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Funding Source: Emerge Summer Undergraduate Research Internship

Differences in parents', siblings', and observers' ratings of family interaction tasks

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Campione-Barr & Pasch (2008) found that both parents and adolescents were rated as less supportive and involved during interactions with later-born adolescents than with first-born adolescents. Between-family analyses (one parent-child dyad from multiple families) of these differences in ratings on support and involvement have given evidence for the idea that parents and adolescents may have a shared reality that differs from outside observers' views when it comes to rating family interactions (Campione-Barr & Smetana, 2004). The authors of the present study examined these differences but, within family (with older and younger siblings) and hypothesized that interactions with older siblings would be rated as more supportive and involved with their parents than younger siblings. It was also hypothesized that adolescents and parents' ratings on adolescent support and involvement would be more similar than observer's ratings of the adolescent. 118 middle-class parents and two of their adolescent children participated in separate dyadic interaction tasks. Following the task parents and adolescents rated their own and their dyadic partner's support and involvement in the task; observers rated videotaped interactions for the same dimensions. These hypotheses were tested using a mixed model ANOVA analysis. It was found that parents and adolescents did not differ in their reports on the parent during the interaction, although observers' ratings were more positive than either family member when rating the parent. For reports of the children, adolescents rated themselves more positively than observers or parents. Additionally, the observer was marginally more positive than parents.