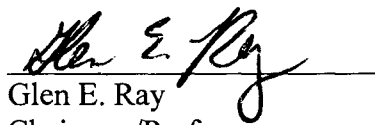


A SHORT-TERM LONGITUDINAL ANALYSIS OF  
FRIEND AND BEST FRIEND RELATIONSHIP QUALITIES

Chrystal Lynne McChristian

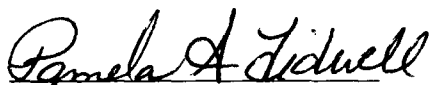
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A SHORT-TERM LONGITUDINAL ANALYSIS OF  
FRIEND AND BEST FRIEND RELATIONSHIP QUALITIES

Chrystal Lynne McChristian

A Thesis

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November 19, 2004

A SHORT-TERM LONGITUDINAL ANALYSIS OF  
FRIEND AND BEST FRIEND RELATIONSHIP QUALITIES

Chrystal Lynne McChristian

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## VITA

Chrystal Lynne McChristian, daughter of Tammy R. McChristian, was born April 25, 1980, in Paragould, AR. She graduated from Greene County Tech High School in 1998. She attended Arkansas State University, graduating with a Bachelor of Science in Psychology in December, 2001. In August of 2002, she entered Graduate School at Auburn University Montgomery.

## THESIS ABSTRACT

### A SHORT-TERM LONGITUDINAL ANALYSIS OF FRIEND AND BEST FRIEND RELATIONSHIP QUALITIES

Chrystal Lynne McChristian

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The present study assessed children's evaluations of friend and best friend relationship qualities and the ways in which these relationships and qualities change over time. Second, third, fifth and sixth grade children evaluated a classroom friend and a classroom very best friend using a Relationship Quality Questionnaire (one for friends and one for best friends) and a Relationship Satisfaction Questionnaire (one for friends and one for best friends). The Relationship Quality Questionnaire assessed seven quality dimensions: Caring/Validation, Conflict Resolution, Conflict/Betrayal, Help/Guidance, Companionship, Intimacy, and Exclusivity. The Relationship Satisfaction Questionnaire consisted of two measures designed to assess children's satisfaction with their close peer relationships. These questionnaires were administered at two times during the school year (November and April). Consistent with previous research, results demonstrated that, with the exception of Conflict/Betrayal, children evaluated their classroom very best

friends higher than their classroom friends on the relationship quality dimensions. Additionally, results illustrated that as relationships change over time, there are corresponding changes in relationship qualities. Specifically, as relationships strengthen over time, qualities increase; as relationships weaken over time, qualities decrease; and as relationships stay the same over time, qualities also stay the same. Further, relationship qualities also change as a function of relationship status. That is, relationship qualities were higher for children who maintained their relationships over time than for children who did not maintain their relationships over time. Additionally, children reported higher satisfaction levels with their best friends than with their friends. Also, for all children, positive relationship qualities were correlated with higher levels of satisfaction and negative relationship qualities were correlated with lower levels of satisfaction. Satisfaction also increased as relationships strengthened over time and decreased as relationships weakened over time. These findings replicate and extend previous research exploring children's understanding of their close peer relationships. Implications for future research are also discussed.

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## A Short-term Longitudinal Analysis of Friend and Best Friend Relationship Qualities

Research has consistently demonstrated that friendships are important to children's social, cognitive, and emotional development (Berndt & Perry, 1986; Bukowski, Newcomb, & Hartup, 1996; Hartup, 1996a; Parker & Seal, 1996). Further, Hartup (1996a) has stressed that to understand the developmental significance of children's friendships, the features, or qualities, of those friendships also must be examined. Research in this area has demonstrated that merely having friends is not sufficient enough to ensure a well-adjusted child. Rather, it is crucial to have friendships that are positive and of high quality (Aboud & Mendelson, 1996; Berndt & Keefe, 1995; Hartup, 1996a). Children and adolescents with friends of high quality are more socially competent (Hartup, 1996a), have better academic adjustment (Berndt & Keefe, 1995), have better emotional adjustment (Brendgen, Markiewicz, Doyle, & Bukowski, 2001), and have higher self-esteem than do children with friends of low quality (Berndt, 1996). However, with few exceptions (e.g., Berndt, Hawkins, & Hoyle, 1986; Ladd, Kochenderfer, & Coleman, 1996; Parker & Seal, 1996), little research has examined the stability of these friendships and their qualities over time. Thus, the current study extends previous research by utilizing a short-term longitudinal methodology to examine the stability of children's relationship qualities with their friends and with their best friends.

### *Friendship Expectations*

Research into children's understanding of friendships has primarily focused on expectations and perceptions of friendships (e.g. Berndt & Perry, 1986; Furman &

Buhrmester, 1985; Parker & Asher, 1993; Ray & Cohen, 1996). Bigelow (1977) defined friendship expectations as “the beliefs, attitudes, and values that a person expresses as being important characteristics to have in a best friend” (p. 247). Research demonstrates that expectations of what determines a best friend undergo marked developmental changes (Furman & Bierman, 1984). For example, younger school-aged children describe friends primarily in terms of overt behaviors and physical attributes, such as liking the same things and spending a lot of time together; whereas older children and adolescents describe friends in terms of underlying personality characteristics and dispositions, such as intimacy, loyalty, and understanding (Berndt & Perry, 1986; Furman & Bierman, 1984; Ray & Cohen, 1996).

Using essays about what children expected from various peer relationships (e.g., best friends and acquaintances) written by children in first through eighth grades, Bigelow and LaGaipa (1975) conceptualized a three-stage model of friendship expectation development. The first stage emerges between second and third grade and is called the reward-cost stage. It includes similar expectations between friends, closeness in terms of proximity of friends, and commonly shared activities between friends. The normative stage emerges between fourth and fifth grade and is characterized by friends developing similar attitudes and beliefs or searching for friendships with other children who share their beliefs. The third stage, which emerges around the sixth or seventh grade, is known as the empathic stage. In this stage, children begin to regard self-disclosure, understanding, and shared interests as important attributes in a friendship. Bigelow and LaGaipa’s (1975) model is consistent with previously mentioned research indicating that as children age, they move from describing friends in terms of behavioral

characteristics, such as proximity, to more personality dispositions, such as intimacy and interpersonal understanding (Berndt & Perry, 1986; Furman & Bierman, 1984; Ray & Cohen, 1996).

Further research into the developmental changes of children's perceptions of friendships conducted by Furman and Bierman (1984) has also demonstrated a developmental trend. Administering an open-ended interview, a story-recognition task, and a questionnaire to second, fourth, and sixth grade children, Furman and Bierman (1984) investigated how children's conceptions of friendship change with age. In particular, Furman and Bierman (1984) examined distinctions between overt, behavioral characteristics and dispositional characteristics in children's conceptions of friendship and how these change as a function of age. Results indicated that friendship expectations are acquired in a cumulative manner, with new expectations being added to existing conceptions and expectations. Younger children report behavioral characteristics, such as similarity and affection, as being of primary importance in friendships, while older children describe dispositional characteristics, such as intimacy and support, as important facets of friendship. This is similar to Bigelow and LaGaipa's (1975) three-stage model of friendship described previously. However, Furman and Bierman (1984) further demonstrated that when older children are explicitly asked whether behavioral characteristics, in addition to the reported dispositional characteristics, are a part of their conceptions of friendship, they indicate that these behavioral features are still important in friendships. Thus, even after dispositional characteristics have become central components of children's conceptions of friendship, the behavioral features acquired at



an earlier point are not discarded, but remain important components of children's conceptions of friendship.

Research conducted by Selman (1981) further supports the idea that children's expectations and conceptions of friendship develop in a cumulative manner. According to the hierarchical developmental model, Selman (1981) reports that particular expectations of friendship appear at specific ages and are added to the existing conception of friendship. While much of the existing expectations remain, some are replaced with these new conceptions of friendship. Studying children and adolescents between the ages of six and fifteen, Selman developed a social-cognitive developmental model, in which children's expectations and conceptions of friendship progress through five stages, each of which is qualitatively different from the previous. In Stage Zero, the Momentary Physicalistic Play stage, friendship expectations are based on physical proximity and similarity. In Stage One, the One-Way Assistance stage, children's expectations of friendship are essentially self-centered and one-sided and are based solely on what they will gain from the relationship. Stage Two, the Fair-Weather Cooperation stage, signifies the beginning of an understanding of the importance of reciprocity between friends. The thoughts, needs, and feelings of others are taken into account and reciprocal intimacy becomes part of the friendship. In Stage Three, the Intimate and Mutual Sharing stage, friendships become less egocentric and children begin to realize the importance of a continuous, secure, and supportive friendship. Children are now more interested in the personality of potential friends rather than what they gain from the relationship. In the final stage, the Autonomous Interdependence stage, children begin to

understand the complexities of friendships and begin to attend to the psychological needs of their friends. Thus, trust, respect, and intimacy become core features of the friendship.

To reiterate, children's friendship expectations change with age, shifting in importance from behavioral characteristics in early childhood to more dispositional characteristics as children grow older. Research has also indicated that expectations of friendships vary with respect to gender as well (Furman & Buhrmester, 1985; Meurling, Ray, & LoBello, 1999; Ray & Cohen, 1996). Girls' friendship expectations focus on emotional intimacy and support, trust, and loyalty, while boys' friendship expectations center around instrumental aspects of interpersonal relationships (e.g., sticking up for each other), as well as autonomy and mastery (Meurling, et al., 1999; Ray & Cohen, 1996). Furthermore, girls expect more self-disclosure and intimacy from friends than do boys, as well as more acceptance and enhancement of worth (Bigelow, 1977; Furman & Buhrmester, 1985).

Recent research on children's friendship expectations has explored the function that these conceptualizations, as well as children's perceptions of their friendships, play in peer relationships. Clark and Ayers (1993) examined the extent to which children's friendships actually have the characteristics that children expect and perceive as important in a friendship. Studying seventh and eighth grade students, Clark and Ayers (1993) demonstrated that girls had both higher and more expectations regarding their friendships and, as such, the expectations were not being fully met. Nonetheless, girls did report greater amounts of the expected characteristics than did boys. On the other hand, boys, whose expectations were lower than girls', were having their expectations met. Clark and Ayers (1993) concluded that while girls' friendships qualitatively exceed

that of boys, they are inadequate to meet all of the expectations girls place on their friendships. Thus, because girls had higher expectations, which their friendships failed to meet, girls were less satisfied with their friendships than were boys, who were more satisfied with their friendships because they surpassed the boys' lower expectations.

Additionally, Ray and Cohen (1996) examined the differences between children's expectations for a prototypical, or ideal, best friend and an actual best friend. Using peer nominations and questionnaires, Ray and Cohen (1996) demonstrated that expectations for an ideal best friend were higher for both boys and girls than they were for an actual best friend. Thus, though actual best friends do not fulfill all of the expectations for an ideal best friend, children are still able to maintain friendships, suggesting, perhaps, that children realize friendships do not have to be perfect and they do not expect actual best friends to be ideal in nature.

In summary, research has suggested that children's friendship expectations change as a function of both age and gender. With respect to age, children progress from friendship expectations revolving around overt, behavioral characteristics in early childhood to more dispositional and interpersonal characteristics in later childhood and adolescence (Berndt & Perry, 1986; Bigelow & LaGaipa, 1975; Furman & Bierman, 1984; Ray & Cohen, 1996; Selman, 1981). Friendship expectations also seem to vary with respect to gender, with girls holding higher expectations and expecting more emotional support, intimacy, trust, and acceptance and boys demonstrating more autonomy (Bigelow, 1977; Furman & Buhrmester, 1985; Meurling, et al., 1999; Ray & Cohen, 1996).

### *Friendship Quality*

To further understand the significance of friendships during childhood and adolescence, much research has also focused on the qualities that children believe are important in their friendships (e.g., Berndt & Keefe, 1995; Cleary, Ray, LoBello, & Zachar, 2002; Hartup, 1996a; Meurling, et al., 1999; Parker & Asher, 1993). Friendship qualities refer to “children’s evaluations of the positive and negative provisions or features that characterize their interpersonal relationships” (Cleary, et al., 2002, p. 180). Friendship qualities are features that are valued and sought after in other individuals when forming a relationship. Research has demonstrated that friends provide more help, intimacy, self-validation, support, and companionship than do non-friends, suggesting that these qualities are important facets of friendships (Aboud & Mendelson, 1996; Hartup, 1996a).

Hartup (1996a) has stated that to understand the developmental significance of friendships, researchers must examine friendship quality. Thus, to determine whether friendships contribute to positive developmental outcomes, it is important, and necessary, to know the features and qualities that lead to both the development of friendships and their maintenance over time. Extensive research into this domain has suggested that elementary children and adolescents with high quality friendships are more socially competent (Hartup, 1996a), have better academic adjustment, enjoy school more and obtain higher grades (Berndt & Keefe, 1995), have better emotional adjustment (Brendgen, Markiewicz, Doyle, & Bukowski, 2001), and have higher self-esteem (Berndt, 1996) than do children with low quality friendships. Thus, merely having friends does not seem sufficient enough to ensure that a child will become a well-adjusted

person. Instead, research indicates that it is crucial to have friendships that are positive and of high quality (Aboud & Mendelson, 1996; Berndt & Keefe, 1995; Hartup, 1996a).

To assess the qualitative features of children's friendships, Parker and Asher (1993) developed the Friendship Quality Questionnaire, which consists of six qualitative aspects of friendships. Validation and Caring ( $\alpha = .90$ ) assesses the degree to which the friendship is characterized by caring, support, and interest. Conflict and Betrayal ( $\alpha = .84$ ) measures the extent to which the friendship is characterized by arguments, annoyance, disagreements, and mistrust. Companionship and Recreation ( $\alpha = .75$ ) refers to the amount of enjoyable time friends spend together both in and out of school. Help and Guidance ( $\alpha = .90$ ) assesses the degree to which friends assist one another with either simple or difficult tasks. Intimate Exchange ( $\alpha = .86$ ) refers to the extent to which the friendship is characterized by a divulging of personal information and feelings. Conflict Resolution ( $\alpha = .73$ ) measures the extent to which disagreements in the friendship are resolved efficiently and effortlessly. Parker and Asher (1993) stated that these six qualities are significantly related to friendship satisfaction, with Validation/Caring, Companionship/Recreation, Help/Guidance, Intimate Exchange, and Conflict Resolution being positively correlated with friendship satisfaction and Conflict/Betrayal being negatively correlated with friendship satisfaction. They further stated that it was the combination of these six qualities that children use to assess and form perceptions of their friendships.

Parker and Asher (1993) used this Friendship Quality Questionnaire to examine the features of best friendships and best friendship satisfaction in sociometrically accepted and rejected children in third through fifth grade. Results demonstrated

significant gender differences, with girls having more friends than boys and being more likely to have at least one friend. Girls also reported more Validation/Caring, more Intimate Exchange, more Help/Guidance, and less difficulty in resolving conflicts in their best friendships than did boys. These findings are consistent with most research that has compared boys' and girls' friendships. While the reason these gender differences exist has only been speculated, one suggestion has been that differences in boys' and girls' play preferences and group structures (e.g., the greater tendency for boys to play in large groups that are hierarchically organized) give rise to differences in the qualities that are important in their close personal relationships.

The Friendship Qualities Scale was similarly developed by Bukowski, Hoza, and Boivin (1994) to examine children's relationships with their best friends. This scale is made up of five features that Bukowski, et al. (1994) found to be fundamental to the formation and perpetuation of friendships: companionship, conflict, help, security, and closeness. Companionship refers to the amount of time children spend interacting with one another. Conflict refers to arguments and disagreements that occur between friends. The way in which children handle conflict with friends is an important indicator of their ability to maintain the friendship. Bukowski, et al. (1994) divide the help feature into two components: aid and protection from victimization. Security indicates the extent to which friends are reliable, dependable and trustworthy in challenging situations. Finally, closeness refers to the positive feelings that friends have for one another.

Bukowski, et al. (1994) reported that companionship, help, security, and closeness were commonly found in children's descriptions of their friendships. However, conflict had no significant effect on the strength of the friendship. Observational studies have

demonstrated that while friends have just as many arguments as non-friends, they simply resolve their disagreements in a more efficient manner and less relationship threatening way (Berndt & Perry, 1986). Bukowski, et al. (1994) concluded that while conflict is a natural and common feature of children's friendships, children may not report disputes with friends because they are not necessarily anticipated. Further inquiry beyond a questionnaire may be needed to determine the amount of conflict in children's friendships.

To reiterate, researchers (e.g., Bukowski, et al., 1994; Parker & Asher, 1993) have developed questionnaires to assess the qualitative aspects of children's friendships, as well as, friendship satisfaction and stability. This research demonstrates significant gender differences with regards to friendship quality. Girls report more friends than boys and report higher levels of positive friendship qualities (Parker & Asher, 1993). Furthermore, with regard to friend versus non-friend, amount of conflict does not seem to differ much. However, conflict resolution seems to be more efficient among friends, with friends resolving their disagreements more quickly and more easily than non-friends (Bukowski, et al., 1994).

While much research has investigated the qualities present in children's friendships in general, more recent investigations of friendship quality have examined differences in the quality between various types of close peer relationships, such as those quality differences that may exist between friends and best friends (Meurling, et al., 1999; Cleary, et al., 2002; Bryan, 2002). To evaluate the differences in quality between classroom friends and classroom best friends, Meurling, et al. (1999) developed the Relationship Quality Questionnaire. This questionnaire is a modified version of the

Friendship Quality Questionnaire originally developed by Parker and Asher (1993). It consists of the original six qualitative features in Parker and Asher's (1993) questionnaire (i.e., Validation and Caring,  $\alpha = .90$ ; Conflict and Betrayal,  $\alpha = .84$ ; Companionship and Recreation,  $\alpha = .75$ ; Help and Guidance,  $\alpha = .90$ ; Intimate Exchange,  $\alpha = .86$ ; and Conflict Resolution,  $\alpha = .73$ ), as well as an added dimension assessing Exclusivity ( $\alpha = .71$ ).

Administering the Relationship Quality Questionnaire to second through sixth grade children, Meurling, et al. (1999) demonstrated that best friends were evaluated significantly higher and more positively than were friends on five of the seven qualities: Validation/Caring, Companionship/Recreation, Intimate Exchange, Exclusivity, and Conflict Resolution. Furthermore, girls evaluated the quality of their relationships more positively than did boys across all the relationship qualities. Thus, girls seem to both give more and get more out of their close peer relationships than do boys. Meurling, et al. (1999) also demonstrated that younger children evaluated classroom friends higher than did older children and older children made larger distinctions between best friends and friends than did younger children on all qualities except Intimacy and Conflict/Betrayal. Meurling, et al. (1999) explained this finding by suggesting that while being supportive and helping are important behaviors for children's differentiation between best friends and friends, degree of intimacy and frequency of disagreements are not qualities children use to distinguish among various positive peer relationships.

Adding to this knowledge base, Cleary, et al. (2002) investigated children's perceptions of relationship quality in reciprocal friends and reciprocal best friends. Administering the Relationship Quality Questionnaire to second, third, fifth, and sixth grade children, Cleary, et al. (2002) demonstrated that children evaluated their best



friends higher than their friends on the following dimensions: Validation/Caring, Companionship/Recreation, Intimate Exchange, and Exclusivity. Further, best friends' perceptions of each other were more similar than were friends' perceptions. Thus, best friends are more in agreement about the quality of their relationship than are friends.

In addition to Cleary, et al. (2002), Bryan (2002) investigated children's subjective understanding of the differences in quality between friends and best friends using a Q-sort methodology, instead of a questionnaire. Using third through sixth grade children, Bryan (2002) demonstrated that best friends were evaluated higher than friends on the qualities of loyalty and commitment, compatibility of attitudes and behaviors, interdependence, reciprocal candor, and affirmation and personal support. Furthermore, unlike previous research (e.g., Furman & Bierman, 1984; Berndt & Perry, 1986; Bigelow, 1977), in which younger children report behavioral characteristics as being of primary importance in friendships while older children describe dispositional characteristics as being important, Bryan (2002) did not find a significant difference with regard to age and behavioral/dispositional relationship qualities.

In summary, research has indicated that to understand the significance of friendships during childhood and adolescence, it is necessary to assess children's perceptions of friendship quality (Berndt & Keefe, 1995; Hartup, 1996a; Parker & Asher, 1993). Friendship quality questionnaires developed by Parker and Asher (1993), Bukowski, et al. (1994), and Meurling, et al. (1999) assess the qualitative aspects of children's close peer relationships. Results have indicated significant gender differences, with girls reporting more friends than boys and evaluating the quality of their friendships more positively (Meurling, et al., 1999; Parker & Asher, 1993). Much research has also

investigated differences in quality between various types of friendships, such as best friend versus friend, finding both gender and age differences (Bryan, 2002; Cleary, et al., 2002; Meurling, et al., 1999). Best friends are consistently evaluated higher on positive quality dimensions, such as caring, intimacy, loyalty, and companionship, with girls evaluating these friendships more positively than boys (Bryan, 2002; Meurling, et al., 1999). Additionally, older children make larger distinctions between best friends and friends than do younger children on most dimensions of friendship quality (Meurling, et al., 1999).

### *Longitudinal Methodology*

While much research has been conducted concerning children's relationships and friendship quality, with few exceptions (e.g., Berndt, et al., 1986; Berndt & Keefe, 1995; Ladd, et al., 1996; Parker & Seal, 1996), the longitudinal examination of children's friendship relations, including the stability of these close relationships and their qualities, has been limited. While cross-sectional designs have generated important information regarding children's friendships (e.g., Furman & Bierman, 1984; Meurling, et al., 1999; Parker & Asher, 1993) and have revealed age-related differences between preschool and childhood friends and childhood and adolescent friends (Newcomb & Bagwell, 1996), to detect individual changes over time, longitudinal research must be conducted (Menard, 1991; Taris, 2000). Furthermore, understanding friendship's developmental significance in childhood requires longitudinal designs that can link friendship and friendship quality to developmental outcomes (Berndt, 1996).

Berndt and Keefe (1995) examined children's friendships during a school year and the extent to which those changes, as well as the features of the friendships,

influenced school adjustment. To do this, seventh and eighth grade children completed questionnaires about their behavior in school, their best friends' behavior, and the features of their best friendships during November or December and April or May of the same school year. Teacher reports concerning each child's behavior and achievement in school also were obtained. Best friends were identified based on children's nomination of their three best friends. Friendship features were assessed by asking children a series of questions dealing with three positive features of friendship (i.e., intimate self-disclosure, prosocial behavior, and self-esteem support) and two negative features of friendship (i.e., conflict and rivalry). Results indicated that children viewed their very best friendships more positively than their second best friendships and their second best friendships more positively than their third best friendships. Further, while very best friendships had fewer reports of negative features, second and third best friendships did not differ with regard to the evaluation of negative features. Additionally, girls evaluated their friendships higher in intimate self-disclosure, prosocial behavior, and self-esteem support than did boys. With regard to school involvement and achievement, results indicated that children who described their very best friendships more positively in the Fall reported less disruptive behaviors, were more involved in school, and had higher grades than did children whose friendships had more negative features. Further, school adjustment and achievement were better for children who had more stable friendships, lasting continuously from the Fall to the Spring.

Berndt, et al. (1986) examined changes in children's friendships during a school year and the extent to which those changes influenced children's impressions of their friendships. To do this, best-friend nominations, ratings of liking, and individual

interviews were administered to fourth and eighth grade children during November and May of the same school year. Friendships were considered to be close if one or both of the children named the other as a best friend and if their ratings on the five-point liking scale averaged 4.0 or better. Results indicated that 69% of friendships in the Fall continued to meet the aforementioned criteria for a close friendship in the Spring. Thus, children's friendships remained relatively stable throughout the school year. Children who remained close friends throughout the school year made more comments about liking each other, spending more time together, and reported higher levels of intimacy and prosocial behaviors than those whose friendships did not last. Thus, these factors (liking, intimacy, and spending time together) are related to more stable and closer friendships. Further, girls made more comments about liking their friends and reported higher levels of intimacy in their friendships than did boys.

To assess whether friendship formation and dissolution were indicators of individual differences in children's friendship adjustment, Parker and Seal (1996) studied children age eight to fifteen years attending a sleep-away summer camp. To do this, sociometric assessments of friendships and questionnaires concerning social satisfaction and loneliness were conducted at the beginning, middle, and end of each camp session. Results indicated that children had more reciprocal friends at the start of camp than they did at the end of camp. Further, while age was not a significant factor in the formation and number of friends at the end of camp, there were gender differences with respect to the organization of children's friendships with respect to one another over time. Boys' friendship networks became more interconnected over time, that is, boy's friends were likely to become friends with each other as the camp session progressed. Girl's

networks, on the other hand, were much less interconnected, suggesting that girl's friendships were more exclusive. Similar to these results, boys reported having more friends than did girls at the middle and end of the camp, but not the beginning. Thus, because their network of friends became more interconnected as the end of camp neared, boys reported having more friends than did girls. However, the qualities of these friendships were not assessed.

Ladd, et al. (1996) examined the relationship between friendship quality, stability, and satisfaction with measurements of school adjustment and development in kindergarten children. Friendship qualities measured included companionship, validation, aid, self-disclosure, conflict, and exclusivity. Results indicated that young children, as observed in older children and adolescents, do recognize differences in the quality of their friendships. Young children were more satisfied with their friendships when they were perceived to offer high levels of validation and exclusivity and low levels of conflict. Thus, friendship satisfaction was correlated with validation, exclusivity, and conflict, but not with companionship, aid, and self-disclosure. Further, children's friendships were more likely to continue throughout the school year when they were high in validation and low in conflict. Higher levels of satisfaction and stability were also related to better school adjustment and academic progress.

In summary, longitudinal research into children's friendships, particularly friendship quality, has demonstrated that these close relationships are important to development (Berndt, et. al., 1986; Berndt & Keefe, 1995; Ladd, et al., 1996). For example, children's friendships remain relatively stable over the period of a few months. Further, as levels of positive qualities (e.g., intimacy and exclusivity) become higher,

friendship stability and friendship satisfaction also increase (Berndt, et al., 1986; Ladd, et al., 1996). Research also indicates that school adjustment and achievement are influenced by the characteristics and features of children's friendships, with more involvement and higher grades being reported for children who have friendships with more positive features (Berndt & Keefe, 1995). Additionally, while girls report more friends than do boys (for exception see Parker & Seal, 1996), boy's friendships tend to be more stable than girls' friendships throughout the school year (Berndt, et al., 1986; Ladd, et al., 1996).

### *The Present Study*

The present study extends previous work (i.e., Bryan & Ray, 2003; Cleary, et al., 2002; Meurling, et al., 1999) demonstrating that children evaluate best friends higher than friends on measures of relationship quality. It is first predicted that best friends will be evaluated higher than friends on the dimensions of Caring/Validation, Help/Guidance, Companionship, Intimacy, and Exclusivity. Additionally, girls will evaluate both friends and best friends more positively than will boys on the dimensions of Caring/Validation, Help/Guidance, Companionship, Intimacy, and Exclusivity. Further, younger children will evaluate both friends and best friends higher on the positive relationship qualities (i.e., Caring/Validation, Help/Guidance, Companionship, Intimacy, and Exclusivity) than will older children, and older children will make a greater distinction between friends and best friends than will younger children.

Second, with regard to the stability of children's relationships, it is predicted that there will be developmental and gender differences. That is, it is predicted that relationship strength from Time 1 to Time 2 will be more stable for older children's

relationships (friends, best friends) than for younger children's relationships. It is also predicted that boys' relationships will be more stable than will girls' relationships throughout the school year. Further, it is predicted that older children's relationships will undergo fewer fluctuations throughout the school year than will younger children's relationships. That is, there will be fewer changes in terms of relationship quality in older children's relationships. Additionally, it is predicted that boys will experience less fluctuation in the quality of their relationships than will girls.

Third, based on longitudinal research by Berndt, et al. (1986) reviewed earlier, it is predicted that as relationships change from the first assessment in the Fall to the second assessment in the Spring (e.g., a relationship weakens or a relationship is strengthened) there will be a corresponding change on the relationship quality dimensions.

Specifically, as friendships become closer (i.e., the friendship is strengthened) from the Fall to the Spring, positive relationship qualities, such as Caring/Validation, Help/Guidance, Companionship, Intimacy, and Exclusivity will increase and negative relationship qualities, such as Conflict/Betrayal, will decrease. As friendships become more distant (i.e., the friendship weakens) from the Fall to the Spring, positive relationship qualities will decrease and negative qualities (i.e., Conflict/Betrayal) will increase. Further, it is predicted that as best friendships become closer from the Fall to the Spring, positive relationship qualities will increase and negative relationship qualities will decrease. As best friendships become more distant over time, positive relationship qualities will decrease and negative qualities will increase.

Fourth, research concerning children's levels of satisfaction with their close peer relationships has indicated that positive relationship qualities (i.e., Caring/Validation,

Help/Guidance, Companionship, and Intimacy) are associated with higher levels of satisfaction with the friendship (Ladd, et al., 1996; Parker & Asher, 1993). Thus, the current study predicts a positive correlation to exist between positive relationship qualities and relationship satisfaction and a negative correlation to exist between negative relationship qualities and relationship satisfaction. It is further predicted that children will report higher levels of satisfaction with their best friends than with their friends. Additionally, because girls evaluate their relationships more positively than do boys, it is predicted that girls will report higher levels of satisfaction with their relationships than will boys.



## Method

### *Participants*

Participants included 111 children (53 from second and third grade and 58 from fifth and sixth grade) from a public elementary school in Montgomery, Alabama. Participating children returned a signed parental consent form and gave their own written consent (see Appendix A). Children were informed that participation in the study was not part of their schoolwork and that they were free to drop out of the study at any time without penalty.

### *Design*

Overall, the current study has four between-participant variables: Grade (2-3, 5-6), Gender, Relationship Strength, and Relationship Status. Relationship Strength Group and Relationship Status Group were used as grouping variables and are described below. The study also contains three within-participant variables: Relationship Type (friend, best friend), Quality Dimension (Caring/Validation, Conflict Resolution, Conflict/Betrayal, Help/Guidance, Companionship/Recreation, Intimate Exchange, and Exclusivity), and Time (Time 1 – Fall and Time 2 – Spring).

### *Materials*

Each child completed six questionnaires. The first questionnaire identified same-gender classroom friends and a same-gender classroom very best friend. The second questionnaire asked the children to evaluate how much they liked each of their same-gender classmates. The third and fourth questionnaires assessed the quality of each child's relationship with their lowest rated friend and their very best friend. The fifth and sixth questionnaires included two questions concerning each child's satisfaction with

their friend and best friend. In the Fall, each child completed the Relationship Nomination Questionnaire, the Relationship Rating Questionnaire, the two Relationship Quality Questionnaires, and the two Satisfaction Questionnaires. In the Spring, each child completed the Relationship Nomination Questionnaire, the two Relationship Quality Questionnaires and the two Satisfaction Questionnaires about the previously nominated friend and best friend.

*Relationship Nomination Questionnaire.* The purpose of this questionnaire was to identify each child's same-gender classroom friends and their same-gender classroom very best friend (as in Bryan, 2002; Cleary, et al., 2002; Meurling et al., 1999; see Appendix B). Two forms of the nomination questionnaire were used, one for boys and one for girls, both of which consisted of a roster of the child's same-gender classmates. The child was asked to circle the names of all of his or her friends, and then place an "X" next to the name of his or her very best friend, even if that person was not circled.

*Relationship Rating Questionnaire.* The purpose of this questionnaire was to identify how well each child liked each of his or her same-gender classmates (see Appendix C). This was done using a six-point Likert rating scale, ranging from 1 (Like Very Little) to 6 (Like Very Much). A roster of the names of all of the same-gender classmates was presented to the child and the child was asked to evaluate how much they like each classmate using the number scale at the top of the page.

*Classroom Friend and Classroom Best Friend Selection.* Using the Relationship Nomination Questionnaire and the Relationship Rating Questionnaire, a same-gender classroom friend and same-gender classroom best friend was selected for each child. The two relationships selected were the child's identified very best friend on the relationship

nomination questionnaire and the nominated friend with the lowest Likert rating.

Selecting the friend and best friend in this way was done to maximize potential differences that may exist between a friend and best friend. In the event of a tie between Likert ratings, the friendship was selected using a table of random numbers.

*Relationship Quality Questionnaire.* To assess the quality of each child's relationship with their same-gender classroom friend and same-gender classroom best friend, two Relationship Quality Questionnaires were used – one for the child's friend and one for the child's very best friend (see Appendix D). This questionnaire is a modified version of Parker and Asher's (1993) Friendship Quality Questionnaire and includes 21 items measuring seven qualitative features: Caring/Validation, Conflict Resolution, Conflict/Betrayal, Help/Guidance, Companionship/Recreation, Intimate Exchange, and Exclusivity (see Table 1 for reliability coefficients). In addition to these items, an item unique to the present study was added to determine the extent to which each child's friend and best friend is a good friend and a good best friend. This new item was designed as a global measure of the child's perception of the strength of the relationship and was used to determine the stability of each child's close peer relationships (friend, best friend) from Time 1 (Fall) to Time 2 (Spring) of the school year. Children's responses were assessed using a six-point Likert rating scale, ranging from 0 (Not at all True) to 5 (Really True).

*Table 1: Reliability Coefficients for Relationship Quality Dimensions*

Dimension	Friend	Best Friend
Caring & Validation	0.77	0.62
Conflict Resolution	0.68	0.58
Conflict & Betrayal	0.69	0.66
Help & Guidance	0.76	0.56
Companionship	0.65	0.47
Intimacy	0.78	0.69
Exclusivity	0.69	0.75
All Items	0.87	0.83

*Relationship Satisfaction Questionnaire.* To assess each child's level of satisfaction with their close peer relationships, two satisfaction measures, based on work from Parker and Asher (1993), were used: one for the child's friend and one for the child's very best friend (see Appendix E). This questionnaire includes two questions: "How is your relationship with (friend's/best friend's name) going?" and "How happy are you with this relationship?" Children's responses were assessed using a five-point Likert rating scale, ranging from 1 (Not Good/Happy at All) to 5 (Very Good/Happy).

#### *Procedure*

In the Fall, each child was individually interviewed in a quiet area outside his or her classroom in one 20-30 minute session. Each of the six questionnaires was completed during this time: the Relationship Nomination Questionnaire, the Relationship Rating Questionnaire, the two Relationship Quality Questionnaires, and the two

Relationship Satisfaction Questionnaires. Order of presentation for the two Relationship Quality Questionnaires (one for friend and one for best friend) and the two Relationship Satisfaction Questionnaires (one for friend and one for best friend) was counterbalanced. After all of the tasks were completed, the child was thanked for his or her participation, asked if there were any questions, and then taken back to his or her classroom by the experimenter. In the Spring, this same procedure was repeated for each child. The only exception was the completion of the Relationship Rating Questionnaire, which was administered only during the Fall.

## Results

Results are divided into five sections. First, analyses were conducted on Time 1 data only to investigate hypotheses based on previous work (i.e., Cleary, et al., 2002; Meurling, et al., 1999), demonstrating that children evaluate their best friends more positively than their friends. Second, to examine the stability of children's relationships over time, analyses were performed on relationship strength difference scores and on relationship quality difference scores. Specifically, data from both Time 1 and Time 2 were analyzed to investigate changes in children's perceptions of the strength of their relationships. Further, Time 1 and Time 2 data were analyzed to investigate fluctuations of relationship qualities over time. Third, data from Time 1 and Time 2 were analyzed to investigate the association between relationship quality and the strength of the relationship (whether the relationship strengthens or weakens) over time. Fourth, data from Time 1 and Time 2 were analyzed to examine the linkages between relationship satisfaction and relationship quality. Lastly, additional analyses are reported that support the hypotheses.

To examine grade effects with sufficient group size the four grade levels were collapsed, forming a younger group (Grades 2 and 3, mean age = 8 years, 3 months) and an older group (Grades 5 and 6, mean age = 11 years, 3 months). Overall, there were four between-participant variables: Grade, Gender, Relationship Strength, and Relationship Status; and three within-participant variables: Relationship Type, Quality Dimension, and Time. Follow-up tests to statistically significant interactions were conducted as tests for simple effects, followed by Newman-Keuls post-hoc tests ( $p < .05$ ) to determine sources of differences where appropriate. For post-hoc analyses of two

groups, t-test's were used and a Bonferroni alpha correction was applied (number of comparisons/.05) to interpret significant effects.

### *I. Replication Analyses on Relationship Quality*

For hypotheses 1, 2, and 3, a 2 (Relationship Type) x 2 (Gender) x 2 (Grade) x 7 (Quality Dimension) mixed factorial ANOVA was performed on relationship quality dimension scores.

*Hypothesis 1:* Analysis on hypothesis 1, predicting that children would evaluate their best friends more positively than their friends, revealed a Relationship Type x Quality Dimension interaction,  $F(6, 642) = 12.86, p < .001$ . While it was originally predicted that best friends would be evaluated higher than would friends on the dimensions of Caring/Validation, Help/Guidance, Companionship, Intimacy, and Exclusivity, best friends were actually evaluated more positively than were friends on all relationship quality dimensions, except for Conflict/Betrayal (see Table 2 for means and standard deviations).

*Table 2: Relationship Quality Dimensions: Relationship Type x Quality Dimension Interaction*

Dimension	Friend Mean (SD)	Best Friend Mean (SD)
Caring & Validation	3.04 (1.61)	4.19 (1.00)*
Conflict Resolution	2.95 (1.59)	3.78 (1.35)*
Conflict & Betrayal	3.64 (1.48)	3.94 (1.31)
Help & Guidance	2.55 (1.65)	3.81 (1.20)*
Companionship	2.34 (1.50)	3.99 (1.07)*
Intimacy	1.99 (1.66)	3.12 (1.56)*
Exclusivity	2.27 (1.56)	3.79 (1.35)*

\* $p < .001$ .

For friends, Conflict/Betrayal was evaluated higher than all the other dimensions. Caring/Validation and Conflict Resolution did not differ and were evaluated higher than were Help/Guidance, Companionship, and Exclusivity, which did not differ. Lastly, Intimacy was evaluated the lowest of the relationship quality dimensions for least-liked friends. For best friends, a different pattern emerged. Caring/Validation was evaluated the highest, followed by Companionship, Conflict/Betrayal, Help/Guidance, Exclusivity, and Conflict Resolution, which did not differ. As with friends, Intimacy was also evaluated as the lowest relationship quality dimension for best friends.

While the relative importance of each quality dimension within friends and within best friends was assessed using the follow-ups described above, quality dimensions within each relationship type were rank ordered and a Spearman rank order correlation was conducted on each rank. This was done to directly assess the similarity with regards



to the importance of each quality dimension between friends and best friends. Analysis revealed a nonsignificant relationship,  $r_s(7) = .57, p = .18$ . Thus, the rank-ordered importance of each dimension was decidedly different for friends and for best friends.

In summary, the first hypothesis was supported, with best friends being evaluated significantly higher than friends on all relationship quality dimensions with the exception of Conflict/Betrayal. This finding is consistent with Meurling, et al. (1999) demonstrating that Conflict/Betrayal was the only quality dimension in which friends and best friends did not differ. Further, these results are also similar to Cleary, et al. (2002), which demonstrated that best friends were evaluated higher than friends on the Caring/Validation, Companionship, Intimacy, and Exclusivity dimensions. However, they found no differences to exist for Conflict Resolution, Conflict/Betrayal, and Help/Guidance.

*Hypothesis 2:* Analyses on hypothesis 2, predicting that girls would evaluate both friends and best friends more positively than would boys, revealed a Gender x Quality Dimension interaction,  $F(6, 642) = 4.46, p < .001$ . While girls were predicted to evaluate their peer relationships higher than were boys on the dimensions of Caring/Validation, Help/Guidance, Companionship, Intimacy, and Exclusivity, only Conflict Resolution was evaluated more positively by girls (see Table 3 for means and standard deviations). Thus, this hypothesis was not supported.

*Table 3: Relationship Quality Dimensions: Gender x Quality Dimension Interaction*

Dimension	Girls Mean (SD)	Boys Mean (SD)
Caring & Validation	3.78 (1.04)	3.49 (1.21)
Conflict Resolution	3.76 (1.11)	3.02 (1.33)*
Conflict & Betrayal	3.76 (1.14)	3.76 (1.11)
Help & Guidance	3.18 (1.06)	3.17 (1.22)
Companionship	3.01 (0.89)	3.29 (1.05)
Intimacy	2.86 (1.29)	2.34 (1.30)
Exclusivity	2.92 (1.19)	3.17 (1.21)

\* $p < .01$ .

*Hypothesis 3:* Hypothesis 3 predicted that younger children (Grades 2-3) would evaluate both friends and best friends more positively than would older children (Grades 5-6) on the Caring/Validation, Help/Guidance, Companionship, Intimacy, and Exclusivity quality dimensions. Analyses revealed a Grade x Quality Dimension interaction,  $F(6, 642) = 3.60, p < .01$ . The only significant finding revealed that older children evaluated both of their peer relationships higher on Conflict Resolution than did younger children (see Table 4 for means and standard deviations). Thus, this hypothesis was not supported.

*Table 4: Relationship Quality Dimensions: Grade x Quality Dimension Interaction*

Dimension	Grades 2 – 3 Mean (SD)	Grades 5 – 6 Mean (SD)
Caring & Validation	3.75 (1.19)	3.52 (1.08)
Conflict Resolution	2.98 (1.31)	3.72 (1.15)*
Conflict & Betrayal	3.70 (1.25)	3.81 (0.99)
Help & Guidance	3.22 (1.22)	3.13 (1.07)
Companionship	3.28 (1.01)	3.04 (0.95)
Intimacy	2.58 (1.44)	2.59 (1.20)
Exclusivity	3.22 (1.26)	2.90 (1.13)

\* $p < .01$ .

*Hypothesis 4:* For hypothesis 4, which assessed relationship discrimination between friends and best friends, a 2 (Grade) x 2 (Gender) x 7 (Quality Dimension) repeated measures ANOVA was conducted on the absolute difference scores between friends and best friends. Specifically, hypothesis 4 predicted that older children would make a greater distinction between friends and best friends than would younger children. The analysis was nonsignificant and the hypothesis was not supported.

Analysis did reveal a main effect for Quality Dimension,  $F(6, 641) = 8.88$ ,  $p < .001$ . For all children, more discrimination occurred between friends and best friends on Companionship than for Caring/Validation, Conflict Resolution, and Conflict/Betrayal (see Table 5 for difference scores and standard deviations). However, Companionship did not differ from Help/Guidance, Intimacy, and Exclusivity.

*Table 5: Quality Dimension Main Effect: Difference Scores and Standard Deviations*

Dimension	Difference Score	Standard Deviation
Caring & Validation	1.37	1.22
Conflict Resolution	1.16	1.17
Conflict & Betrayal	1.21	1.24
Help & Guidance	1.68	1.31
Companionship	1.93	1.38
Intimacy	1.67	1.39
Exclusivity	1.71	1.44

## *II. Stability of Relationship Strength and Relationship Quality*

To assess the second set of hypotheses referring to the stability of children's relationships, two analyses were performed. For hypotheses 5 and 6, a 2 (Gender) x 2 (Grade) x 2 (Relationship Type) repeated measures ANOVA was conducted on relationship strength absolute difference scores.

*Hypothesis 5:* Hypothesis 5 predicted that relationship strength from Time 1 to Time 2 would be more stable for older children's relationships than for younger children's relationships. Analysis of relationship strength absolute difference scores revealed no significant differences and the hypothesis was not supported.

*Hypothesis 6:* This hypothesis predicted that relationship strength from Time 1 to Time 2 would be more stable for boys' relationships than for girls' relationships. Analysis of relationship strength absolute difference scores revealed no differences to support this hypothesis.

Analysis did reveal a main effect for Relationship Type,  $F(1, 107) = 5.13, p < .05$ . Relationships with best friends ( $M = 0.61, SD = 1.27$ ) were reported as being more stable over time than were relationships with friends ( $M = 0.96, SD = 1.32$ ). Specifically, in terms of relationship strength, best friends experienced fewer fluctuations than did friends.

For hypotheses 7 and 8, a 2 (Gender) x 2 (Grade) x 2 (Relationship Type) x 7 (Quality Dimension) repeated measures ANOVA was performed on relationship quality absolute difference scores.

*Hypothesis 7:* This hypothesis predicted that older children's relationships would experience fewer fluctuations in terms of relationship quality throughout the school year than would younger children's relationships. Analysis of relationship quality absolute difference scores revealed no significant differences and the hypothesis was not supported.

*Hypothesis 8:* Hypothesis 8 predicted that boys would undergo fewer fluctuations in the quality of their relationships than would girls. Analysis of relationship quality absolute difference scores revealed no findings to support this hypothesis.

Analysis did reveal a main effect for Quality Dimension,  $F(6, 618) = 3.86, p < .01$ . Conflict Resolution was found to fluctuate, or change, more than Conflict/Betrayal in children's relationships throughout the school year (see Table 6 for means and standard deviations).

*Table 6: Quality Dimension Main Effect: Mean Scores and Standard Deviations*

Dimension	Mean	Standard Deviation
Caring & Validation	1.26	1.21
Conflict Resolution	1.39	1.27
Conflict & Betrayal	0.94	0.99
Help & Guidance	1.26	1.16
Companionship	1.24	1.08
Intimacy	1.19	1.12
Exclusivity	1.23	1.20

### *III. Association between Relationship Strength and Relationship Quality*

To assess the third set of hypotheses referring to the association between changes in relationship strength (i.e., whether the relationship strengthens or weakens over time) and relationship quality, a relationship strength grouping variable was created to assess change in relationships over time. This grouping variable was based on item 22 of the Relationship Quality Questionnaire (“friend/best friend’s name is a good friend/best friend”). For friends, this variable consisted of three groups: one group was composed of children whose relationships strengthened over time (i.e., Time 2 data was higher than Time 1 data, n=27); the second group was composed of children whose relationships did not change over time (i.e., Time 1 data and Time 2 data were equal, n=54); and the last group was composed of children whose relationships weakened over time (i.e., Time 1 data was higher than Time 2 data, n=27).

To assess these hypotheses, two analyses were performed: one for friends and one for best friends. For hypothesis 9, a 3 (Relationship Strength Group) x 2 (Time) x 7

(Quality Dimension) mixed factorial ANOVA was performed on relationship quality scores for friends.

*Hypothesis 9:* Hypothesis 9 predicted that as friendships change over time, there would be a corresponding change in the relationship quality dimensions. Specifically, it was predicted that as friendships strengthened over time, positive relationship qualities would increase and negative relationship qualities would decrease. Additionally, it was predicted that as friendships weakened over time, positive relationship qualities would decrease and negative relationship qualities would increase. This hypothesis was not supported as Relationship Strength Group x Quality Dimension was not significant.

However, analysis did reveal a Relationship Strength Group x Time interaction,  $F(2, 105) = 15.19, p < .001$ . As friendships strengthened over time, relationships qualities increased; as friendships weakened over time, relationship qualities decreased; and as friendships remained stable over time (relationship strength stayed the same), relationship qualities did not change (see Table 7 for means and standard deviations). Additionally, when looking at Time 1 data only, there was no differentiation between the three relationship strength groups. Thus, friendships that strengthened over time did not have higher quality dimension scores at Time 1 and friendships that weakened over time did not have lower quality dimension scores at Time 1. Therefore, by looking at Time 1 data only, it could not have been predicted how the friendship would change over time (i.e., strengthen or weaken). Further, at Time 2, quality dimension scores were significantly lower for friendships that weakened over time than they were for friendships that strengthened over time or stayed the same, which did not differ from each other.

*Table 7: Friendship Quality: Relationship Strength Group x Time Interaction*

Relationship Strength Group	Time 1 Mean (SD)	Time 2 Mean (SD)
Relationship Strengthened (n=27)	2.09 (0.92)	2.62 (0.97)*
Relationship Stayed Same (n=54)	2.96 (1.09)	2.95 (1.13)
Relationship Weakened (n=27)	2.67 (1.21)	1.60 (0.75)*

\* $p < .05$ .

Analysis also revealed a main effect for Quality Dimension,  $F(6, 630) = 32.51, p < .001$ , with Conflict/Betrayal being evaluated higher than all other qualities. Further, Caring/Validation and Conflict Resolution, which did not differ, were higher than Help/Guidance, Companionship, Exclusivity, and Intimacy, which also did not differ (see Table 8 for means and standard deviations).

*Table 8: Friendship Quality: Quality Dimension Main Effect*

Dimension	Mean	Standard Deviation
Caring & Validation	2.93	1.57
Conflict Resolution	2.88	1.55
Conflict & Betrayal	3.57	1.48
Help & Guidance	2.45	1.62
Companionship	2.24	1.50
Intimacy	1.98	1.65
Exclusivity	2.10	1.53

For hypothesis 10, a 2 (Relationship Strength Group) x 2 (Time) x 7 (Quality Dimension) repeated measures ANOVA was performed on best friend relationship



quality scores. For best friends, the relationship strength grouping variable consisted of two groups: one group was composed of children whose relationships did not change over time ( $n=79$ ) and the second group was composed of children whose relationships weakened over time ( $n=27$ ). The group of children whose relationships strengthened over time was omitted for best friends due to insufficient data available ( $n=4$ ).

*Hypothesis 10:* Hypothesis 10 predicted that as best friendships change over time, there would be a corresponding change in the relationship quality dimensions. Specifically, it was predicted that as best friendships strengthened over time, positive relationship qualities would increase and negative relationship qualities would decrease. Due to insufficient data, this part of the hypothesis was not tested. It was additionally predicted that as the best friendships weakened over time, positive relationship qualities would decrease and negative relationship qualities would increase.

Analysis revealed a Relationship Strength Group x Time x Quality Dimension interaction,  $F(6, 624) = 2.72, p < .05$  (see Tables 9, 10, and 11 for means and standard deviations). As best friendships weakened over time, relationship qualities decreased and as best friendships remained stable over time (relationship status stayed the same), relationship qualities did not change.

Specifically, for best friendships that weakened over time, Caring/Validation, Help/Guidance, Companionship, and Exclusivity were lower than these qualities for best friendships that stayed the same. Also, Conflict/Betrayal was higher for best friendships that weakened over time than for best friendships that stayed the same. Thus, with the exception of Intimacy, positive relationship qualities were lower for best friendships that

weakened over time and negative relationship qualities were higher. Therefore, this hypothesis was partially supported.

*Table 9: Best Friend Quality: Relationship Strength Group x Time Interaction*

Relationship Strength Group	Time 1 Mean (SD)	Time 2 Mean (SD)
Relationship Weakened (N=27)	3.71 (1.28)	2.19 (1.37)*
Relationship Stayed Same (N=79)	3.87 (1.23)	3.67 (1.32)

\* $p < .001$ .

*Table 10: Best Friend Quality: Relationship Strength Group x Quality Dimension Interaction*

Dimension	Best Friendships Weakened	Best Friendships Stayed Same
Caring & Validation	3.07 (0.89)	4.11 (0.90)**
Conflict Resolution	3.14 (1.06)	3.76 (1.13)
Conflict & Betrayal	3.22 (1.63)	4.03 (1.26)*
Help & Guidance	3.06 (0.79)	3.71 (1.15)*
Companionship	3.13 (0.89)	3.87 (1.04)*
Intimacy	2.57 (1.19)	3.18 (1.27)
Exclusivity	2.49 (1.28)	3.72 (1.04)**

\* $p < .01$ . \*\* $p < .001$ .

*Table 11: Best Friend Quality: Time x Quality Dimension Interaction*

Dimension	Time 1	Time 2
Caring & Validation	4.25 (0.98)	3.47 (1.47)*
Conflict Resolution	3.76 (1.35)	3.44 (1.55)
Conflict & Betrayal	3.91 (1.33)	3.73 (1.47)
Help & Guidance	3.86 (1.18)	3.22 (1.47)*
Companionship	4.02 (1.05)	3.33 (1.47)*
Intimacy	3.21 (1.52)	2.85 (1.43)
Exclusivity	3.80 (1.37)	3.00 (1.55)*

\* $p < .001$ .

#### *IV. Relationship Satisfaction with Friends and Best Friends*

To assess the fourth set of hypotheses, referring to relationship satisfaction, two analyses were performed. For hypothesis 11, two sets of Pearson product moment correlations ( $r$ ) were conducted on relationship quality scores and relationship satisfaction scores using an average of Time 1 and Time 2 data: one for friends and one for best friends.

*Hypothesis 11:* Hypothesis 11 predicted a positive correlation to exist between positive relationship qualities (i.e., Caring/Validation, Conflict Resolution, Help/Guidance, Companionship, Intimacy, and Exclusivity) and relationship satisfaction and a negative correlation to exist between negative relationship qualities (i.e., Conflict/Betrayal) and relationship satisfaction. For friends, results demonstrated that positive relationship qualities were associated with higher levels of satisfaction and that negative relationship qualities were associated with lower levels of satisfaction (see Table

12 for correlation coefficients). Thus, this hypothesis was supported for children's relationships with their friends.

For best friends, results also demonstrated that positive relationship qualities (i.e., Caring/Validation, Conflict Resolution, Help/Guidance, Companionship, Intimacy, Exclusivity) were associated with higher levels of satisfaction and that negative relationship qualities (i.e., Conflict/Betrayal) were associated with lower levels of satisfaction (see Table 12 for correlation coefficients). Thus, this hypothesis was supported for children's relationships with their best friends.

*Table 12: Quality Dimension and Relationship Satisfaction: Correlation Coefficients*

Dimension	Friend	Best Friend
Caring & Validation	0.68***	0.49***
Conflict Resolution	0.51***	0.28**
Conflict & Betrayal	-0.38***	-0.39***
Help & Guidance	0.57***	0.34***
Companionship	0.52***	0.31**
Intimacy	0.58***	0.22*
Exclusivity	0.54***	0.42***

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

In summary, for both friends and best friends, this hypothesis was supported. Positive relationship qualities were associated with higher levels of satisfaction and negative relationship qualities were associated with lower levels of satisfaction.

For hypotheses 12 and 13, a 2 (Gender) x 2 (Relationship Type) mixed factorial ANOVA was conducted on relationship satisfaction scores using Time 1 data only.

*Hypothesis 12:* Analyses on hypothesis 12, predicting that children would report higher levels of satisfaction with their best friends than with their friends, revealed a Relationship Type main effect,  $F(1, 113) = 100.95, p < .001$ . Children reported being more satisfied with their relationships with their best friends than with their friends (see Table 13 for means and standard deviations). Thus, this hypothesis was supported.

*Table 13: Relationship Type Main Effect: Mean Scores and Standard Deviations*

Relationship Type	Mean	Standard Deviation
Friend	3.86	1.08
Best Friend	4.84*	0.29

\* $p < .001$ .

*Hypothesis 13:* Analyses on hypothesis 13, predicting that girls would report higher levels of satisfaction with both their friends and their best friends than would boys, revealed no significant differences and this hypothesis was not supported. Thus, girls appeared to be no more satisfied with their peer relationships than were boys.

Additionally, analyses for hypotheses 12 and 13 were performed in the larger context of a 2 (Grade) x 2 (Gender) x 2 (Relationship Type) repeated measures ANOVA. This ANOVA was performed on relationship satisfaction scores on Time 1 data only. Analysis revealed a Grade x Gender x Relationship Type interaction,  $F(1, 111) = 7.40, p < .01$  (see Tables 14, 15, and 16 for means and standard deviations). Results demonstrated that older girls were more satisfied with their relationships than were younger girls and older boys. Additionally, both boys and girls were more satisfied with their best friendships than with their friendships; and both younger and older children were more satisfied with their best friendships than with their friendships.

*Table 14: Relationship Satisfaction: Grade x Gender Interaction*

Gender	Younger Children	Older Children
Girls	4.15 (0.74)	4.51 (0.55)*
Boys	4.48 (0.75)	0.29 (0.61)

\* $p < .05$ .

*Table 15: Relationship Satisfaction: Gender x Relationship Type Interaction*

Gender	Friends	Best Friends
Girls	3.83 (1.07)	4.86 (0.26)*
Boys	3.88 (1.09)	4.81 (0.32)*

\* $p < .001$ .

*Table 16: Relationship Satisfaction: Grade x Relationship Type Interaction*

Grade	Friends	Best Friends
Younger Children	3.79 (1.26)	4.88 (0.27)*
Older Children	3.92 (0.88)	4.79 (0.31)*

\* $p < .001$ .

#### *V. Additional Analyses*

Additional analyses were also conducted to support the original hypotheses. For this section, a new relationship status variable (not to be confused with the relationship strength groups) was created based on children's responses to the Relationship Nomination Questionnaire (see Appendix B). For friends, this variable consisted of two groups: one group was composed of children who remained friends with the same child over time; the second group was composed of children who were no longer friends with the same child over time (see Table 17 for frequencies). To be considered friends over

time, children had to circle the same friend on the Relationship Nomination Questionnaire at both Time 1 and Time 2. If the child did not circle the same child at Time 2, the children were considered to no longer be friends. For best friends, this variable also consisted of two groups: one group was composed of children who remained best friends with the same child over time; the second group was composed of children who did not remain best friends over time (see Table 17 for frequencies). To be considered best friends over time, children had to identify the same child as their very best friend at both Time 1 and Time 2. If children did not identify that same child as their best friend at Time 2 as they did at Time 1, then the children were considered to no longer be best friends. Using this new variable, the original hypotheses from sections II, III, and IV were re-analyzed.

*Table 17: Frequencies for Relationship Status Groups*

Grade	Gender	Friends		Best Friends	
		Maintained	Not Maintained	Maintained	Not Maintained
<b>2 – 3</b>					
	Girls	14 (16%)	9 (35%)	11 (20%)	12 (22%)
	Boys	25 (29%)	4 (15%)	13 (23%)	16 (29%)
<b>5 – 6</b>					
	Girls	23 (27%)	6 (23%)	16 (29%)	13 (24%)
	Boys	23 (27%)	7 (27%)	16 (29%)	14 (25%)
<b>Total</b>		<b>85 (76%)</b>	<b>26 (23%)</b>	<b>56 (50%)</b>	<b>55 (50%)</b>

In assessing the second set of hypotheses referring to the stability of children's relationships, several additional analyses were performed. First, four chi squares were performed to investigate age and gender differences among children who maintained their relationships over time. For friends, two chi squares were performed on children

who remained friends over time ( $n=85$ ): one for Grade,  $\chi^2(1, n = 85) = 0.58, p > .05$ ; and one for Gender,  $\chi^2(1, n = 85) = 1.42, p > .05$ . Analyses revealed no significant findings. For best friends, two chi squares were performed on children who had the same best friend at Time 1 and Time 2 ( $n=56$ ): one for Grade,  $\chi^2(1, n = 56) = 1.14, p > .05$ ; and one for Gender,  $\chi^2(1, n = 56) = 0.08, p > .05$ . Analyses revealed no significant findings. Thus, among children who maintained their relationships over time, there were no differences in stability between older and younger children or between girls and boys.

Second, two t-tests were conducted on relationship strength absolute difference scores: one for friends and one for best friends. This was done to assess differences in the perceived strength of the relationship between children who remained friends/best friends with the same child over time and those who did not. For friends, analysis revealed that relationships for children who were still friends were more stable over time than relationships for children who were no longer friends in the Spring,  $t(109) = -3.03, p < .01$ , two-tailed (see Table 18 for absolute difference scores and standard deviations). For best friends, analysis also revealed that relationships were more stable for children who were still best friends than for children who had a different best friend in the Spring,  $t(109) = -4.05, p < .001$ , two-tailed (see Table 19 for absolute difference scores and standard deviations).

*Table 18: Relationship Status Group for Friends: Difference Scores and Standard Deviations*

Relationship Status Group	Difference Score	Standard Deviation
Still Friends	0.75*	1.14
No Longer Friends	1.62	1.63

\* $p < .01$ .



*Table 19: Relationship Status Group for Best Friends: Difference Scores and Standard Deviations*

Relationship Status Group	Difference Score	Standard Deviation
Still Best Friends	0.16*	0.53
No Longer Best Friends	1.07	1.60

\* $p < .001$ .

To get a more descriptive picture of the nature of change with regard to children's perceptions of their close peer relationships, Time (Fall, Spring) was included as a variable in the analyses. Thus, two repeated measures ANOVA's were performed: one for friends and one for best friends. For friends, a 2 (Relationship Status Group: still friends, no longer friends) x 2 (Time) repeated measures ANOVA was conducted on relationship strength scores. Analysis revealed a Relationship Status Group x Time interaction,  $F(1, 109) = 12.38, p < .01$  (see Table 20 for means and standard deviations). Children who were no longer friends with the same child in the Spring evaluated the relationship as being lower at Time 2 than at Time 1. Thus, perceived strength decreased over time when the children stopped being friends. Further, children who were no longer friends in the Spring had less stable relationships at Time 2 than did children who remained friends.

*Table 20: Relationship Strength for Friends: Relationship Status Group x Time Interaction*

Relationship Status Group	Time 1	Time 2
Still Friends	4.41 (1.03)	4.55 (0.98)
No Longer Friends	4.27 (1.34)	3.19 (1.83)*

\* $p < .05$ .

For best friends, a 2 (Relationship Status Group: still best friends, no longer best friends) x 2 (Time) repeated measures ANOVA was conducted on relationship strength scores. Analysis revealed a Relationship Status Group x Time interaction,  $F(1, 109) = 24.83, p < .001$  (see Table 21 for means and standard deviations). Children who were no longer best friends with the same child in the Spring evaluated the relationship as being lower in strength at Time 2 than at Time 1. Further, children who were no longer best friends in the Spring had less stable relationships at Time 2 than did children who remained friends. This is the same pattern that emerged on analyses with friends. Thus, stability decreased over time as the children stopped being friends and best friends.

*Table 21: Relationship Strength for Best Friends: Relationship Status Group x Time Interaction*

Relationship Status Group	Time 1	Time 2
Still Best Friends	4.89 (0.45)	4.95 (0.30)
No Longer Best Friends	4.98 (0.14)	3.91 (1.59)*

\* $p < .001$ .

To assess hypotheses referring to the fluctuation of relationship qualities as a function of relationship status, two analyses were performed: one for friends and one for best friends. This was done to assess fluctuations in terms of relationship quality between children who remained friends/best friends with the same child over time and those who did not. For friends, a 2 (Relationship Status Group) x 7 (Quality Dimension) repeated measure ANOVA was conducted on quality dimension absolute difference scores. No significant findings were revealed. For best friends, a 2 (Relationship Status Group) x 7 (Quality Dimension) repeated measure ANOVA was conducted on quality dimension absolute difference scores. Analysis revealed a Relationship Status Group

(still best friends, no longer best friends) x Quality Dimension interaction,  $F(6, 648) = 2.39, p < .05$  (see Table 22 for means and standard deviations). Children who maintained their best friendships from Time 1 to Time 2 experienced fewer fluctuations over time (i.e., they were more stable) on the dimensions of Caring/Validation and Exclusivity than did children who no longer had the same best friend. Thus, these qualities appear to be important in the maintenance of best friendships over time.

*Table 22: Relationship Qualities for Best Friends: Relationship Status Group x Quality Dimension Interaction*

Dimension	Still Best Friends	No Longer Best Friends
Caring & Validation	0.81 (0.78)	1.52 (1.42)*
Conflict Resolution	1.12 (1.10)	1.47 (1.38)
Conflict & Betrayal	0.95 (1.00)	0.92 (1.16)
Help & Guidance	0.90 (0.94)	1.47 (1.26)
Companionship	0.94 (0.84)	1.44 (1.24)
Intimacy	0.98 (0.87)	1.22 (1.13)
Exclusivity	0.89 (0.94)	1.65 (1.38)*

\* $p < .01$ .

To once again obtain a more complete picture of the nature of change in children's relationships, Time (Fall, Spring) was included as a variable in the analyses. Thus, two 2 (Relationship Status Group) x 2 (Time) repeated measures ANOVA's were conducted on relationship quality dimension scores: one for friends and one for best friends. For friends, a main effect for Relationship Status Group was revealed,  $F(1, 106) = 23.47, p < .001$  (see Table 23 for means and standard deviations). Relationship quality

scores were higher for children who maintained their friendships over time than for children who did not.

*Table 23: Relationship Quality for Friends: Relationship Status Group Main Effect*

Relationship Status Group	Mean	Standard Deviation
Still Friends	2.82*	0.87
No Longer Friends	1.86	0.84

\* $p < .001$ .

For best friends, a Relationship Status Group x Time x Quality Dimension interaction was revealed,  $F(6, 648) = 2.90, p < .01$  (see Table 24, 25, and 26 for means and standard deviations). For children who maintained the same best friends over time, relationship qualities were higher at Time 2 than they were for children who did not have the same best friends. Further, for children who no longer had the same best friend in the Spring, relationship qualities were higher at Time 1 than at Time 2. Thus, qualities decreased over time as children stopped being best friends. Additionally, the Exclusivity dimension was higher for children who stayed best friends over time. Further, for all children, Caring/Validation, Help/Guidance, Companionship, and Exclusivity were higher at Time 1 than at Time 2.

*Table 24: Relationship Quality for Best Friends: Relationship Status Group x Time Interaction*

Relationship Status Group	Time 1	Time 2
Still Best Friends	3.77 (0.77)	3.77 (0.84)
No Longer Best Friends	3.86 (0.79)	2.82 (1.10)*

\* $p < .001$ .

*Table 25: Relationship Qualities for Best Friends: Relationship Status Group x Quality Dimension Interaction*

Dimension	Still Best Friends	No Longer Best Friends
Caring & Validation	3.97 (1.00)	3.70 (1.04)
Conflict Resolution	3.81 (1.06)	3.42 (1.17)
Conflict & Betrayal	4.05 (0.95)	3.59 (1.36)
Help & Guidance	3.59 (1.12)	3.46 (1.08)
Companionship	3.87 (1.11)	3.43 (0.97)
Intimacy	3.31 (1.23)	2.76 (1.26)
Exclusivity	3.80 (1.04)	3.03 (1.26)*

\* $p < .001$ .

*Table 26: Relationship Qualities for Best Friends: Time x Quality Dimension Interaction*

Dimension	Time 1	Time 2
Caring & Validation	4.23 (0.97)	3.45 (1.49)*
Conflict Resolution	3.76 (1.33)	3.47 (1.54)
Conflict & Betrayal	3.90 (1.32)	3.74 (1.45)
Help & Guidance	3.83 (1.20)	3.23 (1.47)*
Companionship	3.99 (1.06)	3.32 (1.48)*
Intimacy	3.21 (1.50)	2.86 (1.43)
Exclusivity	3.80 (1.34)	3.03 (1.55)*

\* $p < .001$ .

To assess the third set of hypotheses referring to the association between changes in relationship strength (i.e., whether the relationship strengthened or weakened over time) and relationship quality, two additional analyses were performed. First, a 3

(Relationship Strength Group) x 2 (Time) x 7 (Quality Dimension) repeated measures ANOVA was performed on relationship quality scores only for children who maintained their friendships over time. Analysis revealed a Relationship Strength Group x Time interaction,  $F(2, 80) = 13.01, p < .001$  (see Table 27 for means and standard deviations). For children whose relationships strengthened from Time 1 to Time 2, relationship qualities increased; for children whose relationships stayed the same, relationship qualities remained the same; and for children whose relationships weakened over time, relationship qualities decreased. Further, at Time 2, relationship qualities were higher for friendships that strengthened over time than for friendships that weakened. These are the same results obtained for friends in the original hypothesis, which included all children, not just those who maintained their friendships over time.

*Table 27: Relationship Quality for Friends: Relationship Strength Group x Time Interaction*

Relationship Strength Group	Time 1 Mean (SD)	Time 2 Mean (SD)
Relationship Strengthened (n=27)	2.23 (0.83)	2.75 (0.93)*
Relationship Stayed Same (n=54)	3.09 (0.97)	3.16 (1.08)
Relationship Weakened (n=27)	3.06 (1.09)	1.79 (0.78)**

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

Second, a 2 (Relationship Strength Group) x 2 (Time) x 7 (Quality Dimension) repeated measures ANOVA was performed on relationship quality scores for children who did not maintain their best friendships from the Fall to the Spring. Analysis revealed a Relationship Strength Group x Time x Quality Dimension interaction,  $F(6, 318) = 3.25, p < .01$  (see Tables 28 and 29 for means and standard deviations). For children

whose relationships weakened from Time 1 to Time 2, relationship qualities were significantly lower at Time 2 than at Time 1. Further, at Time 2, relationship qualities were higher for best friendships that remained stable over time than for best friendships that weakened. Additionally, for children who did not maintain their best friendships over time, Caring/Validation, Conflict Resolution, Help/Guidance, Companionship, Intimacy, and Exclusivity were lower at Time 2 than at Time 1. Thus, all positive qualities decreased over time when children were no longer best friends.

*Table 28: Relationship Quality for Best Friends: Relationship Strength Group x Time Interaction*

Relationship Strength Group	Time 1 Mean (SD)	Time 2 Mean (SD)
Relationship Stayed Same (n=30)	3.96 (0.80)	3.40 (0.92)
Relationship Weakened (n=25)	3.74 (0.78)	2.13 (0.88)*

\* $p < .01$ .

*Table 29: Relationship Qualities for Best Friends: Time x Quality Dimension Interaction*

Dimension	Time 1	Time 2
Caring & Validation	4.39 (0.93)	3.00 (1.57)**
Conflict Resolution	3.85 (1.26)	2.99 (1.68)*
Conflict & Betrayal	3.75 (1.51)	3.44 (1.58)
Help & Guidance	4.01 (1.01)	2.92 (1.61)**
Companionship	3.98 (0.97)	2.88 (1.47)**
Intimacy	3.21 (1.56)	2.31 (1.31)**
Exclusivity	3.82 (1.44)	2.23 (1.47)**

\* $p < .01$ . \*\* $p < .001$ .

To assess the fourth set of hypotheses, referring to relationship satisfaction, several additional analyses were performed. First, four Pearson product moment correlations ( $r$ ) were conducted on relationship quality scores and relationship satisfaction scores using an average of Time 1 and Time 2 data: two for friends (one for children who remained friends over time and one for children who did not) and two for best friends (one for children who remained best friends over time and one for children who did not). For children who maintained their friendships over time, results demonstrated that positive relationship qualities (i.e., Caring/Validation, Conflict Resolution, Help/Guidance, Companionship, Intimacy, and Exclusivity) were associated with higher levels of satisfaction and negative relationship qualities (i.e., Conflict/Betrayal) were associated with lower levels of satisfaction (see Table 30 for correlation coefficients). For children who were no longer friends in the Spring, Caring/Validation, Companionship, Intimacy, and Exclusivity were associated with higher levels of satisfaction (see Table 30 for correlation coefficients).



*Table 30: Relationship Qualities and Relationship Satisfaction: Correlation Coefficients*

Dimension	Still Friends	No Longer Friends
Caring & Validation	0.63**	0.66**
Conflict Resolution	0.47**	0.37
Conflict & Betrayal	-0.37*	-0.27
Help & Guidance	0.55**	0.41
Companionship	0.43**	0.56**
Intimacy	0.50**	0.67**
Exclusivity	0.44**	0.54*

\* $p < .01$ . \*\* $p < .001$ .

For children who maintained their best friendships over time, results demonstrated that Caring/Validation was associated with higher levels of satisfaction and Conflict/Betrayal was associated with lower levels of satisfaction (see Table 31 for correlation coefficients). For children who were no longer best friends in the Spring, Caring/Validation, Help/Guidance, and Exclusivity were associated with higher levels of satisfaction (see Table 31 for correlation coefficients).

*Table 31: Relationship Qualities and Relationship Satisfaction: Correlation Coefficients*

Dimension	Still Best Friends	No Longer Best Friends
Caring & Validation	0.52**	0.47**
Conflict Resolution	0.22	0.26
Conflict & Betrayal	-0.45**	-0.31
Help & Guidance	0.21	0.45*
Companionship	0.32	0.24
Intimacy	0.07	0.22
Exclusivity	0.30	0.38*

\* $p < .01$ . \*\* $p < .001$ .

In summary, the correlation between relationship qualities and relationship satisfaction varies with respect to relationship type and relationship status. For children who remained friends over time, positive relationship qualities were associated with higher levels of satisfaction and negative relationship qualities were associated with higher levels of satisfaction. For children who did not remain friends over time, only Caring/Validation, Companionship, Intimacy, and Exclusivity were associated with higher levels of satisfaction. For children who remained best friends over time, only Caring/Validation was associated with higher levels of satisfaction and negative relationship qualities (i.e., Conflict/Betrayal) were associated with lower levels of satisfaction. For children who did not remain best friends over time, Caring/Validation, Help/Guidance, and Exclusivity were associated with higher levels of satisfaction. Thus, different patterns emerged depending on the type of relationship (friend, best friend) and the status of the relationship (relationships maintained, not maintained over time).

Second, two 2 (Relationship Status Group) x 2 (Time) repeated measures ANOVA's were conducted on relationship satisfaction scores: one for friends and one for best friends. For friends, analysis revealed a Relationship Status Group x Time interaction,  $F(1, 109) = 4.02, p < .05$  (see Table 32 for means and standard deviations). At both Time 1 and Time 2, children who maintained their friendships over time were significantly more satisfied with their friends than were children who did not maintain their friendships. Thus, at Time 1, based on evaluations of satisfaction, it could have been predicted who would have remained friends over time and who would not have remained friends over time.

*Table 32: Relationship Satisfaction for Friends: Relationship Status Group x Time Interaction*

Relationship Status Group	Time 1	Time 2
Still Friends	4.03 (1.00)	4.15 (0.92)*
No Longer Friends	3.42 (1.07)	3.02 (1.29)**

\* $p < .01$ . \*\* $p < .001$ .

For best friends, analysis revealed a Relationship Status Group x Time interaction,  $F(1, 109) = 15.66, p < .001$  (see Table 33 for means and standard deviations). Results demonstrated that at Time 2, children who had the same best friend in the Spring as they did in the Fall had higher levels of satisfaction than those who did not. Further, children who did not maintain their best friendships over time were significantly more satisfied with their best friends at Time 1 than at Time 2. Thus, as relationships with best friends waned, children became less satisfied with their best friendships.

*Table 33: Relationship Satisfaction for Best Friends: Relationship Status Group x Time Interaction*

Relationship Status Group	Time 1	Time 2
Still Best Friends	4.85 (0.29)	4.75 (0.53)
No Longer Best Friends	4.81 (0.31)	4.15 (0.98)*

\* $p < .001$ .

Third, a 3 (Relationship Strength Group) x 2 (Time) repeated measures ANOVA was conducted on relationship satisfaction scores for friends. Analysis revealed a Relationship Strength Group x Time interaction,  $F(2, 108) = 15.33, p < .001$  (see Table 34 for means and standard deviations). For friendships that strengthened over time, satisfaction scores increased; for friendships that remained stable over time, satisfaction scores did not change; and for friendships that weakened over time, satisfaction scores decreased. Further, at Time 2, satisfaction scores were higher for friendships that strengthened over time. Thus, levels of satisfaction decreased as friendships weakened over time.

*Table 34: Relationship Satisfaction for Friends: Relationship Strength Group x Time Interaction*

Relationship Strength Group	Time 1 Mean (SD)	Time 2 Mean (SD)
Relationship Strengthened (n=27)	3.22 (0.98)	4.06 (0.70)*
Relationship Stayed Same (n=54)	4.28 (0.90)	4.25 (1.05)
Relationship Weakened (n=27)	3.72 (1.02)	2.96 (1.12)*

\* $p < .01$ .

For best friends, a 2 (Relationship Strength Group) x 2 (Time) repeated measures ANOVA was conducted on relationship satisfaction scores. Analysis revealed a

Relationship Strength Group x Time interaction,  $F(2, 108) = 25.69, p < .001$  (see Table 35 for means and standard deviations). For best friendships that weakened over time, satisfaction scores decreased; and for best friendships that remained stable over time, satisfaction scores stayed the same. Further, at Time 2, satisfaction scores were lower for best friendships that weakened over time than they were for best friendships that remained stable over time. Thus, levels of satisfaction decreased as best friendships weakened over time.

*Table 35: Relationship Satisfaction for Best Friends: Relationship Strength Group x Time Interaction*

Relationship Strength Group	Time 1 Mean (SD)	Time 2 Mean (SD)
Relationship Weakened (N=27)	4.76 (0.35)	3.59 (1.12)*
Relationship Stayed Same (N=79)	4.87 (0.26)	4.73 (0.47)

\* $p < .001$ .

In summary, changes in relationship satisfaction were similar for both friends and best friends. Children whose relationships were maintained over time reported higher levels of satisfaction than children whose relationships were not maintained. Additionally, satisfaction increased as relationships strengthened over time; satisfaction stayed the same as relationships remained stable over time; and satisfaction decreased as relationships weakened over time.

## Discussion

Friendships are important to children's social, cognitive, and emotional development (Berndt & Perry, 1986; Bukowski, Newcomb, & Hartup, 1996; Hartup, 1996a; Parker & Seal, 1996). A great deal of research has investigated children's understanding of their close peer relationships (e.g., Berndt & Perry, 1986; Furman & Buhrmester, 1985; Parker & Asher, 1993; Ray & Cohen, 1996). Much of this research has focused on children's expectations of their relationships, the qualities that children believe are important to their relationships, and children's understanding of the differences between different types of close peer relationships (e.g., Clark & Ayers, 1993; Cleary, et al., 2002; Furman & Buhrmester, 1985; Meurling, et al., 1999; Parker & Asher, 1993). However, little research has examined the stability of these relationships (friends and best friends) and their qualities over time. Thus, the current study examined the stability of children's relationship qualities with their friends and their best friends using a short-term longitudinal design. What follows is a discussion of the hypotheses of the current study, including limitations and areas for future research.

### *I. Replication Analyses on Relationship Quality*

The prediction that children would evaluate their best friend relationships more positively than their friend relationships was supported, with best friends being evaluated higher on the dimensions of Caring/Validation, Conflict Resolution, Help/Guidance, Companionship, Intimacy, and Exclusivity. This is consistent with previous research (e.g., Cleary, et al., 2002; Meurling, et al., 1999) which has demonstrated that children evaluate best friends as being "more" than friends. However, in the current study, no differences were discovered between children's evaluations of friends and best friends on

the Conflict/Betrayal dimension. This finding is consistent with research that has demonstrated that conflict has no effect on the strength of a friendship (i.e., Bukowski, et al., 1994; Berndt & Perry, 1986). Further, observational studies have demonstrated that friends have just as many arguments as non-friends, they simply resolve their disagreements in a more efficient and less relationship threatening manner (e.g., Bukowski, et al., 1994). The same may also be true of friend and best friend relationships. While children reported fighting and arguing with friends and best friends equally, they reported resolving their conflicts with best friends more quickly and more easily than with their friends.

The hypothesis predicting that girls would evaluate both friends and best friends more positively than would boys on the dimensions of Caring/Validation, Help/Guidance, Companionship, Intimacy, and Exclusivity was not supported. Only Conflict Resolution was evaluated more positively by girls, suggesting that arguments among girls are resolved more efficiently than arguments among boys. That girls did not evaluate their close peer relationships more positively than boys is surprising given the precedence of this finding in the literature (e.g., Meurling, et al., 1999; Parker & Asher, 1993). However, this discrepancy could, in part, be the result of a power issue. It is important to note that Parker and Asher (1993) had 881 participants, while the current study had 111 participants. In this study, girls did evaluate their relationships more positively than boys on the dimensions of Caring/Validation, Help/Guidance, and Intimacy. However, the difference was not significant. If there had been more participants in this study and, as a result, more power, the differences between girls and boys on these dimensions may have been more apparent.

The hypothesis predicting that younger children would evaluate both friends and best friends more positively than would older children on the dimensions of Caring/Validation, Help/Guidance, Companionship, Intimacy, and Exclusivity was not supported. Thus, older and younger children evaluated their relationships equally on these dimensions. This is inconsistent with previous research (e.g., Meurling, et al., 1999). However, power could also explain this discrepancy. Meurling, et al. (1999) had 170 participants, while the current study had 111 participants. Though not significant, younger children did evaluate their relationships more positively than did older children on the dimensions of Caring/Validation, Help/Guidance, Companionship, and Exclusivity. Given more participants and more power, the differences between younger and older children could have been more substantial.

Results also illustrated that older children evaluated their relationships higher on Conflict Resolution than did younger children. Thus, older children reported settling their arguments with friends and best friends easier and quicker than did younger children. This finding is reasonable given that previous research (e.g., Bigelow & LaGaipa, 1975; Furman & Bierman, 1984) has demonstrated that children gain more interpersonal understanding as they grow older. Part of this interpersonal understanding is learning how to relate and communicate with others in a more efficient manner. Thus, resolving conflicts is easier and quicker for older children than for younger children because they can relate better to their peers.

The prediction that older children would make a greater distinction between friends and best friends than would younger children was not supported. This is inconsistent with previous research (e.g., Meurling, et al., 1999) that has demonstrated a



growing sophistication in the understanding of different types of relationships as children mature.

## *II. Stability of Relationship Strength and Relationship Quality*

The predictions that relationship strength from Time 1 to Time 2 would be more stable for older children's relationships than for younger children's relationships and more stable for boys' relationships than for girls' relationships were not supported. The lack of gender effects is inconsistent with previous research (i.e., Berndt, et al., 1986; Ladd, et al., 1996) demonstrating that boy's friendships tend to be more stable than do girls' friendships throughout the school year. However, differences in methodology could account for some of the discrepancy evident between the current study and past research. Berndt, et al. (1986) assessed the stability of fourth and eighth grade children's reciprocal (mutually nominated) friends. This measure of friendship differs from the present study, in which analyses included least-liked friends, as well as best friends, and the reciprocal nature of the relationship was not assessed. Further, Ladd, et al. (1996) studied kindergarten children and their reciprocal best friends. This younger group of participants and the nature of reciprocal relationships could also account for the differing results between the Ladd, et al. (1996) study and the current study.

Additionally, the present study revealed that best friend relationships are more stable than are friend relationships. Research (i.e., Berndt, et al., 1986; Ladd, et al., 1996) has demonstrated that the stability of a relationship is related to the quality of the relationship. Qualities such as liking, intimacy, validation, and prosocial behaviors are related to more stable and closer friendships. Thus, relationships with more positive qualities are more stable over time. The current study, as well as previous research (e.g.,

Cleary, et al., 2002; Meurling, et al., 1999), has demonstrated that children evaluate best friends higher than friends on positive quality dimensions (i.e., Caring/Validation, Conflict Resolution, Help/Guidance, Companionship, Intimacy, and Exclusivity). Thus, because best friendships are evaluated as being more positive, they are also more stable over time than friendships.

While no age or gender differences were found in regards to stability, additional analyses revealed differences between children who maintained their close peer relationships over time and those who did not. For both friends and best friends, relationships were more stable for children who maintained their relationships over time than for children who did not. Thus, stability decreased as children's relationships deteriorated over time. This finding also served as a manipulation check, demonstrating that the measure of relationship strength varied depending on whether or not children were still in a close relationship.

The predictions that older children's relationships would experience fewer fluctuations in terms of relationship quality throughout the school year than would younger children's relationships and that boys would undergo fewer fluctuations in the quality of their relationships than would girls were not supported. However, a Quality Dimension main effect was revealed, with Conflict Resolution changing more than Conflict/Betrayal. Thus, behaviors related to successfully getting over conflict situations appear to be more fluid, while evaluations of the actual conflict situations themselves are more stable. Perhaps, children's actual conflict situations are more salient and more easily remembered than are the steps taken to rectify the situation.

Additional analyses on the stability of relationship qualities revealed that children who maintained their best friendships over time experienced fewer fluctuations on the Caring/Validation and Exclusivity dimensions than did children who did not maintain their best friendships. Caring/Validation refers to behaviors that make the other person feel good about him/her self (i.e., “\_\_\_\_ tells me I’m good at things” and “\_\_\_\_ and I make each other feel important and special”). Exclusivity refers to liking and playing with another person more than anyone else (i.e., “I like \_\_\_\_ more than I like any other kids” and “\_\_\_\_ plays mostly with me on the playground”). Because of their relative stability over time, these characteristics appear to be important in the maintenance of best friendships. Thus, best friends who exhibit these characteristics are likely to continue being best friends over time. Additionally, using Time in the analysis, relationship quality scores were higher for children who maintained their relationships over time than for children who did not. Further, qualities decreased over time as children stopped being best friends and increased for children who maintained their best friendships over time. Thus, relationship qualities fluctuated as a function of relationship status (maintained vs. not maintained), but not as a function of age or gender.

### *III. Association between Relationship Strength and Relationship Quality*

The prediction that as relationships change over time, there would be a corresponding change in the relationship quality dimensions was partially supported. For friends, relationship qualities increased as friendships strengthened over time; relationship qualities decreased as friendships weakened over time; and relationship qualities did not change as friendships remained stable over time. Further, at Time 2, quality dimension scores were significantly lower for friendships that weakened over

time than they were for friendships that strengthened over time or stayed the same, which did not differ from each other. In additional analyses, an identical pattern emerged, but only for children who maintained their friendships over time. Thus, for friends, relationship qualities change as a function of relationship strength and status.

For best friends, relationship qualities decreased as best friendships weakened over time and relationship qualities did not change as best friendships remained stable over time. Specifically, for best friendships that weakened over time, Caring/Validation, Help/Guidance, Companionship, and Exclusivity were lower than these qualities for best friendships that stayed the same. Also, Conflict/Betrayal was higher for best friendships that weakened than for best friendships that stayed the same. Thus, with the exception of Intimacy, positive relationship qualities were lower for best friendships that weakened over time and negative relationship qualities were higher. Additionally, for children who did not maintain their best friendships over time, Caring/Validation, Conflict Resolution, Help/Guidance, Companionship, Intimacy, and Exclusivity were lower at Time 2 than at Time 1. Thus, all positive qualities decreased over time when children were no longer best friends. These findings illustrate that relationship qualities also change as a function of relationship strength and relationship status for best friends.

In 1996, Hartup stated that to understand the developmental significance of children's close peer relationships, it will be important not only to know how many friends children have and who those friends are, but to also know the quality of the relationship. The current study has demonstrated that relationship qualities are important to the development and to the demise of close peer relationships. While high quality relationships are going to be more beneficial than are lower quality relationships, the

current study demonstrates that certain quality dimensions (i.e., Caring/Validation, Conflict Resolution, Conflict/Betrayal, Help/Guidance, Companionship, Intimacy, and Exclusivity) are needed for relationships to be developed and maintained.

#### *IV. Relationship Satisfaction with Friends and Best Friends*

The prediction that a positive correlation would exist between positive relationship qualities and relationship satisfaction and a negative correlation would exist between negative relationship qualities and relationship satisfaction was supported. For both friends and best friends, positive relationship qualities were associated with higher levels of satisfaction and negative relationship qualities were associated with lower levels of satisfaction. Further, for children who maintained their friendships over time, positive relationship qualities were associated with higher levels of satisfaction and negative relationship qualities were associated with lower levels of satisfaction. However, for children who did not maintain their friendships over time, only Caring/Validation, Companionship, Intimacy, and Exclusivity were associated with higher levels of satisfaction. Thus, the relationship between satisfaction and the various qualities varies as a function of the presence or absence of a close peer relationship.

A different pattern emerged for best friends. For children who maintained their best friendships over time, Caring/Validation was associated with higher levels of satisfaction and Conflict/Betrayal was associated with lower levels of satisfaction. For children who did not maintain their best friendships over time, Caring/Validation, Help/Guidance, and Exclusivity were associated with higher levels of satisfaction. Thus, the relationship between satisfaction and the qualities of a best friendship varies as a function of the status of the close peer relationship.

Of the predictions that children would report higher levels of satisfaction with their best friends than with their friends and that girls would report higher levels of satisfaction with their relationships than would boys, only the first was supported. Children were more satisfied with their best friends than with their friends, which is consistent with previous research (i.e., Bryan & Ray, 2003; Cleary, et al., 2002; Meurling, et al., 1999). While girls were no more satisfied with their peer relationships than were boys, additional analyses revealed that older girls were more satisfied with their relationships than were younger girls and older boys. Thus, when looking at gender alone, satisfaction does not differ; however, when satisfaction is examined in the context of both gender and age, differences between groups do emerge.

Children's evaluation of relationship satisfaction differs with respect to relationship status as well. Children who maintained their relationships over time were significantly more satisfied with their friends and best friends than were children who did not maintain their relationships over time. Further, as friendships strengthened over time, satisfaction increased and as friendships weakened over time, satisfaction decreased. As best friendships weakened over time, satisfaction decreased and as best friendships remained stable over time, satisfaction also stayed the same. Thus, as the relationship changed, there was also a corresponding change in levels of satisfaction.

In summary, the current study has demonstrated a relationship to exist between satisfaction and relationship quality: relationships that are of higher quality are evaluated as being more satisfying than are relationships of lower quality. Thus, though satisfaction and relationship quality are different constructs, they are also related. In the current study, satisfaction was conceptualized as a more global evaluative judgment

about the relationship, while qualities were conceptualized as more specific attributes. Thus, satisfaction is an evaluation of a relationship based on the qualities of that relationship. When the qualities of a relationship are more positive, those relationships are more satisfying than when the qualities of a relationship are more negative, which are less satisfying.

The current study has several limitations. First, children nominated a classroom friend and a classroom best friend, however, the reciprocity of these relationships was not investigated. Future research should utilize a reciprocal nomination measure to more accurately assess the dyadic relationship between friends and best friends and how qualities change over time in reciprocal relationships. Second, children evaluated the quality between their least-liked classroom friends and classroom very best friends. However, it is possible that children's actual very best friends were in a different classroom, a different school, or a different town. Thus, it will be important for future research to go beyond the classroom and investigate the nature of children's relationships that occur in other areas within a child's life. Third, children were limited in their responses when assessing the qualities of their relationships. Any added dimensions, outside the seven qualities assessed, that might occur in these relationships were not explored. Future investigations into the differences between friends and best friends need to give children the opportunity to give their own opinions about the differences between their friends and best friends. Lastly, the current study investigated differences between friend and best friend relationship qualities and how they changed over a five-month period of time. It will be important for future research to look at these differences over a longer period of time. Further, relationships were assessed at only two points throughout

the school year. Future research should explore these relationships at several points throughout the year to get a better picture of the nature of change that occurs over time in friend and best friend relationships.

While a great deal of research has been conducted examining close peer relationships, much more is needed before the dyadic nature of these relationships can be fully understood. The current study has added to this understanding by not only demonstrating that children do distinguish between types of close peer relationships and that they evaluate best friends more positively than friends, but by also examining the qualities that appear to be important in the maintenance of these close peer relationships over time. Results demonstrated that the various relationship qualities assessed were systematically related to both the strength of the relationship and to the maintenance or termination of children's close peer relationships. That is, as relationships strengthened over time, the qualities of that relationship increased; as relationships weakened over time, the qualities of that relationship decreased; and when the strength of the relationships remained unchanged over time, the qualities of that relationship also remained unchanged. Additionally, children who maintained their best friendships over time experienced fewer fluctuations on the dimensions of Caring/Validation and Exclusivity than did children who did not maintain their best friendships. Thus, these qualities appear to be important in the maintenance of best friendships over time. Future research should further explore this finding, as well as other characteristics necessary for the maintenance of relationships, as it may be useful in helping those who have difficulty forming and maintaining close personal relationships.



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**Auburn University at Montgomery  
Informed Consent  
Children's Friendship Project**

Chrystal McChristian (graduate student researcher)  
Dr. Glen E. Ray (faculty supervisor)

Your child is being invited to participate in a project looking at the importance of children's friendships. We hope to learn more about children's understanding of friends and best friends. Your child has been selected because all second, third, fifth, and sixth grade children at Dannelly Elementary School are being asked to participate.

If you decide to allow your child to participate, we will spend a few moments familiarizing your child with the necessary tasks, which include filling out friendship nomination, quality, and satisfaction questionnaires. There are no apparent risks to children participating in this study and the names of participants will be kept strictly confidential. At no time will your child leave the school. The study will be performed in a quiet room outside your child's classroom at a time scheduled by your child's teacher. The interview will take about 20-30 minutes.

All information obtained during this project will remain confidential. All data will be grouped together and no individuals will be identified by name on any reports.

Your decision on whether or not to allow your child to participate will in no way prejudice your relationships with Dannelly Elementary School. If you decide to allow your child to participate, your child will be free to withdraw from the study at any time. If your child decides later to withdraw from the study, you may also withdraw any information that has been collected about your child.

This project has the approval of the principal, Mrs. Crockett. If you have any questions, we encourage you to ask us. If you have additional questions later, please contact Chrystal McChristian (356-0617) or Dr. Glen Ray (244-3690) and we will be happy to answer them.

**YOU ARE MAKING A DECISION WHETHER OR NOT TO PARTICIPATE. YOUR SIGNATURE INDICATES THAT YOU HAVE DECIDED TO PARTICIPATE, HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED ABOVE.**

---

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, my child may participate in the project mentioned above.

\_\_\_\_\_ No, my child may not participate in the project mentioned above.

Parent's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness' Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix A

### Participating Child's Assent/Consent Form

Today, I am doing a project about children's friendships and I would like you to help me. I want to know how you think and feel about your friends here at school. To tell me about your friends, you will be filling out some questionnaires. There are no right or wrong answers and this is not a test. Once we get started, you can stop at any time if you want to. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Child's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B

### Relationship Nomination Questionnaire

Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ 2 3 5 6 B G Today's Date: \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_

Teacher's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

---

**Instructions:** Here is a list of names of all the boys and girls in your class. First, find your name on the list and mark a line through it. Second, circle the names of all your friends. Then, put an "X" next to the name of your very best friend in the class.

---

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10
- 11
- 12
- 13
- 14
- 15
- 16
- 17
- 18
- 19
- 20
- 21
- 22
- 23
- 24
- 25

(Numbers show place holdings only and will not be present on actual questionnaire.)

Appendix C

Relationship Rating Questionnaire

Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ 2 3 5 6 B G Today's Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Teacher's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

---

**Instructions:** First, find your name and mark a line through it. Second, I want you to think about how much you like all your classmates. Try to think of each of your classmates as they are right now and how important they are to you. Use the numbers below to tell me.

---

Like Very Little	Don't Like	Dislike a Little	Like a Little	Like	Like Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 1 2 3 4 5 6

2. \_\_\_\_\_ 1 2 3 4 5 6

3. \_\_\_\_\_ 1 2 3 4 5 6

Etc.



Appendix D

Relationship Quality Questionnaire

Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ 2 3 5 6 B G Today's Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Teacher's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

---

**Instructions:** Use the numbers below to describe how important your friend (friend's name) is to you. Try to think of your friend as they are right now and not as you want them to be. Use the numbers below to tell me. Remember, this is about your friend (friend's name) so make sure to think about them when you answer the questions.

---

Not at all True	Rarely True	A Little True	Somewhat True	Pretty True	Really True
0	1	2	3	4	5

1. \_\_\_\_\_ makes me feel good about my ideas.....0 1 2 3 4 5
2. \_\_\_\_\_ and I make up easily when we fight.....0 1 2 3 4 5
3. \_\_\_\_\_ and I argue a lot.....0 1 2 3 4 5
4. \_\_\_\_\_ helps me so that I can get done quicker.....0 1 2 3 4 5
5. \_\_\_\_\_ and I always sit together at lunch.....0 1 2 3 4 5
6. \_\_\_\_\_ and I always tell each other our problems.....0 1 2 3 4 5
7. \_\_\_\_\_ likes me more than anybody else in class.....0 1 2 3 4 5
8. \_\_\_\_\_ tells me I'm good at things.....0 1 2 3 4 5
9. \_\_\_\_\_ gets over our arguments really quickly.....0 1 2 3 4 5
10. \_\_\_\_\_ and I help each other with school work a lot.....0 1 2 3 4 5
11. \_\_\_\_\_ and I always pick each other as partners for things.....0 1 2 3 4 5
12. \_\_\_\_\_ and I talk about things that make us sad.....0 1 2 3 4 5
13. \_\_\_\_\_ and I make each other feel important and special.....0 1 2 3 4 5
14. \_\_\_\_\_ plays mostly with me on the playground.....0 1 2 3 4 5
15. \_\_\_\_\_ and I talk about how to get over being mad at each other.....0 1 2 3 4 5

Appendix D

16. \_\_\_\_\_ gets mad a lot.....0 1 2 3 4 5
17. \_\_\_\_\_ gives me advice with figuring things out.....0 1 2 3 4 5
18. \_\_\_\_\_ and I fight a lot.....0 1 2 3 4 5
19. \_\_\_\_\_ and I always play together at recess.....0 1 2 3 4 5
20. I talk to \_\_\_\_\_ when I am mad about something that happens to me... 0 1 2 3 4 5
21. I like \_\_\_\_\_ more than I like any other kids.....0 1 2 3 4 5
22. \_\_\_\_\_ is a good friend.....0 1 2 3 4 5

Appendix D

Relationship Quality Questionnaire

Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ 2 3 5 6 B G Today's Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Teacher's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

---

**Instructions:** Use the numbers below to describe how important your best friend (best friend's name) is to you. Try to think of your friend as they are right now and not as you want them to be. Use the numbers below to tell me. Remember, this is about your best friend (best friend's name) so make sure to think about them when you answer the questions.

---

Not at all True    Rarely True    A Little True    Somewhat True    Pretty True    Really True  
0                    1                    2                    3                    4                    5

1. \_\_\_\_\_ makes me feel good about my ideas.....0 1 2 3 4 5
2. \_\_\_\_\_ and I make up easily when we fight.....0 1 2 3 4 5
3. \_\_\_\_\_ and I argue a lot.....0 1 2 3 4 5
4. \_\_\_\_\_ helps me so that I can get done quicker.....0 1 2 3 4 5
5. \_\_\_\_\_ and I always sit together at lunch.....0 1 2 3 4 5
6. \_\_\_\_\_ and I always tell each other our problems.....0 1 2 3 4 5
7. \_\_\_\_\_ likes me more than anybody else in class.....0 1 2 3 4 5
8. \_\_\_\_\_ tells me I'm good at things.....0 1 2 3 4 5
9. \_\_\_\_\_ gets over our arguments really quickly.....0 1 2 3 4 5
10. \_\_\_\_\_ and I help each other with school work a lot.....0 1 2 3 4 5
11. \_\_\_\_\_ and I always pick each other as partners for things.....0 1 2 3 4 5
12. \_\_\_\_\_ and I talk about things that make us sad.....0 1 2 3 4 5
13. \_\_\_\_\_ and I make each other feel important and special.....0 1 2 3 4 5
14. \_\_\_\_\_ plays mostly with me on the playground.....0 1 2 3 4 5
15. \_\_\_\_\_ and I talk about how to get over being mad at each other.....0 1 2 3 4 5

Appendix D

16. \_\_\_\_\_ gets mad a lot.....0 1 2 3 4 5
17. \_\_\_\_\_ gives me advice with figuring things out.....0 1 2 3 4 5
18. \_\_\_\_\_ and I fight a lot.....0 1 2 3 4 5
19. \_\_\_\_\_ and I always play together at recess.....0 1 2 3 4 5
20. I talk to \_\_\_\_\_ when I am mad about something that happens to me... 0 1 2 3 4 5
21. I like \_\_\_\_\_ more than I like any other kids.....0 1 2 3 4 5
22. \_\_\_\_\_ is a good best friend..... 0 1 2 3 4 5

Appendix E

Relationship Satisfaction Questionnaire

Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ 2 3 5 6 B G Today's Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Teacher's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

---

**Instructions:** Use the numbers below to describe how satisfied you are with your relationship with your friend (friend's name). Try to think of your friend as they are right now and not as you want them to be. Use the numbers below to tell me. Remember, this is about your friend (friend's name) so make sure to think about them when you answer the questions.

---

1. How is your relationship with \_\_\_\_\_ going?

1	2	3	4	5
Not Good At All	A Little Good	Somewhat Good	Pretty Good	Very Good

2. How happy are you with this relationship?

1	2	3	4	5
Not Happy At All	A Little Happy	Somewhat Happy	Pretty Happy	Very Happy

Appendix E

Relationship Satisfaction Questionnaire

Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ 2 3 5 6 B G Today's Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Teacher's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

---

**Instructions:** Use the numbers below to describe how satisfied you are with your relationship with your best friend (best friend's name). Try to think of your friend as they are right now and not as you want them to be. Use the numbers below to tell me. Remember, this is about your best friend (best friend's name) so make sure to think about them when you answer the questions.

---

1. How is your relationship with \_\_\_\_\_ going?

1	2	3	4	5
Not Good At All	A Little Good	Somewhat Good	Pretty Good	Very Good

2. How happy are you with this relationship?

1	2	3	4	5
Not Happy At All	A Little Happy	Somewhat Happy	Pretty Happy	Very Happy