revealed that the average shared knowledge of each student was 0.215 with a standard deviation of 0.102. An eigenvalue represents the total amount of variance described by a factor. If the ratio between the first eigenvalue and the second eigenvalue is greater than three, it suggests that there is a strong consensus among informants (Handwerker et.al. 1998: 572-3). The ratio of the first eigenvalue to
the second eigenvalue was greater than six, suggesting that there is a strong consensus among the students.

Table 2 shows that children named specific games as the most frequent items (wall ball hockey, hockey, dodge ball, basketball, jump rope, and football). Most of these games are structured by Socialized Recess. Some games, such as football, baseball, and hide-and-seek, are not structured by the adults, but are initiated into recess by the children. Table 3 displays the different ETIC categories of terms. Structured games include those games organized by the school nurse. Unstructured games are instituted by the students. Many positive terms were associated with recess, such as ‘play’, ‘happy’, ‘fun’, and ‘friends’. Occasionally, negative terms were mentioned by the students, such as ‘fights’ and ‘sad’.

To summarize, there is a strong consensus among the students at Penrose regarding thoughts about recess. Salient terms in the students’ perceptions of recess include both structured and unstructured games. In general, students associate positive terms with recess.
Discussion

It becomes apparent that children do have their own perceptions of violence and recess, yet these perceptions are not incongruent with those of the school, supporting that the adults have input into the cultural models of children. Thus, the majority of the children reported that they would ignore a situation or tell a teacher if confronted with a violent act, regardless whether the act was by accident or intentional. That most children reported ignoring an accidental action and telling on an intentional offender exemplifies that the children do in fact recognize behaviors based on intent (King 2001). Furthermore, children are able to recognize that certain children have behavioral problems. Although the children do not realize the root of these problems, which may be biological, environmental, or psychological, they do know that these children are somehow different. Children with behavioral problems at Penrose are defined as "buck-wild," and they have "temper problems." Furthermore, the children understand that fights can break out of "silly things," and they look upon these fights with disrespect because they result from trivial events.

Because children are socialized to incorporate certain models for behavior, they become confused when adults go against the cultural model for proper behavior. This was evident in the interaction among a group of students talking to a faculty member about Sam’s fight. In fact, this minute interaction was so unusual to the group of boys that they recalled the ten-second conversation months later.

Conflicts between the cultural models about violence of children and the adults at the school become evident as well. For example, children recognize that to prevent violence they just need to say no. However, in doing this, they risk becoming a "chump" and may lose respect. In urban environments, respect and group-status are salient issues. When a child is held in high
respect, bullies may avoid him/her. Thus, children must fight to gain respect, which ironically, may prevent fighting at a later time. Although the school faculty condones such inappropriate behavior, this cultural model is shared by members of the urban community in which they live. For example, the two "troublemakers" Tyson and Benjamin learned from their older brothers that fighting is a way to handle problems. Parents sometimes support the use of physical force so that their child is not bullied and children assimilate these values into daily life. On one hand, faculty members socialize children to adapt appropriate methods of behavior, but the faculty may also send conflicting signals that encourage children to incorporate violence into their cultural models for behavior (Fenning et.al. 2000; Petrie et.al. 1999). These conflicts coexist within the child, shaping how the child contextualizes play and violence. The nurse was able to recognize that urban children construct play and fighting through different cultural models. "They're still just kids," he said. "They may play by different rules, but they still just want to play."

In order to help assuage the conflicts that exist among cultural values in children, their values must be incorporated into programs designed to prevent violence. Recess is a time for play where the games played by the children are valuable to their culture. That "types of games" were mentioned most frequently by children indicates that play is important to children. Furthermore, games that are not structured by adults are valuable to children. Although Socialized Recess prevents violent acts, it appears to be only part of the answer. The children do not structure Socialized Recess; the adults structure it. By including games congruent with cultural values, children develop a sense of ownership in recess. It will also, as suggested by the boys, keep the children busy. With more games to play, children will form smaller groups. Smaller groups may lead to less confrontation between students. This may also alleviate the need for color-coded wristbands: more game options will naturally separate the children.
Furthermore, most of the games mentioned by the students involved little or no props. This cuts down on the cost needed for games and toys. For example, tag and running were frequently mentioned. It would be possible to designate an area for races and/or different types of tag. Because the students would help in restructuring the program, they may value the program more.

As King (2001) noted, children are able to identify the intent and appropriate response of certain actions, such as aggressive behavior. Yet, the results reveal that this is not always the case. Some children are reacting violently. Numerous children at Penrose, like Tyson, have risk factors that increase the likeliness of acting violently. Because Socialized Recess does not address these problems directly, there are no opportunities for alternative shared task solutions. Socialized Recess prevents violent interactions from occurring, but it does not teach children how to respond to different scenarios. In fact, one can infer that Socialized Recess is dangerous because it structures a child's playtime without teaching them to react in unstructured situations. Because recess is a time for the child, the faculty should turn to the students for help, and they should adopt the use of peer mediators.

Peer mediation is a program that can be used potentially to reduce violence. The purpose of peer mediation is to select students to act as supervisors during recess. The mediators intervene when conflicts begin between students, such as name-calling or shoving. When a conflict arises, the mediator separates the children. There is a brief "cooling off" time, and then the children are brought back together to discuss the conflict. The mediator enforces the rules, such as not interrupting when a child is explaining the course of events. The mediator, in a sense, acts as a counselor to the other students. Children can also come to the mediators for advice on how to handle problematic situations. When problems are too big for the mediators to handle, there is a group of school faculty designed to intercede in order to help the monitors
(Wyness 2000: 107-108). By developing a group of peer monitors, it increases the supervision during recess as each play area in Socialized Recess can have an individual supervisor.

Children are ideal mediators because they are simply more knowledgeable about the events that occur during recess. Peer mediators are peers that bring shared models for what is acceptable among student’s behavior. For example, a monitor will know the difference between rough-and-tumble play versus a negative confrontation between children. Moreover, conflicts that occur on the playground do not always originate there. Mediators will be prepared for such conflicts and may be able to intercede before these conflicts worsen. It also improves children's social skills. It teaches them the value of communication, listening, and tolerance. It also prepares children for the adult culture within which they will soon enter. They learn the value of responsibility and learn the difference between trivial and serious issues. Peer mediation also gives the students a sense of ownership, which is especially important during recess (Wyness 2000: 108-112).

Teachers and school faculty should also become involved in preventing violence. By combining both the students and teachers, there may be an additive effect towards preventing violence (Rosenberg et.al. 1997: 1641-2). As the girls at Penrose suggested, the teacher should listen to children. Teachers should encourage children to talk about their problems and feelings. This also allows teachers an opportunity to identify children with early warning signs for violence. Once these warning signs are identified, the teacher can go to the onsite counselor for advice on how to handle the situation. Flannery et.al. recommend that by supporting children and encouraging them to open up, teachers can become an integral part of the child's social network where appropriate values can be reinforced (1999: 5-10).
The principal needs to become involved in clearly defining the code of conduct allowed at Penrose and the consequences of misbehavior, and all school faculty need to enforce the rules accordingly. Violent interactions between students are handled inconsistently by adults at Penrose. This may confuse the child on the appropriate behavior requested by the school faculty. This is consistent with Fenning et al.'s findings that suggest that ineffective school policy is related to the level of violence that occurs in the school setting (2000: 175-8). Dwyer et al. propose that school officials should "develop a schoolwide disciplinary policy that includes a code of conduct, specific rules and consequences that can accommodate student differences on a case-by-case basis when necessary (1998: 20-21). If a disciplinary program exists, the school administration should examine and reform it if needed. The policy must ensure that the cultural values are reflected in the rules. The values supported by the school faculty should be expressed in order to indicate educational goals for the students. The policy should include a description of the anti-violence policies of the school. The policy should be enforced in a nondiscriminatory manner and respect cultural diversity. Just as negative consequences are used as punishment for misbehavior, positive tactics for teaching socially appropriate behaviors should also be included in the policy (Dwyer et al. 1998: 20-21). Furthermore, students need to be aware of the difference between school rules and state laws (Fenning et al. 2000: 178). Once a clearly defined policy is in place, teacher and other school faculty will be absolved of the duties of being both police and judge.

These suggestions can be realistically executed in a school with limited resources, such as Penrose. Many violence prevention programs need time and money to be initiated. However, peer mediation and a clearly defined disciplinary policy require little money. The only important resources needed are time, effort, and a little bit of patience. The problem of violence did not
begin overnight. The integration of violence in different cultures has a long history, and it is unlikely that a reduction in violence will occur overnight. Hopefully, through a case study of Penrose Elementary School, the public will recognize that different cultural models, including those of students, adults in the school, and adults in the urban community, shape the behavior of children, both in play and violence. Furthermore, the numerous risk factors for violence assault the very well being of children. This paper has put forth ideas to prevent violence taking into account the unique aspect of cultural models in urban environments. Children deserve the right for an appropriate and nurturing developmental period. Scholars must use these data and similar examples to insist upon policy reform in the school system. Our children are the way of the future; we must protect and ensure their cultural knowledge and survival.

Limitations

There are a number of limitations to this study. First, my role as a lunch aide may have affected how children behaved in my presence. I had the authority to break-up fights and direct children to the appropriate for punishment. My authoritative role over the children may have inhibited the behavior of children in my presence. Second, I was unable to conduct my interviews and freelists in an isolated environment. Despite my cautionary measures, this may have affected the way the children responded. However, this limitation may also have been as asset to my study because the surrounding environment may have put the children into the exact context of which they were to describe. Third, I was unable to include kindergartners in my analysis because the kindergartners have recess at a different time from the rest of the school. The analysis of cultural models in kindergartners would be useful in order to determine if cultural models change form the first year of school to the second year.
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Wyness, Michael G.

Youniss, James
Table 1: Grade and Gender Distribution of Surveyed Students

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Table 2: Most Frequent Items in the Freelist for the Domain of Recess

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<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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<td>Wall Ball</td>
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<td>Jump Rope</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Football</td>
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<td>Happy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baseball</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quiet Area</td>
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<td>Fun</td>
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<td>Hula hoop</td>
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<td>Girls</td>
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<tr>
<td>Talk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sad</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jump</td>
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Table 3: Categories for Most Frequent Items in the Freecists for the Domain of Recess

<table>
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<th>ETIC Category</th>
<th>Term</th>
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<td>Basketball</td>
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<td>Jump Rope/Hula hoop</td>
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<td>Quiet Area</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Football</td>
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<td>Girls</td>
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56
Figure 1: Percentage of Children Involved in a Fight during Recess, 2000-2001 (n=116)
Figure 2: Children (Grades 1-5) who Have Seen a Fight during Recess, 2000-2001 (n=116)
Figure 3: Emotional Reaction of Students (Grade 1-5) to Viewing a Fight during Recess (n=112)

- 41% Happy
- 16% Sad
- 11% Angry
- 6% Scared
- 6% No Feeling
- 20% NA
Figure 4: Feelings of Safety among Students (Grades 1-5) during School (n=116)
Figure 5: How Children (Grades 1-5) Feel about Socialized Recess (n=116)
Figure 6: How Children (Grades 1-5) Feel about the Lunch Aids (n=116)
Figure 7: How Students (Grades 1-5) React to Different Scenarios on the Playground (n=116)
Figure 8: How Male Students (Grade 1-5) React to Different Playground Scenarios (n=54)
Figure 9: How Female Students (Grades 1-5) React to Different Playground Scenarios (n=46)
Figure 10: Reactions of Six-Year Olds to Different Playground Scenarios (n=9)
Figure 15: Reactions of Eleven-Year Olds to Different Playground Scenarios
(n=16)
Figure 11: Reactions of Seven-Year Olds to Different Playground Scenarios
(n=16)
Figure 12: Reactions of Eight-Year Olds to Different Playground Scenarios
(n=25)
Figure 13: Reactions of Nine-Year Olds to Different Playground Scenarios (n=22)
Figure 14: Reactions of Ten-Year Olds to Different Playground Scenarios (n=25)
Appendix
INTERVIEW ABOUT VIOLENCE MARCH 09, 2001

WHAT DO YOU THINK THE WORD VIOLENCE MEANS?

WHAT IS GUN TALK?

WHAT ELSE DO YOU THINK VIOLENCE MEANS?

HAVE YOU SEEN A VIOLENT ACT AT SCHOOL

CAN YOU DESCRIBE AN EVENT THAT YOU HAVE SEEN?

HOW DO SOME OF THE FIGHTS AS YOU DESCRIBED ABOVE GET STARTED?

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF SOMEONE WHO ACTS VIOLENTLY?

LET'S TALK ABOUT WHAT CAN BE DONE TO PREVENT VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS. WHAT CAN STUDENTS YOUR AGE DO?

WHAT ARE SOME REASONS THAT EXPLAIN WHY KIDS DON'T SAY "NO, I DON'T WANT TO FIGHT YOU."

WHAT CAN TEACHERS AND OTHER FACULTY MEMBERS DO TO PREVENT VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS?

ARE THERE WAYS WE CAN PUT THESE ACTIVITIES INTO OUR DAILY LIVES?
PENROSE SURVEY

Dear Student,
I would like to learn more about fighting during recess. With your help in answering these questions, hopefully, we can make recess more fun for you. This is not a test so please answer the questions in an honest way.

FOR ALL QUESTIONS, ANSWER THE QUESTION BY COLORING IN THE BOX YOU WOULD LIKE TO CHOOSE.

PART I: PLEASE ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS

1. In the past school year, were you in a fight during recess?
   □ Yes
   □ No

1b. If you did get in a fight in the past school year, about how many fights were you involved in during recess?
   □ None
   □ 1-5
   □ 6-10
   □ 11-15
   □ 16 or more
   □ can't remember

2. In the past school year, have you seen a fight during recess?
   □ Yes
   □ No

2b. If you did see a fight, how did it make you feel to see a fight?
   □ Did not see a fight
   □ Happy
   □ Sad
   □ Angry
   □ Scared
   □ No feeling

3. During school, how safe do you feel?
   □ safe
   □ sometimes safe
   □ sometimes not safe
   □ not safe

4. How do you feel about socialized recess with the wrist bands?
   □ Really like it
Like it
It is okay
Don't like it
Really don't like it
Don't know
Other __________________________________

5. How do you feel about the adults who watch you at recess?
□ They are very helpful
□ They are helpful
□ They are okay
□ They are not helpful
□ They are really not helpful
□ Don't know
□ Other __________________________________

PART 2: PLEASE MARK WHAT YOU WOULD DO IF THESE THINGS HAPPENED TO YOU. THERE IS NO RIGHT OR WRONG ANSWER, SO PLEASE ANSWER THE QUESTION IN AN HONEST WAY.

6. During recess, another child hits you with a ball by accident. What would you do?
□ Ignore the situation and continue what you were doing
□ Tell a teacher or lunch aid
□ Yell at the child
□ Push the child
□ Hit the child
□ Other __________________________________

7. During recess, another child hits you with a ball on purpose. What would you do?
□ Ignore the situation and continue what you were doing
□ Tell a teacher or lunch aid
□ Yell at the child
□ Push the child
□ Hit the child
□ Other __________________________________

8. During recess, another child pushes you by accident. What would you do?
□ Ignore the situation and continue what you were doing
□ Tell a teacher or lunch aid
□ Yell at the child
□ Push the child
□ Hit the child
□ Other __________________________________
9. During recess, another child pushes you on purpose. What would you do?
   □ Ignore the situation and continue what you were doing
   □ Tell a teacher or lunch aid
   □ Yell at the child
   □ Push the child
   □ Hit the child
   □ Other __________________________

10. During recess, another child hits you by accident. What would you do?
    □ Ignore the situation and continue what you were doing
    □ Tell a teacher or lunch aid
    □ Yell at the child
    □ Push the child
    □ Hit the child
    □ Other __________________________

11. During recess, another child hits you on purpose. What would you do?
    □ Ignore the situation and continue what you were doing
    □ Tell a teacher or lunch aid
    □ Yell at the child
    □ Push the child
    □ Hit the child
    □ Other __________________________

12. During recess, another child says something that hurts your feelings. What would you do?
    □ Ignore the situation and continue what you were doing
    □ Tell a teacher or lunch aid
    □ Yell at the child
    □ Push the child
    □ Hit the child
    □ Other __________________________

13. During recess, another child cuts in front of you in line. What would you do?
    □ Ignore the situation
    □ Tell a teacher or lunch aid
    □ Yell at the child
    □ Push the child
    □ Hit the child
    □ Other __________________________

14. During recess, another child steals the toy or game you were playing with. What would you do?
    □ Ignore the situation and continue what you were doing
    □ Tell a teacher or lunch aid
□ Yell at the child
□ Push the child
□ Hit the child
□ Other ________________________

PART 3: PLEASE SELECT THE BEST ANSWER

15. How old are you?
□ 5
□ 6
□ 7
□ 8
□ 9
□ 10
□ 11
□ 12

16. Are you
□ male
□ female

17. What area do you like to play at most during recess?
□ Quiet area
□ Dodge ball
□ Basketball
□ Wall ball
□ Jump rope
□ Hockey
□ Other ________________________