Predicting Preschool-Aged Children's Behavior Regulation from Attention Tasks in the Lab

Chelsea Andrews
University of Wisconsin Madison

Emily Coates
Ripon College

Kristine Kovack-Lesh
Ripon College

Vanessa Simmering
University of Wisconsin - Madison

Abstract: One challenge in studying cognition over the lifespan is designing tasks that measure the same construct in different age groups and relate reliably to real-world outcomes. The current study confronts this challenge by testing a new paradigm to assess attention in preschool-aged children for comparison with other measures. Children completed the new "Pop-the-Bubbles" paradigm plus Flanker and Visual Search tasks, for comparison with parental reports of behavioral regulation. Correlations between behavioral regulation and measures from both Flanker and Pop-the-Bubbles suggest that children's ability to ignore irrelevant stimuli in these lab tasks relates to their ability to behave appropriately in everyday situations. Further development of Pop-the-Bubbles for eye-tracking and a color version of Flanker are underway to test these relationships more extensively in young children.