

# “He’s such a poser!”: Children condemn social climbers.

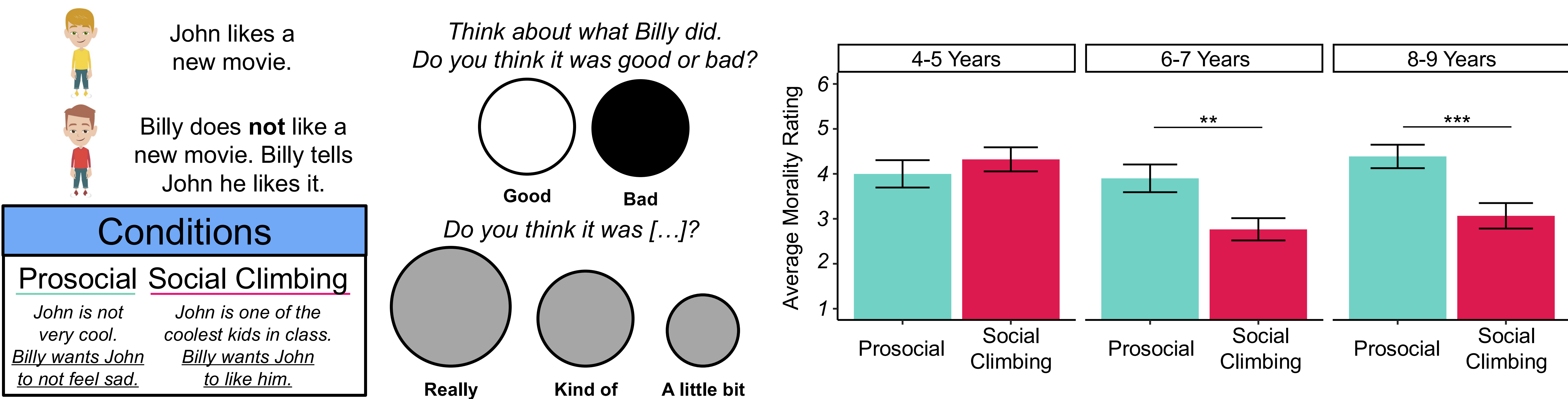
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## Introduction

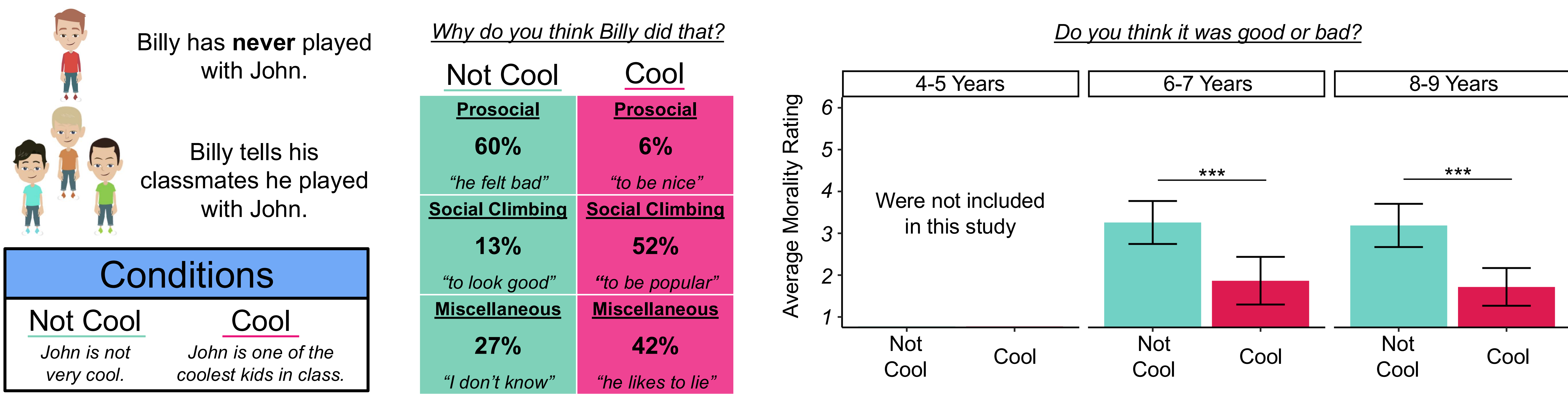
- Children start managing their reputations at a young age and acquire more social tactics as they mature.<sup>1,2</sup>
- One tactic is lying: Children lie to adults to avoid punishment<sup>3</sup> and think others lie about their failures.<sup>4</sup>
- Although children condemn many lies<sup>5</sup> they believe that “white lies” are not so bad.
- They approve of lying to avoid making another person feel bad<sup>6</sup> and lies that make others look good.<sup>7</sup>

**Do children condemn or condone ostensibly “white lies” that could enhance the liar’s reputation?**

## Study 1: At what age do children condemn “white lies” aimed at social climbing?



## Study 2: Do children condemn social climbers when they must infer these motives?



## References

[1] Asaba & Gweon, 2022 [2] Silver & Shaw, 2018 [3] Talwar & Lee, 2002 [4] Good & Shaw, 2020 [5] Bussey, 1999 [6] Heyman et al., 2009 [7] Ahn et al., 2020 We would like to thank the members of the UChicago DIBS Lab for their help with recruitment and their feedback. Also, thank you to Anderson Lynch and Lena Tran for qualitative coding and copy-editing! Last, thank you to all the families who participated in this study, making our research possible.

## Discussion

- Starting at age 6, children condemned a “white lie” when the liar was motivated by improving their reputation (4- to 5-year-olds did not). They condemned this even when tasked with inferring the social climbing motive from the liar.
- Next, we are examining if children similarly condemn people for *chasing clout* on social media—judging someone for falsely claiming to “like” something that a popular kid likes (while not condemning the same action directed at an unpopular kid).
- Motive can taint children’s evaluations of a seemingly good action. In all cases above, the lie could be seen as prosocial (in fact, that’s how young kids saw it). But when that lie is reputationally beneficial, older kids condemn these social climbers.