

# Young Children's Perceptions of Peers from Different Economic Backgrounds

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## Background

- Children attend to others' socioeconomic status.
- Previous research indicates that children show favouritism of the wealthy.
- Young children who have more contact with peers of different economic backgrounds have a stronger understanding of fairness.
- This study examined the **extent to which young children associate with peers of different economic backgrounds**, and their **perceptions of everyday interactions between peers of different economic backgrounds**.

## Method

### Participants

$N = 95$  children ages 3- to 5 years; racially and socioeconomic diverse; balanced by gender

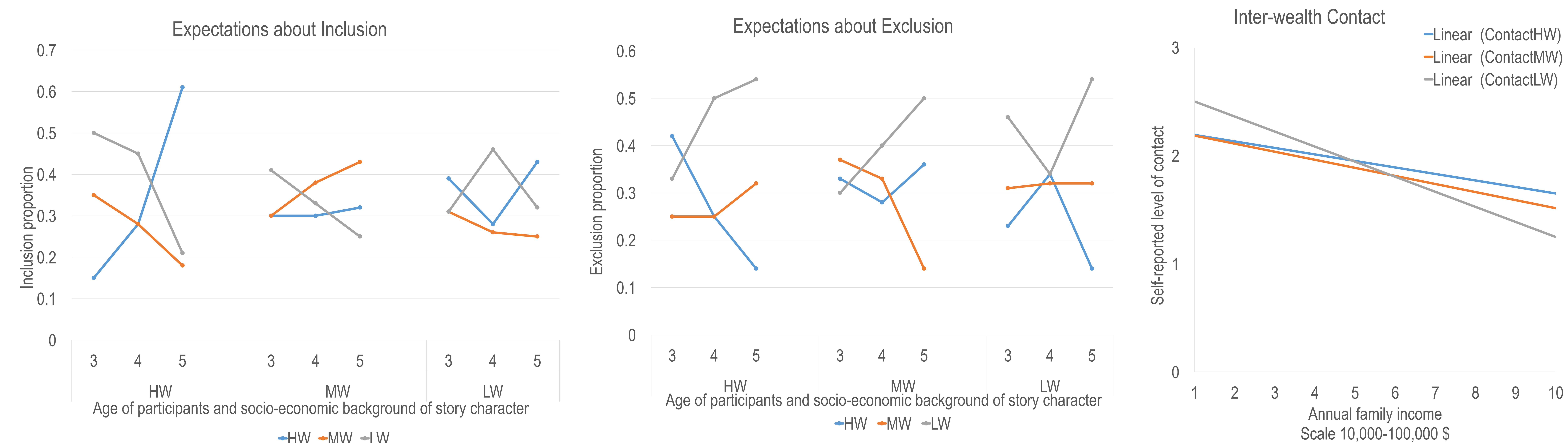
### Procedure

Participants viewed story scenarios of interactions between children of high-wealth (HW), middle-wealth (MW), and low-wealth (LW) backgrounds

- Predicted which children would be included or excluded (e.g., "Who do you think X will play with?" "Why do you think so?")
- Indicated their own level of contact with peers of different wealth backgrounds



## Results



## Summary

- With age, young children expected peers of high- and middle-wealth backgrounds to **include** (play with) others of the same background; expectations for the peer of low-wealth background were mixed.
- With age, young children expected peers of all backgrounds to **exclude** (not play with) a low-wealth peer.
- Children from higher-income families (by parent report) were less likely to report knowing individuals of a low-wealth background.