Elementary School-Aged Children's Conversations with their Mothers about Helping and

Being Helped by Peers

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ABSTRACT

Elementary School-Aged Children's Conversations with their Mothers about Helping and Being Helped by Peers

Nazila Tolooei

The acquisition of prosocial abilities and behaviours (i.e., actions that seek to meet others' needs) is a valuable part of children's social and emotional development and can be encouraged through parent-child conversations (Brownell et al., 2013; Nadler, 2015; Spinrad & Gal, 2018). This study investigated the similarities and differences between parent-child conversations that centered on an event wherein the child was a prosocial actor or prosocial target. The study was based on a sample of 56 mother-child dyads with children between the ages of 6-7 years old or 10-11 years old. Half of the dyads ($n = 28$) discussed a past event wherein the child was the agent of help (actor), while the other 28 discussed an event wherein the child was the recipient of help (target). Transcripts of conversations were reliably coded for references to prosocial acts, consequences, actors' reasons, targets' needs, evaluations, and lessons and insights. Results revealed that conversations included more references to reasons for helping and evaluations when the child was the actor, whereas consequences of help for targets were discussed more when children were targets of help. Across both events, there were more references to positive (rather than negative) evaluations and consequences. Conversations with girls included more references to target's needs while boys included more evaluations. Overall, findings highlight the importance of investigating children's experiences of both helping and being helped and reveal the role of parent-child conversations in supporting children's prosocial understanding across both types of events.

Keywords: prosociality, helper, recipient, parents, conversations, socialization

Acknowledgements

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

List of Appendices

Elementary School-Aged Children's Conversations with their Mothers about Helping and

Being Helped by Peers

In their everyday interactions with peers, children experience both helping others and being helped by others. Arguably, children's reflections on each type of experiences may provide contexts for prosocial development, albeit in different ways. For example, while helping others may require and promote a level of compassion, empathy, and prosocial motivation (Brownell et al., 2013; Spinrad & Gal, 2018), being helped affords opportunities to consider why and how people can and do meet others' needs, as well as to experience reactions to being helped such as gratitude (Nadler, 2015). Conversations with others provide one important venue in which children can reflect on these types of experiences. Studying prosociality (i.e., actions or efforts that intend to help or service others) and the ways it is discussed in parent-child conversations allows us to document the meanings that children construct about prosociality, including their perspectives, attributions, interpretations, and emotions. Moreover, considering that parent-child conversations are dynamic interactions that permit the parent to contribute to the discussion, parental evaluations and responses may also provide insight into the socialization process whereby parents communicate prosocial standards and expectations (Brownell et al., 2013; Spinrad & Gal, 2018).

The current study aimed to address the following question: What are the similarities and differences between mother-child conversations that focus on a time the child was helped by a peer versus a time the child helped a peer? The following sections will introduce the different factors that may influence children's prosocial motivations and actions, the prosocial socialization of children, the importance and relevance of parent-child conversations about prosocial experiences and actions, as well as the perspective differences that may exist when the

child is a prosocial actor (i.e., describing a time when they helped) versus a prosocial target (i.e., describing a time when they were helped).

The Development of Prosocial Awareness

An other-oriented awareness that emotions, desires and thoughts are subjective (i.e., that others may believe and know things that vary from what one personally believes and knows) facilitates empathetic understanding, compassionate and/or sympathetic action, and emotional support for others (Brownell, 2013; Brownell et al., 2013; Cushman, 2013; Gopnik & Wellman, 1992; Zaki & Ochsner, 2012). The ability to mentalize others' emotional, mental and/or physical states thus serves as a prerequisite for action that can address the needs or desires of others (Zaki & Ochsner, 2012). As such, children's recognition of others' needs, if accompanied by a voluntary desire to help the other despite a potential temporary cost to the self, may lead to prosocial actions and behaviors (Buchanan & Preston, 2014; Dunfield, 2014; Jensen, 2016; Warneken, 2015). Prosociality refers to any intentional action, dialogue, or other form of aid that aims to fulfill the needs and desires of another person, reduce the prosocial recipient's distress or negative affect, or a probable combination of the two (Jensen, 2016; Marsh et al., 2007; Spinrad & Gal, 2018).

More specifically, the first necessary step in prosociality-driven behavior is the *recognition and identification of a need* (Dunfield & Kuhlmeier, 2013). Perspective-taking and other-oriented understanding lead to need identification with the assistance of situational or behavioral cues like facial expressions (i.e., displays of distressed emotions), physical markers that indicate a need (i.e., someone reaching for an object but struggling or a spilled drink), or direct vocalizations (i.e., someone is asking for help or talking about a need) (Buchanan & Preston, 2014; Dunfield & Kuhlmeier, 2013). Once the need is acknowledged, the second step

involves the prosocial agent identifying *what intervention they can perform* in order to address the need (Buchanan & Preston, 2014; Jensen, 2016). This is dependent on the labelling of the need expressed: an instrumental need (i.e., one in which they need some form of help achieving a goal) would be met with appropriate help, assistance or information, a material need (i.e., one in which they need some form of material good or resource) would be met with resource sharing, giving, or donating, and an emotional need (i.e., one in which they are experiencing a negative affective state or feeling) would be met with comfort, support, or emotional aid.

The third and final prerequisite for prosocial action is the *motivation to help*, despite potentially incurring a personal cost in doing so (Buchanan & Preston, 2014; Jensen, 2016; Spinrad & Gal, 2018). These costs may present themselves in different forms: the fulfillment of a material desire requires the helper to give up a portion or all of a coveted or needed resource that they hold (i.e., money or toys), an instrumental need may take up time or energy, and other forms of needs may put the helper in a position that may threaten their safety, comfort, or happiness (i.e., standing up for a bullied friend may jeopardize their own social status or lead to personal victimization) (Buchanan & Preston, 2014; Spinrad, 2018). Personal costs that may come with helping others can be immediate or latent in their presentation, and it is the agent's ability to identify, analyze and evaluate these costs that influence their subsequent prosocial action or inaction. These costs may serve as obstacles to prosocial action, but are merely one factor in a series of elements that guide the eventual decision to help or not. Some of these additional factors are reviewed below.

Factors Influencing Prosocial Decisions

As noted above, personal costs to the helper are one factor that may influence the decision to help. Furthermore, one's perceived ability to help may also play an important role: if

the help required is viewed as out of the ability of the agent (i.e., physical ability, emotional ability and understanding, or mental capacity), then the agent may not feel confident enough to assist (Chernyak et al., 2018; Dalbert et al., 1988; Dunfield et al., 2011; Dunfield, 2014). An evaluation of capability may also lead an individual to feel obliged to help, if they perceive that their assistance and contribution to the need is necessary, impactful, and vital (Steg & de Groot, 2010). On the other hand, should others be deemed more capable of helping or if the need has already been attended to by others, this may reduce the likelihood of engaging in prosocial behavior.

The identity of the person who needs help may also be a factor influencing the decision to act prosocially. Individuals tend to favour members of their own group over members of opposing or other groups (Malti & Dys, 2017; Sierksma et al., 2014). Whether groups consist of family, friends, social circles, sports teams, or other types of groups (i.e., classroom groups for projects), individuals tend to choose and help their co-members more so than others based on solidarity, union, friendship, love, or mutually held goals and desires. Consequently, if a friend is asking for help, a child may be more likely to help them than if it were a stranger. This may be driven by a sense of obligation when it comes to those we personally know and care for, whereas a stranger in need is not judged to be a personal responsibility (Avydinli et al., 2014; Malti & Dys, 2017). In a study conducted by Sierksma, Thijs, and Verkuyten (2014), children were more likely to want to help their friends over people who they were not friends with, but that this difference was reduced when the children were prompted to think about how the strangers felt. This research highlights that prosociality is partly governed by the relation between the recipient and the agent, but also by variations in empathy for others.

The anticipated consequences of acting prosocially may also play a role in informing children's decisions. When appraising if one should act prosocially, one possible influence may be children's anticipation of reward (Eisenberg & Valiente, 2002). Rewards may range from praise and encouragement to physical goods like stickers and toys, and they serve as attractive compensation for any time, effort, or sacrifice that is exerted in order to help someone else (Eisenberg & Valiente, 2002; Malti & Dys, 2017). While rewards may increase the likelihood of engaging in prosocial action, research has shown that such a promise may lead children to only be prosocial in situations wherein a wanted good or desire is guaranteed, and may thus undermine intrinsic prosocial motivation that comes from simply wanting to be helpful to others (Eisenberg & Valiente, 2002; Fabes et al., 1989; Smith et al., 1979). Rewards may therefore serve as a catalyst for a child's increased prosocial motivation and tendencies, but these effects may not endure or generalize to new situations (Eisenberg & Valiente, 2002).

Furthermore, prosociality that is self-servicing and only done with the intent of gaining a reward calls into question if the action was truly done with intent of helping another or if it was done to benefit the self. The notion of prosociality as an intentional act that serves to help or benefit another person may be compromised when the help received is only a by-product of the agent's intentions and behaviors done to receive a desired gain (Greenberg & Frisch, 1972). When an action is committed for the purpose of helping another person, and this deliberate and direct other-oriented intentionality is established and identified, the motivation can then be confidently assumed to be prosocial. If, however, the action was not other-oriented, but rather self-serving or accidental, than the motivation behind the action may not fall so neatly into what is typically classified as prosocial (Greenberg & Frisch, 1972; Jensen, 2016). As an example of this intentionality difference, Jensen (2016) proposes two hypothetical scenarios wherein there is

a difference of prosocial motivation: in one story, someone gets up purposefully to offer a seat to someone on the bus, and in the other, the character gets up to get off the bus at their stop, thus leaving the seat open after their absence. Although the behaviors done and the outcome are virtually identical, the agent's varied intentions informs differences in whether the agent may be perceived as prosocial across the two situations. The intentionality in which a prosocial act is rooted therefore may work to distinguish what is and is not prosocial, although it is important to mention that acts of service and help for others do not exclusively stem from deliberate actions (Greenberg & Frisch, 1972). Prosociality can be perceived by recipients even when the helping action was accidental, or non-intentional, for they experience their need being addressed by another individual, regardless of the reasons behind the action (Bierhoff, 2002).

As alluded to above, taking the perspective of another person and acknowledging that they hold different ideas, knowledge and opinions, may also support prosocial action in conjunction with feelings of empathy and compassion for the distress, negative affect, or need a person is exhibiting (Shahaeian et al., 2011; Zaki & Ochsner, 2012). This empathy, which presents itself in ways like experience sharing (i.e., agents actively trying to share the targets' internal states) and mentalizing (i.e., agents visualizing and considering the targets' states and feelings), has been shown to lead to a mirrored aversive or negative feeling within the self, and this can lead to action that aims to reduce both parties' distress or needs (Zaki & Ochsner, 2012). While empathy is not a prerequisite for all prosocial behaviors, for people may feel driven to help for other reasons that are not emotion-based, such as obligation or reward, it does seem to be a significant factor in prosocial reasoning (Spinrad & Gal, 2018). The emotional understanding that comes with empathetic ability often leads to a sympathetic concern for the

other individual, and this feeling of pity, worry, or compassion motivates and increases prosocial tendencies.

Although a range of factors that are other-oriented and selfless may motivate one to act prosocially, prosocial actions and considerations may also stem from reciprocity norms and ideals (Bartlett & DeSteno, 2006; Erreygers et al., 2018). Reciprocity norms are societal standards that govern behavioral practices surrounding prosocial action: a recipient of help must be aware and mindful of potential expectations to repay the prosocial agent by assisting them in the future, should they ever need it (Bartlett & DeSteno, 2006). While a prosocial act may therefore aim to honor this reciprocity standard, it is also important to note that reciprocal action may not just be done in order to repay an individual once, but rather to establish a relationship between the agent and the target wherein both benefit from mutually held ideals to help and be helped (Erreygers et al., 2018). Prosocial action can therefore, at times, be motivated by past or future reciprocity, wherein the temporary costs incurred from helping are justified as a reciprocal response to others' past actions or by the expectation of future help and gains.

Should a person receive an act of prosocial kindness, and should the behavior be judged to be intentional, voluntary, and caring, then they may experience a feeling of gratitude and appreciation as a result (Bartlett & DeSteno, 2006; Rothenberg et al., 2017; Tudge, 2018). Gratitude, defined as a feeling of happiness, joy, and thankfulness derived from receiving the intentional actions, words, or thoughts of another person, may create a warm, positive affect in the target that makes them feel cared for, supported, and understood (Chancellor et al., 2018; Tudge, 2018). This feeling can encourage children to help others due to their own experiences being helped. Reciprocal relationships may therefore be encouraged due to a mutual sense of gratitude, wherein both parties feel content and thankful, and consistently help the other in a

prosocial cycle of sorts in search of either feeling gratitude once again or ensuring that those important in their lives also hold this feeling.

When considering the factors that may influence the motivations behind performing prosocial actions and/or understanding prosociality, it is of importance to acknowledge that the age of the child may work as a significant moderator in the child's ability to identify prosocial expectations and ideals, moral or social standards, and empathetic concern, all of which may serve as prerequisites in helping situations (Benish-Weisman et al., 2019). In this sense, it is instructive to consider how moral identity development progresses over the course of childhood: starting at the age of six, children begin to develop habits of perspective-taking, understanding and applying moral ideas and emotions, as well as recognizing the importance of helping others due to moral motivation (i.e., the commitment they develop to uphold moral rules they've adopted over time) within situations that call for prosociality (Benish-Weisman et al., 2019). As they grow older, this moral responsibility becomes an ingrained prosocial ideal and expectation that encourages children to help whenever they can in order to honour moral social norms and adopted moral identities. It has been shown that younger children more often report helping another individual per the request of an adult (i.e., to appease or avoid punishment), or for the promise of a reward, while older children tend to report helping due to moral or altruistic motives, obligations, and expectations (Bar-Tal, 1982). As such, the frequency of prosocial behaviours increases as children age and internalize moral principles (Bar-Tal, 1982; Benish-Weisman et al., 2019).

Moreover, as children age from early childhood to the adolescent period in their lives, the development of skills, abilities, and knowledge permits them to perform more complex or frequent prosocial actions (Bar-Tal, 1982; Jackson & Tisak, 2001). In a study by Jackson and

Tisak (2001), 7- and 8 year-olds were less likely to want to comfort another individual than they were to perform other behaviours like helping, sharing, or cooperating as compared to 9 and 10 year-olds. This pattern was believed to occur because the younger cohort felt less confident comforting a peer, and may not have known how to do so as clearly as they would performing a helping act like material sharing or instrumental help. As children grow older, it seems, their repertoire of knowledge expands with experience and understanding, and this allows children to be able to identify how to help more frequently and with greater ease.

Parental Socialization of Prosociality

Children's development of understanding, knowledge, and behavior relevant to prosociality are informed by interactions with familial socializing agents like the parents (Carlo et al., 2007; Hastings et al., 2007; Pastorelli et al., 2016; Recchia et al., 2013). While parents vary in their styles, values, and goals, research broadly underlines the crucial role of parents in supporting the development of children's prosocial understanding and action (Hastings et al., 2007). Children may look towards their parent(s) to understand what is and is not normative, acceptable, moral, and appropriate in a wide range of different contexts and situations (Hastings et al., 2007).

The choices parents make, however, may also sometimes undermine children's prosociality. For example, if parents lack sensitivity, warmth, or empathic concern for others, or if they fail to offer a secure and trusting emotional climate, this may undermine children's prosocial orientation towards others (Hastings et al., 2007; Pastorelli et al., 2016). In contrast, a parent who presents a model of emotional concern, of sensitivity and support standards, and of caring, comforting behaviors for others may foster children's emotional understanding and maturity that later serves as a basis for prosocial motivation (Carlo et al., 2007; Pastorelli et al.,

2016). The parent, within this model, will demonstrate an attentiveness and care that will exemplify prosocial and other-oriented thinking, foster empathetic feelings and dialogue, and encourage interpersonal prosocial and/or moral behaviors (Carlo et al., 2007). When a child is exposed to parenting that is characterized by nurturance, independence, empathy and sympathy, a sense of security and understanding will likely be formed that may encourage prosocial learning by enhancing concerns for others, a feeling of connectedness and unity with others, and a compassion that will lower exclusively self-oriented concerns (Carlo et al., 2010; Pastorelli et al., 2016; Spinrad & Gal, 2018).

It is also important for parents to be attuned to their child's prosocial understanding and maturity as they age and adapt alongside them in order to develop and deliver age-appropriate content and prosocial opportunities. For example, when parents first socialize their child to be other-oriented and helpful in the early years, they may particularly emphasize instrumental helping opportunities such as encouraging children's motivation to assist others with concrete problems (Waugh et al., 2015). Over time, as the child grows older and develops more abilities and skills, parents may recognize that their child's repertoire of helping is increasing, and they are now in a stage in their life wherein they can be called upon to be of emotional support or help (i.e., comforting someone else or identifying one's negative state and feeling compassion to help). Thus, the situations wherein parents may engage in prosocial socialization change with children's growing maturity, as do the forms of modelling and dialogue surrounding prosocial actions (Pettygrove et al., 2013; Waugh et al., 2015).

Parent-Child Conversations

Conversations are one important context in which parents can influence children's prosocial development (Brownell et al., 2013; Recchia et al., 2013; Spinrad & Gal, 2018; Wang,

2001). These conversations may present themselves spontaneously (i.e., when an issue or relevant event occurs that may create an opportunity for the conversation to take place) or more reflectively, where parents may aim to help their children explore emotions, needs, self-regulation, situational understanding, and/or subsequent courses of action (Brownell et al., 2013). For example, should a child be dealing with an event that involves a prosocial opportunity (i.e., a friend asking for help on an assignment), the parent may initiate a conversation wherein the concerns of the child, their internal states, and other subjective ideas and interests are discussed in conjunction with the prosocial recipient's needs, concerns, states, and interests (Calderón-Tena et al., 2011; Recchia et al., 2014). Such conversations may help children to deepen their understandings of what prosocial situations entail, how they work, and what actions or responses may be most effective, appropriate, or necessary. The conversations may also be hypothetical in nature should the parent(s) wish to explore prosocial concerns with their children, but these events naturally happen infrequently or at inconvenient moments (Eisenberg & Valiente, 2002).

Within parent-child conversations, empathetic concern may be encouraged and exemplified when the parent asks the child to focus on the emotions, thoughts, goals, and circumstances of others: by attending to and reflecting on the experience of a person in need, the child is asked to consider, recognize, and be compassionate towards the distress or needs of others, which ultimately may work to promote prosocial tendencies (Brownell et al., 2013; Spinrad & Gal, 2018). By talking about prosocial situations and actions, the child may develop a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of what it entails to be prosocial, including the identification and analysis of potential costs, rewards and consequences for the self and others (Spinrad & Gal, 2018). Moreover, ideas of cooperation, reciprocity, and/or obligation may be discussed in ways that lead children into assessing prosocial responses as appropriate and

needed, thereby establishing emotional standards and codes of conduct that service the welfare and help of others.

More specifically, as described above, prosocial motivation partly depends on children's ability to take the perspective of the person in need (Streit, 2013). Perspective-taking in prosocial situations primarily involves being aware of and attentive to the emotions and lives of those around us, and parent-child conversations that aim the dialogue towards reflecting on and labeling others' emotions and/or needs can thus reinforce prosocial standards of other-oriented thinking and care (Brownell, 2013). More broadly, alongside others' needs, conversations can also address the emotional or affective signals that cue the children to others' unresolved needs or distress, as well as the subsequent emotions or reactions in the self (i.e., concern, empathy, pity, obligation), and problem-solving about effective responses to need; in these ways, parents can promote children's prosocial motivation and responsiveness (Brownell et al., 2013; Garner et al., 2008; Streit, 2013).

While the content of the conversations is incredibly important to the type of prosocial development and teaching that occurs subsequently, the emotional tenor of the conversation holds significant weight as well (Eisenberg & Valiente, 2002; Noddings, 2010). According to Noddings (2010), the purpose of parent-child conversations is to identify and sympathize with the needs and states of the recipient, and to work cooperatively in order to meet the needs of others in a prosocial manner. Consequently, the dialogue itself must be warm, sensitive, and driven partly by a care for the other: the words used, should they be negative, judgmental, or stressful, may work against the prosocial intention of the conversations altogether (Eisenberg & Valiente, 2002; Noddings, 2010). Parents are advised to steer clear of negative words such as "bad", "mean", or "wrong", so as to avoid sounding judgmental or overly critical of their child

and disrupting the open conversation. The most effective parent-child conversations are characterized by a sense of security wherein the child feels comfortable and safe discussing issues with their parent, and does not fear being chastised or punished (Hastings et al., 2007).

Children's Varied Roles Within Prosocial Experiences

When a person engages in a prosocial act to benefit another, by definition, these experiences include both an actor and a target (i.e., the one who commits the prosocial act and the one who receives the act). Arguably, the focus of these two individuals may differ despite both experiencing simultaneously the same event, considering the perspectives of the individuals. Inasmuch as people have privileged access to their own internal states, for example, prosocial agents may be particularly focused on their own actions, prosocial reasons and motivations since it is what they have the most information on; in contrast, prosocial targets may be more focused on their needs, emotions, or problems leading to others' prosocial action, since that may be the more salient and important part of the experience for them (Nadler, 2015; Wainryb et al., 2005). This difference in focus comes naturally, for it is reasonable that children are more aware of their own experiences and feelings, rather than those of others, regardless of their role in the prosocial event (Wainryb et al., 2005). It is thus important to consider some of these differences that may arise between the viewpoint of a prosocial agent and target, as it may inform and explain the features, focuses, and evaluations of parent-child conversations about different prosocial experiences.

As noted above, an agent's likely feelings of empathy and concern for the emotional well-being, needs and desires of the target may explain why the individual feels motivated to help (Strayer & Roberts, 1989). This feeling of empathy may arise in conjunction with perspective-taking on the part of the agent whereby they attempt to put themselves in the shoes

of the target to imagine what they may be feeling or dealing with. Empathy thus may stem from these efforts at perspective-taking in ways that work to encourage prosocial action. On the other hand, from the perspective of the target who has received help, perspective-taking can occur when the individual perceives a sense of communion, warmth, and consideration from their helper, and interpret this as an act of love, care, or generosity that may be selfless, kind, and/or a sign of belongingness (Nadler, 2015). In other words, the target may account for the agent's actions by connecting them to their own past experiences of helping others, and thus draw conclusions about others' attentiveness and care, and/or their friendship and bond. Therefore, while perspective-taking by a prosocial agent may center on empathy and need consideration, perspective-taking by a target may be linked to perceptions of friendship, belonginess, care, and/or awareness of needs (Nadler, 2015; Strayer & Roberts, 1989). It is important to note, however, that the perspective of the target is understudied in research as compared to that of the agent, which can signal that there are gaps in what is known about the experiences of prosocial recipients.

There is some limited evidence suggesting that targets of help may not consistently experience prosocial acts in positive ways (Nadler, 2015). For example, the person from whom the target received help plays a role in the target's assessment: should the actor have been a socially close individual (i.e., a friend or relative) or an individual who is in the same field as them (i.e., a co-worker or student in the same program), the help may make the target feel professionally, intellectually, or socially inferior to someone with whom they are meant to be equals. It is suggested that this may compromise the target's sense of worth, sense of self-efficacy or ego, all of which may result in the prosocial act being perceived as a threat to the self or a hostile act. Moreover, the target may feel unhappy about being perceived as someone who

14

requires a dependency on others for their needs, and thus develop a level of stress, embarrassment or resentment that may muddle the genuineness or kindness of the prosocial act. On the other hand, should the actor have been a stranger who appeared to have no social or personal gain to achieve from the prosocial act, the target may perceive the prosocial act as altruistic and more authentic. However, given the scarcity of research on this topic, it remains to be seen whether these patterns will be supported in other studies or whether they will extend to children's experiences of receiving help from others.

More broadly speaking, however, this research points to the possibility that identity considerations may have a bearing on prosocial experiences. For example, beyond the identity of "friend" or "sibling" causing an increase in motivation to help (and for the help to be well-received), actors' sense of moral identity may impact their prosociality. When children in a study conducted by Bryan et al. (2014) were primed to think of helping in characterological terms ("being a helper"), this appeared to motivate the child to help (see also Tasimi & Young, 2016). For the actor, then, the sense of identity of the prosocial agent may impact their prosocial actions in a sort of self-fulfilling prophecy whereby they act in accordance with their prosocial commitments, while the sense of identity when a child is the target of help may also guide the type of responses and reactions they may give (Nadler, 2015).

Moreover, the level of competence of the target to have completed a task or addressed a need themselves may also influence their reactions to receiving the help: should the recipient assess themselves to be capable of fulfilling their own need, then receiving help may feel belittling or negative, but should the task be one that is out of the recipient's capabilities, then the help received may be viewed as attentive, thoughtful and necessary, and thereby more prone to elicit feelings of gratitude (Nadler, 2015). This also connects to notions of identity: when an

individual feels incompetent, their jeopardized sense of self-efficacy may disrupt a healthy self-identity, thereby making a prosocial act less positively received than desired. Conversely, a prosocial actor's sense of self-efficacy may increase their likelihood to help, either by understanding that they are able to help (and so, why wouldn't they?), or that they are particularly qualified to help (Chernyak et al., 2018; Nadler, 2015).

In terms of positive evaluations that the target can make, a common experience mentioned is one of gratitude (Hussong et al., 2017). When struggling with a need, having others be attentive and caring enough to lend a helping hand may often elicit positive emotion in prosocial targets. This gratitude, which can be interpreted as a consequence of the appreciation the recipient may have for the prosocial agent, can also be a catalyst for reciprocal action, wherein targets recall how good it felt to be helped and thus be motivated to return the favour to the actor or someone else (Hussong et al., 2017; Nadler, 2015; Wangwan, 2014). Moreover, this recognition that gratitude can invoke a positive moral emotion in response to being helped, when paired with positive feelings of compassion, empathy, and care for another's well-being or needs, may increase prosocial agency in future circumstances (Shahaeian et al., 2011; Zaki & Ochsner, 2012). An agent may also therefore gain a positive feeling of pride and happiness (i.e., potentially stemming from a self-identity of a helper or compassionate person) from having helped another individual by recalling the gratitude and warmth that they had felt in previous instances (Bryan et al., 2014).

Beyond creating a forum for children to disclose their perspectives, ideas, and opinions on prosocial actions and inactions, parent-child conversations are also more broadly guided by parents' goals and concerns: parents may use prosocial conversations with their children as an opportunity to teach their children certain ideals, habits, and attitudes concerning prosociality

(Noddings, 2010). Arguably, such goals may differ depending on the child's role within a prosocial event. For example, when the child is the recipient of a prosocial act, the parent may be likely to emphasize issues of gratitude, as previously discussed, including the importance of gratitude, expressing thankfulness, and how the positive, warm feeling it entices can work to encourage the child to reciprocate in a future instance (Hussong et al., 2017). Moreover, the parent may focus on the child's feeling of warmth and happiness in order to help them understand that the positive feeling may stem from the appreciation one feels from having been the recipient of care: this feeling can be capitalized on by the parent and used to promote the recipient's own motivation to help another at a future time (Nadler, 2015). It is important to note that there is little research on the types of goals and concerns that parents may have with their children in prosocial dialogues that revolve around the child being the recipient of help, which signals that more research is needed in this area.

On the other hand, research provides more guidance regarding the types of goals and concerns that inform parents' contributions to conversations that focus on children's own prosocial actions. As described earlier, children's awareness of others' thoughts, feelings, and experiences can allow for empathy and care towards others. As such, parents' emphasis on the feelings, behaviours and cues signalling others' needs can help the child develop tools to be attentive and empathetic in future scenarios, and thus scaffold children's understanding of prosocial intention and action (Salmon & Reese, 2015). Parents may also aim to encourage children to internalize prosocial norms, ideals, and standards by elaboratively discussing narratives and experiences and praising positive, other-oriented thoughts and actions expressed by the child or by others in a story (Salmon & Reese, 2015). More generally, inasmuch as they are uniquely invested in socializing their *own* child, in conversations about prosociality with

nonfamilial peers, parents may be particularly focused on their child's experiences and potential lessons to be learned.

When a child is discussing an instance wherein they engaged in a prosocial action towards another individual, a common response from the parent is that of encouragement, praise, and positive attribution (Bower & Casas, 2016; Recchia et al., 2014). Generosity and care towards others are typically perceived as positive social norms to abide by, consistent with virtuous character, which may explain why parents may react to helping by praising their child's intentions, actions, and personality. By saying phrases like "You are such a nice girl" or "You are so thoughtful", not only is the parent signalling their approval and pride, but they are also making positive attributions of the action to the child's internal self (Bower & Casas, 2016). The prosocial action is not only a kind thing to have done, but the child is now labelled a kind person for having done the act of service. These types of parental evaluations may help children to see themselves as prosocial agents, which can work to promote subsequent prosocial action based on the positive feeling that parent-initiated praise, acknowledgment, approval and/or positive character attributions can bring (Waugh et al., 2015). These self-attributions that parents may make are more likely, evidently, to appear in conversations wherein the child is the prosocial agent than when they are the prosocial recipient, however, because of the nature of the conversation: if the child is describing a time in which they were helped, the type of character attribution that the parent may revolve more so around is the gratitude and gracefulness of the child's reaction as opposed to their compassion and generosity (Hussong et al., 2017).

When the child is the recipient of a prosocial action, the parent-child conversations may typically target and explore different elements of prosocial interactions, and work to understand them by remembering salient aspects of those events (Hussong et al., 2017). As noted earlier,

18

gratitude may be one of these elements. One way to encourage gratitude may be to focus on the actions of the helper, and label them as positive actions. As parents evaluate the help the child received as positive, kind, and/or selfless, they may also ask open-ended questions about the child's experiences and make frequent confirmations of their contributions to the conversation in order to facilitate dynamic prosocial socialization and learning, as well as encourage gratitude ideals (Hussong et al., 2017).

The Current Study

This study sought to compare mother-child conversations about prosocial events experienced and nominated by children when they are prosocial actors (i.e., when the individual *helped* a peer) versus prosocial targets (i.e., when the individual was *helped by* a peer). We investigated these conversations in two age groups (6-7 years old; 10-11 years old), given literature suggesting meaningful development in social-cognitive processes relevant to prosociality in this age range. Specifically, from the early to late school-aged years, a sense of other-oriented awareness develops via psychological factors such as empathy, need fulfillment, reciprocity ideals, as well as via prosocial socialization (Jackson & Tisak, 2001; Waugh et al., 2015).

The conversations were coded along various dimensions to capture the meanings constructed by parents and children. This coding investigated the following overarching research question: What are the similarities and differences between parent-child conversations that center on an event wherein the child was a prosocial agent or prosocial target? To tackle this question, we examined variations in the following aspects of conversations as a function of age and the child's positioning as actor vs. target: (a) references to prosocial acts, (b) the consequences of helping (i.e., costs and benefits to helping or not helping), (c) the target's needs, (d) the actor's

reasons for helping, (e) evaluations of prosociality, (f) the tendency for the child to simulate the peer's perspective, and (g) the lessons and/or insights that may be drawn from the experience.

First, regarding the discussion of the actor's reasons for helping, we hypothesized that these reasons would be more frequently discussed (and with more detail and attention) when the child was a prosocial actor rather than target because children likely have more information about their own reasons than the reasons of others, and reasons for helping are likely most salient to them in this context (Nadler, 2015; Wainryb et al., 2005). Relatedly, given extant literature suggesting that the child's moral identity is a likely reason to *help another*, we hypothesized that characterological identity (i.e., of being a "helper") would be more frequently expressed when the child is a prosocial actor rather than target (Bryan et al., 2014), given that it is less likely that moral identity would be discussed as a salient aspect of *being helped*.

Secondly, we hypothesized that the types of costs incurred from a prosocial act would be more frequently discussed when the child was a prosocial actor rather than target, considering that it is more likely to be a theme in the conversations wherein the children themselves had to exert effort or time to help someone (and, in turn, costing a personal negative consequence) than when they themselves were helped (wherein it may be less likely that any negative consequence at all will be discussed) (Buchanan & Preston, 2014; Spinrad, 2018). Positive consequences of helping or being helped were hypothesized to be described more frequently than negative consequences across both conversations, considering social and psychological norms that praise and encourage helping acts, therefore making it less likely for children to report negative consequences from having helped or from being helped (Bryan et al., 2014). Moreover, the feeling of gratitude is often more expressed when one receives a service or good, and therefore we hypothesized that discussions of gratitude (as a type of consequence) would arise more

frequently when the child was the target of help, as they describe their feelings in response to prosocial acts (Chancellor et al., 2018; Tudge, 2018). On the other hand, it was hypothesized that the actor conversations would include more references to the pride that the child experienced as a result of helping than targets conversations would (Bryan et al., 2014).

Moreover, it was hypothesized that perspective-taking would be more likely to occur when the child is a prosocial actor, inasmuch as helping requires taking the perspective of the target. In contrast, it is less essential for the child to take the perspective of the actor in order to experience being helped and/or understand it (Streit, 2013). Furthermore, it was hypothesized that the target's needs would be discussed more frequently in conversations where children were the targets of help. Our reasoning was similar to the expectation for actor's reasons above; that is, targets (as compared to actors) may have more knowledge of their own needs, and/or these aspects of events may be particularly salient from their perspective (Nadler, 2015; Wainryb et al., 2005).

In terms of the act evaluations, it was hypothesized that across both types of conversations, negative evaluations and criticism would arise infrequently: not only would these approaches be counterproductive to parents' common goals of open discussion (Noddings, 2010), but the conversations themselves also center around prosocial events that are likely to be experienced and evaluated as largely positive. It was also hypothesized that conversations would include more positive evaluations when the child was the prosocial actor versus when they were the target, considering that it is a particular salient norm to be kind and help *others* as opposed to simply being grateful when having *been helped* (Hussong et al., 2017).

In regard to age-related patterns in parent-child conversations, we hypothesized that the conversations with younger children (i.e., 6-7 year-olds) would include fewer references to moral

identity (i.e., as a factor as to why children helped, or why they believed it is important to help) than those with older children (i.e., 10-11 year-olds) across both conversations. It has been shown that older children tend to consider internalized moral standards and ideals more than younger children when discussing prosociality (Bar-Tal, 1982; Benish-Weisman et al., 2019). It was also hypothesized that older children would discuss instances of emotional prosociality (i.e., comforting) across both conversations more so than the younger children because emotional understanding, ability and consideration have been shown to develop with age (Jackson & Tisak, 2001). Conversely, the literature does not provide a clear basis for hypotheses about whether age may moderate variations across actor and target conversations, and thus these effects were examined in a more exploratory way.

Considering the limited research on the implications of being a recipient of prosociality within the context of prosocial development and parent-child conversations, as well as the scarce literature on the comparison between the two perspectives (i.e., agent versus target of prosociality), this current study set out to fill an evident gap in the literature on prosocial development and socialization. While the hypotheses posited were informed by the extant literature, this study was largely explorative and novel, and conducted in an effort to document patterns that may lead to new research questions that may inform subsequent research on parent-child conversations about prosociality.

Method
Participants

This study was based on two different datasets that were collected and transcribed for previous studies and purposes (henceforth referred to as ACTOR and TARGET studies). The intent of this research was to compare a subsample of mother-child conversations across the two

22

datasets. As such, a sample of 28 dyads were drawn from each dataset (total $N = 56$ families). The children that comprised the total sample ranged in age from approximately 6 to 7 years old ($n = 28$, $M = 7.37$, $SD = 0.62$) and 10 to 11 years old ($n = 28$, $M = 11.14$, $SD = 0.57$). Within the subsample of 6 to 7-year olds, there were 14 girls (50%) and 14 boys (50%). Within the subsample of 10 to 11-year olds, there were 15 girls (53.6%) and 13 boys (46.4%) (as shown in the table below), The ACTOR study was conducted in Salt Lake City, Utah, and the TARGET study was conducted in Montreal, Quebec.

Table 1

Age and Gender of Children within ACTOR and TARGET Samples

	Ages 6-7	Ages 10-11	
ACTOR	$n = 14$ 7 boys, 7 girls	$n = 14$ 7 boys, 7 girls	n total (ACTOR): 28 dyads 14 boys, 14 girls
TARGET	$n = 14$ 7 boys, 7 girls	$n = 14$ 6 boys, 8 girls	n total (TARGET): 28 dyads 13 boys, 15 girls
	n total (6-7): 28 dyads 14 boys, 14 girls	n total (10-11): 28 dyads 13 boys, 15 girls	n total: 56 dyads

In each study, mothers provided written informed consent on behalf of their children and themselves, and the children all assented to the procedures. The mothers' ages ranged from 28 to 55 years old ($M = 38.5$, $SD = 5.10$). In terms of the age differences across the samples, the ACTOR study had mothers' ages ranging from 28 to 55 years old ($M = 37.6$, $SD = 5.65$), while the TARGET study's mothers were between 33 to 50 years old ($M = 39.4$, $SD = 4.42$). It thus seems that the participating mothers in both studies were similar in age.

The mothers' ethnic backgrounds were varied, including the parents who were White (83.9%), African American (1.7%), Latin American/Hispanic (3.6%), Arab (3.6%), and those who identified as another ethnicity (7.2%). Across the two samples, there was more variation in the background of mothers in the TARGET study than ACTOR: in the TARGET study, 75% of mothers identified as White, 7.1% of mothers as Arab, 3.6% of mothers as Black, 3.6% of mothers as Latin American/Hispanic, and 10.7% as other. In the ACTOR study, on the other hand, most mothers identified as White (92.8%), while the remainder were either Latin American/Hispanic (3.6%), or of another ethnicity (3.6%). The comparative data is represented in Table 2.

Table 2

Race/Ethnicity of Mothers in the ACTOR and TARGET Samples

	White	African American	Latin American/ Hispanic	Arab	Other	
ACTOR	$n = 26$	$n = 0$	$n = 1$	$n = 0$	$n = 1$	n total $= 28$
	92.8%	0%	3.6%	0%	3.6%	
TARGET	$n = 21$	$n = 1$	$n = 1$	$n = 2$	$n = 3$	n total $= 28$
	75%	3.6%	3.6%	7.1%	10.7%	
Overall	$n = 47$	$n = 1$	$n = 2$	$n = 2$	$n = 4$	n total (both
	83.9%	1.7%	3.6%	3.6%	7.2%	studies) $= 56$

Moreover, in regard to the mothers' education level and background, it was shown that the large majority of the participating mothers had either completed some level of college and/or university education (21.4%), obtained a university degree (46.4%) or continued with a post-graduate program (23.3%). Some parents were shown to have either only some high school

education completed (1.8%) or have obtained their high school diploma (7.1%). In terms of variations across samples (as shown in Table 3 below), it is evident that the large majority of mothers reported having some university or college diploma obtained, followed by a slightly smaller majority either having attended a post-graduate program, or having some college or university completed. In both samples, a minority of mothers reported only having high school diplomas obtained, or having some high school completed. Thus, maternal education level was relatively high across both samples.

Table 3

Education of Mothers in ACTOR and TARGET Samples

	Some high school completed	High school diploma obtained	Some college or university completed	University or college diploma obtained	Post-graduate program	
ACTOR	$n = 1$	$n = 1$	$n = 8$	$n = 10$	$n = 8$	$n = 28$
	3.6%	3.6%	28.6%	35.6%	28.6%	
TARGET	$n = 0$	$n = 3$	$n = 4$	$n = 16$	$n = 5$	$n = 28$
	0%	10.7%	14.3%	57.1%	17.9%	
Overall	$n = 1$	$n = 4$	$n = 12$	$n = 26$	$n = 13$	n total (both studies) = 56
	1.8%	7.1%	21.4%	46.4%	23.3%	

Procedure

As noted above, this study was based on secondary analyses of existing datasets; only procedures and measures relevant to the current study are described in detail. Participants in the ACTOR study were recruited using flyers that were posted in schools and community centres, as well as through word of mouth. Participants in the TARGET study were contacted through flyers

posted, online advertisements in local community groups, through databases of past participants in previous unrelated studies, as well as through word of mouth.

In each study, children were first asked to nominate a series of transgressive and prosocial events while parents completed a demographics questionnaire. In both studies, the last nominated event was the focus of the current analysis. In the case of the TARGET study, the children were asked to nominate an event wherein a friend or another kid at school did or said something to make the child feel really good. In the ACTOR study, the children were asked to nominate a time wherein they ended up doing something to help a friend. In both studies, children were asked to choose an event that they remembered well and that was important to them. After having nominated and recounted events in a private interview with a research assistant, children were asked to discuss events with their mothers in an audio- and videorecorded conversation. In each case, they were asked to discuss each event and "see if something can be learned from it". The conversations across both studies were all transcribed and verified for the purpose of data analysis.

Considering that the prompts used to elicit events were not parallel across the two studies, we carefully preselected prosocial events that had similar characteristics across the two samples to maximize the comparability of the conversations. Specifically, we included only events that were clearly prosocial within this study's operational definition of prosociality: acts needed to be intentional (rather than accidental), directional (rather than collaborative or mutual) and clearly based on interactions between peers (rather than siblings or ambiguous relationships). Furthermore, events involving compliments that were not expressed in response to a need were excluded from analyses for two reasons: (1) they didn't clearly align with definitions of prosociality as responsive to needs (Dunfield & Kuhlmeier, 2013), and (2) they arose frequently

26

in the TARGET study but not the ACTOR study, and thus would have decreased the comparability of the two sets of events. Applying these inclusion criteria and ensuring equal cell sizes across age and sample resulted in the final *N* of 56 events described above.

Coding of Conversations

The coding scheme developed for the purpose of this study is outlined in Appendix A. These coding categories were derived based on past research examining prosocial development, understanding, and parent-child conversations (Buchanan & Preston, 2014; Calderón-Tena et al., 2011; Jensen, 2016; Nadler, 2015; Spinrad & Gal, 2018).

Interrater reliability for the coding was derived by having two raters independently code a sample of 12 transcripts (approximately 21.4%, with six from each dataset and including equal representation by age group and gender). The reliability coding was completed in two phases – first for initial identification of codes (i.e., reasons, acts, consequences) and subsequently for subcategories, once initial references were identified and agreed upon. Cohen's kappas are reported below. Disagreements were resolved via discussion and consensus.

The same coding was applied to conversations about events in which the child was a prosocial actor (i.e., helped a peer) vs. the prosocial target (i.e., was helped by a peer). Conversations were first segmented into subject-verb clauses for analysis. Subsequently, we coded for the frequencies of references to the following specific types of content in each discussion, separately for mother and child: prosocial acts, the consequences of helping, the target's needs leading to the act, the actor's reasons for helping, evaluations of the act, as well as lesson and/or insights gained from the experiences. Cohen's kappa for identification of clauses to be coded was 0.82, and *kappa* = 0.96 for type of code (i.e., acts, consequences, needs, etc.).

27

Each prosocial act described in the conversations were further coded into one of four different types of categories: instrumental (i.e., an action wherein the child described help with a task, injury, or problem of sort that needs attention), material (i.e., an action wherein the child described help related to limited resources or a physical need), emotional (i.e., an action wherein the child described help related to comforting, supporting, reassuring, or otherwise reducing negative affect), and social (i.e., an action wherein the child described help related to peer pressure, bullying, relationships, conflicts, or other social issues). Cohen's kappa for types of acts was 0.95.

In turn, each consequence of helping identified in a conversation was coded as (a) positive or negative (*kappa* = 0.88), (b) for the actor or target (*kappa* = 0.91, as well as (c) for the particular type of consequence: material, time (although it was part of the coding scheme, this code never arose in the conversations), social, external praise/punishment, emotional, gratitude emotions/response, and reciprocity (see Appendix A for details and examples; *kappa* = 0.93).

Each reference to the target's needs was coded into one of four categories described previously in the type of prosocial act (i.e., instrumental, material, emotional, or social; *kappa* = 0.78). As for references to the actor's reasons for helping, they were coded into one of nine categories (*kappa* = 0.85): (a) the actor's empathy and/or sympathy, (b) self-characteristics (i.e., moral identity, self-attributing ideas of being kind or helpful), (c) perceived competence (i.e., feeling able to help as a motivator), (d) reciprocity (i.e., ideas of past or future reciprocity motivating one to help), (e) relational reasons (i.e., having a relationship, friendship, or bond creating expectations or motivation to help), (f) other prescriptive beliefs, obligations and norms (i.e., ideas of helping being the right thing to do as a motivator), (g) self-oriented reasons/goals (i.e., for praise or reward), (h) self-servicing positive emotion expectancies (i.e., helping because

28

it feels nice or brings personal joy), and (i) circumstantial, external, or imposed rules (i.e., helping because it is a set obligation to do so).

In turn, each reference to an evaluation of a prosocial act in the conversations was coded as positive or negative (*kappa* = 1.00). Negative evaluations included references to criticism, negative evaluative language (i.e., "that was not nice of you to do"), or other forms of discouragement or expressed disappointment in particular actions. Positive evaluations included references to mothers' pride, gratitude, or thankfulness (i.e., thanking the child directly), praise, and/or positive evaluative language (i.e., "that was nice of you to do").

Lastly, mention of lessons and/or insights that the child gained were categorized into lessons about the self (i.e., learning it's alright to ask for help), lessons about the other (i.e., learning that others care about you), and lessons about relationships (i.e., learning that friends should be there for one another). It is important to mention, however, that the coding of lessons and insights and its subcategories was not reliable, and so it was analyzed in a more broad and qualitative manner (i.e., wherein the content coded was examined anecdotally for themes, but we did not systematically distinguish between subcategories in analyses).

While the tendency for the child to simulate the peer's perspective (i.e., perform a perspective switch so as to consider what *they* had experienced or felt when they themselves were in a similar situation) was initially a point of interest in this research, early coding revealed a lack in such tendencies in the parent-child conversations, and so this coding category and its corresponding hypothesis were not explored further.

While some initial hypotheses were posited for specific coding categories, the onset of coding made it evident that certain themes were not arising as frequently (if at all) as once estimated, and so changes were made to the coding scheme and subsequent analysis.

Specifically, regarding target's needs, parental elaboration was not explored, and so the corresponding hypothesis (i.e., that it would occur more frequently when their child was the actor) was not investigated.

Results

Plan of Analysis

All coding categories and hypotheses were explored using GLM-based procedures, with type of conversation (actor vs. target), age group, and gender entered as between-group independent variables. While a few hypotheses were advanced regarding age, gender was examined in an exploratory manner. Given the focus of our study, we report significant main effects and two-way interactions; in light of the small sample size, the one significant three-way interaction between age, gender, and event type was not interpreted. Significant multivariate tests (with different coding dimensions as dependent variables) were followed up by univariate ANOVAs, and in turn by post hoc pairwise comparisons (with a Bonferroni correction). An overall alpha level of $p < .05$ was used for all analyses.

Overall Comparison of Different Codes

Across the 56 transcripts, six codes (i.e., type of prosocial acts, consequences to helping or being helped, target's needs, actor's reasons, act evaluation, and lessons and/or insights derived) were analyzed. To examine the overall use of different codes across age, gender, and type of conversation, we first ran a factorial 2 (age) x 2 (gender) x 2 (event type) MANOVA with the six types of codes as dependent variables. The analysis revealed multivariate main effects of event type, Wilk's $\gamma = .71$, $p = .02$, $\eta^2_p = .29$, and gender, Wilk's $\gamma = .74$, $p = .04$, $\eta^2_p = .26$.

Follow-up ANOVAs revealed effects of event type for reasons, $F(1, 48) = 5.63$, $p = .02$, $\eta^2_p = .11$, and evaluations, $F(1, 48) = 8.08$, $p = .01$, $\eta^2_p = .14$. As depicted in Table 4, dyads made more references to reasons for helping and evaluations of helping in conversations when the child was the actor, rather than the target. The effect for actor's reasons confirmed our hypothesis. The effect for act evaluations also essentially confirmed our hypothesis, in that we had expected that there would be more positive evaluations when the child was the actor rather than when they were the target. That is, although this analysis did not distinguish between positive and negative evaluations, the vast majority of evaluations were positive (98.5%).

In turn, ANOVAs revealed main effects of gender for references to needs, $F(1, 48) = 4.44$, $p = .04$, $\eta^2_p = .09$, and evaluations, $F(1, 48) = 5.37$, $p = .03$, $\eta^2_p = .10$. Specifically, it was shown that conversations with girls ($M = 5.67$, $SE = .67$) included more references to needs than conversations with boys ($M = 3.55$, $SE = .72$), whereas evaluations of helping were more frequent in conversations with boys ($M = 1.71$, $SE = .29$) as compared to girls ($M = .77$, $SE = .28$).

Table 4

Means and Standard Errors of Coding Categories across Event Types

	Actor Event	Target Event
	M (SE)	*M (SE)*
Acts	5.53 (.56)	4.15 (.56)
Consequences	5.25 (.73)	5.42 (.74)
Lessons and Insights	6.10 (1.08)	7.22 (1.08)
Needs	5.50 (.71)	3.72 (.71)
Reasons	2.43 (.48) *	.82 (.48) *

Evaluations	1.82 (.29) *	.66 (.29) *

Note. * indicate significant pairwise comparisons between event types at *p* < .05

Prosocial Act

No hypothesis was posited in relation to differences across event types (i.e., actor or target) in references to specific types of prosocial acts. Analysis revealed no significant multivariate effects. Thus, while we had advanced an age-related hypothesis wherein older children would discuss instances of emotional prosociality (i.e., emotional prosocial acts like comforting) more than younger children, this was not supported. Table 5 outlines all the means and standard errors for references to different types of prosocial acts across both actor and target events.

Table 5

Means and Standard Errors of Prosocial Acts Across the Two Event Types

	Actor Event	Target Event
	M (SE)	*M (SE)*
Instrumental	3.21 (.53)	1.10 (.53)
Material	.21 (.22)	.48 (.23)
Emotional	.93 (.40)	1.13 (.41)
Social	.82 (.43)	1.36 (.44)

Consequences of Helping
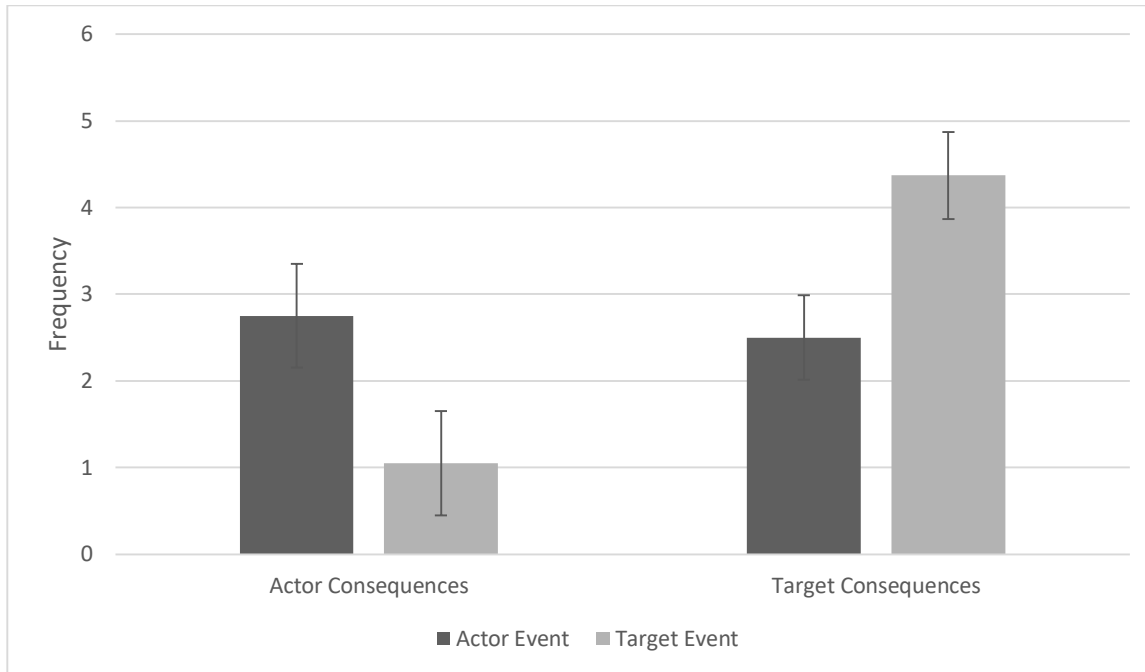
Valence of Consequences

It was hypothesized that any negative consequences discussed would be more frequently shown in conversations wherein the child was the prosocial actor rather than the target. However,

32

similar to evaluations, there were few conversational references to negative consequences: of the total 271 consequences coded, only 5 of them were negative (1.85%), and the remaining 266 (98.15%) were positive. As such, data were in line with our hypothesis concerning the preponderance of positive consequences, $F(1,48) = 92.20$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2_p = .66$. Below, we report findings concerning references to consequences for actors and targets, as well as specific types of consequences.

Consequences for Actors and Targets of Help. We considered whether references to consequences for actors and targets would vary according to event type, age, and gender. A MANOVA revealed a multivariate effect of event type, Wilk's $\gamma = .83$, $p = .01$, $\eta^2_p = .17$. Follow-up ANOVAs revealed a trend for the effect of event type on consequences for actors $F(1,48) = 3.98$, $p = .052$, $\eta^2_p = .08$, as well as a significant effect of event type on consequences for targets, $F(1,48) = 7.14$, $p = .01$, $\eta^2_p = .13$. The pattern is depicted in Figure 1. Whereas there was a trend ($p = .052$) for consequences for actors to be discussed more when the child was the actor ($M = 2.75$, $SE = .60$) than the target ($M = 1.05$, $SE = .60$), consequences for targets were discussed significantly more when the child was the target ($M = 4.37$, $SE = .50$) than when they were the actor ($M = 2.50$, $SE = .49$).

Figure 1

Means and Standard Errors of Actor and Target Consequences by Event Type

Note. The figure outlines the means and standard errors of consequences of help for actors and targets by event type.

Types of Consequences. We hypothesized that discussions of gratitude would arise more frequently when the child was the target of help as opposed to the actor. However, the analysis did not reveal any significant multivariate effects, and thus this hypothesis was not supported. Means across the two event types are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Means and Standard Errors of Consequences of Helping

	Actor Event	Target Event
	M (SE)	*M (SE)*
Emotional	3.39 (.57)	3.14 (.57)
External Praise/Punishment	.32 (.23)	.00 (.23)
Gratitude Emotions/Responses	.46 (.21)	.67 (.21)
Reciprocity	.14 (.29)	.65 (.29)

Social	.93 (.25)	.96 (.25)

Target's Needs

Multivariate analyses that investigated the four subtypes of actors' needs (i.e., emotional, social, instrumental, and material) did not reveal any significant multivariate effects. Means and standard errors for the subtypes of target's needs across the two event types are reported in Table 7.

Table 7

Means and Standard Errors of Target's Needs

	Actor Event	Target Event
	M (SE)	*M (SE)*
Instrumental	2.18 (.40)	.99 (.40)
Material	.21 (.17)	.13 (.17)
Emotional	1.36 (.41)	1.21 (.41)
Social	1.68 (.52)	1.39 (.53)

Actor's Reasons

It is important to note that the frequencies for each of the individual subtypes of actors' reasons were low, and are reported descriptively in Table 8 by count, mean, and standard deviations, across both conversations.

Table 8

Counts, Means, and Standard Deviations of Actor's Reasons

	Actor Event Count	Actor Event M (SD)	Target Event Count	Target Event M (SD)
Actor's empathy/sympathy or other-oriented motivation	21	.75 (1.62)	8	.29 (.66)
Self-Characteristics	14	.50 (1.29)	4	.14 (.59)
Perceived competence	2	.07 (.26)	2	.07 (.26)
Reciprocity	2	.07 (.38)	0	.00 (.00)
Relational reasons	9	.32 (.72)	5	.18 (.61)
Other prescriptive beliefs/obligations/norms	3	.11 (.32)	3	.11 (.42)
Self-oriented reason/goal	2	.07 (.38)	0	.00 (.00)
Positive emotion expectancies for self	2	.07 (.38)	1	.04 (.19)
Circumstantial/external/imposed rule	6	.21 (.57)	1	.04 (.19)
Actor's reason: no subcategory	7	.25 (.80)	0	.00 (.00)

In relation to actor's reasons, we hypothesized that moral or characterological identity (i.e., that of being a helper, and referring to that self-characteristic as a reason for having helped) would be more frequently discussed when the child was the prosocial actor rather than when they were the target of a prosocial act. A *t-test* did not confirm this hypothesis (although there was a higher frequency of actors who referenced self-characteristics as a reason for helping (14

instances) than targets (4 instances), this difference was not significant). Moreover, an age-related hypothesis was established that the conversations with younger children (i.e., the 6–7-year old's) would discuss fewer instances of moral identity than older children (i.e., 10-11-year old's) across both conversations. A *t-test* did not confirm this hypothesis. Broadly speaking, no significant effects emerged vis-à-vis age-related variations in references to any actor's reasons.

Discussion

This study aimed to investigate the similarities and differences between parent-child conversations wherein a child was helped by a peer (target events) versus a time a child helped a peer (actor events). Conversations were coded for references to prosocial acts, actors' reasons for helping, targets' needs, consequences to helping and being helped, act evaluations, and lessons and insights obtained through experiences. The study highlighted patterns in children's prosocial experiences and understandings that pointed to the most salient aspects of the events being discussed, as well as parental socialization goals and approaches surrounding children's prosocial experiences. The following sections will discuss the hypotheses posited and their related findings and will draw on the research literature addressing prosocial behaviour so as to help interpret the patterns observed throughout the study. Subsequently, the limitations and future directions, as well as the conceptual and practical implications of this study will be outlined.

Types of Prosocial Acts

With respect to types of prosocial acts (i.e., instrumental, material, emotional, social), one hypothesis for age was advanced prior to the onset of the coding: we expected that older children would discuss instances of emotional prosociality more than younger children. This hypothesis was established inasmuch as older children increasingly develop the maturity, understanding,

and capabilities to engage in emotional prosociality, as compared to younger children who may be uncomfortable or less knowledgeable with emotional comforting or aid (Jackson & Tisak, 2001; Hepach, 2017). Younger children have been shown, in other research, to understand the solutions to instrumental needs more so than emotional needs, whereas older children may be better-equipped to take on emotional helping tasks (Hepach, 2017). However, this hypothesis was not supported in the current study. This lack of evidence in our research may be due to the small sample or because the children simply stated a recent prosocial experience with less consideration for its saliency or their understanding of it (Hepach, 2017). It is conceivable that prompting the children to recount prosocial acts of different types (i.e., instrumental, material, emotional, and social) would reveal that older children can recount emotional forms of prosociality with greater ease, deeper understanding, or in relation to more complex acts than do younger children.

There were no significant differences in the types of references children made to the prosocial acts they experienced across the ACTOR and TARGET studies. Overall, the types of events that children nominated and spoke about with their parents tended to include similar themes across both perspectives: they often described helping in a social situation (i.e., wherein someone was being teased or bullied), a situation where someone needed help with an injury or conflict, or a situation where someone was upset about something (i.e., about a low grade or fight). For example, instrumental prosocial acts were referenced by actors in situations such as helping a friend down to the office after hurting themselves, whereas targets described being escorted to the daycare room when they needed help; material prosocial acts were referenced by actors as situations wherein they gave a peer a jacket to wear, whereas targets described their friend sharing a snack with them; actors referenced emotional prosocial acts such as calming a

38

friend down when they were upset whereas targets recounted similar moments of being comforted; and social prosocial acts described by actors included standing up for a peer, whereas targets described having friends defend them when they were teased. Thus, the types of events that arose in both datasets reflected the types of experiences that are common among school-aged children: it was clear that the children were able to draw on a rich database of lived prosocial experiences (i.e., experiences that were normative and expected given their age and what would be considered salient and important in their lives) from both perspectives.

Consequences of Helping and Being Helped

When coding the data, we had considered a number of different possible consequences of helping and being helped – these included positive and negative impacts in terms of time, material, social, external praise and punishment, emotional, gratitude, and reciprocity of helping. It is important to note that time and material consequences never arose for either actor or target conversations. The lack of material references may stem from the minority of material prosocial acts overall: beyond a few instances of shared snacks or clothing, the large majority of the conversations centered on social, emotional, and instrumental prosocial acts rather than material support. Moreover, when a material act was discussed, the consequences recounted thereafter were usually focused on emotional impacts (i.e., feeling happy, proud, confident, taken care of, etc.), which may point to a pattern where material consequences naturally came up less often simply because it was not the point or interest of the conversations. Similarly, it appeared that costs or benefits in terms of time invested or gained were not particularly salient to the children, as compared to other types of consequences (i.e., children recounting standing up for a friend would talk about feeling proud in having done so more so than they would feeling burdened by the time it took to say something; children being helped with a math problem may recount

feeling happy more so than explaining how that act saved them time). Consequently, while some acts did require an investment of time theoretically, it was perhaps not the most salient part of the children's experiences and consequences, and as a result were not mentioned in these conversations.

In relation to consequences of helping and being helped, it was hypothesized that costs (i.e., negative consequences) would be more frequently discussed when the child was the prosocial actor rather than target, considering how helping another individual appears to take more time, effort and/or energy than being helped (Buchanan & Preston, 2014; Spinrad, 2018). However, this hypothesis was not confirmed. Overall, negative consequences were discussed very infrequently across both conversations: out of 271 references to consequences, only five were negative, and included mainly references to social costs (i.e., a child unfairly getting blamed for telling on a friend to a teacher; a child getting into a fight after sticking up for a friend). Interestingly, however, all of the negative consequences were discussed in actor conversations. So, while this is in line with our hypothesis that actors would be more likely to reference negative impacts of helping, the low frequency rendered the pattern insignificant.

Moreover, positive consequences were hypothesized to be referenced more by both actors and targets than negative consequences, given the prosocial nature of the events (Bryan et al., 2014). As noted above, this hypothesis was confirmed inasmuch as the vast majority (98%) of the consequences referenced across both conversations were positive. The positive consequences referenced across both perspectives touched on similar themes, such as peers becoming kinder (social consequences) and positive feelings of helpers and recipients (emotional consequences). Interestingly, emotional consequences were discussed most frequently, which perhaps can be explained by both the nature of how prosociality is experienced and reflected on: regardless of

40

the type of prosocial act committed, the literature on prosocial socialization emphasizes that parents focus on the emotional consequence of feeling happy, being cared for, or feeling good for having helped or been helped in order to explain, encourage and support subsequent helping behaviour (Fivush et al., 2000). So, despite children recounting instances of instrumental or material help in some cases, themes of feeling happy or good (i.e., emotional consequences of the event) are discussed often, regardless of the nature of the prosocial act.

It should be noted that references to external praise and punishment arose relatively infrequently (mentioned twice), and only in the actor conversations. While the lack of references to punishment may have occurred simply because children do not typically get punished for helping (and so, referencing it would be as rare as the occurrence of punishment in the first place) or in an attempt to preserve a good character (i.e., social desirability to avoid talking about instances where they were chastised with their parents), the lack of references to being praised for prosociality could be explained by children's emphasis on the intrinsic consequences of good behaviours rather than external ones (Hepach, 2017; Smith et al., 1979). A child may therefore discuss consequences (i.e., emotional consequences of feeling proud or happy, or social consequences of someone not being picked on anymore) that are consistent with internal characteristics about the type of person they are (i.e., how altruistic, or good of a person they are; Smith et al., 1979). In this sense, discussing praise as a consequence of having helped or been helped may be inconsistent with children's understandings of why they helped or what they gained from it.

Moreover, reciprocity consequences were shown as moments where peers returned the favour (for actors) or efforts to repay help (for targets). It seemed often that the consequences recounted were two sides of the same coin: when a target discussed feeling the need to

reciprocate with a kind gesture, actors also spoke about how they felt that the person they helped would one day help them. In the realm of prosocial understanding, children recounting and discussing reciprocity is important: not only does reciprocity often require a level of moral understanding to help those who have helped you, but it allows one to feel cared for, looked after, and attended to so much so that it encourages them to want to reciprocate the gesture in the future to the helper or others (Tudge, 2018). This reciprocal standard, once established, can help strengthen friendships built on mutual care and attentiveness, and a dynamic relationship wherein both individuals' needs and desires are considered by their friend (Chancellor et al., 2018; Tudge, 2018).

Lastly, a subcategory of consequences to helping or being helped was gratitude, wherein it was hypothesized that experiences or expressions of thankfulness and appreciation would be discussed more when the child was the target (Chancellor et al., 2018; Tudge, 2018). This hypothesis was not confirmed, and it may be due to similar emphases in conversations across both perspectives: while targets recounted their own gratitude because it was part of their experience, actors were often prompted by their parents to discuss the target's thankfulness in an attempt to then explain why prosociality was so important (i.e., gratitude was used as a marker of the prosocial act being significant and appreciated by the target, and thus something the children should do in the future). It may be helpful for future research to distinguish more systematically how these references to gratitude arose in the conversations, and the extent to which they were scaffolded by parents.

Despite these overall similarities in references to consequences across the two types of conversations, the results revealed one interesting pattern in relation to positive consequences of helping for actors or targets. Specifically, there was a trend for actor consequences to be

referenced more in conversations with actors, whereas consequences for targets were discussed significantly more in conversations with targets of help. This pattern makes sense when considering the salience and relevance of different consequences vis-à-vis children's own experience; that is, recipients of help know more, understand more, and are therefore more likely to discuss consequences they have incurred and experienced directly (Bryan et al., 2014; Nadler, 2015). The less salient pattern for actor consequences may be because the focus of a prosocial act is usually on the fulfillment of the need, and less centered on the prosocial agent (Nadler, 2015; Weinstein & Ryan, 2010). But overall, taken together, this finding highlights that experiences of helping from these different perspectives are providing children with varied lessons about the benefits of helping for the different individuals involved.

Actor's Reasons for Helping

Similar to the pattern for consequences, it was revealed that when the children were actors, they made more references to the actor's reasons than did children who were targets of help. This confirmed our related hypothesis, and is in line with theory emphasizing that salient aspects of experiences are often the focus of conversation; for actors discussing having helped an individual, their reasons for having helped are more salient to their experience than it would be to targets who may only understand the actor's reasons for having helped them in a speculative or minimal manner (Nadler, 2015; Wainryb et al., 2005).

While no significant effects of perspective emerged for any of the subcategories of actor's reasons, it is illuminating to consider the types of reasons that were discussed. Firstly, actors' empathy/sympathy or other-oriented motivation seemed to be the most common reason discussed in both conversations: actors described having helped because they knew how their friend felt, or that it made them cry to see their peers upset, and targets attributed similar motives

43

to prosocial actors, such as desires to keep them safe or empathy for their predicament. Empathy for others is often cited as a precursor to helping, and although it is not a necessary condition for prosocial behaviour to occur, other-oriented concern is a commonly used explanation for having helped someone (Hastings et al., 2007; Hepach, 2017; Pastorelli et al., 2016; Spinrad & Gal, 2018). As such, it is understandable that in conversations centered around helping and being helped, and ones in which parents aim to socialize and teach their children about prosociality, discussions of empathy-related motives would arise most frequently across both perspectives.

It was hypothesized that moral identity (i.e., drawing on a moral notion of the self or self-characteristics as a reason for having helped) would arise more when the child was the actor versus when they were the target, but this was not confirmed. While there were more instances of self-characteristics used as a reason for helping in the actor conversations than in the target ones, the frequency was too low to show any significant pattern. For instance, actors referenced having helped because they were "always so good at helping people" or because "they were…a peacemaker", whereas targets credited their helpers for having aided them because "they were brave enough to do it for me". It was also hypothesized that older children would discuss their moral identity more than younger children. Past research suggests that older children have a heightened sense of moral understanding, and thus would exercise that as a reason for having helped more than their younger counterparts (Bar-Tal, 1982; Benish-Weisman et al., 2019). However, this hypothesis was not supported by our analyses. It may be that the age difference between the two cohorts (6-7 year-olds versus 10-11 year-olds) was too small to detect age-related change: research has shown that adolescents often deal with significant changes in peer relations, social abilities, and identity, and so perhaps examining how conversations may continue to evolve into adolescence may be useful in future research (Grusec et al., 2002).

Other reasons for actors' helping included perceived competence, reciprocity, relational reasons, other prescriptive beliefs, obligations and norms, self-oriented reasons/goals, positive emotion expectancies for the self, and circumstantial, external or imposed rules. While some categories seemed to arise more frequently in actor conversations than in target conversations (i.e., circumstantial reasons arising six times in actor events as compared to only once in target conversations), frequencies of each individual category overall were relatively low. The content of the different categories was not noticeably different across the two perspectives: for example, while actors cited having helped a peer because they were "the only one that noticed" the need (i.e., a circumstantial reason for helping), targets were heard explaining their helper's actions as a result of them turning around at the right time to see their need (i.e., another circumstantial reason for helping). Perhaps the lack of differences between the content or presentation of reasons for helping across both perspectives is due to the similar types of experiences children chose to narrate (i.e., often dealing with similar themes such as injury, social issues, friendships).

Target's Needs

We hypothesized that there would be more frequent references to the target's needs in conversations about events when the children were the targets rather than when they were the actors, considering the saliency and wealth of knowledge that targets would have on their own needs; in contrast, it may be relatively more challenging for actors to infer needs, as they are perceived nonverbally or expressed directly, but never personally experienced) (Nadler, 2015; Wainryb et al., 2005). It is worth noting that this hypothesized pattern for references to target-related experiences (i.e., target's needs) was parallel to our earlier hypothesis that actors would reference actor-related experiences (i.e., actor's reasons, wherein it was confirmed that actors did reference it more). However, in this case, the hypothesis was not supported. It is possible that the

similarity in references to targets' needs across the two datasets comes from the nature of prosocial experiences. That is, while actors' reasons may be less transparent to targets (i.e., unless otherwise told, it is largely speculative to assume why others have helped you), targets' needs are more salient to children even when they are not the targets themselves, for helping the target requires the detection and understanding of their need(s) (Dunfield & Kuhlmeier, 2013). Perhaps because of this, then, both actors and targets discussed needs in order to clearly explain the prosocial experience (Brownell, 2013; Nadler, 2015).

When comparing the types of references children made to targets' needs across the two perspectives, findings reflect largely similar themes of instrumental, social, or emotional needs that make sense given the age of the children and the usual settings of the events (i.e., often in the classroom or playground). For instrumental needs, children referenced needs like how they or someone else "forgot how to do division" or "twisted [their] leg". For material needs, actors described giving a friend a jacket because they were really cold, whereas targets were heard explaining, for example, needing a toy because they were bored. Moreover, emotional needs were described at times by actors as instances where friends were crying, upset, had their feelings hurt, or were being made fun of, while targets paralleled those themes by explaining that they felt nervous, were stressing out about a project, or were scared of a dog at a friend's house. Lastly, social needs were exemplified by actors as instances where peers of theirs were being called names, or left out of something, while targets mirrored the same types of social needs by narrating their own experiences of being teased or not being invited to events. No major differences were observed in the frequency, nor type of target's needs across the two perspectives.

When examining targets' needs, gender was investigated in an exploratory way, and an effect was observed wherein conversations with girls, overall, included more references to needs than those with boys. Considering social expectations for girls to be more expressive and open about their emotions than boys, this pattern is consistent with a socially encouraged and reinforced comfort among girls in discussing their needs (Fivush et al., 2000; Hastings et al., 2007). Girls have been shown to talk more freely about emotional experiences than do their male counterparts, and thus in these conversations, explaining the needs they held or observed in others may have felt more comfortable to them than boys, who may have been taught to shy away from such discussions. Moreover, research has highlighted that boys may believe that having needs and asking for help is a marker of weakness, and thus may have felt embarrassed or nervous to discuss such needs, at least in comparison with girls (Nadler, 2015).

Act Evaluations

In relation to act evaluations, we had hypothesized that negative evaluations and criticism would arise infrequently across both conversations, considering such evaluations and negative tones from the parents would be counterproductive in the goal of teaching children to be prosocial in an open, honest, and dynamic conversation (Noddings, 2010). The nature of the conversations (i.e., helping another individual, or being helped) were also inherently recounts of positive events, and so negative evaluations seemed incongruent with the content and goals of the dialogue. Moreover, we hypothesized that mothers would more frequently make positive evaluations when their children were actors than when they were targets, seeing as how helping others is more socially encouraged and praised than simply being helped (Hussong et al., 2017). Results confirmed that actor conversations included more references to evaluations than did

target conversations, and the vast majority of such evaluations (98.5% across both perspectives) were positive. Consequently, both of our hypotheses were confirmed.

When reviewing the transcripts, only one negative evaluation was coded across both types of conversations, wherein an actor's action of siding with their friend and teaming up to argue with the friend's parents about not wanting to hike on a trip was disapproved of by the actor's mother, who said that the action "made it harder for the parent". The prosocial act, however, was later described by both the child and mother as something that "wasn't that wrong", thereby underlining perhaps that the intention of these conversations is largely to focus on the positive aspects of prosocial actions so as to encourage subsequent prosociality, and not to focus on the negative aspects of an otherwise praised act of helping (Noddings, 2010). Moreover, while prosociality may sometimes be viewed as problematic from the perspective of the target (i.e., in the case where it is perceived as a threat to the ego, sense of self-efficacy, or reputation of the recipient; Nadler, 2015), the data did not reflect such a pattern. This is perhaps because helping is more often viewed as a praised social norm, and because the acts the children recounted typically involved their friends, and not by people they would be likely to feel threatened by.

When considering the specific examples of positive act evaluations given across the two sets of conversations, it is apparent that similar themes of the mother's praise, sense of gratitude, encouragement, and support arose: for actors, positive evaluations such as "that's cool that you helped him out", "that was very smart of you to think of that", and "I'm proud of you" were observed and paralleled in the target conversations, wherein parents praised the helper by claiming that it was "nice of [them]" or that they "liked the way that [friend] did that". Of course, the meaning of evaluations differed across the two conversations, in that actors were being

48

directly praised, whereas targets heard the positive act evaluation for their helper (i.e., the other agent in their story). This pattern makes sense when considering the intention of the parent-child conversation: parents are working towards explaining and encouraging prosocial behaviours, and so focusing on the person who exhibited the prosocial act when expressing happiness, gratitude, or positive character attribution ultimately works to fuel prosocial behaviour reinforcement (Noddings, 2010; Ontai & Thompson, 2008; Salmon & Reese, 2015). By praising the helper's actions as good, parents work to encourage subsequent, repeated prosociality when their child was the actor (i.e., to do it again, more often, and/or in more contexts), or work to help their child understand that they appreciate and approve of the helper's prosocial actions when their child was the target (i.e., by capitalizing off of the child's met needs, happy or cared for feelings or gratitude to show that prosociality is a positive, necessary thing) (Nadler, 2015; Tudge, 2018). Consequently, the pattern observed wherein actor conversations held more references to act evaluations than target conversations is understood as a by-product of both the parent's goals and focus in prosocial conversations, as well as a natural result from parents being able to provide more positive evaluations when their child committed the prosocial action (i.e., making more frequent, detailed, and enthusiastic remarks) than when it was another peer who committed the helping act.

Although no hypothesis for gender was posited for act evaluations, analyses indicated that conversations with boys referenced evaluations more than those with girls. Considering the large majority of evaluations were positive, this gender difference may be explained by social and traditional gender roles and ideas that may have been reinforced by the parents: that is, while girls are expected to be kind, nurturing, and resourceful to others due to their gender, boys' prosocial actions are considered more supererogatory (Fivush et al., 2000). As such, when boys

49

do commit helping acts, they may be perceived as more commendable or praise-worthy (Nadler, 2015). Thus, the parents in this study may have downplayed their own gratitude or approval when speaking with their daughters about prosociality, and/or may have praised boys for more prosocial actions (i.e., because it is less the norm for boys; Fivush et al., 2000; Nadler, 2015).

Lessons and/or Insights

In relation to the types of lessons and/or insights that children may have gained and recounted from their prosocial experiences, no hypotheses were posited, as this was an exploratory element of the coding, and no significant effect or pattern was observed. While we had planned to consider three subcategories (i.e., lessons about the self, about others, and about relationships), we were not able to establish interrater reliability on these distinctions. It is interesting to note, however, that lessons and insights did come up frequently across both discussions. Anecdotally, although the perspective of the child (i.e., whether they were the actor or target) did alter the vocabulary and saliency of their lesson recounting somewhat, the lessons appeared to be similar in content across the conversations: in the ACTOR conversations, lessons such as learning to "stand up for other people" and that it was important to "be nice" were paralleled often in the TARGET conversations, where children spoke about how "you attract more flies with honey" and how it was good "when people do nice things for you".

The take-away, across both conversations, was often about how helping and being helped left the children feeling happy, content, secure, cared for, or positive, and that prosocial understanding was often reinforced by parental emphasis on the emotional benefits of helping and being helped. This pattern aligns with literature surrounding prosociality, in that helping others and being helped often leaves children with feelings of happiness, pride, and/or gratitude, and such a positive reaction reinforces prosocial norms and ideals: parents often utilise this

50

feeling to encourage helping behaviours in their children by recalling their positive emotion and explaining how it is important to make others feel cared for and positive as well (Nadler, 2015; Tudge, 2018). As such, lessons were consistent with the natural intentions behind parent-child conversations about prosociality (i.e., to teach and encourage prosociality).

Some lessons also focused on the peer's experiences and what they may have learned: for example, some actors spoke about how helping is necessary "when somebody's hurt, especially when they're like, so hurt they can't walk very easily", whereas targets were observed referencing being helped as an experience that reminded them that they have nice friends even though "unfortunately...not everyone is nice". Moreover, some lessons centered on friendship and relationships, wherein actors were heard making observations like how they "learned how to be a really good friend" by helping, whereas one child in the target conversations explained that "part of being a good friend is giving space."

Considering the themes evident in lessons and insights that were discussed, it may be of merit, in future research, to investigate lessons that children learned about particular types of knowledge: for example, differentiating between emotional, social, instrumental, and/or psychological lessons (as opposed to broad perspective categories like self and other) help elucidate more concrete understanding of the types of things that children describe learning from these events. Moreover, while we did not distinguish between concrete lessons and more broad and reflective insights (Salmon & Reese, 2015), it may be of interest to consider these categories separately: perhaps children make more references to lessons in clear situations with concrete resolutions, whereas insights are more common in ambiguous situations that require them to speculate why they were helped, or what it may mean that a friend assisted them with something.

Limitations and Future Directions

Although we carefully established inclusion criteria to balance the datasets and derive transcript and participant samples from each study that would be as parallel as possible (i.e., in type and focus of narrative, gender, age, etc.), there inevitably may have been some confounds due to fact that the study was based on two samples that were collected for two different purposes. In the TARGET study, the prompt for the narrative wherein the child discusses being a target of a prosocial act was: "Can you think of a time when a friend or another kid at school did or said something to you and it made you feel really good?" whereas the prompt for the ACTOR study was "Can you think of a time where you did or said something that ended up helping a friend?". As such, there may be some inherent differences across the two conversations (i.e., with frequency or likelihood to discuss emotional consequences or needs more by targets than actors considering the more emotional nature of the prompt), despite our efforts to ensure comparability of the events across samples.

The study's sample may have also had its limitations based on the participants' background differences: while the sample from the ACTOR study was collected in Utah (i.e., Americans who predominantly identified as White, some of whom were part of the Mormon religious community in the area), the TARGET study's participants were recruited from Montreal (i.e., English-speaking Canadians with a greater diversity of racial/ethnic backgrounds). Although it is difficult to determine how these background variations may have affected the findings, it is important to be mindful of these variations in the interpretation of the results. In the future, making cultural differences a focus of these types of studies may be of merit: perhaps the comparison of cultures can demonstrate differences in the ways children understand or interpret their prosocial experiences as actors and targets, or the ways in which

parents in different cultural contexts encourage, evaluate, or elaborate on different types of prosocial events.

Moreover, our study was conducted based on a collective sample of 56 parent-child conversations (split evenly between the two studies), and this small sample size may have limited the study's power: some of the observed patterns may have been statistically significant in a larger sample, or one comprised of longer conversations (i.e., wherein the parent-child conversations ran longer and thus may have yielded more codable references). As such, future studies that may seek to expand on this literature would benefit from prompting parent-child pairs to discuss multiple instances of prosociality (i.e., to outline more than just one prosocial event that happened) in order to prolong and enrichen the conversations, as well as from having studies with a higher number of participants altogether. Moreover, a repeated-measures design wherein each parent-child pair is prompted to discuss events wherein the child both helped and was helped could allow an increase in the study's power and allow stronger comparability across the two sets of transcripts collected.

It is important to acknowledge that this study was conducted based on written transcripts only and excluded the use of the videos that accompanied them. Consequently, perhaps not seeing the parent and child converse (i.e., body language, observing their facial expressions, etc.) nor hearing the tone, attitude, or volume with which they spoke (i.e., angry tone, frustrated, happy, proud, etc.) disallowed us from capturing the full picture of the conversations. In future studies, it may be useful to conduct both audio and video analysis to investigate both verbal and nonverbal cues in parent-child conversations centered around prosocial experiences. Lastly, our study was based on mother-child conversations, and while a large majority of the prosociality research that investigates parent-child narratives does so with mothers, it would be important to

also investigate conversations between children of varied genders with fathers or other parents who do not identify as mothers.

Implications and Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the differences in parent-child conversations about prosocial events when the child was a prosocial actor and when the child was the target of a peer's prosociality. Although ample research in the field of prosocial developmental has examined children's reactions, responses and understanding of being prosocial agents, minimal research has sought to examine the conversations and ideas children have when discussing *being* helped. Furthermore, no work has compared parent-child constructions of meanings from these two perspectives, reflecting a gap that this study aimed to fill. This research sought to provide insight into the types of themes and aspects of events that are salient in parent-child conversations about prosocial experiences in children's lives from both perspectives. Such investigation is important, for not only can it help inform parents about the complexities, importance, and techniques with which they can teach their children, but can help guide child educators and workers on how children understand prosociality (thereby cultivating more appropriate and effective prosociality-related curricula and practices).

This study's findings revealed various patterns reflecting how children discuss and interpret their prosocial experiences, as well as how parents engage and socialize their children in these conversations. It was shown that children largely focus on discussing what is most salient to them and their experiences (i.e., discussing consequences they incur more so than consequences their peers may have; discussing the needs of the targets equally regardless of perspective because it is an integral part of the prosocial experience and act; discussing actor's reasons more so when they themselves were the actor because they would have greater insight

54

than would a target whom would be probably assuming or speculating, etc.). The findings also suggest that parents may be guided by specific goals in these conversations wherein they, for example, focus on positive evaluations more so than negative regardless of perspective (as it is a motivator and important component of prosocial encouragement and socialization, whereas negative evaluations may hinder such conversations and discourage children). Taken together, these findings have implications for the practices that parents may adopt when reflecting on past prosocial experiences with their children. By understanding that children tend to recall and retain personally experienced elements of an event more so than ones experienced by a peer, for example, parents can know to guide questions that not only are centered on how the child felt then and now (so as to encourage active dialogue that can help deepen the child's understanding of their own personal experiences and feelings), but that help broaden the child's focus to also the peer's experiences in order to encourage consideration of how the other must have felt and experienced prosocial events. This scaffolding could help to facilitate conversations about areas of prosocial understanding (i.e., the peers' experiences) that the child may be less familiar with.

Moreover, parents in this sample appear to understand that children learn best when they feel understood and praised (i.e., through positive evaluations), but it may nevertheless be important to underline the importance of avoiding punishment, negative tone and attitude, or discouragement when children discuss social events like prosociality or related experiences. It may also be helpful to encourage parents to reflect on the messages about gender that they may be implicitly or explicitly communicating to their children (i.e., how girls are perceived as more emotional or nurturing than boys, and thus received less praise for prosocial actions, or feel pressure to be more attentive to others' needs than do boys). In other words, it may be fruitful to support parents' awareness of how they speak to their daughters and sons: equal praise and

gratitude can be displayed, equal reinforcement of prosocial understanding and action can be implemented, and equal lessons about why and how prosocial behaviours are done can be taught. Given that children's capacity to acquire and learn prosocial tendencies affects their competence in their academic achievement, peer and social relationships, emotional abilities, health, and psychological functioning (Williamson et al., 2013), this research on how children's prosocial development may be fostered by a variety of conversations with parents makes a useful contribution to the literature.

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Appendix A

Coding Scheme

Code 1: Prosocial Act

Type	Examples
Instrumental	a. Instrumental help with an injury (i.e., child running to get ice for a hurt peer, helping a friend up after having fallen off a swing) • Instrumental help can refer to helping someone, for example, when they are hurt, but **only** physical hurt, not emotional hurt. Emotional pain or distress would fall into an emotional prosocial act instead, generally speaking. b. Seeking adult intervention to get instrumental help with a physical injury (i.e., going to get a teacher to come help an injured peer, asking an adult or parent for an ice pack for an injured friend) c. Help/assistance with a task/providing a service to either do something for or with someone (i.e., helping a peer finish a school project, helping a friend pick up a heavy box, grabbing something that's out of reach; going out of the way to return a lost sweater) d. Providing valuable or necessary information (i.e., explaining how to make an origami flower to a friend who is struggling in an art class, pointing out how to get to the lost and found to a peer who is lost, a friend talking you through a school assignment that you're confused about)
Material	a. Sharing of an item or needed material (i.e., sharing scissors when the child needs them, or taking turns using a toy) b. Giving of an item or needed material (i.e., giving it as a gift or permanently, like giving a friend a snack when they forgot their lunch at home; he gave me the most powerful card in a game of Yu-Gi-Yoh)
Emotional (also includes psychological)	a. Comforting and/or attending to temporary aversive affect (i.e., comforting someone if they're crying, or trying to cheer them up) b. Offering moral support (i.e., being there for them, helping them go through something when something is more long-term) c. Reassuring someone when they are worried or anxious (i.e., don't worry, my dog won't bite you, she's really friendly)

65

	d. Helping improve someone's self-esteem
	e. Helping improve someone's sense of self, and character
	f. Helping improve someone's sense of self-efficacy or competence (i.e., encouraging somebody who is insecure and unsure about their bike riding skills that they can do it)
Social	a. Standing up for someone socially (i.e., when bullied, picked on, teased, etc.)
	b. Befriending someone or strengthening friendship for someone who may need it (i.e., if a child has no friends, is new to school and feels alone, or feels unsure about an already existent friendship)
	c. Conflict resolution between other individuals in argument or fight (i.e., helping resolve issues between people)
	d. Improving social status, rank or character of person (i.e., defending them or talking positively about them)

Code 2: Consequences of Helping

Each reference to consequences coded for:
REFERENT: Actor or target of help (i.e., consequences only coded between these parties, not any third or external party discussed)
VALENCE: Negative or positive [negative also includes positive consequences of NOT helping; positive also includes negative consequences of NOT helping]

Type	Examples
Material (NEVER CODED)	==*Actor's (helper) consequences*== **Positive**: • i.e., may invite others to share their toys with you in the future, may gain you something you want by someone else like a teacher or parent **Negative**: • i.e., having to give up a good, having to share a toy or item <mark>*Target's (being helped) consequences*</mark> **Positive**: • i.e., receiving a material or item that you needed or required
Time (NEVER CODED)	==*Actor's (helper) consequences*== **Negative**:

66

	• i.e., it takes times to help an individual, you might lose time that will end up costing you in your own goals *Target's (being helped) consequences* **Positive**: i.e., someone else helping you with a task may significantly reduce the time it takes to complete it
Social	*Actor's (helper) consequences* **Positive**: • i.e., gaining and/or strengthening of friendship, increase in popularity, improvement in reputation and character (i.e., how others see you and regard you improves if you help others) **Negative**: • i.e., Reputation cost/change, isolation, status, popularity *Target's (being helped) consequences* **Positive**: • i.e., friendships may be strengthened or gained when you feel cared for and helped, this strengthened friendship or sense of security may encourage your communication and interactions to other people (which may lead to more friends and/or heightened popularity or status)
External praise/punishment	*Actor's (helper) consequences* **Positive**: • i.e., can get praised for having helped others, may be applauded, and seen as a good person **Negative**: • i.e., getting in trouble, adult reprimanding you for helping when you weren't supposed to *Target's (being helped) consequences* **Positive**: • i.e., praise from being able to ask for help **Negative**: • i.e., punishment/reprimand if you weren't supposed to be helped (like on a test)
Emotional (also includes psychological consequences)	*Actor's (helper) consequences* **Positive**:

	• i.e., feelings of accomplishment, feelings of happiness and pride in having helped • i.e., self-esteem change (feeling like you're competent, capable, and kind), improvement in self-identity (gaining a more socially approved and encouraged identity of a nice person, feeling better/more secure in yourself) **Negative**: • i.e., feeling resentment for having to help, feeling tired or worn out from having to help others • i.e., feeling like others are using you, feeling like your identity is changing without you wanting it to by others, may have added pressure or anxiety in having to help someone, may have mental strain or exhaustion from having helped others *Target's (being helped) consequences* **Positive**: • i.e., improvement in affect from feeling cared for and helped; positive affect from feeling like your needs are met, feeling less lonely, sad, mad, or upset • i.e., increased self-esteem from knowing others are attentive to your needs; increased confidence and/or ability to feel comfortable in asking for or receiving help **Negative**: • i.e., feeling embarrassed that you needed help; feeling undermined or upset that someone thought you needed help at all • i.e., feeling insecure about one's own capacities due to needing help
Gratitude emotions/responses	*Actor's (helper) consequences* **Positive**: • i.e., she said thank you to me **Negative**: • i.e., she didn't even say thank you *Target's (being helped) consequences* **Positive**: • i.e., feelings of gratitude, thankfulness, appreciation; feeling like others' care for you

	Negative costs seem non-applicable in the context of gratitude (positive consequence)
Reciprocity	<mark>*Actor's (helper) consequences*</mark> **Positive**: - i.e., establishing a relationship where if you helped them, they would feel inclined/motivated to help you in the future **Negative**: - i.e., may feel indebted to help again another time because people view you as someone who should/will always help, may develop a reciprocal helping relationship that you do not want *Target's (being helped) consequences* **Positive**: - i.e., establishes a mutual care or standard of helping so that you feel happy to help, or want others to feel cared for like you were **Negative**: - i.e., expectation that you must now help others, feeling of indebtedness

Code 3: Target's Needs

Type	Examples
Instrumental	a. Injury (i.e., needs help after falling down or hurting yourself) b. Help with a task (i.e., need assistance carrying something, finishing homework, carrying heavy items)
Material	a. Expressing the need to share an item or needed material (i.e., need to use a glue stick from a friend) b. Expressing the need to take/have an item or needed material (i.e., need more blocks to finish an art project) c. Expressing that they do not have enough resources for a material (i.e., not enough money to buy art supplies)

Emotional (also includes psychological needs)	a. Expression of negative affect (i.e., sadness, anger, frustration, crying, feeling down) b. Expression of distress while seeking comfort (i.e., wanting someone to cheer them up or listen to them) c. Expression of anxiety, stress or worry d. Needing friends or peers during emotional daily or life events (i.e., need someone to be there for them as they grieve or mourn, needing a friend to be there for them) e. Expression of low or jeopardized child's self-esteem (i.e., insecurities, low self-regard) f. Expression of low or jeopardized child's sense of self, and character g. Expression of low or jeopardized child's sense of self-efficacy or competence (i.e., expressing feeling down because they're unable to do something)
Social	a. Teasing, bullying, or victimization (i.e., when the child is bullied at school, picked on by peers, etc.) b. Expression of insecurity or sadness in the stability or presence of friendships/relationships (i.e., child feels like they're not good friends and wants to build the relationship, or wants more friends) c. Conflict resolution between them and other individual(s) in argument or fight (i.e., wanting someone to intervene or help them) d. Needing help with social status, rank, or character of person (i.e., someone to defend them or talking positively about them)

Code 4: Actor's Reasons

Type	Examples
Actor's empathy/sympathy or other-oriented motivation	i.e., I felt bad for her i.e., I knew what it was like to be in her shoes i.e., It made me feel sad to see her upset i.e., He helped me because they wanted to respond to my needs selflessly i.e., See, I'm fat, you're more thin, who cares! (i.e., I understand how you feel; I've been there before)
Self-Characteristics (i.e., moral identity, self-attribution)	i.e., I helped because I'm a good person i.e., I helped because I think of myself as a helpful person i.e., Because I'm a peacemaker

Perceived competence	i.e., I helped because I know I can i.e., I helped because I feel confident in the skill it took to help them i.e., I debated his point to his parents because I'm good at arguing
Reciprocity (past or future)	i.e., I helped because she helped me before (past reciprocity) i.e., I helped because I expect if I help her, she'll help me later (future reciprocity)
Relational reasons (i.e., relationship, bond, friendship expectations)	i.e., I helped because we're friends i.e., We're very close, so I knew I needed to be there for her
Other prescriptive beliefs/obligations/norms	i.e., Because you're supposed to do it i.e., I helped because it's the right thing to do i.e., I feel responsible i.e., She was really upset, so I had to calm her down (implication of social norm of comforting someone when they are upset, for example) i.e., she already had so many markers, and I just needed one, so she let me borrow one of them from her (here, the idea of having many markers could imply the social norm of sharing, or of not being selfish when you have an abundance of a coveted resource)
Self-oriented reason/goal (i.e., rewards, praise, etc.)	i.e., I knew if I helped him, I would get a sticker from my teacher i.e., I helped him because I know my mom will compliment me
Positive emotion expectancies for self	i.e., I know how it feels nice to help others, so I wanted to do it
Circumstantial/external/imposed rule	i.e., I helped because there was no one else around to help (obligation) i.e., I helped because it's against the rules not to help i.e., I helped because I knew I'd get in trouble if I didn't

Code 5: Act Evaluation

Valence	Examples
Negative	i.e., criticism of act (i.e., that wasn't a great choice; you could or should have done that differently)

	i.e., negative evaluative language (i.e., he shouldn't have done that; it wasn't okay that you did/didn't do that)
	i.e., discouragement (i.e., don't do it again)
	i.e., disappointment (i.e., I'm disappointed in myself; I'm disappointed in you)
	i.e., mothers' guilt and/or shame (i.e., personal negative feelings)
Positive	i.e., mothers' pride (i.e., I'm so proud of you)
	i.e., mother's gratitude (i.e., I'm thankful you did that)
	i.e., thanking the child (i.e., Thank you for helping him)
	i.e., praise (i.e., great job; you're so nice)
	i.e., evaluative language (i.e., that was such a nice thing to do)
	i.e., mother's happiness (i.e., I'm happy you helped her; that makes me so glad to hear that you were there for her)

Code 6: Lessons/Insights **[Note: distinction between subtypes was not reliable]**

Type	Examples
Self	i.e., about myself in that moment, or what I want/could do in the future (i.e., I learned I'm good at helping people; it's okay to let people care for you)
Other	i.e., about others and/or the peer I'm talking about (i.e., I learned that sometimes people don't know how to ask for what they need; people sometimes surprise you with how much they care; I learned that my friend cares about me; that others will show they care about you in different ways)
Relationships	i.e., about relationships and/or friendships (i.e., I learned that friends should always be there for each other; that it feels good to share things with your friends)

Notes for Coding:
- In the following section, *M* will refer to speech given by the mother, and *C* will refer to speech given by the child.
- **Before you get started, some reminders:**
    - **Do not code a subtype where there is none.**
        - So, if the mother asks a question like "And what did you do to help Tommy?", it's a call to the *act*, so it should be coded as "Act", but no subcodes should be coded because it isn't specified yet!
    - Reminder: if a theme or idea comes up more than once, you can code it multiple times but **only if they are on different turns**. If it's in the same clause or same turn, then code it just once.
        - So, for example, it could look like this:
        C: I helped her pick up the heavy box. (Code: *Act. Instrumental*)
        M: That's nice of you. (Code: *Act. Eval. Positive*)
        C: So yeah, I picked up the box with her. (Code: *Act. Instrumental*).
- **As you code, some reminders:**
    1. Always ask yourself *"What is the speaker trying to say?"* Don't get hung up on your own ideas or hypotheses –they can cause you to stray away from what's being said.
    2. Sometimes the *need* and the *act* don't always align in terms of subcodes.
        - It feels natural to think that if a need exhibited is, for example, emotional (i.e., a child is upset about a low grade they received for their school project), that the prosocial act would also be emotional (i.e., a friend comforts them and makes them feel better). However, it isn't *always* like this.
            - As an example, the need could be instrumental (i.e., a child is struggling with scoring a goal in soccer), and the act is emotional (i.e., a friend cheers them on and later tells them they did amazingly).
    3. Is this a consequence of the event they are discussing, or is it a consequence of another event?
        - If the event is that Sally stood up for John, and then John is talking to his mother about how he feels happier because of it, that's a direct consequence of the event. But, if the event is that Sally stood up for John, and then John felt happy because later that day he received a toy from his mom, then it's not a consequence of the prosocial event in question, so it is not to be coded.
    4. When looking at the references to gratitude, and when trying to decipher the referent (i.e., actor or target), you can see it as this:
        - If the sentence is referring to personally felt or experienced gratitude, the referent is the **individual talking** (i.e., either the actor or target, depending on the conversation). If the sentence is referring to expressing gratitude to someone else, like by saying thank you for example, then the referent is the **peer** (i.e., either the actor or target, depending on the conversation).

- The question you can ask yourself to gauge the situation is: if gratitude is a *consequence*, then the referent is the person who is experiencing/receiving that consequence.
    - **Note:** To code the referent of **reciprocity**, you can have the same rule of thumb as gratitude.
- **Knowing when to code:**
    - **Does this clause *need* to be coded?**
        - When a child or mother says something *new* and *significant to code*, then you code the clause, considering it is important information that needs to be looked at. I.e.,
            - M: So, did you thank her for picking up your toys with you?
            - C: Yeah
                - Here, the response "yeah" is an answer that conveys important information (it is saying "yes, I did thank her"), so it must be coded!
        - If, however, the response sounds more like active listening, and is not conveying new information, then it should not be coded, like so:
            - C: I went towards the front of the class
            - M: Mhm, yeah
                - Here, the mother's response is just to convey that she is listening and following along. She is not providing new information, and therefore her line should not be coded!
        - Sometimes, the coding can get tricky when active listening **interrupts** a turn, like so:
            - C: So, I learned to be kind
            - M: Mhm
            - C: and sweet to my friends
                - Here, the mother's active listening skills interrupted the sentence the child was saying, and so not only is the mother's sentence **not to be coded**, but the child's second line of "and sweet to my friends" would not be coded either, for it is evident that should the mother not have interrupted, the child would've said that as a full sentence. Therefore, that one thought would be coded once regardless *unless* the two separate parts of the sentence expressed **independent ideas** that are to be coded differently!
    - **Does this clause fit the coding scheme?**
        - Sometimes, you'll come across situations like:
            - M: Did you learn that it's important to help?
            - C: No
                - Here, even though the child is saying *no* to the answer, the mother is still making a reference to a lesson or insight, so you're coding her line (you would just be unable to specify the subcode because it's not inferred)! For the child, however, considering he/she is saying no (or even if they say "I don't know" or "maybe"), it would **not be coded.**

- o **Should I recode repeated lines?**
  - ▪ If mom/child repeats themselves, you're not always going to code. But, if it's a legitimate question, or new information, then code. I.e.,
    - • C: I felt sad
    - • M: Oh, you felt sad?
    - • C: Yeah.
      - o Here, the mom is just following the conversation. She's not actually asking anything new, nor offering new ideas that would lead to new information, so the mother's line would **not** be coded.
- o **Can I double-code one clause into multiple categories?**
  - ▪ If appropriate, yes. The goal of coding is to capture as much information as possible so that the parent-child emergent themes are well investigated, so double-coding allows us to capture all the information given in certain scenarios in ways that would've been restricted if we only always coded once.
- **Exceptions and Reminders for Category Coding:**
  - o To decipher between *Social* and *Emotional* prosocial acts*:*
    - ▪ I.e., if a child is talking about how a peer was bullying them and making fun of them, and their friend Derek steps in to stand up for them, then Derek performed a **social act**. If, however, Derek waited until after the child was alone, walked over and simply sat with them to comfort them when they were crying, then now Derek has performed an **emotional** act.
  - o To decipher between *External Praise/Punishment* and *Social* consequences*:*
    - ▪ I.e., If, for example, Johnny is defended by a friend who tells a bully not to report Johnny to the teacher, the consequence could be classified as a social *if* it is of a **social** nature (i.e., perhaps Johnny makes more friends, or avoids confrontation with the bully in the future). However, that same situation could be classified as referring to external punishment avoidance if the conversation emphasizes how Johnny does not get in trouble with the teacher, or does not get detention, etc.
  - o To decipher between *Target's Needs: Emotional* versus *Actor's Reasons: Empathy*:
    - ▪ Here, it's important to focus on what is being said. If the child places the focus on the target and how they're feeling (i.e., I saw them crying) then it's a reference to **target's needs: emotional.** If, however, it's a focus on what the child themselves felt (i.e., I felt bad seeing them cry), then it's a reference to **actor's reasons: empathy**. In certain cases, it could be double-coded, but you must read the context to see what the child is discussing, and what they are focused on in order to make that decision.
  - o To decipher between *Lessons/Insights: Self* and *Actor's Reasons: Self-Characteristics*:
    - ▪ In *Lessons/Insights: Self*, we're looking at lessons that the child has learned from the event that they discussed, and so if they end up learning something or referring to an understanding that they gained from the experience (i.e., I learned I'm good at helping people), then it's

categorized as **Lessons/Insights: Self.** On the other hand, if they say, "I helped Sally because I'm good at helping people", then they're calling to the reason for having helped, and that would be categorized as **Actor's Reasons: Self-Characteristics.**