


# Maternal Emotion Coaching and Young Children’s Peer Play Competence: Mediating Role of Emotion Regulation

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## INTRODUCTION

### Objective

- This study examined the relationship between maternal emotion coaching and child peer play competence and tested the mediating effect of child emotion regulation on the link between maternal emotion coaching and child peer play competence.

### Background

- Social competence in preschool is largely manifested in the context of peer play. The capacity to regulate one's emotions from early childhood is crucial for the development of social competence and it can be learned through appropriate guidance of parents, i.e. emotion coaching.
- Emotion coaching is a specific parenting technique that helps children understand their feelings and learn how to regulate them.
- The mother's appropriate emotional coaching would enhance the children's ability to regulate their emotions, which in turn, promotes positive interactions and reduces negative interactions with the child's appropriate responses and actions during peer play.

### Research Questions

- 1) Is there a difference in child emotion regulation and peer play behaviors as a function of child sex?
- 2) Is maternal emotion coaching associated with child peer play behaviors through child emotion regulation?

## METHODS

### Participants

- A total of 279 dyads of three- to five-year-old children and their mothers were recruited from preschools located in the metropolitan area of Seoul, South Korea.

### Measures

- Maternal emotion coaching:
  - Maternal Emotion Coaching Questionnaire (Lim & Park, 2022)
  - Ex: “When my child gets angry, I see it as an opportunity to help”
- Emotion regulation:
  - Emotional Intelligence Scale (Lee, 1997)
  - Ex: "When the child loses in a game, they accept the outcome without getting angry”
- Peer Play Competence:
  - Penn Interactive Peer Play Scale (Fantuzzo et al., 1998)
  - Positive Peer Interaction Ex: "Helps other children"
  - Peer Play Disruption Ex: “Does not share toys”
  - Peer Play Disconnection Ex: “Wanders aimlessly”

Mothers’ emotion coaching helps their children tune in to peer play by enhancing children’s emotion-regulation skills.



## RESULT

Table 1. Gender differences and correlations among maternal emotion coaching, child emotion regulation, and peer play competence

		<i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )	Boys( <i>n</i> = 142) <i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )		Girls( <i>n</i> = 137) <i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )	<i>t</i>	1	2	3	4	5
1. Maternal emotion coaching		3.82(0.48)	3.78(0.48)		3.86(0.48)	1.48	-				
2. Child emotion regulation		3.38(0.72)	3.19(0.71)		3.57(0.69)	4.60***	.27**	-			
Peer play competence	3. Positive interactions	1.83(0.65)	1.66(0.61)		2.00(0.63)	4.94***	.24**	.70**	-		
	4. Play disruption	0.92(0.65)	1.03(0.68)		0.80(0.61)	-2.96**	-.22**	-.69**	-.43**	-	
	5. Play disconnection	0.67(0.61)	0.78(0.63)		0.56(0.57)	-3.07**	-.27**	-.35**	-.54**	.25**	-

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

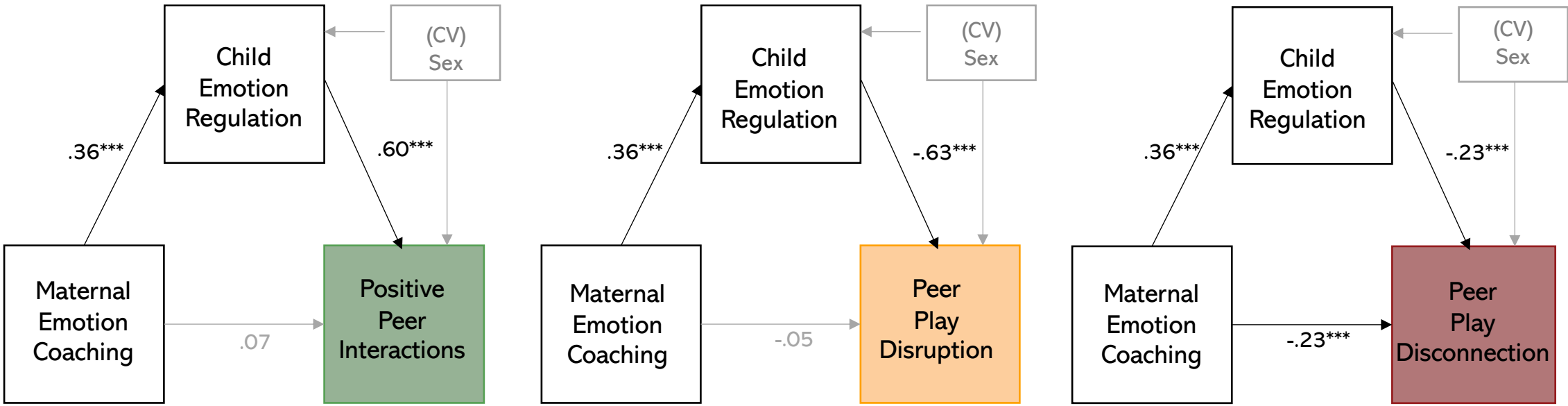


Figure 1. Standardized regression coefficients for the relationship between maternal emotion coaching and varied peer play behaviors as mediated by child emotion regulation  
\*\*\**p* < .001.

## CONCLUSION

- This study suggests that maternal emotion coaching is an important factor that promotes the development of children's social competencies.
- Appropriate maternal emotion coaching indirectly influenced children to engage in positive play behaviors with their peers by improving their capacity for emotion regulation.
- In contrast, inappropriate maternal emotion coaching hampered the children’s ability to regulate their emotions, prompting them to engage in play-disruptive and play-disconnected behaviors.
- Taken together, to help young children interact positively without being disconnected from their peers, mothers need to coach their children appropriately by improving their children's emotion regulation ability through emotion coaching.