



CHILDREN'S CONCEPTS OF DISABILITY AND NORM VIOLATION

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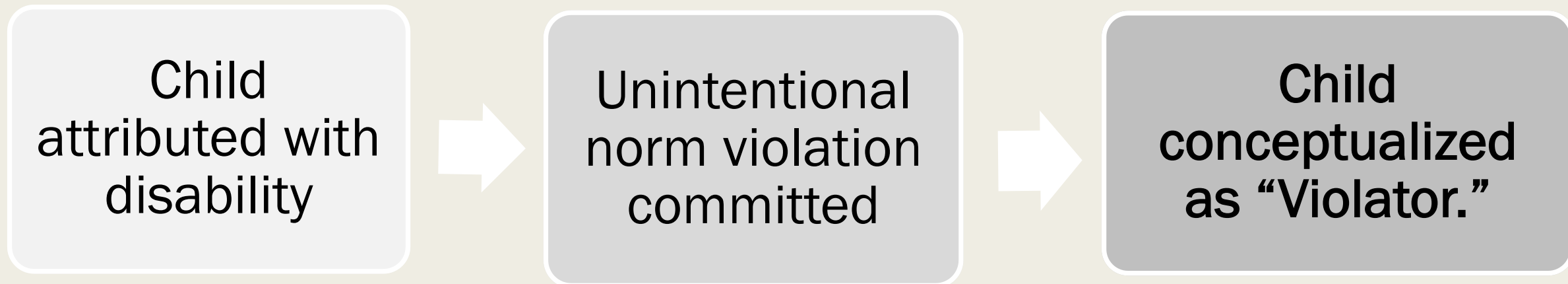
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Introduction:

- Compared to their neurotypical peers, children with disabilities receive **lower likability ratings** from their peers, and are less often sought as friends or playmates (Huckstadt & Shutts, 2014).
- **Victimization** rates for children with disabilities are approximately **50%**, which has serious implications for these students' **well-being** and **perceived safety** in the school environment (Rose & Gage, 2016).

Young children, **aware of and sensitive to the presence of norm violations** (such as those produced by a disability) may come to conceptualize children with differences/disabilities **solely as “violators,”** even if their violations are not intentional or of free-choice (Huckstadt & Shutts, 2014).



MORAL NORM VIOLATIONS

Harm, justice, and rights (Ball et al., 2017).

- Children 3-4 years conceptualize these as: more **extreme**, more **punishable**, more **universal**, and **less dependent on context** (Hardecker, Schmidt, Roden, & Tomasello, 2016).
- Preschoolers judge moral violations involving **physical harm** more seriously than those involving a **lack of fairness** (Ball et al., 2017).

SOCIAL-CONVENTIONAL NORM VIOLATIONS

Built upon **arbitrary, mutual understandings** for behavior (Ball et al., 2017)

- Judged as **wrong** by children 3-4 years of age, even though the violation demonstrates **no clear harm or consequences** to the violator (Dahl & Kim, 2014).
- Younger children hold **ingroup** members accountable for adhering to social-conventional norms **more often** than **outgroup members** (Schmidt et al., 2012)

Limitations of Past Research

Asks participants to evaluate **real children with disabilities**. (Diamond, Le Furgy & Blass, 2010; Huckstadt & Shutts, 2014).

Uses **visually salient markers of disability** (such as a wheelchair to mark a physical disability). (Diamond & Hestenes, 1996; Huckstadt & Shutts, 2014).

Has used **experimenter-created games and norms/violations**. (Josephs et al., 2016; Riggs & Kalish, 2012; Schmidt et al., 2012).

PURPOSE

The Current Study

Uses novel stories with **novel characters**.

Presents all characters, **regardless of disability status**, sitting in a chair.

Uses norm violations that could **realistically occur**.



Objectives:

Research Questions

1.

Do children's judgments of character **intent and naughtiness** differ across development (4.0-5.99 years vs. 7.0-8.99 years) for **moral versus social-conventional norm violations**?

2.

Do children's inferences of character **intent** differ across development (4.0-5.99 years vs. 7.0-8.99 years) for norm violations committed by a **child with a disability** versus a **typically developing child**?

3.

Do children's judgments of character **naughtiness** differ across development (4.0-5.99 years vs. 7.0-8.99 years) for norm violations committed by a **child with a disability** versus a **typically developing child**?

Objectives:

Hypotheses

1.

Participant's judgments of character **intent and naughtiness** will be **more severe** for moral violations than social-conventional norm violations in **both** the older (7.0-8.99 years) and younger (4.0-5.99 years) age groups.

2.

Older participants (7.0-8.99 years) will attribute **less intent** for norm violations committed by a child with a disability versus a typically-developing child. Younger participants (4.0-5.99) will attribute equivalent intent.

3.

Older participants (7.0-8.99 years) will judge norm violations **less naughty** if committed by a **child with a disability** versus a **typically developing child**. Younger participants will judge actors as equally naughty.

Methods

Participants

- Participants include typically developing children (4.0-8.99 years old) and their parents ($n=76$).
- **50%** of the participants will be younger children (4.0-5.99 years), and **50%** will be older children (7.0-8.99 years).
- Participants are recruited through Tennessee state birth records for in-lab participation at Vanderbilt, and from the Nashville school system (St. Bernard Academy).

Design

- The design of the study is a 2 **Age** (4-5 vs. 7-8) x 2 **Violation** (moral vs. social-conventional norm) x 2 **Ability** (neurotypical vs. disability) mixed-effects design.

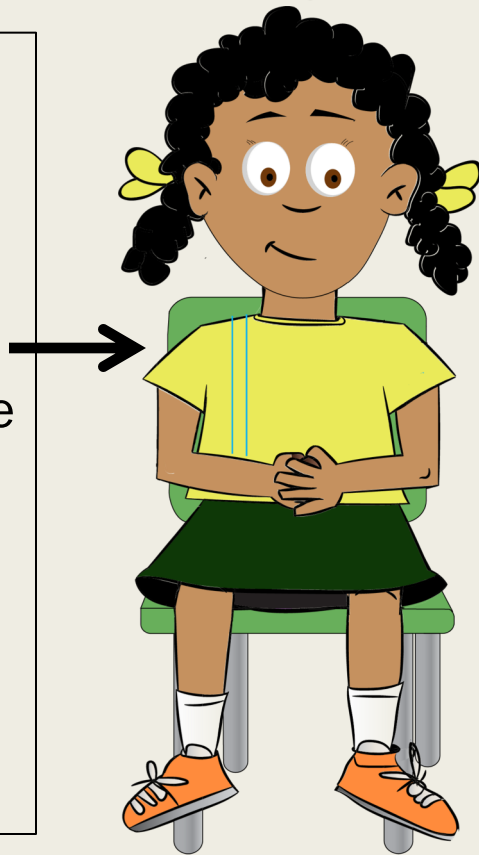
AGE	NORM VIOLATION	ABILITY
4.0-5.99 YEARS	MORAL	TYPICAL DEVELOPMENT
7.0-8.99 YEARS	SOCIAL-CONVENTIONAL	DISABILITY

Procedure

Children are first presented with gender-matched, novel drawings of characters (depicted alone and seated in a chair), and given descriptions of two types of disabilities (physical disability (walking), perceptual (hearing) disability).

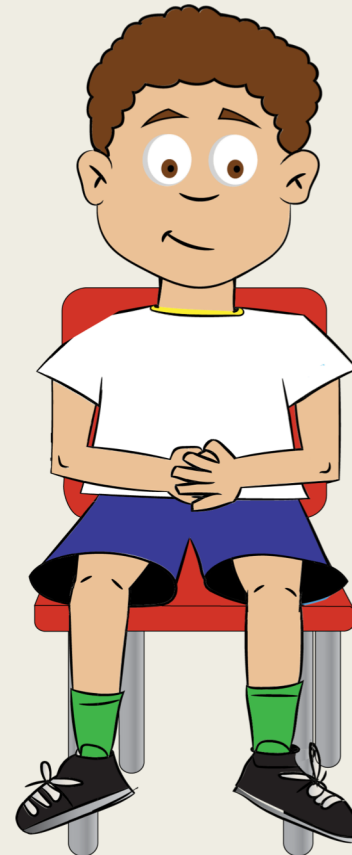
Physical Disability:

"This girl's **legs** don't work. She can't get out of their chair and move around if she wants to. She can't run around the playground. She can't walk to the front of the classroom to ask the teacher questions if she need help."



Perceptual Disability:

"This boy's **ears** don't work. He can't hear if a firetruck is coming down the street. He can't hear the school bell at the end of the day. He can't hear his friends yelling on the playground."



Children are then presented **4 scenarios** (two moral violations and two social-conventional norm violations), all with one **neurotypical character**, one with a **physical disability**, and one with a **perceptual disability**.

- **Moral norm violation #1:** A boy/girl trips and falls down. He/she screams for someone to help. **No characters help the fallen boy/girl.**
- **Social-conventional norm violation #1:** The same characters are supposed to be “working quietly in the classroom.” **All talk too loud in the classroom.**
- **Moral norm violation #2:** Four new characters are on the playground for recess. One character asks the others to “run and play” with them. **None run and play with the boy/girl.**
- **Social-conventional norm violation #2:** The same characters are asked by their teacher to “walk to the bookshelf and pick out a book to read” for reading time. **No character gets a book like the teacher asked.**

Example: Moral Norm Violation #1

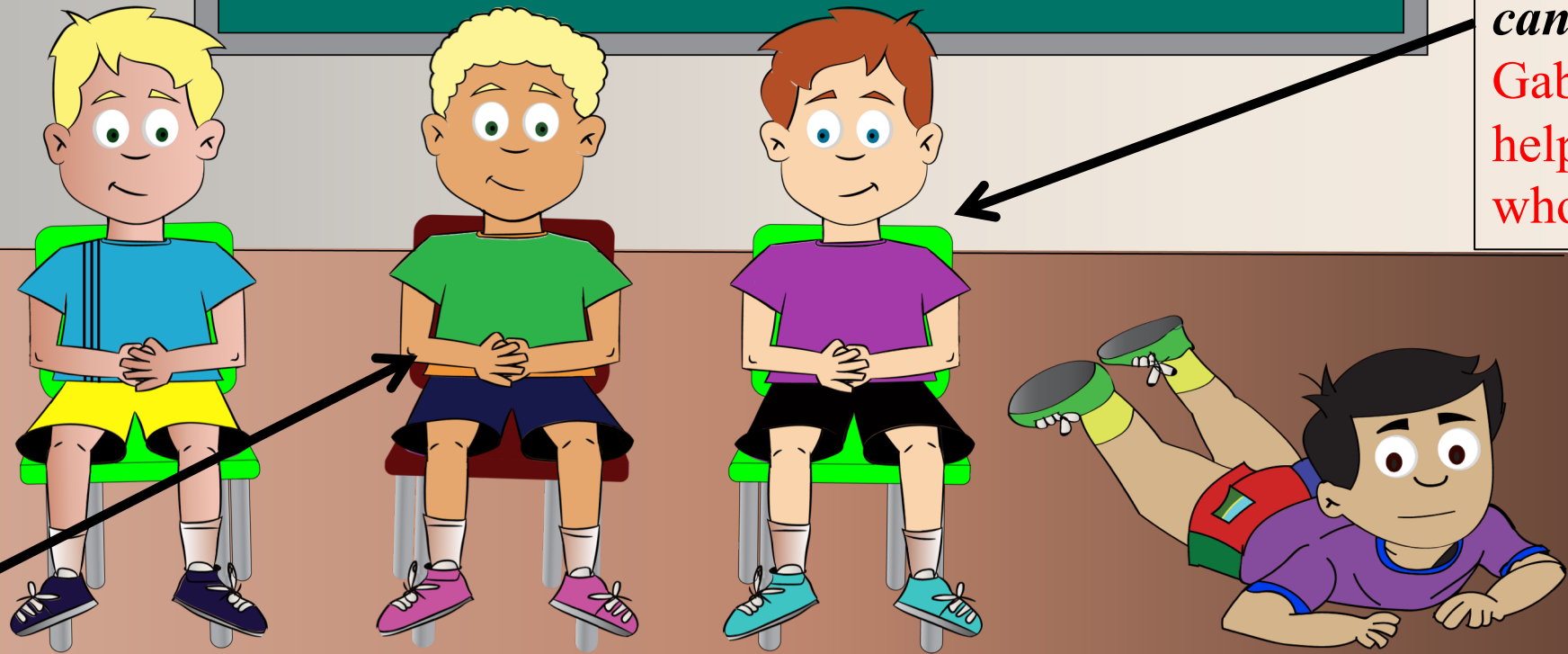
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“Chris *can* walk and he/she *can* hear. Chris *doesn't* help the boy/girl who fell.”

“These 4 kids are in the same classroom. Look! A boy trips and falls down. He screams for someone to help.”

“This is Gabe. Gabe *can* walk but he *can't* hear. Gabe *doesn't* help the boy who fell.”

“Danny *can* hear but he *can't* walk.” Danny *doesn't* help the boy who fell.”



Example: Social-Conventional Norm Violation #2

“These 3 kids are in the same class. It’s reading time, and the teacher asks the class to walk to the bookshelf and pick out a book to read.”

*“Hannah **can** walk and she **can** hear.*

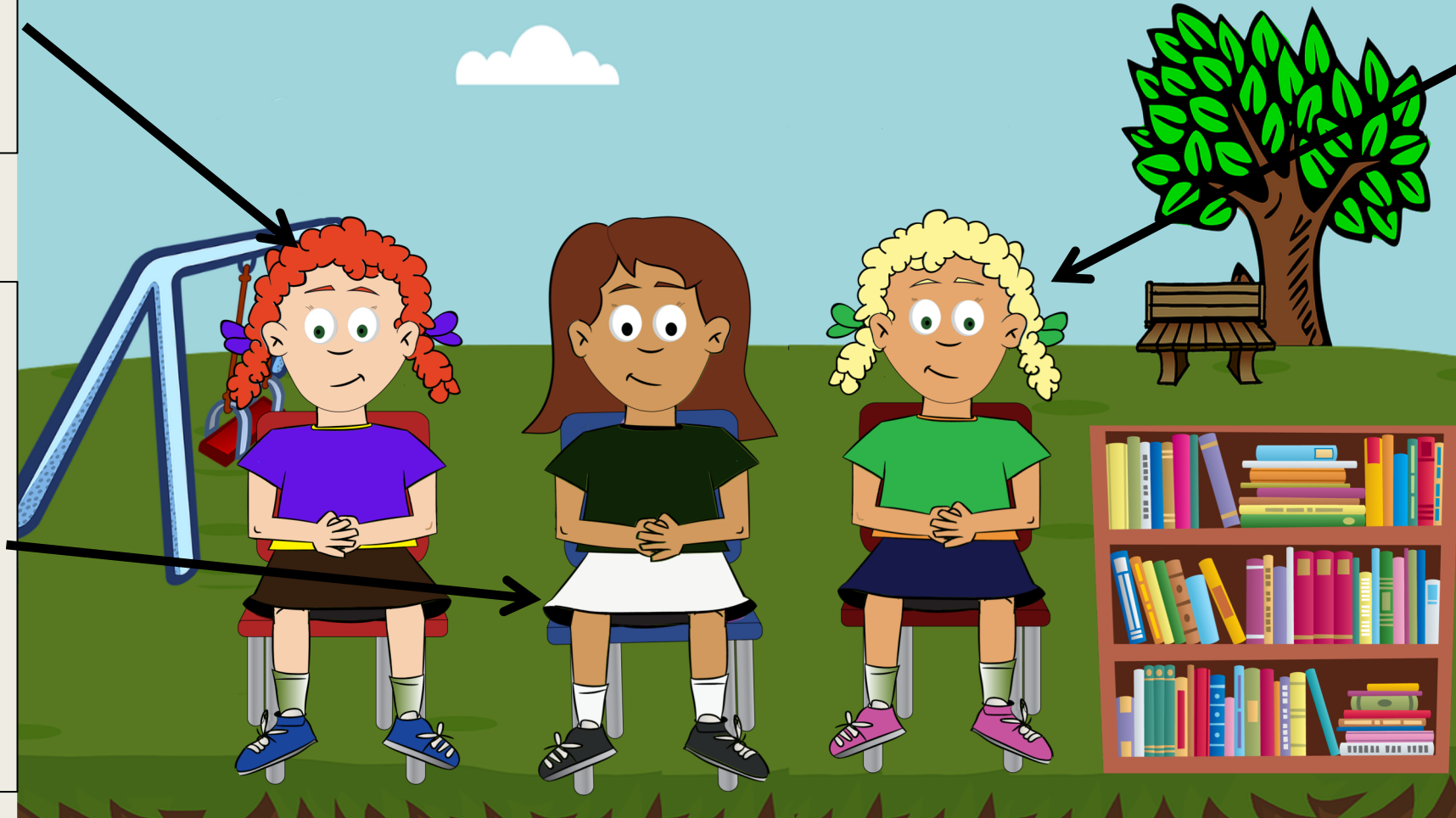
*Hannah **doesn’t** walk over to pick out a book for reading time... “*

*“Erin **can** hear, but she **cannot** walk.*

*Erin **doesn’t** walk over to pick out a book for reading time like the teacher asked.”*

*“Nikki **can** walk, but she **cannot** hear.*

*Nikki **doesn’t** walk over to pick out a book for reading time like the teacher asked.”*



For each character, children are asked:

Memory checks:

“So what part of (character’s) body doesn’t work?”



Measure of intentionality:

“Why did (character) not help the boy/girl who fell?”



Measure of naughtiness:

“Is (character) naughty for not helping?”

“If “YES”; So you think (character) is naughty.

Is he/she a little naughty, or very naughty?”

Results: Example Responses

Qualitative Questions (Measure of Intentionality)	Younger Age Group (4.0 - 5.99)	Older Age Group (7.0 - 8.99)
Why didn't (character) play with the boy who asked?	"Because he didn't want to play with the boy." - 4.7 years	"Because that girl probably did something mean to her." - 6.76 years
Why did (character) not help the girl who fell?	"Because she can't" - 4.31 years	"Because she couldn't walk over to get her" - 7.82 years
Why did (character) not walk over to pick out a book from the bookshelf for reading time like the teacher asked?	"Because his legs are really really tired and he can't move." - 5.95 years	"Because maybe he doesn't like reading." - 8.1 years
Why was (character) talking too loud in the classroom?	"Because he didn't know how to talk." - 5.35 years	"Because she can't hear so she doesn't know she's talking...she just talks." - 8.67 years

Results: Expected Analysis

A mixed-effects analysis of variance (ANOVA) will be used to evaluate the effects of each independent variable on children's **naughtiness** judgments.

A logistic regression analysis will be used to evaluate the effects of each independent variable on **intent** judgments.

Potential Significance

- Fills an **existing gap** in the literature on young children's concepts of disability in the context of their concepts of norm violation.
- Intentionally addresses four, **critical limitations** in the relevant, existing literature.
- Develops new, **evidence-based approaches** to fostering an earlier understanding of difference and disability.
- Lowers **victimization rates** for students with disabilities.

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