

## Later relationships

### The development of friendship in childhood and adolescence.

#### Discuss Sex differences in children's friendship

- Boys and Girls seem to make friends and maintain friendships in different ways.
- Even before the concepts of 'boy' & 'girl' are properly developed, children start to prefer the company of their own sex.
- By 3-4 yrs children play mostly in same-sex groups (Erwin, 1998).
- This separation may occur because boys and girls prefer different sorts of activities (e.g. boys rough and tumble play).
- By 5 yrs boys show greater same-sex preference than girls.
- By 11/12 yrs groups have become very important and sex segregation is almost complete.
- **Waldrop and Halverstone (1975):**
  - Suggested boys tend to have extensive relationships & to view groups as a network of friendship pairs that engage in joint activities.
  - Girls have more intensive relationships that focus on the sharing of emotions and information.
- **Halle (1999):**
  - Asked 122 children aged between 4-8 years with whom an imaginary child could choose to be in relation to a range of situations.
  - Choices involved:
    - Same sex and opposite peers
    - Friends and unfamiliar peers
    - Same sex unfamiliar peers and opposite sex friends
  - Children, especially girls and younger children tended to choose same sex partners.
  - Children's choices in abstract reasoning tasks appear to be similar to choices in real situations.

#### Popularity and rejection

- **Coie and Dodge (1983)** - a 'sociometric' study (measuring friendship networks). Children were asked to categorise their peers as 'liked most' or 'liked least'. From the responses the researchers identified 5 types of children.
  - **Popular children** - The 'most liked' by peers.
  - **Average children** - Moderately liked. Peers do not have strong feelings for or against them.
  - **Popular children** - The 'most liked' by peers.
  - **Average children** - Moderately liked. Peers do not have strong feelings for or against them.
  - **Rejected children** - Have few friends and make friends with other unpopular children.
  - **2 types:**
    - **Rejected-aggressive** - serious behavioural problems because they are hostile, hyperactive & impulsive. Poor social understanding, often misreading others.
    - **Rejected-withdrawn** - inhibited, passive and socially withdrawn. High levels of social anxiety and concerned about being attacked by others. Often the target of bullying.
- **Cases of popularity and rejection:**
  - **Physical Attractiveness** - children prefer to be friends with those who are attractive.
    - **Vaughn and Langlois (1983)** - found a significant correlation between attractiveness and popularity using a sociometric analysis with 59 pre-school children. There was an even stronger correlation for the girls.
  - **Similarity** - Children make friends with those who share something in common. Children will choose friends who live near or who are seen regularly. Children will choose playmates from similar background, of the same sex, with similar interests and so on.