Introduction

- Conflicts are inevitable and frequent among young children. What can a transgressor do to make a victim feel better?
- Adult victims feel better after hearing an apology (Ohbuchi, Kameda, & Agarie, 1989) and rate a transgressor who apologizes more positively even if the apology was prompted by someone else (Risen & Gilovich, 2007).
- When children receive a written apology from a peer who broke a promise, they feel better than when they do not receive an apology (Smith & Harris, 2012).
- Caregivers frequently prompt transgressors to apologize (Schleien, Ross, & Ross, 2010), but does this actually make victims feel better?
- Would 6- and 7-year-olds (N=48) who were the victims of a minor, accidental transgression feel better after hearing a transgressor apologize? Would it matter whether the apology was spontaneous vs. prompted?

Method

Child and confederate separately build towers to win prize.

Confederate asks for cup and accidentally knocks down child’s tower.

Child and confederate return to building for 15 seconds.

References


Acknowledgments

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Results

Victims who hear an unprompted apology attribute the most remorse to transgressor.

Nor does it affect ratings of how nice transgressor is or whether children would play with her again.

Table: Apologies (unprompted or prompted) lead victim to share more stickers with transgressor:

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<th>Unprompted</th>
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<tr>
<td>Unprompted</td>
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