Chapter 2
The Emergence of Morality in Childhood

How do children acquire morality, how is morality measured, and what are the obstacles that children confront when applying morality to their daily social interactions and encounters? In this chapter, we will review research on morality in childhood, and how moral concepts such as justice and fairness are applied to situations involving social inclusion and exclusion. Understanding children’s social exclusion requires knowing both the positive and negative side of child development. The positive side manifests in the early emergence of morality and a sense of fairness that children demonstrate spontaneously as early as 2 and 3 years of age. The negative side is reflected in children’s distrust of others who are different, selfishness, and ingroup favoritism. Moral norms are the converse of prejudicial norms; to be prejudiced violates norms about equality and fairness. Thus, to understand when children exclude others in ways that are unfair, it is necessary to understand the contexts in which children value fairness.

In what types of contexts do children demonstrate morality and how does it become inhibited or suppressed in situations in which bias is revealed? We offer group identity as part of the key to the puzzle; group identity pulls children in directions away from fairness in some contexts and determining how this comes about is important. Thus, the dynamic between developing morality and group identity reflects the crux of prejudice as it emerges in childhood, and group membership becomes an important source of influence on children’s ability and motivation to enact their emerging beliefs about fairness, inclusion, and equality.
Morality in Childhood

We will first review how morality has been studied in childhood, and then describe research revealing morality in the context of intergroup attitudes and relationships. Morality, in general, has been defined as prescriptive norms regarding how people should treat one another, concerning concepts such as justice, fairness, and rights. Important experiences that contribute to forming and acting on these concepts include empathy, perspective-taking, reciprocity, and mutual respect. In contrast to what many child developmentalists theorized in the middle of the last century, children are capable of understanding these concepts, albeit in a more primitive form than that displayed by adults. Most lay definitions of morality are fairly general (to a fault, often, as in the “kitchen sink” metaphor), and research has demonstrated how morality is actually a very well-defined construct, at least when measuring it from a developmental perspective.

What Morality is Not

Many common conceptions about what morality entails center on “rule-following” behavior. This definition of morality stems from early psychological research in the mid-1900s, which was later re-examined by child developmental psychologists, who showed that rule-following behavior involves many aspects of social interactions that are not explicitly about morality. For example, rules about etiquette (where to place a knife and fork), conventions (what to wear to a wedding), and pragmatic regulations (do not touch a hot stove) are not prescriptive norms about interindividual treatment but are agreed-upon rules to regulate social interactions and ensure group functioning. Most centrally, violating a rule about etiquette does not involve a “victim;” disorder may result, and the violation may disrupt group functioning but this is not the same as creating harm or unfairness to another person or victim. In addition, many rules are contrary to moral principles. Thus, following the rules “Hit disobedient children,” “Blacks and Whites cannot sit together,” “All children must say a prayer” (in a public school in the United States) were deemed wrong from a moral viewpoint in courts of law in the United States, indicating that “rule-following” behavior is not specific enough as a definition of morality. Not all rules are moral rules. As it turns out, these distinctions are understood in childhood, as will be described below.
In the early part of the last century, morality was examined in a delimited way in childhood, focusing on cheating and lying, but often defined from the adult’s perspective. As an illustration, two psychologists, Hartshorne and May (1928–1930), in the 1920s, studied children’s cheating behavior. They compared children’s responses to interview questions about cheating with their actual cheating on a paper-and-pencil exam. The actual cheating exam was deceptive because children were asked to trace a circle with their eyes closed, which signaled to the experimenter that all children who did the task correctly cheated given that it was impossible to perform the task without cheating (Hartshorne & May, 1928–1930). The findings indicated that the vast majority of the children cheated by peeking through their fingers to draw the circle correctly.

As it turned out, though, children’s responses for their behavior were a more complete reflection of their moral judgment than their actual “rule-following” behavior. Children who lied about their cheating and insisted that they drew the circle with their eyes closed were more likely to cheat multiple times, whereas children who explained that they peeked because they wanted to do well on the test and they hoped to please the teacher by drawing a nice circle were less likely to cheat overall. These findings indicated that children’s interpretation of their behavior is an important dimension of their morality, and that how morality is measured needs to go beyond mere behavioral observations. In fact, children’s understanding about truthfulness, lying, and what makes cheating wrong is more reflective of morality than their specific rule-following behavior. To understand morality we need to know what individuals’ intentions are regarding their actions, and to differentiate rules about conventions, regulations, and customs, from rules about fairness, equality, and justice (Smetana, 2006; Turiel, 1998). This was the goal of Piaget’s (1932) research on moral judgment in childhood in the 1930s, to be described below.

**Criteria, Definitions, and Measurements of Morality**

Research on morality in the child over the past 50 years has provided a more complex characterization, demonstrating social-cognitive differentiations that children make regarding the large number of rules that they are confronted with in their daily lives, the origins of morality, how moral concepts are related to concepts about authority and punishment, the relation of moral judgments to moral emotions, the role of peer
interactions and groups on morality, how family interactions and relationships contribute to moral understanding, and the social predispositions that contribute to the emergence of morality, to name a few (see *Handbook of Moral Development*, Killen & Smetana, 2006).

More specifically, over the past three decades studies have demonstrated that children evaluate social rules using different criteria, and that social events are conceptualized by children as moral, social-conventional, or psychological, reflecting different domains of knowledge (Turiel, 1983, 1998, 2006). The moral domain includes issues about fairness, equality, justice, rights, and other’s welfare (physical and psychological harm); the societal domain includes concerns about group functioning, group regulations, social institutions, cultural norms, traditions, and cultural rituals; and the psychological domain includes personal goals, autonomy, identity, Theory of Mind, and individual prerogatives. In addition to measuring the criteria that children use to differentiate rules, research has examined the reasons that children give for their evaluation of transgressions. Before describing this research program in detail, however, studies that have documented the origins of moral judgment will be described. Then the methodology for analyzing children’s underlying criteria for what makes an event or a rule moral or social-conventional, or a matter of individual choice and prerogatives, will be discussed.

**Morality Encompasses Judgment, Emotions, Individuals, and Groups**

In many views of morality, the central debate is whether morality is about judgments “or” emotions, whether the focus should be on the individual “or” the group. In fact, both judgments and emotions are central, and the focus for understanding morality in the child has to be on both the individual and the group. Children are developing new concepts, skills, beliefs, and perspectives about their individual identity, autonomy, and personhood at the same time that they are becoming attached to others, forming groups, and understanding group identity and group dynamics. Moral judgment emerges out of social interactions, and these interactions involve information about the emotional, mental, and motivational states of others. Children use this information, to varying degrees, as they begin to interact with others, and form concepts about fair and equal treatment of persons. Emotional reactions from recipients of unfair treatment, as well as emotional displays by transgressors, provides children with foundational information about the nature of social interactions and
what makes an act right or wrong, good or bad, kind or mean (Arsenio & Gold, 2006; Dunn, 1988; Malti, Gasser, & Buchmann, 2009).

In order to understand how children acquire morality in the context of social interactions and groups, it is necessary to discuss the basic developmental constructs that guide what we know about the acquisition of morality and moral concepts in childhood, and to provide a historical context about how morality in childhood has been characterized. This also involves defining morality, how it emerges in early development, and what it means for children to apply moral principles to their interactions with others in multiple contexts. What are the “social precursors” of morality? What does morality in childhood look like and what are the major findings?

Social Precursors of Moral Judgment

Social relationships, preferences, predispositions, and mindreading

Research over the past two decades has changed the focus of the emergence of moral judgment from adolescence to childhood (Dunn, 2006; Nucci, 2001; Smetana, 1993; Turiel, 1998). In addition, research on what might be the precursors of morality has expanded to include the infant’s first set of social interactions with parents and caregivers (Thompson, Laible, & Ontai, 2003), social interactions with extended family members, including siblings (Dunn, 2006), social-cognitive distinctions that reflect an understanding of intentionality of social goals of others (Woodward, 2009), and social distinctions reflecting early forms of cooperation (Tomasello, Carpenter, Call, Behne, & Moll, 2005). These different areas of research do not include all of the ways that precursors to morality have been documented in infancy and early childhood, but reflect important evidence that the “inclusive” part of human development emerges early. We will briefly illustrate what these lines of research have demonstrated about early moral development.

Social interactions and relationships

Precursors of morality include a wide range of responses to others in the family, regarding social-emotional and social-cognitive understanding. These findings reveal how infants come into the world with a social predisposition. Beginning with early social-cognition research on an
infant’s ability to differentiate people from other animate and inanimate objects on a number of dimensions (for a review, see Thompson, 2006), findings have shown that babies prefer to look at human faces than nonhuman faces, prefer human speech, and engage in focused social interaction very early. Thus, infants are predisposed to orient towards other social beings and, with age, these preferences become more differentiated, with babies preferring familiar “others” (such as family members) and same-age peers to strangers.

Importantly, babies begin to engage in social exchanges and reciprocity with parents as well, and these exchanges become part of the basic building blocks of being social, which contributes to the development of attachment and affiliation with others. An extensive history of attachment research has provided evidence for the adaptive nature of infant’s social orientations towards others (Cassidy, 2008), and how social interactions and relationships from the first days of an infant’s life set in motion a behavioral system that ensures close proximity and security between the infant and the caregiver. Secure attachment enables the child to be independent, explore, and engage in social relationships with peers that contributes to an orientation to be inclusive and prosocial.

The basis for attachment and affiliation that is necessary for constructing moral understanding develops during the preschool period. This is because understanding others is part of the motivation for acting morally, and developing principles about respect for others. Out of early social interactions emerges knowledge about people, emotions, conventions, self-awareness, and morality. As Thompson (2006) and Dunn (2006) have asserted, early morality stems from both knowledge about rules as well as from the emotional bonds and affective relationships that are reflected in early childhood.

Social-cognitive preferences and intentionality

A body of research has further documented how infants differentiate social goals and motivations, including intentionality (Woodward, 2008, 2009). For example, during the first year of life infants begin to understand the relation between a person who looks and the object of his or her gaze; whereas 10-month-old babies do not understand the relation, 12-month-old babies do. This is a very subtle relationship, one taken for granted by adults, but reflecting a social and cognitive achievement by the end of the first year of life. Woodward and her colleagues have shown how infants make inferences about the relationship between acts and intentions.
Along with cognition about intentions regarding acts and objects, researchers have examined how infants make connections regarding acts and intentions with social objects, that is, with peers and adults. In one study, infants watched a cartoon in which a square helped a triangle up a hill followed by a triangle that hindered the other triangle’s “efforts” to go up the hill. Following the cartoon, infants reached out for the object that was depicted as a helper more often than the object that was depicted as a hinderer (Hamlin, Wynn, & Bloom, 2007). This tells us that infants have a bias towards objects that appear to be helping others than those that might be serving as an obstacle to obtain a goal. Further, Warneken and Tomasello (2007) demonstrated that infants at 14 months altruistically help others towards individual goals, and cooperate towards a shared goal. Coordinating their skills with other social partners, however, was more difficult for the 14-month-olds than for 18- and 24-month-old children. Further, Vaish, Carpenter, and Tomasello (2009) demonstrated that children do not need to observe others’ emotions to make judgments that inflicting harm on others is wrong. One implication of this finding is that while emotions often provide information about the connection between acts and consequences for young children, emotions are not the core feature of what makes an act moral. Instead, children appear to make inferences about acts of harm whether a negative emotion is associated with the act or not.

Early social interactions vary greatly by cultural contexts, and particularly in terms of the extent to which this exposure is with family, friends, siblings, or nonfamilial peers and adults (daycare settings). Research on early social interaction has been conducted in the Americas (North, Central, and South), Europe and the UK, as well as Asia (Japan, Korea, and China), and the findings provide a strong basis for the universality of early social interactions that contribute to the development of the person (Greenfield & Cocking, 1994; Thompson, 2006). The findings on early social interaction in preschool children indicate that exchanges with siblings and peers involve object disputes and turn-taking, which are negotiated by children. As will be discussed below, Ross and colleagues have demonstrated how social interactions in the family in early development form the basis for an understanding of justice (Ross, Ross, Stein, & Trabasso, 2006).

Through resolving conflicts with peers and siblings, children experience reciprocity and understand why inflicting harm on others is wrong. Over countless hours, children work through social conflicts, initiating attempts to bargain and negotiate as well as threaten and insist on their own way. Children gain feedback from siblings and peers about what works
and what contributes to conflict resolution or conflict escalation. As it turns out, children who engage in constructive conflict resolution and negotiation are more socially competent in an array of social contexts, and have better success in school and with making friends (Rubin, Bukowski, & Parker, 2006). Along with Ross’ work (Ross et al., 2006) on early negotiations in peer interactions, Hay (2006) has examined children’s concepts of ownership, for example, and has demonstrated that conversational competence and discussions about ownership facilitate positive peer interactions in early childhood.

Dunn (2006) as well has demonstrated how precursors to morality along emotional, affective, linguistic, and cognitive dimensions emerge in family relationships and exchanges. Discussions between parents and children about the nature of acts and consequences of acts provide children with social-cognitive information about the negative outcome of an act, and how to give priority to considerations of others instead of the self. At the same time, the emotional components of family relationships are central. Rather than focusing solely on the mother–child relationship as a transmission process from adult to child, Dunn (2006) has demonstrated that the family context enables children to learn about the consequences of acts on others, and to make inferences based on witnessed exchanges, which involve emotional reactions, discourse, and conversations. How family discussions, arguments, debates, and teasing contribute to children’s understanding about empathy, fairness, and Theory of Mind has received a fair amount of attention in the past decade.

The connection between a child’s emerging Theory of Mind and moral development has been of great interest to scholars and researchers in both fields. An overwhelming amount of evidence has demonstrated that social interaction and social experiences during the first 4 years of life enable children to acquire a Theory of Mind, which enables children to understand that others have desires, intentions, and beliefs that are different from one’s own (Astington & Olson, 1995; Baird & Astington, 2004; Carpendale & Lewis, 2006; Dunn, 2006; Wellman, 1990). The central way that this ability is related to moral judgment is that intentionality is an underlying construct of morality as well as part of what the child becomes capable of doing in the first few years of life. Morality involves understanding that an action is wrong based on one’s intentions, not solely the “objective” consequences. This is initially applied to one’s own actions, but to make more judgments about others it is essential to know that others have intentions that may be different from one’s own (recent research on a child’s theory of social mind, that is, when children understand that others may have different intentions with
Dunn’s careful social interaction research provides extensive evidence for how this aspect of moral judgment emerges through shared discourse in the family environment (Dunn, 2006). For example, children begin to understand the idea of responsibility, which means how children are accountable to others for their rule violations such as those involving hitting others. Dunn has shown how young children during the third year of life begin to blame others (especially siblings), reflecting a sense of blameworthiness for one’s actions. Further, children become capable of differentiating others’ feelings and emotions from their own, which is necessary for understanding others’ perspectives and has implications for early morality.

**Judgments and emotions**

This characterization of the emergence of moral development differs from previous characterizations which have typically dichotomized morality as either stemming from cognition (Kantian “rationality”) or emotions (Humean “sentiments”). Children acquire morality from their social experiences, and the emotional consequences of the actions of others provide information for them to determine how to act. Moreover, and importantly, the process of caring for others enables one to respond to others from a moral viewpoint. That is, feelings of attachment and affiliation provide the basis for the ability to make moral judgments.

At the same time, attachment to the group is related to group identity, which can provide the basis for prejudice and stereotyping. This is because being strongly attached to one’s group and forming a group identity has been shown to contribute to ingroup preference and outgroup dislike. Thus, how attachment and affiliation are interpreted by the child remains a very important component for determining when attachment contributes to morality and when it contributes to prejudice and bias. Traditional attachment research has focused on attachment to the caregiver (not the group), and how this emerges at the beginning of life, enabling children to develop healthy social relationships as well as to become independent and capable of exploration (Cassidy, 2008). Considering the implications of attachment to the group is quite different from the body of research on caregiver–child attachment.

The issue of attachment is complex, however, when predictions are made regarding attachment relationships and social development, particularly moral development. In fact, as will be discussed in Chapter 5,
children’s likelihood to commit moral transgressions, such as bullying or victimization, stems from, in part, the quality of their social relationships, and their cognition about the feeling states of others. Moral understanding derived from family interactions typically refers to interactions among others who are familiar to the self. As children engage and interact with others outside the home context, the formation of groups and group interactions enters into the social experiential base of moral judgments.

Recently, there has been more attention to moral judgments about moral emotions and the intersection of these abilities (Malti, Gummerum, Keller, & Buchmann, 2009). Malti and her colleagues have conducted a research program on how children and adolescents attribute emotions to others, and the relation of evaluations of transgressions along with the emotions that individuals attribute to victimizers and victims. Young children who have trouble coordinating different types of emotions often attribute positive emotions to transgressors due to the material gain or benefit derived from certain forms of bullying (such as pushing someone off a swing to get a turn). This has been referred to as the “happy victimizer” effect which appears to dissipate around 8–9 years of age. At this point, children begin to attribute both positive and negative emotions to transgressors. This research is integrative in that moral judgment is not pitted against moral emotion. Instead, the core of the approach is social cognition, and the analyses pertain to how individuals make judgments of the feelings that they expect others will have during social exchanges.

**Early peer group interactions**

For the most part, children’s experiences in social peer groups begin early in development, as young as 3 and 4 years of age. The knowledge derived from these social encounters include an understanding of how to engage in social exchanges, establish social groups, acquire negotiation skills, learn how to resolve conflicts, understand the intentions of others (Theory of Mind) as well as how to apply moral concepts, such as fairness, equality, and empathy to social interactions with others. What makes new social interactions challenging, in contrast to family interactions, is the lack of prior knowledge about new playmates and peers. Children enter social groups with a lack of knowledge about what others are like, what they think, and whether there is a mutual compatibility or trust. Children’s Theory of Mind becomes more explicit during this period as well. Interacting with new individuals involves a new set of challenges.
At the same time, these new challenges enable children to apply the knowledge acquired in familiar, family interactions to individuals with different traits, appearances, interests, and group identities. Through social negotiation, there is also the potential for group antagonism and favoring one’s own ingroup, which can easily (but not necessarily) result in negative attitudes about those who are not in the child’s “group,” however that is defined.

Research in the area of peer interactions and relationships has identified different levels of peer groups that are much more differentiated than depicted in past research (Gelman & Wellman, 1991). These are sociometric categories of popular and rejected peers, social crowds, groups of friends, and groups of peers who “hang out” together in social cliques. How morality emerges in these types of groups has not been studied extensively and remains an area ripe for investigation.

Thus, the precursors for moral judgment are multidimensional, including establishing a Theory of Mind, forming attachments, engaging in social interaction, and interacting with family members regarding morally relevant exchanges. Moral judgment, which emerges during early childhood has reflected a long tradition of research in developmental psychology, with a focus on how morality is defined, measured, and analyzed. In the next section, we will discuss moral judgment research findings.

**Moral Judgment and Interaction in Childhood**

Piaget (1932), studying children’s moral judgments in his classic book *The moral judgment of the child*, demonstrated how children change from focusing on authority mandates to determine what is right and wrong, to focusing on independent principles of justice by late childhood. With age, children do not define morality in terms of authority mandates but in terms of principles of fairness. Piaget drew on moral philosophical theories to assert that morality should not be defined by cultural norms and rules, but instead by principles stemming from reasoning about the treatment of others. Piaget (1932) showed that the origins of moral rationality, as theorized by Immanuel Kant (1785/1981), could be observed in childhood, and that the transformation from authority-based judgments to justice-based judgments takes place by 10 years of age, which reflects a developmental and universal social-cognitive transformation. What was important about this viewpoint was that Piaget designed studies to determine whether moral judgment was universal in
childhood, and whether children could critically evaluate cultural norms and authority rules.

Moreover, Piaget theorized about moral emotions as reflected in respect for others but not as the fundamental basis of morality, which could only be judgment and rationality. This was quite different from the earlier accounts of children’s moral reasoning because he: (1) investigated morality as a form of judgment, not strictly conformity to rules; (2) rejected a definition of morality as cultural norms or rules and relied on a definition that referred to principles of justice and fairness; (3) predicted that children constructed moral principles as they construct space, time, and causality, and that the knowledge related to morality was not solely learned from adults; and (4) proposed universally general moral developmental processes emerging in childhood.

Piaget’s studies involved asking children about their rules for the game of marbles as well as their consciousness of the rules. He conducted detailed interviews with children regarding their judgments about their games as well as their evaluations of hypothetical dilemmas. He asked them what made the rules of the game fair or unfair, where the rules came from, and whether the rules could be changed. Using this methodology, he found that by 8 years of age, children view the basis of rules as something children negotiate by peers rather than as taught by adults, and that children reason about the wrongness of acts in terms of justice rather than what adults deem is right. He also found that children differentiate different forms of justice, such as distributive and retributive. Important-ly, Piaget developed a methodology for soliciting children’s perspectives on what makes an act right or wrong, and he established a way to analyze spontaneous reasoning from children regarding fundamental concepts, such as morality, authority, and social rules (Helwig, 2008; Turiel, 1998).

Further, Piaget’s theory provided a rich basis for theorizing about children’s morality in terms of judgment–action relations, morality and emotion, morality and authority, and the role of peer interaction in facilitating moral development. In particular, Piaget focused on how children’s interactions with peers provide an essential experiential basis for constructing concepts of equality and fairness. Through a reciprocal process of identity and perspective-taking, children develop an understanding of why it is important to be fair and treat others equally. As one identifies with another then this becomes the source for understanding why it is wrong to inflict harm or deny others’ resources (“I don’t like it when someone takes my toy; he is like me so he must not like it when I take his toy”).

Several studies by Damon (1977) examined children’s discussions about fairness in peer exchanges, documenting age-related changes in
concepts of distributive justice. In one study, children were videotaped in groups of three (without adults present) and were asked to divide up candy among their group after making bracelets. The findings showed that by 6 years of age, children spontaneously focused on principles of equality, and by 9–10 years of age, children referred to principles of merit and reciprocity. Interviews with children confirmed the generalizability of these concepts, which children applied to a wide range of peer settings (Damon & Killen, 1982).

To provide a detailed analysis of children’s discourse during conflict interactions regarding the distribution of resources, Killen and Turiel (1991) videotaped children in groups of three playing with toys to determine how they approached conflicts that arose in the course of interaction (Figure 1.1). An example of an exchange in which three 3.5-year-olds are playing at a table with small toys while a video camera is on and no adults are present in the room, is the following:

> [Three children are at a table asked to play with toys while no adults are present in the room]

**RUTH:** [holding up two Fisher-Price people] Hey, I want the green person. How about if we trade? Here, you can have this one [gives a blue person to Michael]. And I can have the green one. Okay? [reaches for the green person that Michael is holding in his hand]
MICHAEL: No! We already did trade. I want this one [holds on to the green one]. I want it now and you had it already.
LILY: Hey, you can both have my spoons, if you want? [shows her spoons to Michael and Ruth]
RUTH: No, I want the green person.
MICHAEL: I’m not trading any of mine. [hovers over his toys]
LILY: [sings] I’m not trading any of mine.
RUTH: [sings] I’m not trading any of mine.
LILY: Well, that’s not fair because I don’t have any people. [pouts]
MICHAEL: [to Ruth] Give her one of them.
RUTH: But you have three and she has none and I have one. So that’s not fair.
LILY: Yeah, because I have none.
RUTH: [to Michael] You know what? If you give me the green and then I’ll give her the red one and then we’ll all have one.
MICHAEL: Well, if you don’t give me the red one then I won’t invite you to my birthday party.
LILY: But I don’t have any people.
RUTH: Okay, I’ll give you this one [to Lily] and I’ll take this one from Michael and then we’ll all have one, okay?
MICHAEL: [gives orange person to Ruth] Okay, but can we trade again tomorrow?
RUTH: [sings] Birthday party! [takes the orange person from Michael and gives the red person to Lily]
LILY: [sings] Birthday party!
MICHAEL: [sings] Birthday party!

This example, consistent with a Piagetian approach, reveals how children construct social and moral rules during their interactions. This differs from a view that examines whether children comply with rules as a means for determining the origins of morality. As reported by Killen and Turiel (1991), children’s conflict resolution strategies were more varied and collaborative with age. Subsequently, the videotapes of these sessions (55 sessions conducted over 6 months, 2,000 discourse utterances) were analyzed from a child psycholinguistic framework (Killen & Naigles, 1995) and the findings indicated that children used “collaborative suggestions” most often, followed by “negotiations,” “bargains,” as well as “threats” (e.g., “I won’t invite you to my birthday party”). Few references to the group were recorded in triadic settings with young children, aged 3.5 years. At 4.5 and 5.5 years, however, children begin to refer to their group, and to their collective identity.

At this point in development, collective identity typically has referred to the emergence of a group, that is, references to “us” rather than “you”
and “me.” For example, children at the youngest age were most likely to share between dyads, excluding the third child in the play session, and often in terms of access to the toys. While children often demonstrated spontaneous sharing between themselves and one other playmate, coordinating the interactions was difficult and children often excluded a third party from the discussions of how to share the toys. By 5.5 years of age, children in these peer group settings referred to one another in their discussions about sharing and came up with “third party reconciliation” resolution strategies. What requires more research is how this collective identity emerges, and how attitudes about ingroup and outgroup based on categories such as gender, race, and ethnicity bear on this process. This issue is the topic of the next two chapters (see Chapters 3 and 4) in which we describe the research on early categorization, prejudice, and group identity. During the preschool and elementary school periods, research has been conducted on the role of gender in same-gender and opposite-gender group encounters, with mixed findings (as discussed in the next chapter). Suffice it to say, Piaget’s foundational research did not delve into these issues.

Thus, while Piaget’s research set the stage to analyze children’s construction of morality in social interactions, there were many limitations of his research, aside from the categories of social identity that contribute to ingroup/outgroup attitudes. One limitation of Piaget’s analyses was that his observations of children’s peer interactions were focused primarily on a narrow context, that is, children’s discussion about the game of marbles (and all boys). Over the past few decades, developmental research has expanded the context of relevant interactions to the family, the home, school, and importantly to consider a range of issues for discussion and evaluation, including many varied social concepts (Smetana, 2006). Further, detailed analyses have included how emotions, the history of interactions, the quality of friendship and peer relationships, the nature of social groups, group identity, and group functioning have an effect on the emergence of morality in the child. Before discussing how children’s social interactions bear on moral development, further discussion of the traditional theories about children’s moral development will be described, followed by current formulations and findings.

Morality as Justice

Extending Piaget’s theory, Kohlberg (1984) theorized that moral development could be characterized as a set of six stages throughout life, not
just early and middle childhood, and that moral reasoning reflected increasingly sophisticated notions of justice, based on philosophical criteria. Using more elaborated dilemmas, which were designed to probe individuals about complex societal issues involving stealing, saving a life, property rights, social obligations, and relationships, Kohlberg provided a basis for extending the range of concepts within the moral domain. In addition to focusing on fair distribution of resources, Kohlberg included issues such as the value of human life, rights, others’ welfare, and social equity. Moreover, Kohlberg demonstrated how complex social interactions are related to morality by studying how schools that were established on theories of democracy and rights (Just Community Schools, see Colby & Kohlberg, 1987) were related to the development of moral judgment.

Like Piaget, Kohlberg (1971) contested the notion that morality involved children’s compliance to adult rules. Instead, morality involved an understanding about what makes rule transgressions wrong, and how an underlying concept about justice emerges and changes over the lifespan. Kohlberg debated with behaviorist researchers by arguing for a cognitive theory of morality. Very generally, Kohlberg found that young children were premoral (referred to as pre-conventional), and relied on selfish desires to avoid punishment (rather than authority mandates as Piaget had predicted) to determine whether acts were right or wrong. Subsequently, adolescents acquired an understanding about groups and cultures and evaluated acts as right or wrong based on societal laws, rules, and social relational obligations (referred to as conventional reasoning). By adulthood, individuals evaluated acts in terms of principles of justice, and not from a selfish or group perspective (referred to as post-conventional). This approach involved assessing an individual’s general scheme (organizing principle) for evaluating social problems and dilemmas across a range of contexts. Kohlberg’s formulation was expansive and involved detailed coding and analyses of children’s, adolescents’, and adults’ reasoning about a range of dilemmas.

Most centrally, Kohlberg (Colby & Kohlberg, 1987) focused on reasoning and judgment, and the ways that nonmoral social considerations such as personal desires and group conformity exerted negative pressures on individuals to subordinate morality to these types of concerns. His specific analyses, however, were limited to responses to a complex adult-oriented dilemma regarding the value of life pitted against property rights, marital relationships, and legal consequences (referred to as the Heinz dilemma in which a man steals a drug to save his wife’s life).
These concepts were not part of the child’s world but were adult-focused and adult-defined. Importantly, though, the theory provided a framework to examine moral reasoning throughout the lifespan.

**Social Domain Model of Social and Moral Judgment**

By the mid-1980s, though, studies of contextual variation in judgments provided extensive evidence contesting domain-general approaches to moral development, which were identified as broad stages of moral judgment (Smetana, 2006; Turiel, 1998). Instead, Turiel and colleagues formulated a domain-specific model, referred to as the Social Domain model for understanding morality as a distinct conceptual system from other forms of social judgment such as concepts about conventions as well as psychological knowledge. The research program demonstrated the coexistence of different forms of social reasoning from childhood to adulthood. For example, young children’s evaluations of transgressions and social events reflected considerations of the self (pre-conventional level in Kohlberg’s terminology), the group (conventional level in Kohlberg’s system), and justice (post-conventional level, Kohlberg’s highest level); these three forms of judgments coexisted in early development (Table 2.1). Moreover these constructs provided categories to analyze social interactions as well as social judgments. This theory was a direct challenge to Kohlberg’s theory which proposed that his levels were hierarchically organized in that one came after the other. Thus, in Kohlberg’s system, young children are self-oriented, adolescents and adults are group-oriented, and adults with heightened moral awareness are justice-oriented; passing through each stage is necessary before reaching the next stage.

The Social Domain model demonstrated that these constructs do not emerge successively but simultaneously in development, each with its own separate developmental trajectory (e.g., self-knowledge, conventional (group) knowledge, and moral knowledge). Thus, multiple forms of reasoning are applied to the evaluations of social dilemmas and interactions.

Consistent with Kohlberg’s theory, though, these findings demonstrated that morality is not strict rule-following behavior as not all rules are the same, nor do all rules have moral underpinnings. As discussed at the beginning of the chapter, the findings revealed, further, that children do not conceptualize all rules the same, and that different justifications and
reasons were given for the evaluation of rules. Rules with a moral basis, such as those involving harm or unfairness, are treated differently from rules with a conventional basis, such as those involving customs, traditions, and etiquette. Research over the past 25 years, with over 100 empirical studies published, has provided an extensive research program with many generative applications of the model to different areas of social life (Smetana, 2006).

Social judgments do not reflect one broad template or stage, such as Kohlberg’s pre-conventional level to characterize childhood morality. Instead, children, adolescents, and adults use different forms of reasoning – moral, conventional, and psychological – simultaneously when evaluating transgressions and social events. The change in formulation of morality reflected a movement away from a global stage model towards domain-specific models of development and is consistent with changes towards domain specificity in other areas of development such as cognitive development (Kiel, 2006; Kuhn & Siegler, 2006), neuroscience (Blakemore, Winston, & Frith, 2004), and other fields of

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Domain-specific theory</th>
<th>Domain-general stage theory</th>
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<td><strong>Social Domain theory</strong></td>
<td><strong>Moral judgment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Psychological domain: individual prerogatives; self, autonomy, Theory of Mind</td>
<td>• Preconventional (self): children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Societal domain: behavioral uniformities for making groups work well; societal rules, group traditions, customs, group functioning</td>
<td>• Conventional (group): adolescents and adults</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Moral domain: principles of how individuals ought to treat others; justice, fairness, equality, rights, others’ welfare</td>
<td>• Post-conventional (justice): philosophers, ethicists</td>
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Cognitive development (Piaget, 1952)

- Sensori-motor: pre-representational (infancy)
- Preoperational: intuitive (early childhood)
- Concrete: reversible operations (childhood)
- Formal: abstract (adolescence)
child development. This is because domain-specific approaches provide for a contextual approach that enables researchers to understand how children’s judgment and behavior vary as a function of the context. From a Kohlbergian view, young children evaluate rules from a selfish perspective and then from a group perspective, only holding a justice viewpoint with the emergence of abstract reasoning in adulthood. In other words, a child at the first stage of moral development in Kohlberg’s system should judge that rules should not be broken unless you “will not get in trouble” (avoid punishment or evade an authority’s awareness of the rule violation).

Social Domain studies with children have shown, however, that children differentiate rules along a range of criteria. Rules about the moral domain are evaluated differently from rules about the societal domain because rules about avoiding harm and fair distribution, for example, are evaluated based on the intrinsic negative consequences, and are interpreted as generalizable (not culturally or contextually specific), unalterable (the rules should not be changed), and not subject to authority jurisdiction (the teacher cannot change the rules about it). In contrast societal rules about conventions, customs, and etiquette are evaluated as contextual and culturally specific as well as alterable and within authority jurisdiction. Further, the evaluation of issues within the psychological domain indicates that children view issues such as choice of friends, bodily appearance, and personal correspondence as matters that should not be regulated with rules and are up to individuals to decide (individual discretion and personal prerogatives) (Nucci, 2001).

Several implications of this approach are that children’s social understanding and social knowledge are not characterized as “moral or selfish” but as multidimensional, that is, moral, self-oriented, group-oriented, and societally-oriented. Nonmoral, social understanding, for example, includes a concern with group functioning or group identity (societal domain) as well as a concern with autonomy and personal goals (psychological domain). Thus, what may appear as “selfish” from the viewpoint of the adult observing children’s interactions, may, in fact, pertain to personal goals and autonomy. This is not to assert that young children are not selfish; it is to assert that adults can also be selfish, and that “selfishness” is not a uniquely age-related phenomenon found only in early childhood. That children may refrain from sharing toys may have to do with their interpretation of the objects in terms of ownership, and when this information is incorrect their behavior appears to be selfish, when, in fact, it is within their ownership priority (Hay, 2006; Ross, et al., 2006). This domain-specific model provides an
alternative approach to Kohlberg’s (1971) and Piaget’s (1952) domain-general models.

As an illustration, research on children’s differentiation of social domains has interviewed children about rule transgressions and found that different sets of criteria are used to evaluate the legitimacy or wrongness of a rule violation. For example, two transgressions, hitting someone in an unprovoked encounter, and wearing pajamas to school, are viewed as wrong by children. As shown in Table 2.2, these two transgressions are depicted with the criteria that are used to assess children’s criteria for evaluating these transgressions.

Children evaluate the first transgression, hitting, as wrong because of the negative intrinsic consequences to another person (which involve a victim) in contrast to the second transgression, wearing pajamas to school, which children view as wrong because it is disruptive to expectations about modes of dress and traditions. A set of criterion assessments have been applied to children’s judgments to determine their differentiation of concepts. These are: (1) rule alterability (Can you change the rule about X?); (2) generalizability (Does the rule about X apply in other schools or cultures?); (3) punishment avoidance (Is it all right to do X if you do not get in trouble for doing it?); (4) authority jurisdiction (Is it up to the teacher to decide whether the act X is all right or not all right?); and (5) rule contingency (Is the legitimacy of the act X contingent on the

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<tr>
<th>Table 2.2</th>
<th>Children’s criteria for social rules. (© 2010 Melanie Killen)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joe hits Sarah for no reason (Rule violation: do not hit someone)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• “What if the teacher says it’s okay?” (“It’s still wrong”)</td>
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<td>• “What if you don’t get in trouble?” (“It’s still wrong”)</td>
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<td>• “What if there is no rule about it?” (“It’s still wrong”)</td>
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<td>• “What if you could change the rule about it? (“It’s wrong”)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• “What if there is another school/culture where it would be all right to hit?” (“It’s still wrong”)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alice wears pajamas to school (Rule violation: do not wear pajamas to school)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• “What if the teacher says it’s okay?” (“It’s okay”): Authority jurisdiction</td>
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<tr>
<td>• “What if you don’t get in trouble?” (“It’s okay”): Punishment avoidance</td>
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<tr>
<td>• “What if there is no rule about it?” (“It’s okay”): Rule contingency</td>
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<tr>
<td>• “What if you could change the rule about it?” (“It’s still wrong”): Rule alterability</td>
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<tr>
<td>• “What if there is another school/culture where it would be all right?” (“It’s okay”): Generalizability</td>
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existence of a rule?). In the case of hitting and wearing pajamas to school, in children as young as 4 and 5 years of age (some studies have shown the distinction as young as 2.5 years of age), the rule about hitting is viewed as not alterable, generalizable, still wrong if you do not get in trouble, not a matter of authority jurisdiction (if the teacher says it is okay then it is still wrong), and not rule contingent (it is wrong even if there is no rule about it). In contrast, the rule about wearing pajamas is alterable (you can change it), not generalizable (it is okay if people in other contexts wear pajamas to school), not wrong if you do not get in trouble, a matter of authority jurisdiction (okay if the teacher says it is okay) and rule contingent (see Nucci, 2001; Smetana, 2006; Tisak, 1986; Turiel, 1998).

These findings demonstrate that young children have underlying criteria that they use to evaluate social events, interactions and relationships in their social world. Children are often unaware of these dimensions, and only through systematic empirical investigation are these capabilities and competencies made explicit.

Reviews of this research have shown that children use these criteria beginning at an early age up through adulthood. Yet, with age, children begin to use more than one criterion to differentiate different types of rules. For example, very young children may recognize that rules about conventions are alterable (the rule can be changed) but not yet recognize that conventional rules are contingent on authority (that authority can deem the act to be legitimate). In general, children use a range of justifications, including moral, conventional, psychological, and pragmatic reasons to evaluate acts, events, and transgressions. Thus, children use a mixture of reasons when evaluating different scenarios, not just one type of reasoning as would reflect a global stage of development.

To a large extent, the foundational research on moral judgment from the Social Domain model concentrated on documenting the universality of conceptual categories and distinctions, such as the extent to which children differentiate moral rules from social-conventional ones (Nucci & Turiel, 1978), evaluate parental jurisdiction about moral rules (Tisak, 1986), evaluate victimizers’ emotional states (Arsenio & Kramer, 1992), differentiate rights and freedoms (Helwig, 1995a; Ruck, Abramovitch, & Keating, 1998), determine preschoolers’ criteria for evaluating rules and differentiating hypothetical and actual transgressions (Smetana, 1981; Smetana, Schlagman, & Adams, 1993), differentiate teacher responses to transgressions (Killen, Breton, Ferguson, & Handler, 1994), and differentiate the personal domain from the moral and conventional domains (Killen & Smetana, 1999; Nucci, 2001; Nucci & Weber, 1995).
As an example, Killen et al. (1994) showed preschool-aged children different pictures of teachers responding to two different encounters: (1) one child hitting another child in the sandbox; and (2) one child who played with Lego in the sandbox. Both acts were rule violations at the school (“Do not hit others”, “Do not play with Lego in the sandbox”). Children were asked to evaluate whether the act was all right and why. These two acts were viewed as “moral” and “social conventional” transgressions. Then, children were asked to choose which of two forms of teacher interventions they thought would be best. The first one was “domain appropriate,” in which a teacher used language that matched the domain of the act, and the second one was “domain inappropriate,” following on Nucci’s (2001) distinctions. In Figure 2.2, the “moral” transgression is displayed with the teacher using each response in card 1 (moral) and card 2 (social conventional). With age, from 3–5 years old, children preferred teachers to talk about the negative intrinsic consequences of the act to another person (causing pain) rather than the social disruption, reflecting a preference for teachers to be “domain appropriate” (using moral language for a moral transgression) rather than “domain inappropriate” (using social-conventional language for a moral transgression).

Moral Generalizability

Research on the universality of these principles has demonstrated that children and adolescents in a wide range of cultures believe that equality, justice, and fairness apply to all individuals. This is measured in childhood and adolescence by administering assessments about the generalizability of the act. Thus, this method of examining universality or generalizability reflects whether individuals in a given culture believe that rules about fairness, harm, and rights should be upheld by members of another culture or whether these values are culturally specific. For example, cross-cultural studies in India and the United States have investigated whether individuals in the United States and in India believe that “fair distribution of resources” should be upheld by people in different countries. Answers to this question address theories about moral universalism and moral relativism, that is, whether morality is generalizable or culturally specific. Another way to address the question of universality of principles, however, is to ask whether individuals include members of other groups (defined by culture, race, ethnicity, or gender) when making judgments about equality and fairness. Do individuals
believe that resources should be divided equitably among individuals regardless of group membership? Does the fair distribution of resources depend on one’s majority/minority status, and is this judgment applied similarly to members of the ingroup and the outgroup? What are the contexts in which this judgment is clearly answered in the affirmative, and when do stereotypes about the other influence these types of judgments? These questions concern intergroup relationships, which bear on the universality of morality from the viewpoint of the individual.

Most of the research in moral development has examined how children apply their moral principles to members of their own cultural, ethnic, or gender group. In fact, most research by design involves interviewing children and adolescents about others who are just like them, typically to increase the “comfort” level of the interviewee (e.g., children are shown picture cards that match the gender and race/ethnicity of the participant). Nonetheless, there is an underlying assumption about intergroup relationships in moral developmental theories to the extent that morality is about being impartial and applying concepts of justice and rights to

![Figure 2.2 Cards used in a preschool study on moral judgment. (© 2010 Melanie Killen.)](image)
everyone, regardless of group membership. Only recently, however, has moral development research *directly* tested these assumptions and have moral developmental hypotheses included considerations about the influence of intergroup attitudes on moral judgments, as discussed in Chapters 3 and 4.

### Morality in the Context of Other Social Concepts: Multifaceted Events

While the early Social Domain studies (in the late 1970s and 1980s) demonstrated how children differentiate rules by these domains, and how children conceptualize the domains by a set of criteria, more current research has examined children’s coordination of these domains. That is, given that most issues in social life are multifaceted, how do children weigh different considerations? What happens when a moral rule about not harming others is in conflict with a conventional rule about fulfilling a role as group leader or team captain? In these situations children have to coordinate different concerns and give priority to the types of issues created in an actual situation. Research has examined the multitude ways in which coordination is required with a set of age-related findings. In fact, what changes with development is the way that children coordinate these reasons, and the priority that they give to different reasons when making decisions and evaluating social exchanges.

For example, social problems can be straightforward, where one type of issue is predominant (e.g., hitting someone for no reason is viewed as wrong from a moral viewpoint with few competing considerations), or social issues can be complex with more than one consideration (e.g., excluding someone from a group can be viewed as legitimate to make the group function well or as wrong when the reason for exclusion is arbitrary). While most issues in social life are multidimensional, understanding the fundamental “components” of social issues is essential, and this knowledge begins in early development. The basic components of morality, conventions, and the psychological self provide the foundations for constructing knowledge about complex issues, and for decision-making in social life.

Research from Social Domain theory, then, has shown that children develop three coexisting domains of knowledge early in development: the moral domain (justice, others’ welfare, fairness), the societal domain (conventions, traditions, customs, group norms), and the psychological domain (self, personal discretion, individual prerogatives).
The methodology used to investigate children’s social and moral judgments involves evaluating familiar everyday social exchanges (different from Kohlberg’s adult-oriented complex dilemmas and similar to Piaget’s focus) and systematic probes to determine children’s judgments, justifications, and the underlying criteria by which they differentiate moral, social-conventional, and psychological concepts (which is different from Piaget’s global approach).

These domains reflect rich, complex, and dynamic issues for children (and constructs to study in research) that reflect conflict and change, negotiation and resistance, judgments and emotions, the individual and the group, hierarchies and status. The strengths of this model, which has provided a striking contrast to the stage theories of moral development, are that: (1) it provides a way of analyzing the multiple forms of reasoning present in children’s and adolescents’ judgments rather than solely focusing on moral reasoning; (2) it moves the analysis away from how children and adolescents reason about unfamiliar hypothetical scenarios (sometimes once-in-a-lifetime events) to one that studies reasoning about everyday, familiar issues; (3) it examines how an individual’s reasoning varies across a wide range of social contexts rather than reflecting general, global stages, which are theorized to apply across diverse social contexts; (4) it shifts the focus of the study of morality away from the test of a hierarchical, primitive-to-advanced theory and towards an examination of how individuals coordinate different forms of reasoning, moral and nonmoral, at different points in development; and (5) it allows for an examination of cultural variation in moral and nonmoral social reasoning that does not compare individuals from different cultures on one scale or “standard.”

Over the past decade, much of the social-cognitive domain research has focused on investigating how individuals evaluate complex issues, those that typically involve multiple domains of reasoning. Complex issues are in contrast to straightforward ones in that more than one form of reasoning is used to evaluate the nature of the act. This has included investigating how individuals evaluate issues such as religion (Nucci & Turiel, 1993), parent–adolescent conflict (Smetana & Asquith, 1994), mixed emotions (Lemerise & Arsenio, 2000; Malti, Gummerum et al., 2009), prejudice and intergroup attitudes (Killen, Margie, & Sinno, 2006), interpersonal responsibilities (Miller, 2001), autonomy (Nucci & Weber, 1995), Theory of Mind (Killen, Mulvey, Richardson, Jampol, & Woodward, in press; Lagattuta, 2005), and cultural expectations of social norms (Turiel, 2002; Wainryb, 1993). In general, age-related changes within the moral domain are that young children first understand
the concrete moral principles pertaining to others’ welfare (not inflicting physical harm) and distribution of resources (sharing, turn-taking), followed by an understanding of more abstract moral issues, such as psychological harm (teasing), rights, and exclusion (in the context of negative intentions towards others).

Age-related changes from childhood to adolescence regarding moral reasoning are reflected by an increasing ability to coordinate multiple issues and to weigh different points of view when making morally relevant decisions. What also becomes complex is that age-related changes within each domain – the moral, societal, and psychological – occur, and thus weighing multiple considerations in adolescence is quite different from early childhood. Moreover, individuals have the capacity to weigh a wealth of contextual information about persons (intentionality, motivations, emotions, mindreading), groups (power, status, hierarchies), and societies (traditions, customs, rituals) when making moral judgments.

**Morality and Theory of Mind**

Recent research on the intersection of morality and Theory of Mind has revealed a number of important findings. Researchers have studied whether Theory of Mind competence is related to understanding morally relevant actions (Chandler, Sokol, & Wainryb, 2000; Leslie, Knobe, & Cohen, 2006; Zelazo, Helwig, & Lau, 1996). The focus of studies differs but the overall pattern indicates that these abilities are interrelated; for both abilities it is necessary to understand intentionality. For example, Lagattuta, Nucci, and Boascki (2010) have shown that from 4 to 7 years of age, children’s feelings about compliance with rules increases but only for moral rules, not issues associated with the personal domain, such as choice of friends or activities. Participants predicted that children would feel positive emotions about noncompliance within the the personal domain, such as being happy when asserting autonomy, but negative emotions about noncompliance within the moral domain, such as being sad when someone is a victim. Thus, domain specificity was revealed regarding expectations about others’ intentions.

In the area of judgments and decision-making about peer encounters, a recent study was completed in which children from 3.5 to 7.5 years of age were asked to make attributions about an “accidental transgressor” (Killen et al., in press). Three tasks were administered to children: (1) prototypic moral transgression (pushing someone off a swing); (2) prototypic false belief Theory of Mind (ToM) task (false contents
and location change); and (3) morally relevant Theory of Mind (MoToM) tasks. The MoToM task involved a story in which a child accidentally threw away a special cupcake while cleaning the classroom when the cupcake owner was outside. The participant was asked where the cupcake owner would look when he/she returned to the room, and how he/she would feel about the classroom helper.

Children who did not pass the false belief ToM task were more likely to attribute negative intentions to an accidental transgressor than children who passed the false belief ToM task, and to use moral reasons when blaming the accidental transgressor. In addition, children who did not pass false belief ToM viewed it as more acceptable to punish the accidental transgressor than did participants who passed false belief ToM. Thus, this study revealed that a child’s ability to understand that others have different intentions from the self is related to their attributions of intentional wrong-doing of peers. An implication is that children who do not have false belief knowledge may be more likely to accuse their friends of wrong-doing unfairly (when the act is accidental). These findings provide insights into the domain specificity of social knowledge (moral knowledge being different from psychological knowledge of others’ minds) and provide essential information that helps to explain children’s interpersonal interactions and social exchanges.

**Morality and Social-Cognitive Development**

New cross-cutting areas for investigating children’s social and moral understanding is in the field of children’s cognitive development, particularly in the area of executive control (Carlson, 2005; Zelazo, Carlson, & Kesek, in press) as well as in developmental neuroscience (Blair, 1995; Eisenberger & Lieberman, 2004; Lieberman, 2007). This is because new research on cognitive and brain mechanisms has revealed ways in which the brain can (or cannot) weigh and coordinate different variables when the individual is making decisions, which helps explain coordination between different domains. As will be discussed in other chapters, domain-specific approaches to social and moral development have led to new, interdisciplinary approaches to understanding child development.

**Summary**

In summary, this chapter demonstrated how morality emerges early in development. Studies in infancy have shown that infants prefer “helpers” to “hinders” and that toddlers engage in spontaneous helping behavior
towards others that does not benefit themselves (thus is not about personal gain). Research with preschoolers, children, and adolescents has shown how children have an underlying category system for conceptualizing rules, events, and transgressions that reflects different domains of knowledge, with morality being differentiated from conventions and issues of autonomy.

As early evidence, preschool children spontaneously discuss and negotiate issues about fairness during peer interactions differently from those involving regulations and traditions, and adults discuss these types of interactions in distinct ways. During childhood and adolescence, morality becomes complex, reflecting issues of fairness, rights, and the wrongfulness of discrimination, which have to be coordinated with the context of social events that reflect different types of relationships, emotions, expectations about mental states, and general knowledge about how the world works.

How morality is related to prejudice, group identity, and intergroup attitudes is a more recent focus for research. In the next chapter, we will describe research on categorization and prejudice that has drawn from cognitive psychology as well as social psychology and has guided much of the recent developmental research in this area.