

Transactional Processes Between Children's Hyperactivity, Engagement and Social Interactions in Swedish Preschools

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Abstract

Hyperactivity may interfere with children's engagement as well as social interactions in preschool activities. This study investigates transactional processes between teacher responsiveness, peer-to-child interaction, and children's level of hyperactivity and engagement. Two hundred and three children (114 boys), aged 15- 71 months participated. Data was collected in 45 preschool units in six Swedish communities on three occasions over a two-year period. Auto-regressive, cross-lagged path analyses were used to explore transactional paths between children's engagement, hyperactivity and teacher responsiveness and peer-to-child interaction. The results revealed that high levels of engagement increase the probability for positive peer-to-child interaction and teacher responsiveness, which in turn increase engagement over time. Teacher responsiveness and positive peer-child interaction do also predict less hyperactivity. In contrast, hyperactivity does not significantly influence social interaction. The findings are discussed in relation to how special support for children with hyperactivity can be designed to increase engagement in preschool activities.