Research in sociolinguistics has revealed that social experience is shaped for and by children in their acts of speech (Cook-Gumperz & Corsaro 1986). Through verbal and non-verbal communication, children build their relationships with their peers during face-to-face interactions. Thus, evidence of the social organization of children can be found in their language. This study explored the discourse relationships between a group of boys in Atlanta, Georgia. Specifically, it focused on how these children expressed dominance through their language by using requests. It also examined the variables which contribute to the social structure of any interaction. These include age, location, activity, and familiarity. Additionally, this study explored the role politeness plays in choosing a request form.

INDEX WORDS: Requests, Politeness, Face-to-face interaction, Social organization, Peer interaction
BUILDING DISCOURSE RELATIONS: THE USE OF REQUESTS
IN A BOYS' PEER GROUP

by

HOLLI RENEE CHAPMAN
A.B., The University of Georgia, 1997

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BUILDING DISCOURSE RELATIONS: THE USE OF REQUESTS
IN A BOYS’ PEER GROUP

by

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December 2001
DEDICATION

to my parents, for their encouragement

and support in all my academic endeavors
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my professors, Dr. Moshi, Dr. Baptista, and Dr. Provost for their guidance and invaluable advice. I am indebted to the families of Applefarm Drive for allowing me into their homes, and to the children, who opened their lives and worlds up to me, thank You! I would also like to thank the Bice family for their support and encouragement. I am grateful for all of my family’s support; Heidi, your computer expertise saved me! To Brian, thank you for your endurance and patience through my moments of panic and support in my moments of confidence. You believed in me when I needed it most.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Ochs (1986: 3) has noted that individuals and society construct one another through social interaction. This is supported by Fishman (1972:3), who states, “Language itself is content, a referent for loyalties and animosities, an indicator of social statuses and personal relationships, a marker of situations and topics.” Similarly, Corsaro’s (1979) research into children’s understanding of the concepts of role and status showed that children at a very young age have a good understanding of status, but the concept of role is a later development, most likely learned through peer interaction.

My interest in studying children’s interaction began as an accident. One summer while I was in school I decided to look after children to make some extra money. I kept two boys, ages 4 and 6, during the day. These boys spent most of their time playing with their friends from the neighborhood, making it relatively easy for these two boys to find playmates. As part of my job, I observed the children at play to make sure they did not get hurt. As I watched them, I was struck by their use of play language. Therefore, I began to pay more attention to their language and behavior during these interactions. What became apparent was all of the children seemed to have specific roles in a given interaction. Moreover, it was clear who was the
leader at any one of the observed interactions. I developed a curiosity as to
the nature of those roles, and more broadly the social organization, through
the language used by the children. This research developed out of my
interest in exploring these children’s worlds.

Children have long been interesting subjects for scientific research, and
their language is no exception to this. Recent work (Cook-Gumperz and
Goodwin 1990) has shown that children’s worlds provide an excellent setting
for studying language as social action because they use their language to
build social relationships with their peers during face to face interaction.
Furthermore, Ochs (1986:3) notes, “one critical area of social competence a
child must acquire is the ability to recognize/interpret what social
activity/event is taking place and to speak and act in ways sensitive to the
context.”

Studies in the social and cognitive development of children have provided
valuable insight. Maltz and Borker (1982) found that boys play in
hierarchically organized groups. Research (Corsaro 1979; Goodwin 1990;
Ervin-Tripp 1977; Mitchell-Kernan and Kernan 1977) has also shown that
children understand concepts of status at a very young age and use their
language to express the status differences present during interactions. In
addition, children use their language to define the roles and alignment of the
participants during a given interaction.
Much attention has been given to the ways in which children mark these status differences. Specifically, most research (Garvey 1975; Ervin-Tripp 1976, 1977; Mitchell-Kernan and Kernan 1977; Goodwin 1990) has focused on requests because they show visible signs of dominance by getting someone to do what you want him or her to do. Bruner, Roy, and Ratner (1982:3) also note that “learning to make a request is, in its way, a microcosm of socialization into a linguistic community and into the culture.” Ervin-Tripp’s (1976) extensive research on adults’ and children’s language found six commonly used types of requests which, she argues, are favored by particular social factors. These social factors include the familiarity and relative ranks of the interlocutors, the setting, the role relations of the speaker and addressee, and aspects of the request itself, such as the difficulty of the task and whether the task is a normally expected duty (Ervin-Tripp 1976, 1977).

These views will be explored in the present research study because they provide a glimpse into the social organization of this peer group. Studying the language used by a child can reveal how he views his role in the interaction and how he aligns himself to the other participants. Although dominance is shown through body language, facial expressions, and actions, requests also provide information about how the participants of a particular interaction align themselves asymmetrically.

One important aspect of social interaction, which is largely overlooked in the research on requests, but is central to this study, is the notion of
politeness. Becker (1982) says there are three motivating forces in conversation: be clear, be polite, and maintain face. She adds, “Rules of politeness, unlike rules of clarity, need not apply simultaneously in a given communicative situation. Their applicability depends on contextual factors” (Becker 1982:16). Therefore, shared knowledge of social relationships and the interactive situation can guide request choice based on functions they might serve in a given context.

Politeness will also be explored in the present research because it is a pivotal element to understanding the asymmetrical alignments in the boys’ peer group. Becker (1982:1) notes, “[Children] learn that they need not waste politeness on listeners younger than themselves.” Hence, politeness can be an indicator of status differences. In addition, requests can take varying forms depending on the degree of politeness the speaker wishes to express.

The objectives of this research, therefore, are twofold: to examine the discourse features used by the boys in this peer group to determine leadership patterns and to explore how the variables such as age and location affect the hierarchical structure of the peer group. Contrary to assumptions made prior to the data collection process, namely that the children would use numerous discourse features to mark dominance, the data showed patterns which suggested the children used requests frequently to mark dominance. Not only were requests abundant in the data, but they were used by all the participants consistently. Consequently, as the analysis will show, the focus is on requests as markers of dominance, and the factors
affecting the use of requests in addition to age and location. Thus, the main research questions are:

- **How do the boys in this peer group use requests to organize their social interaction?**
- **What factors determine which request form to use?**
- **How do politeness and maintenance of face affect request choice?**

The remainder of this study will be divided into the following chapters. Chapter two will review some of the previous literature on children’s interaction in peer groups, children’s understanding of the concepts status and role, their use of requests, and research on politeness. Chapter three introduces the participants, their neighborhood, and the settings for the research, as well as discussing the theoretical methods adopted and the procedures followed for this study. Chapter four reveals the results of analysis of the data, and Chapter five considers conclusions which can be drawn from this research.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Previous Research

The disciplines of Linguistics, Sociology, Anthropology, and Psychology have all contributed to the understanding of children’s worlds in social and cognitive terms. Research on children has focused on various aspects, but there have been substantial findings relating to children’s interaction with peers and adults. Research has shown that social structure is encoded in verbal interaction (Brown and Levinson 1979). Furthermore, findings show that young children are aware of status differences (Corsaro 1979) and can use their discourse to convey those differences. Much research\(^1\) (Garvey 1975; Labov and Fanshel 1977; Bruner, Roy, and Ratner 1982; Ervin-Tripp 1976, 1977; Mitchell-Kernan and Kernan 1977; Becker 1982) has focused on the use of requests to mark these status differences. The term “request” used here follows Becker’s (1982:1) definition, which refers to “an utterance that is intended to indicate the speaker’s desire to regulate the behavior of the listener—that is, to get the listener to do something (e.g., provide information, give permission, perform an action).” Labov and Fanshel (1977:86, 96) note that speakers “necessarily must give more attention to the proper handling of requests than to any other form of face-to-face

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\(^1\) In this literature, various terms have used by authors to refer to requests. Terms that have been used include “directive” (Ervin-Tripp, 1976, 1977; Mitchell-Kernan and Kernan, 1977; Goodwin, 1980) and “request for action” (Garvey, 1975; Labov and Fanshel, 1977).
interaction …The making of requests is a delicate business and requires a great deal of supporting ritual to avoid damaging personal relationships surrounding it.”

Brown and Levinson (1979) have conducted research in order to better understand the relationship between social structure and verbal interaction. Their research focuses on two main themes. The first is that “social structure serves to link social variables in such a way that linguistic correlates with one such variable can provide important clues to the values of other such variables” (Brown and Levinson 1979:327). The second theme is linguistic variables are dependent for their social significance on other aspects of interaction due to the organization of that interaction (Brown and Levinson 1979). Brown and Levinson (1979:317) note that “how persons treat other persons interactionally, together with a great deal of knowledge about the relevant structures, can be the basis for inferred attributions of precise group or subgroup membership.” While their findings are mostly based on class distinctions shown by honorifics and the use of more polite forms, these hierarchical classifications can be transferred to children’s groups as well. The work of Corsaro (1979) exemplifies this.

Corsaro (1979) has examined children’s understanding of status and role by observing children in a natural environment engaging in role-play. His specific focus is “how children link developing knowledge of the concepts status and role to the contextual demands which arise in spontaneous role play” (Corsaro 1979:49). Corsaro’s findings are similar to Mitchell-Kernan and Kernan (1977) in that children use language to exert authority depending on the social positions they occupy in role-play. He also found that children had a clear concept of status but
an underdeveloped concept of role. Corsaro (1979:58) offers an explanation for this by saying, “children’s knowledge of role expectations may lag behind their knowledge of status due to differences in social contextual features of early interactive experiences” and suggests that peer interaction may promote their development of role expectations associated with same-status social positions. Goodwin’s (1990) work supports this assumption because her research on African American boys shows they use requests to establish role in peer interaction. Ochs (1986) has made similar conclusions based on her work on language socialization. She has found that “one critical area of social competence a child must acquire is the ability to recognize/interpret what social activity/event is taking place and to speak and act in ways sensitive to the context” (Ochs 1986:3). Ochs adds that the organization of communication embeds the concepts of social status and role of the interactants.

Much research (Garvey 1975; Ervin-Tripp 1976,1977; Mitchell-Kernan and Kernan 1977; Goodwin 1990) has been devoted to studying the use of requests because they are, for the most part, salient features of language which encode the social relationship of the interactants. Researchers have approached the topic of requests from several different angles. One of the earliest studies on requests was conducted by Catherine Garvey (1975). Garvey approached requests by outlining rules which must be met in order for a request to be valid. Her research focuses on children’s communicative competence in dealing with requests, i.e. making and responding to them. Specifically, she is interested in how children convey interpersonal meanings by speaking and interpret the
intentions of others by their speech as well as understanding how connected discourse is structured. For this study, she observed 36 dyads of nursery school children from white, middle-class, professional families; she based her research on the request as “an illocutionary act whereby a speaker (S) conveys to an addressee (H) that S wishes H to perform an act (A)” (Garvey 1975:45). Garvey states 4 sincerity conditions which underlie a genuine request:

(a) S wants H to do A.
(b) S assumes H can do A.
(c) S assumes H is willing to do A.
(d) S assumes H will not do A in the absence of the request.

(Garvey 1975:45)

Using this formula, she distinguishes two different kinds of requests: direct and indirect requests. The results of her study show that children are aware of the interpersonal meanings on which the request speech act is based. She notes, “The interpersonal meanings do, indeed, rest on the participants perceptions of what are, essentially, non-linguistic conditions. They are products of S and H’s interpretation of each other’s situated behaviour and represent an aspect of social competence. But we have also shown that S and H share an understanding of how these beliefs and attitudes may be encoded in their language” (Garvey 1975:62).

Labov and Fanshel (1977) have investigated psychotherapy as a form of conversational interaction. In doing so, they outline rules for discourse; they define “rule” as “a prescriptive, explicit statement of what should or should not be
done—a law, direction, command, moral, rule of thumb. It is a guide to action for a person faced with conscious choice” (Labov and Fanshel 1977:74). In their rules for discourse, Labov and Fanshel isolate a rule for requests, which centrally functions to distinguish jokes, insults, and proverbs from valid requests for action. Their approach to requests is similar to Garvey’s (1975) in that their rule consists of four conditions which must be met. The rule is as follows:

If A addresses to B an imperative specifying an action X at a time T₁, and B believes that A believes that

1. X should be done (for purpose Y) \([\text{need for the action}]\)
2. B would not do X in the absence of the request \([\text{need for the request}]\)
3. B has the ability to do X (with an instrument Z)
4. A has the right to tell B to do X,

then A is heard as making a valid request for action.

(Labov and Fanshel 1977:78)

Labov and Fanshel’s work reveals that their main point of concern is how an utterance is interpreted as a request as opposed to the social structure it proposes.

Bruner, Roy, and Ratner (1982:91-92) have searched for the beginnings of requests in young children by studying “the pragmatics of request and the ways in which pragmatic requirements guide grammatical, morphological, and phonological development.” In this study, Bruner, Roy, and Ratner observed
young children up to age 2 interacting with their mothers. They witnessed these young children using hand gestures and primitive vocalizations for the purpose of requesting. This fueled an interest in how requests become linguistically realized in place of gesturally and vocally realized requests. They determine “there is a ‘primitive’ requestive element that expresses itself initially by ‘natural’” rather than conventionalized means” (Bruner, Roy, and Ratner 1982:132).

Susan Ervin-Tripp (1976, 1977, 1982) has conducted considerable research on requests, or what she terms directives. She has examined adults’ use of requests in order to assess their affective significance in conversation. Through her research, Ervin-Tripp identified six distinguishable types of requests commonly used in interaction, and she ranked these six types according to the relative power of speaker and addressee and the obviousness of the request, i.e. whether the directive function is explicit or not. They are given in Table 1. Her study found that there are numerous social features encoded in requests, such as territoriality, distance, familiarity, normality of task and role, and difficulty (Ervin-Tripp 1976). Ervin-Tripp (1976) concludes that the use of requests and the social features implied are systematic and derive from social norms, which must be shared by the participants in order to be understood.

Ervin-Tripp continued this line of research by studying children’s use of requests. Corroborating Bruner, Roy, and Ratner’s (1982) findings, she found children’s repertoire of requesting began with gestures, names of desired objects, and a few verbal function indicators like want or more (Ervin-Tripp
1977). With age and increasing vocabulary, children are able to specify problems, goals,

Table 1. Summary of Directive Types.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Request Type</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Obvious</th>
<th>Social Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Need Statements</td>
<td>I need a match.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Subordinates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imperatives</td>
<td>Gimme a match.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Subordinates or familiar equals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imbedded Imperatives</td>
<td>Could you gimme a match?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Unfamiliar or diff. Ranks task outside role or territory expect compliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permission requests</td>
<td>May I have a match?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Superiors or unfamiliar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request questions</td>
<td>Gotta match?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>non-compliance possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hint</td>
<td>The matches are all gone.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>non-compliance possible or familiarity or routine roles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Ervin-Tripp 1976:46)

imperative acts, possessives, limited routines, and structural modifications.

According to Ervin-Tripp (1977), around the age of 3 children are able to comprehend hints and question directives quite well; by 4, children appear to be capable of using verbal strategies which have several steps to success; and by 5 or 6, they do not require reference to the desired goal. She concludes, “the major differences between adults and young children is not diversity of structure, not diversity of social features—though the rules may increase in number of variable and in complexity with age—but systematic, regular, unmarked requests,
which do not refer to what the speaker wants. Wide use of tactful deviousness is a late accomplishment” (Ervin-Tripp 1977:188).

Mitchell-Kernan and Kernan (1977) studied a group of African American children who ranged in age from 7 to 12. Their focus was to explore the social distribution of directive types used by the children and to study the relationship between particular directives and broader interactional goals. They collected data from role playing situations as well as naturally occurring speech. Their results show that the children used all of the six major types described by Ervin-Tripp (1976). Mitchell-Kernan and Kernan (1977:206-7) note, “not only have the children acquired all of the forms appropriate for directives, they show an awareness of at least some of the social factors that help to determine which directive form is to be used on a particular occasion.” In regard to the communicative competence of the children, this study found that the use of directives included at least two functional aspects: “the identification and comprehension as directives of utterances that have some other surface form; and the selection of particular directive forms on the basis of situational appropriateness” (Mitchell-Kernan and Kernan 1977:207). Thus, Mitchell-Kernan and Kernan (1977) and Ervin-Tripp (1977) both argue that the main motivation for children in using requests is to make assertions about the relative positions of participants more than simply to get something done.

Goodwin (1990) examined African American children playing in order to describe how talk is used to build social organization within face-to-face interaction. She conducted this study by watching children playing in their own
neighborhood in south Philadelphia for a year and a half. Goodwin observed the children’s use of requests during task activities, e.g. making slingshots from wire coat hangers. Her findings show that the children on Maple Street used requests not only to mark asymmetrical relationships, but also symmetrical ones. Goodwin notes that boys tend to mark their relations with peers as asymmetrical while girls often aligned themselves symmetrically with peers. These findings support Maltz and Borker’s (1982:207) conclusions that boys play in hierarchically organized groups, and the main thing the boys learn to manipulate in their interactions with their peers is the relative status of each of them.

Judith Becker (1982) researched current theoretical models describing the production and comprehension of requests. Finding these models inadequate, she proposed her own model based on participants’ shared understanding of context, social interaction, language, and three pragmatic principles (clarity, politeness, and face). According to Becker (1982), a strategy must be used to resolve opposing characteristics that guide conversation when using requests: clarity, politeness, and face. She notes, “A speaker wants to be understood by being clear, gain compliance by being subtle and polite, and at the same time maintain face by not being unnecessarily obsequious. The nature of the resolution will depend on features of the request being made and on the context of communication” (Becker 1982:24). Becker’s model is unique because she integrates the concepts of politeness and face into the study of requests in a way that has not been done before. For instance, Ervin-Tripp (1977) deals minimally with the notion of politeness by assuming it is directly taught by caregivers.
Bates (1976) has studied Italian children in order to determine the extent to which they have a dimensional conception of politeness and are able to judge degrees of politeness in requests. She studied the children’s production of polite requests by having the children ask a puppet representing an old woman for a piece of candy. The children were told that the woman would give them a piece of candy if they asked very nicely. The children were then told to ask in the nicest way they know how, and they received a piece of candy. Bates also studied the children’s comprehension of polite requests by having them play the role of the old woman and give candy to the frog that asked the nicest. Eight different pairs of requests were played for them, and they were asked to chose which frog asked more nicely than the others. The results of this study found that even the youngest children (age 3) were able to increase the politeness of their requests in some way and their ability to make judgements developed earlier than their ability to explain these judgements. Bates and Silvern (1977) repeated this experiment with English speaking children and drew the same conclusions. They found that children’s production, comprehension, and explanation of requests were related to age, but even very young children understand that requests vary along a continuum of politeness.

Brown and Levinson (1978) have dealt considerably with the issues of politeness and face. They have formulated an argument for what they believe to be a politeness phenomenon, which is centered around the anticipation of the behavior of others and the altering of one’s own plans accordingly (Brown and Levinson, 1978). Their focus is to devise a tool which can be used to study the
quality of social relationships. Their research is based on several key concepts, namely rationality, face, and face threatening acts (FTAs). The essence of their theory rests on a model person who is a fluent speaker of a natural language gifted with rationality and face. Through the concept of face, this model person possesses two desires: the desire “to be unimpeded” and the desire “to be approved of in certain respects” (Brown and Levinson 1978:63). It is these desires which influence language choice, i.e. politeness, and, therefore, shape interaction.

This research has provided valuable information and insight into the worlds of children. It has shown that children build social structure through their interactions. They use language to encode the social meanings of their interpersonal relationships. One resource children use to do this, which has been widely studied, is requests. Garvey (1975) and Labov and Fanshel (1977) present formulas for requests, but Ervin-Tripp’s (1976) analysis of requests provides more detailed description of not only how the request is interpreted, but also how it is responded to. While all of these studies provide significant findings in their own right, they do not present the whole picture. Becker’s (1982) research shows that these studies fail to provide a complete and accurate portrayal of children’s social structure through the use of requests because they only minimally address the notion of politeness. Bates (1976) and Brown and Levinson (1978) have proven politeness to be an important factor in the analysis of social interaction. Therefore, a study is needed that observes and describes the requests used by children in an interaction to mark their social relationships;
attention must also be given to understanding the implications of politeness on the face of the interactants.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

The work of Ervin-Tripp (1976, 1977) provides a crucial theoretical foundation for this research. Ervin-Tripp (1976:26) notes, “variations in expression are systematically related to social features...variation does major work in interaction, conveying concurrent information about social features of the speakers and situation, communicative intent and affect.” In order for the children to interpret each other’s utterances and respond to them, they must have the knowledge of what is correct and incorrect for a specific situation. Therefore, in a broader sense, the work of Gumperz (1982a) also contributes to this research because communication is a social activity, which requires at least two participants coordinating their efforts. This joint effort can be witnessed through the children’s interactions during play. In order to communicate with each other, they must be able to understand verbal and non-verbal signals. Gumperz (1982a:1) notes, “to create and sustain conversational involvement, we require knowledge and abilities which go considerably beyond the grammatical competence we need to decode short isolated messages.” Cook-Gumperz (1986:2) relates this framework to the study of children by suggesting “focusing upon language not simply as a grammatical skill, but as a set of speech strategies which children use to structure their social action and to control and effect communication.” The children involved in these interactions must,
therefore, be able to interpret these strategies and respond by signaling involvement (Gumperz 1982a). In addition, Corsaro (1979:46) adds, “Naturalistic studies of adult-child and peer interaction are essential for an understanding of how children acquire social knowledge and the interactive and conversational skills necessary to articulate such knowledge with ongoing interactive scenes.” This framework is essential to this study because one speech strategy the children are using in order to establish their social organization is varying forms or requests. In order to function as a peer group, the members must be able to understand these utterances to maintain the hierarchical structure. Additionally, the variation of request form used by the children reveals how each child defines his role within the group.
CHAPTER 3  
DATA COLLECTION AND METHODOLOGY  

This section will describe the data collection process and the methodology applied. This includes a profile of the participants studied, the neighborhood in which they live, how the data was collected and transcribed, and the theoretical application to the data.

3.1. The Subjects  
The subjects of this research were boys who ranged in age from 3 to 9. For the purpose of this study, I have changed the names of the participants to protect their anonymity. The names I will call them and their ages at the beginning and end of the study are given in Table 2. I have known all the subjects personally for a year and a half because I have been the nanny of Robert and Kyle Wilson from May 2000 to December 2001. My personal relationship to the children benefits this research because I know their personalities and behavior patterns. This knowledge of the children and their daily lives provides validation for the data. The subjects come from four different families all of whom live in the same neighborhood, no more than a block apart. This section will describe the participants and the activities they enjoy because these activities influence whether the children play alone or with someone. In addition, these descriptions serve to show the various common interests of the peer group.
Kyle Wilson is one of the younger boys in this peer group. He enjoys playing with Legos and Playmobil indoors, but he especially likes playing outdoors when the weather permits. His favorite things are his toy trucks. He usually digs various spots in the backyard with his toy excavators and backhoes and transports the dirt with his toy dump trucks to a new location. He also enjoys riding his bike or scooter and playing soccer.

Robert is Kyle’s older brother, and the oldest child in his family. Robert mostly enjoys being indoors watching cartoons or playing Nintendo. He often plays games outside, such as hide and seek or chase. He is athletic and plays soccer, baseball, and tennis. He occasionally plays with Legos or Matchbox cars, but not nearly as often as his brother.

Joe Walker lives four houses down from Robert and Kyle. He is one year younger than Robert and also the oldest child in his family. He enjoys historical

Table 2. Participants’ Names and Ages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age (beginning)</th>
<th>Age (end)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kyle Wilson</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Wilson</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Walker</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe Walker</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris Collins</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brian Bowen</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Bowen</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
things, such as knights. His favorite toys to play with are wooden blocks, Playmobil, and Legos. His hobbies include playing violin, soccer, and swimming.

George is Joe’s younger brother. He enjoys assisting his brother in building things and playing with knights. He also enjoys drawing, painting, playing games, and dressing up in costumes.

The Bowens live across the street from the Walkers, and they have two sons, David and Brian. David spends most of his time indoors playing video games. He does, however, play soccer. He is the oldest child in his family. Brian is the middle child, and he also plays soccer. He enjoys spending time outdoors riding his bike or scooter or indoors playing with Legos or Playmobil.

Chris Collins lives on the next block, four houses down from the Walker boys. His mother describes him as a “risk-taker” who enjoys the equipment on playgrounds, such as monkey bars and equipment which requires balancing skill. He spends a good bit of time playing computer games, but he also enjoys outdoor activities, such as soccer and riding his scooter.

Kyle, Chris, and George attend the same preschool and carpool together in the mornings and afternoons. Because George and Kyle were born only four months apart, they have interacted with each other since they were small babies. When Kyle was sixteen months old, George’s mother took care of both of them during the day; this continued until he was three. Since George and Kyle attend the same school, they see each other every day on the playground and often spend time together after school. Chris also attends the same school; however, Chris is closer to George than he is to Kyle. George, Kyle, and Chris are viewed
as the younger boys because they all have older brothers who are relatively close in age, and they are all the youngest children in their respective families. Joe attends elementary school with Robert. The two play together about once every two weeks, but Robert spends most of his time with David and Brian. Although David and Brian attend a different school than the rest of the boys, Robert plays with them almost every day after school.

The children’s play typically consists of building with Legos or wooden blocks; playing with Playmobil, toy cars and trucks, or Beanie Babies; playing Nintendo; playing board or card games; riding bikes and scooters; or digging in the backyard.

3.2. The Neighborhood

The children live in an upscale neighborhood close to downtown Atlanta. All of the families involved in the study live on the same street, which for the purposes of this study I will rename Applefarm Drive. The neighborhood is pleasing to look at with numerous trees, well-manicured lawns, and well-kept homes. The neighborhood consists of old houses built in the 1930s. Most of the homes have undergone some sort of renovation and are now modest, three bedroom, two bath homes. The families are white-collar, middle class, professionals. In most families, only one parent works and the other stays home with the children. If both parents work, a nanny is usually hired to care for the children. The neighborhood is close-knit with an abundance of children living there. It boasts a neighborhood park for the children to play and a weekly scheduled activity in
which all the children of the neighborhood are invited. Such activities include a visiting fire truck, a picnic in the park, water games, or a night of play in the streets while they are blocked off.

3.3. The Setting

Recordings for this study were collected at three different homes in the neighborhood. Most of the recordings were conducted at the Wilson’s home. Two of the transcripts were gathered from the Walker house, and one was recorded at the Collins’ home.

The recordings at the Wilson home were gathered in three different rooms and the backyard. Kyle’s room contains bunk beds on which the children play, Legos, matchbox cars, and old Halloween costumes the boys can use to dress up. The playroom holds an assortment of toys from cars, trucks, and trains, to wooden blocks and games. The boys also often play in their parents’ bedroom where they jump on the bed or build forts on the floor. The backyard is home to Kyle’s numerous construction sites where he uses his toy trucks or gardening tools to dig. There is ample clear ground to play games such as hide and seek or miniature golf.

Recordings were obtained from the Walker home in two different settings. The first locale was George and Joe’s room, which also contains bunk beds. Various stuffed animals and Beanie Babies rest on their beds. A miniature train, which also functions as an alarm clock, is located in their bedroom. The second
location was the playroom, which holds all of their toys, e.g. Legos, Playmobil, Tinker Toys, wooden blocks, puzzles, and games.

The Collins’ playroom was also used to record an episode. Their playroom contains a miniature pool table, miniature foosball table, couch, and a closet full of board games.

3.4. *Theoretical Considerations for Data Collection*

Children’s worlds are not simpler versions of adult worlds; therefore, it is necessary to describe, observe, and evaluate children’s worlds in order to gain a better understanding of the link between language development and socio-cognitive development (Streeck 1986). An ethnography of speaking provides the detailed analysis useful in describing how children construct their worlds and their identities through language. Goffman (1967:2) adds that ethnographies can identify “the countless patterns and natural sequences of behavior occurring whenever persons come into one another’s immediate presence.”

The children were observed and recorded while participating in peer interaction. Damon (1977:15) notes, “it is a widely shared belief that peer group interaction may be a decisive context for the child’s linguistic and socio-cognitive development in a variety of domains.” While parents and caregivers often prove to be crucial influences in children’s early speech, the peer group takes precedence during middle childhood and adolescence because of the amount of time spent together. An ethnographic methodology best serves this study because it allows for the detailed observation and evaluation of a small sample
size in order to capture patterns of language use associated with children’s peer groups.

This research also utilizes conversation analysis to examine the data. Bates (1976) notes that the utterance means more than just what the words are saying, and this additional meaning comes largely from the context. Heritage (1984:242) adds:

A speaker’s action is context-shaped in that its contribution to an on-going sequence of actions cannot adequately be understood except by reference to the context—including, especially, the immediately preceding configuration of actions—in which it participates. This contextualization of utterances is a major, and unavoidable, procedure which hearers use and rely on to interpret conversational contributions and it is also something which speakers pervasively attend to in the design of what they say.

Thus, an emphasis will be placed not only on the utterances of the children, but also on the context in which they were spoken.

3.5. The Data

This research began with extensive observation of typical peer interaction in this neighborhood prior to collecting data. To collect data, the children were audio-recorded while playing in a natural environment. An audio recording was chosen because I felt the presence of a video camera would be too disruptive to their play. Recording began in January 2001. The children were all informed of the research before the data collection process began. In addition, all of the parents
of the children involved were informed of the research by me and asked permission to record in their homes.

Once the children began playing, I asked if I could record them; however, I made no attempt to structure the activity. With their consent, I turned the recorder on and left the room. I listened within earshot, but out of view because I did not want my presence to hinder their activity and behavior. I only returned to the room if there was reason to believe someone had been hurt. The average episode of play lasted between 15 and 20 minutes. The boys would usually play for a little while with all of their attention focused on one activity and then move on to another activity. I did not attempt to move the recorder around with them when they did this because I did not want to draw attention to the process of recording.

A total of nine interactive episodes were recorded, amounting to over two hours of data. Transcript A captures George and Kyle playing in Kyle's room on his bunk beds. Transcript B also involves George and Kyle, but they are playing in George's bedroom with Beanie Babies. In Transcript C, Robert, Joe, Kyle, and George play Legos in Joe and George's playroom. Transcript D is set in the Wilsons' playroom with Robert and Kyle playing with toy motorcycles. Transcript E takes place in Robert and Kyle's parents' bedroom while David, Robert, Brian, and Kyle play a made up game on the bed. Transcript F is the only episode collected outside. It involves Kyle and George digging in Kyle's backyard while Robert and Joe play a game of golf nearby. Robert interrupts George and Kyle's play during the episode and is, therefore, included in the transcript. Transcript G
includes Robert, Kyle, and Chris playing on Robert and Kyle’s parents’ bed. Transcript H captures Kyle and Chris playing a game of pool at Chris’s house. Transcript J involves Kyle, George, and Chris playing in Kyle’s playroom. The data collected from the episodes was transcribed shortly after it was recorded following the guidelines described by Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974). These transcriptions serve as the main source of data for this research.
CHAPTER 4
ANALYSIS

The data was analyzed using the utterance as the smallest unit of analysis. The process consisted of three stages. Stage I included coding each utterance according to criteria compiled from Corsaro (1979) and Ervin-Tripp (1977). In addition, the utterances were coded based on the utterances immediately preceding and following that particular utterance. A total of 1,168 utterances were coded; 19 utterances were not coded because they were incomplete and the speakers intentions were not clear. In Stage II, I searched for patterns in the usage of requests. The patterns were then examined according to who was speaking, to whom he was speaking, and at what location the activity was taking place. Stage III sought to examine how requests affected issues of face during these interactions.

4.1. Communicative Forms and Functions

From Stage I, I found eleven different forms used consistently throughout the data: need statements, imperatives, imbedded imperatives, permission requests, non-explicit question requests, hints, informative statements, requests for joint action, tag questions, information requests, and answers. Of these forms, six were types of requests described by Ervin-Tripp (1976,1977) and they accounted for 27.1% of all utterances coded.
4.1.1. Request forms

Ervin-Tripp (1976, 1977) has divided requests into two broad categories: direct and indirect. Direct requests include need statements, imperatives, imbedded imperatives, and permission requests and are called such because the directive function is obvious. Indirect requests refer to non-explicit question requests and hints because these are utterances where the function is ambiguous. Direct requests were used more often by the children than indirect requests (25.3%\(^2\) compared to 1.8%\(^3\)). The most abundant type of direct request found in the data was the imperative, occurring in 20.2% of request utterances. A summary of the request forms and their distribution can be found in Table 3.

Table 3. Summary of Request Forms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Request Form</th>
<th>Number of Utterances</th>
<th>Percentage(^4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Need Statements</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imperatives</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imbedded Imperatives</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permission</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hints</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>317</strong></td>
<td><strong>27.1%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^2\) This percentage was calculated by adding together the percentages of the direct requests (need statements, imperatives, imbedded imperatives, and permission requests) found in the data.

\(^3\) This percentage was calculated by adding together the percentages of the indirect requests (question requests and hints) found in the data.
4.1.1.1. Need Statements

The most direct form of requesting involves need statements. They are used to express a desire for something and usually include the word “want” or “need” in their utterances. Of all the utterances coded, 3.5% were need statements. For example, while George, Joe, Kyle, and Robert are playing with Legos at George and Joe’s house, Robert sees that Kyle has three pairs of wheels and wants one of those pairs for himself. He says, “KYLE YOU HAVE LIKE THREE PAIRS. I need one pair.” In this particular episode, the activity of playing with Legos seemed to promote the use of need statements; they amounted to 13% of the total number of utterances for this episode. Ervin-Tripp (1977) has noted participants who differ in rank use need statements. In this episode, all of the children used need statements, but Robert used twice as many as the other boys and was more successful with his requests. Thus, although subordinates used this direct form with their superiors, compliance was not guaranteed.

4.1.1.2. Imperatives

Imperatives were used in 247 (21.1%) of the children’s utterances, mainly in situations where “the actor, verb, and object was explicit so the directive function is obvious” (Ervin-Tripp 1977:166). For example, statements such as “You get your pick axe” were coded as imperatives. Ervin-Tripp (1976) has found imperatives can take two different forms: a statement or a question. In both forms, however, the function is a command for action. Ervin-Tripp (1977:169)

\(^4\) Percentages were rounded to the nearest tenth decimal place.
notes that imperative statements may take a modified form, such as you + imperative, attention-getters, post-posed tags, or rising pitch, and she explains these utterances “will be interpreted as directives which break topical continuity in discourse, and which refer to acts prohibited to or obligatory for addressees, mention referents central to such acts, or give exemplars of the core arguments of understood social rule.” Corsaro (1979:49) adds, “the main function of the imperative is to control the behavior of other interactants.” All of the children used imperatives as an attempt to get someone to do something.

Imperatives which take the form of a question are called imbedded imperatives because they embroider the imperative by adding modals such as “why don’t you…, could you…, can you…” Ervin-Tripp (1977) notes the agent and object are explicit in imbedded imperatives. Imbedded imperatives are more formal than imperatives and have different social features. An example of an imbedded imperative occurred in an interactional episode between Kyle and George. The two were digging in the backyard when George asked Kyle to get another tool by saying, “Why don’t you get some other thing?” Eleven of the imperatives found in the data were deemed imbedded in the same fashion as this example.

4.1.1.3. Permission Requests

Permission requests seek permission to engage in a specified activity and take the form modal + beneficiary + have/verb + ? (Ervin-Tripp 1977). The modals

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5 This percentage was calculated based on 36 need statements used in Transcript C out of a total of 275 utterances.
include *can, could, may* and their negatives. According to Ervin-Tripp (1977), they are the most elaborate form of direct request and tend to be addressed upward in rank. Eight permission requests were used by the children, and six of these were used by subordinates to seek permission from superiors to participate in an activity. For example, in an episode with David, Robert, Brian, and Kyle, Robert asked David, “Can we flip each other?” This request was seeking permission from David, the leader of the activity.

4.1.1.4. *Question Requests*

One of two indirect forms of requests found in the data was *non-explicit question requests*. Ervin-Tripp (1977) says that non-explicit question requests give the addressee an escape route by treating the question request as an informative question; therefore, they are asked when non-compliance is likely. Only one non-explicit question request was found in the data. While building with legos, Joe asked, “Um, Robert, do you have any extra helmets?” In this instance, Robert complied with the request and gave Joe a helmet.

4.1.1.5. *Hints*

*Hints* are the second type of indirect request. They are similar to non-explicit question requests because they require inference and are used when non-compliance is possible. Because they do require inference, Ervin-Tripp (1977) has noted that misunderstandings often result from the use of hints. Becker (1982) concludes hints are probably underestimated in the research available on
requests because they are difficult to identify without the listener’s compliance or the speaker repeating or rephrasing the request. For example, at the end of Transcript E, Robert said, “Water break for me.” This statement served as a hint to request ending the game. However, if no one acknowledged this request and if Robert did not repeat or rephrase the utterance, it would be impossible to know for sure if it was intended to be a hint or not. Thus, twenty utterances were interpreted as hints because either the listener complied or the speaker repeated or rephrased the request.

4.1.2. Other Forms

The results of Stage I found five types of utterances used by the children which were not requests described by Ervin-Tripp (1976, 1977). A summary of these other forms can be found in Table 4.

**Table 4. Summary of Other Forms.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communicative Form</th>
<th>Number of Utterances</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Informative Statements</td>
<td>548</td>
<td>46.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requests for Joint Action</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answers</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tag Questions</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Requests</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>851</strong></td>
<td><strong>72.9%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.1.2.1. Informative Statements

The majority (46.9%) of utterances found in the data were informative statements. Corsaro (1979:49) defines these as “declaratives produced to provide information relevant to the acknowledged topic or activity, to comment on on-going interaction, or to express personal feelings toward specific features of the interactive scene.” For example, statements such as “Robert, my guy’s goin’ to do a jump” were coded as informative statements. Corsaro’s (1979) own research has yielded similarly high percentages of informative statements in peer interaction.

4.1.2.2. Requests for Joint Action

Statements such as “Let’s work George, okay?” were coded as requests for joint action. Corsaro (1979:50) says requests for joint action differ from imperatives in that they “(1) normally take the interrogative form, (2) are declaratives without heavy stress patterns, or (3) contain syntactic elements which signify the suggestion of joint action,” In the data, more than half of all requests for joint action (18 out of 31) occurred during interactions with Kyle and George, who are the two participants closest in age. This suggests they align themselves as equals more than differing ranks.

4.1.2.3. Tag Questions

Tag questions were found in the data and coded as such. Corsaro (1979:50) states that tag questions are utterances used to “gain shared understanding of
the emerging scene…they tend to insure auditor feedback which signifies mutual understanding.” In this respect, they are similar to requests for joint action because they stress a sharing aspect of the current activity and a joint process of organizing the ongoing activity. Corsaro (1979) has found an unusual pattern in the use of tag questions during cross-status interaction: subordinates infrequently used tag questions when in the presence of superordinates. He suggests, “the children may be developing a rule which restricts conversation between subordinates in the presence of superordinates” (Corsaro 1979:51). This is supported by the data for this study. For example, when George and Kyle played alone in George’s room, tag questions amounted to 8.6%6 of their utterances. However, when they played with their older brothers, Robert and Joe, present, only one tag question (.36%7) was used.

4.1.2.4. Information Requests

Another type of question found in the data was information requests. These are questions employed by the speaker to obtain information about the ongoing activity from the other interactants (Corsaro 1979). For example, George asked Kyle, “What are we tryin’ to do?” in order to obtain information about the current activity. Goody (1978:39) asserts questions “are speech acts which place two people in direct, immediate interaction. In doing so, they carry messages about relationships—about relative status, assertions of status and challenges to

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6 This percentage was calculated based on 21 tag questions used in Transcript B out of a total of 243 utterances.
7 This percentage was calculated based on 1 tag question used in Transcript C out of a total of 275 utterances.
status.” Corsaro (1979) found that children in role-play had little time for information requests because they were so busy giving and following orders. This data shows 7.3% of all utterances were information requests, suggesting the activity the children are engaged in lends itself to some types of utterance more than others.

4.1.2.5. Answers

As Corsaro (1979) notes, subordinates can respond to orders given by superordinates in two ways: by producing numerous answers in response to imperatives or by using requests for permission before engaging in an activity. He defines answers as “communicative functions in which the speaker is responding to a previous question or imperative from another interactant or is accounting for a past action or failure to act” (Corsaro 1979:50). For example, while playing with Legos, Kyle asks, “Who needs this?” Robert’s response, “I do,” is coded as an answer. In this study, 12.4% of utterances were answers.

Two conclusions can be drawn from the analysis of the data in Stage I. First, the children seem to spend most of their time during interactions discussing and organizing the on-going activity. Second, the children produced a sizable portion of requests in the data. This strongly supports the notion that requests are used to structure social interaction. The next section will attempt to address this.
4.2. Requests as Markers of Dominance

Requests comprised over a quarter of all the utterances produced by the children. Corsaro’s (1979) work on status and role found that children exert authority over other children, and one way they do this is through the use of requests for action. Becker (1982) has found that children mark obvious status differences due to role and age, but they also mark more subtle status differences, such as more dominant, bigger peers. Wood and Gardner (1980) found that dominant children used more direct requests with their less dominant peers, and submissive children used more indirect requests and fewer requests overall with their more dominant peers. The data collected from the children of Applefarm Drive support these findings.

4.2.1. Establishing a Social Structure Through the Use of Requests

During an interactional episode, the children used requests early on to establish their roles and to align themselves with the other participants. Episodes which involved four children proved to be the most interesting to look at in terms of social structure.

The following episode involved Robert, Joe, Kyle, and George playing with Legos. From the onset, Robert immediately asserted his position of leader with a need statement.

Example (1)\(^8\)

C1 R – I need something else. A flat and long red one.
C2 J – Like this?
C3 R – Yeah, but it’s fatter. (1.5 sec) Something kinda like that.
C4 J – Here, I’ll give you this one=

\(^8\) Cf. Appendix A for an explanation of transcript notations.
Joe affirmed Robert’s claim to leadership by complying with the request and trying to find the piece Robert needs. When Robert pointed to one of Joe’s pieces as being similar to the one he needs, Joe interpreted this as a hint and again complied to give it to Robert. However, Robert did not intend for this utterance to be a hint and refused to take the Lego piece. Joe continued to comply with Robert’s request to find the piece he needs by looking in the Lego box.

A few moments later in the interaction, Robert and Joe joined forces under Robert’s control when he said,

Example (2)

Their joint effort in building Legos served to separate the older boys, Robert and Joe, from the younger ones, Kyle and George. This separation is found in other episodes and observations as well. In this activity, George defined his role when he said, “Joe, can you take this off?” His use of an imbedded imperative in this instance served to show his respect to his superior, Joe.

Corsaro (1979) has suggested from findings in his own research that there is an unwritten rule stating subordinates can not talk to each other when in the presence of superordinates. In this episode, however, George did plenty of talking (22% of the total utterances); he made numerous attempts to get the
attention of the older boys and seven of his attempts failed. Goffman (1967:113-114) said of conversation, “It is a little social system with its own boundary-maintaining tendencies; it is a little patch of commitment and loyalty with its own heroes and its own villains.” George’s failure to abide by the unwritten rule served to alienate himself. Goffman (1967:115) continues, “Due to the ceremonial order in which his actions are embedded, he may find that any alternate allocation of involvement on his part will be taken as a discourtesy and cast an uncalled-for reflection upon the others, the setting, or himself.” This is evidenced in the following transaction:

Example (3)
C174 R – Nah. (1.6 sec) I only need weapons.
C175 K – You need weapons?
C176 G – I’ve got some more weapons. (2 sec) There’s a battle ax.
C177 R – No, not those. I need a witch hat.
C178 G – More weapons like I have?
C179 J – We need a band witch.
C180 R – A sword. And another magic wand. An //another sword.
C181 G - I have some swords. I have some swords.
C182 R – JOE, look at these weapons we have.
C183 G – And a gun. A gun. I’VE GOT GUNS.
C184 J – Oh. We don’t care.
C185 G – I was telling Kyle.
C186 K – I don’t care.

Although George had numerous weapons and was eager to give any of them to Robert, who wanted weapons, Robert refused to even acknowledge his offer.

Joe responded for the two of them with “Oh. We don’t care.”

Later in the episode, George tried to reconcile with the older boys by fulfilling Robert’s request of needing more wheels. Robert noticed that Kyle had three pairs of wheels. The two bickered briefly over the wheels with Kyle
refusing to give up a pair to Robert. George alerted Robert to some wheels that
nobody was using in an attempt to get in good favor with him; however, his
attempt was thwarted because the wheels were not long enough for Robert to
use. George then tried to take one of Kyle’s pair of wheels to give to Robert.

The following exchange ensued:

Example (4)
C222 K – GEORGE.
C223 G – Kyle, he really needs a pair of wheels.
C224 K – Well, I need two pairs. Three I mean.
C225 G – I need a pair of legs.

Kyle’s response to George here and in the example (3) of saying, “I don’t care”
served to align himself with Robert and Joe and not be associated with George’s
outcast status.

Claims to leadership were not always accepted; in some instances
challenges were made. During an episode with Robert, Kyle, David, and Brian,
the four boys decided to make up their own game to play in Robert and Kyle’s
parents’ bedroom. The transcript began:

Example (5)
E1 R - Let’s uh- here, I’ll do a flip.
E2 B - Okay.
E3 R - GET OFF. GET OFF.
E4 D - No, no, no, no.
E5 R - I’m king of the bed.
E6 K - Well you’re oldest.
E7 D - No, I’m oldest.
E8 R - Wait after I do a flip, David.
E9 D - No. You can’t do it, you can’t use pillows.
E10 B - I'M TRYIN’ TO BEAT HIM UP.
E11 R - I’m king of the bed.
E12 D - No pillows. No pillows.
In this episode, David and Robert had a fairly lengthy challenge for leadership. Robert began to take charge by ordering everyone off the bed so he can do a flip. David challenged by telling him “no.” Robert then asserted his leadership by stating he is “king of the bed.” Kyle affirmed this by responding that Robert is the oldest of all the boys, which is not true. David is the oldest, and he corrected Kyle on this point. Several exchanges were made back and forth between Robert and David, and the battle for leadership seemed to parallel the physical battle for who can stay on the bed. When Robert was finally brought down physically, this proved to be his defeat for leadership of the activity as well. He acknowledged this defeat by saying, “I’m knocked down. I fell. Can we get back up?” His directive choice showed his deference to David because he used a permission request, which is addressed upward in rank. David’s position is further affirmed by Robert when he tells on Brian for breaking one of the rules by saying, “LET GO. He was pulling me David.” His turn to David for help is a clear sign he has lost the challenge for leadership and serves to assert David’s position as the only person who can do anything about the situation.

The hierarchy between the remaining boys is established without challenge. Robert’s losing the battle for leadership leaves him next in charge. Brian makes his position of a subordinate to Robert clear by making a cushion of
pillows for Robert to fall on: “I’m making a cushy dock for your— you keep on
doing it Robert.”

Kyle’s age easily makes him the lowest participant in this social hierarchy.
Because of his age, he is not able to play as rough as the older boys; therefore,
they constantly watch out for him. David commands, “No matter what you can’t
hurt Kyle.” Additionally, Kyle is given direct orders by all of the other boys
involved. For example,

Example (6)
E68 D - Kyle, Kyle, you get down there.
E69 B - You just stand right at the edge.
E70 D - Whoa.
E71 B - Kyle, no, you don’t get there. You have to stand right/
E72 D -            WAIT. Kyle, I’ll show you what to do, watch. Kyle, Kyle, WATCH.
E73 K - I’ll stay.

In this episode, Brian and David were telling Kyle what he should be doing. He
submitted to their commands with his response, “I’ll stay.” Kyle tried to give
commands himself:

Example (7)
E85 K - TIMEOUT. TIMEOUT. TIMEOUT. TIMEOUT. TIME. TIME.
E86 D - TIMEOUT. What?
E87 K - You cannot go against the wall.
E88 D - Actually, they can. They can up here. They can’t down there.

It is clear he is in no position to give commands, however, because he has to
repeat his request six times. When he finally had everyone’s attention and could
state his rule, David overrode him. These actions show Kyle is at the bottom of
the social hierarchy.
4.2.2. Variables affecting Dominance

Becker (1982:3) has said, “to the extent that children’s repertoires of requests relate systematically to social variables, requests are a means of assessing the influence of different social variables on their behavior and their facility for dealing with these variables in an interactive setting.” In this respect, the data proved to be quite telling. Ervin-Tripp (1976) found that age, task, size, territoriality, and familiarity were all factors in the organization of social structure.

4.2.2.1. Age

In most of the data, age was found to be a clear determinant of dominance. This was especially true in episodes which involved an older child, such as Robert, who was 7, and younger children, such as Chris, who was 4. For example, in one episode Robert, Kyle, and Chris were all playing at Robert and Kyle’s house in their parents’ bedroom. During this episode, Robert instructed both boys on what to do by giving twelve imperatives. His leadership was established in the beginning:

Example (8)
G1   R – Chris, watch this. Aww. Look, all the pillows. They’re scattered.
G2   Wait. Wait. You guys know how to scatter them? Just toss them up
G3   in the air.
G4   (2 sec)
G5   C – I’m gonna kill you.
G6   R – Toss ‘em up here C. And leave ‘em wherever they fall.
G7   K – Okay. I got it.
G8   C – I got it.

Robert began this game by explaining to Chris and Kyle what they were to do.

Their responses, “I got it,” affirmed his leadership.
4.2.2.2. Location

In most of the episodes, the setting did not seem to affect the social structure. However, during an interactional episode between Chris and Kyle at Chris’s house, the setting seemed to favor Chris. The two were playing a game of pool on a miniature pool table. Chris had played the game before and was very familiar with the rules. Kyle had clearly never played pool before and was not aware of the rules, such as not hitting the eight ball in until you have gotten all your other balls in. Much of the interaction consisted of Chris trying to explain the rules as the game progressed. For example,

Example (9)
H3 K - I’m solids, okay? I’m the solid ball.
H4 C - You’re not. You have to hit that ball.

Example (10)
H14 C - No you have to hit this ball.
H15 K - No, I don’t. Alls I have to-

Example (11)
H19 C - You need to put this in here.
H20 K - Yeah, but now I’m not solids anymore, just not.
H21 (3.3 sec)
H22 C - Stop it. You have to shoot right there.

In these examples it is clear that even though Chris is a year younger than Kyle, he has an advantage by being on his own territory because he has played this game before and is familiar with the rules. This knowledge places him in a position to command Kyle to play by the rules. However, territorial rights do not ensure leadership, and his commands are constantly challenged by Kyle. This episode does reveal that the setting plays a crucial role in shaping interaction.
4.2.2.3. Activity

The task or activity at hand seems to lend itself to certain types of requests more than others. For example, when the children played games, such as the made up game played by David, Robert, Brian, and Kyle, or the pool game played by Chris and Kyle, the total number of utterances for each of these interactions consisted of a sizable amount of imperatives (46% and 18%, respectively). Close inspection of these imperatives revealed they were often rules telling the other participants how to play the games. Likewise, in the episode with Robert, Joe, George, and Kyle playing Legos, the activity of digging through hundreds of plastic pieces to find the one you need seemed to result in the use of more need statements than any other episode.

4.2.2.4. A Special Case

The data revealed something unusual about the social structure of interaction between George and Kyle. Three episodes were recorded of Kyle and George playing alone and one episode was recorded with the two of them playing with Chris. In each of these episodes, a clear leader was never established. Even more remarkable, the number of utterances made by each of them was alarmingly close. In Transcript A, Kyle made 10 utterances compared to George’s 8. In Transcript B, George and Kyle both had 61 utterances a piece. Again, in Transcript F, they both used 16 utterances each. These numbers

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9 This percentage was calculated based on 93 imperatives used in Transcript E out of a total of 203 utterances.
10 This percentage was calculated based on 25 imperatives used in Transcript H out of a total of 141 utterances.
support the notion that they are of equal status because subordinates are expected to use fewer requests and, thus, have fewer utterances during an interaction than their superiors. A closer look at their utterances revealed Kyle and George’s actions stressed doing things together, such as the use of requests for joint action and tag questions as seen in the example “Let’s work George, okay?” They used more requests for joint action and more tag questions than any other episode.

There are several possible reasons for their equal rank status. Kyle is four months older than George; however, Kyle is small for his age and George is actually bigger in height and weight than Kyle. Since age and size tend to be factors determining dominance, these may cancel each other out. Another possibility is the closeness the boys have had throughout their childhood so far. The two spent the first few years of their lives in the care of George’s mother. In addition, they continue to play together on a daily basis and attend the same school.

I believe that their circumstances of being in each other’s company for most of their lives contributes to the structure of their interaction. They view each other as equals, in part, because so many of their childhood milestones they experienced together, e.g. learning to ride a bicycle without training wheels, learning to tie their shoes, and learning the alphabet. In addition, their closeness has resulted in a strong friendship. Changing the organization of that relationship with one of them being more dominant over the other one would jeopardize all
that they have built. Therefore, this closeness throughout their childhood serves to define their roles with each other in interaction.

### 4.3. Considering Politeness and Face

Becker’s (1982) model of requests includes three motivating forces in conversation: be clear, be polite, and maintain face. Goffman (1967:5) defined face as the “positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line (a pattern of behaviors by which he expresses his view of a situation and through it his evaluation of the participants, especially himself) others assume he has taken during a particular contact.” Since social relationships are comprised of requests and conversation, Goody (1978) said there are long and short term goals to be met in a request situation. The short term goals involve getting the listener to fulfill the request, while the long term goals attempt to preserve the social relationship of the speaker and listener (Goody 1978). Therefore, participants in an interaction must make their requests clear and sufficiently polite to mark the status of speaker and listener in order to maintain face (Becker 1982). The maintenance of face entails maintaining the approval of others, being unimpeded in one’s personal needs, and preventing embarrassment and humiliation (Brown and Levinson 1978). These can be accomplished through language choice and, hence, request choice.

Returning to example (3) where Robert, Joe, Kyle, and George are playing with Legos. George is trying to preserve his relationship with Robert, the leader of the activity, by offering him some Legos that he needs.
Example (3)
C174 R – Nah. (1.6 sec) I only need weapons.
C175 K – You need weapons?
C176 G – I’ve got some more weapons. (2 sec) There’s a battle ax.
C177 R – No, not those. I need a witch hat.
C178 G – More weapons like I have?
C179 J – We need a band witch.
C180 R – A sword. And another magic wand. An //another sword.
C181 G – I have some swords. I have some swords.
C182 R – JOE, look at these weapons we have.
C183 G – And a gun. A gun. I’VE GOT GUNS.
C184 J – Oh. We don’t care.
C185 K – I was telling Kyle.
C186 G – I don’t care.

In this exchange, George has been alienated by the other boys. He is trying to gain favor with the older boys by offering to them some of his weapons, since they requested weapons. George chooses to use hints, such as “I have some swords…and a gun” to in effect say, “Take these weapons.” His choice of an indirect form serves a two-fold purpose: to show respect to his superiors and to save face if they chose not to comply. However, Joe’s response of not caring threatens George’s face. He tries to save face by saying he was talking to Kyle, but since George has been alienated, Kyle saves his own face, and thus his relationship with the older boys, by also responding that he does not care. The loss of face for George only serves to further his outcast status in this interaction.

In the same episode, Robert asks for a pair of wheels from Kyle, who has three pairs. An exchange follows:

Example (12)
C204 R – I need, like, uh=
C205 K – =I need a=
C206 R - =I NEED ANOTHER PACK OF WHEELS.
C207 K – Oh, but- like what?
Kyle refuses to give one of his pairs of wheels to Robert. This act threatens his face because he is not being polite to his superior. He proceeds to search in the Lego pile for a pair of wheels which Robert can use. He finds a pair and says to Robert, “Here’s a good pair of wheels.” Not only does Kyle fulfill Robert’s request of needing wheels (whether Kyle’s or another pair), he also chooses to use a hint telling Robert to take the wheels. This act serves to save his face.

Indirect forms of requests were used in other episodes as well to preserve face. During an interaction between Kyle and George, the two play with Beanie Babies at George’s house. George is referring to his stuffed animals when he says,

Example (13)
B101  G – I love all these guys. This guy right over here is my favorite guy.
B102  ((George pretends to cry like a baby))
B103  K – George, only koala bear’s crying. He got hurt.
B104  G – I got hurt too.

Kyle uses a hint, “only koala bear’s crying,” to tell George to stop crying. This choice of request functions to preserve their relationship by being as polite and indirect as possible and to maintain Kyle’s face.

While Kyle and Chris played pool at Chris’s house, it was clear that Chris had a territorial advantage. This, however, did not give him leadership rights.
Throughout the game, Chris used imperatives to explain the rules to Kyle. With Kyle being the older of the two boys, these instances often became face threatening acts for Chris. During their pool game, someone knocked on Chris’s front door and he went to answer it. The following transaction ensued:

Example (14)
H138  ((Knock at the front door. Chris goes to answer it.))
H139  C - ((from far off)) Don’t shoot it yet.
H140  K - Yeah, I can shoot. ((hits the ball))

Chris commands Kyle not to take a turn while he is away from the table and cannot witness Kyle’s move by using an imperative “Don’t shoot it yet.” Kyle responds by taking his turn and hitting the ball, which results in him getting a ball in one of the pockets. Chris returns to the table and is vocally upset that Kyle has defied his request and hit the ball. This act threatens Chris’s face, but Kyle does not back down:

Example (15)
H143  C - =That’s not fair ‘cause I wasn’t playing.
H144  K - Yeah, it was fair. Yes.
H145  C - NO.
H146  K - Yes it is.
H147  C - NO cause I was not playing.
H148  K - Well, I still am. I still am.
H149  C - I thought that was the eight ball.
H150  K - The eight ball was right there.

In this instance, Chris is justified in asking Kyle not to shoot without him present; however, his choice of request form serves to agitate Kyle and threaten his face. In an effort to save his face and preserve his relationship with Kyle, he has to relent and offer the excuse “I thought that was the eight ball.”
4.4. Summary

This chapter has examined the results of the data. A summary of the communicative forms used by the children can be found in Table 5.

**Table 5. Summary of communicative forms found in data\(^{11}\).**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communicative Form</th>
<th>Number of Utterances</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Need Statements*</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imperatives*</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imbedded Imperatives*</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permission Requests*</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question Requests*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hints*</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informative Statements</td>
<td>548</td>
<td>46.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Requests for Joint Action</td>
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<td>3.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Answers</td>
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<td>12.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tag Questions</td>
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<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Requests</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data revealed that the children used their language to establish the social structure of an interaction, and the children used requests frequently to mark dominance. Moreover, several factors affect this organization. The factors found in the data include age, location, and activity. A unique relationship was found among two of the boys, Kyle and George. A theory of closeness was posited to

\(^{11}\) (*) represents the six types of requests as described by Ervin-Tripp (1976, 1977).
explain this relationship and their equal rank status. In addition, the preservation of face was found to have an effect on the request form chosen.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

5.1. Overview
This research began with three main objectives: (1) to examine how the boys
used requests to organize their social interaction, (2) to determine the factors
which contribute to the request form chosen, and (3) to consider how the
maintenance of face affects the choice of request. Several conclusions can be
drawn from the analysis of the data collected.

The data revealed that the children do possess a shared understanding of
the interactions in which they were involved. In addition, this shared knowledge
allowed them to interpret the social structure of the interaction by the various
request forms used. Thus, even the youngest children involved in the study were
able to use requests appropriately, showing they understood the social features
marked by such use. In addition, the children used different forms of requests for
different functions, e.g. to establish leadership, to affirm leadership, or to
challenge leadership. The use of these different forms served to define the
child’s role within the interaction.

The children’s repertoires included all of the six types described by Ervin-
Tripp (1976, 1977). Corroborating her research, the children used more polite
forms, such as permission requests and hints, to address superiors; in addition,
the children used few indirect requests overall. This contradicts Becker’s (1982)
findings that children use more indirect requests with participants of higher status than themselves. One explanation for this by Read and Cherry (1977) is that preschoolers do not address many indirect requests to peers because they may not be used to having peers satisfy their needs and wants. Another possibility suggested by Becker (1982:7) is that “children are in some sense aware that indirect requests place a fairly heavy inferential burden on their peer listeners.”

The children used imperatives more than any other form of request. The younger children used imperatives even when addressing listeners older than themselves and presumably of higher status. This finding contradicts Corsaro (1979) and Mitchell-Kernan and Kernan (1977) who found that subordinates rarely use imperatives at all.

The data revealed there are more factors that determine social structure than simply which directive type is used. Similar to Ervin-Tripp’s (1976, 1977) findings, factors which contributed to the social organization of the interaction included age, location, and activity. In most interactions, age seemed to be the biggest determiner. However, in some interactions the location clearly provided an advantage for a participant. Similarly, certain activities, such as playing with Legos, created a higher frequency of certain request forms due to the nature of the activity. The unique combination of participants engaging in a specified activity at a certain location created the social organization. Therefore, the social structure of the neighborhood is fluid and changes depending upon who is present, where the interaction is taking place, and what the children are doing.
In addition to these factors, the maintenance of face affected the request form chosen by the children. The children want their requests to be fulfilled in an interaction, but they also want to preserve their relationships with the other participants; therefore, the request form chosen can accomplish both of these goals. Although the children used imperatives most of the time, when face threatening acts occurred, the children used more indirect, polite forms with their addressees in order to preserve face.

The relationship between Kyle and George revealed unexpected conclusions. Since the two were born only four months apart and have maintained a solid friendship for most of their lives, they have a closeness incomparable to any of the other participants. The data revealed that when these two are in interaction with each other, neither one takes a firm leadership position. I believe it is due to their closeness. Because they have known each other for so long and are close friends, they have more to lose if the relationship is not preserved. Therefore, they treat each other as equals by using language which stresses doing things together, such as requests for joint action and tag questions.

Overall, the data confirmed the boys’ peer group is hierarchically structured. In addition, the children use their language to embed information about the status and role of the participants. The key element in these interactions is the request. Requests were used by participants to define their role within the interaction. In addition, factors such as age, location, activity, and maintenance of face contributed to the request form. The social structure of any
given interaction was organized through the language of the children and was 
influenced by social factors; thus, the social organization of the peer group is 
always changing.

5.2. Limitations of the Study

The nature of the recording process posed several obstacles. While a video 
camera would have provided the opportunity to examine facial expressions and 
body language to show dominance, a tape recorder was chosen to be less 
intrusive. However, the equipment used to record the children was not highly 
sophisticated; in order to insure an audible recording, it was necessary to place 
the recorder within the children’s sight. For this reason, the children were told 
they were being recorded. Having observed them play prior to recording, I do not 
believe the recorder inhibited their play.

Due to schedule constraints, I was only able to record the children a couple of 
times per month. Since I was visiting the children when it was convenient for me, 
it was not always at a time when they wanted to play with someone. This caused 
the data collection process to span a six month time period. In addition, finding 
an adequate setting was sometimes an obstacle. Because the recording 
equipment was not technologically advanced, it was difficult to obtain good audio 
recordings outdoors, and impossible to record activities which required extensive 
movement, such as a game of hide and seek. Therefore, all but one of the 
recordings were collected indoors.
After I had collected nine episodes of interaction I began analyzing the data. Although requests were abundant in the data, they were not always clear markers of dominance. Some transcripts were quite short, and, therefore, they did not reveal much about the social organization of that interaction. The amount of requests found was enough to do descriptive statistics, but not enough to do a highly statistical analysis. A laboratory setting could have elicited more requests, but at the sacrifice of realism.

Despite these limitations, I believe the data collected is a valuable contribution to the understanding of these children’s worlds and fulfills the goals set for this research.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


   Sociology of education, 52: 46-59.


Garvey, Catherine. 1975. Requests and responses in children’s speech.


APPENDIX A

TRANSCRIPT NOTATION

° Low volume
-
Thir
Bold italics indicate some form of emphasis
[
Overlap brackets
:::
Colons indicate that the sound immediately preceding has been noticeably lengthened
//
Alternate method of marking overlap
.
Falling contour
?
Rising contour
,
Falling-rising contour
=
Latching: there is no interval between the end of a prior turn and the start of a next piece of talk.
*hh
Inbreath

~
Indicate speech that is slurred together because spoken rapidly
((laugh))
Enclose material that is not part of the talk being transcribed
(1.4)
Numbers in parentheses mark silences
THIR
Capitals mark increased volume
(only)
Indicate material the transcriber is uncertain about
(h)
Plosive aspiration which could result from breathiness, laughter, or crying
APPENDIX B

TABLES OF TRANSCRIPTS

Transcript A
Kyle and George playing on Kyle’s bunk beds.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Statements</th>
<th>Kyle (4.9)</th>
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**Transcript B**

George and Kyle playing with Beanie Babies on George’s bunk beds.

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Robert, Joe, Kyle, and George playing with Legos in Joe and George’s playroom.

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Transcript D
Robert and Kyle playing in their playroom.

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Transcript E

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Kyle, George, and Robert playing in Kyle’s backyard.

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Transcript H
Kyle and Chris playing pool in Chris’s playroom.

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Kyle, George, and Chris playing in Kyle’s playroom.

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APPENDIX C

TRANSCRIPTS

Transcript A
January 23, 2001
Kyle and George playing in Kyle’s room on his bunk beds

A1 K – Let’s work George, okay? (3.5 sec) George, SEND ME UP THOSE
A2 TWO PUZZLE BOARDS.
A3 G – Two puzzle boards. Here’s one.
A4 K – And hand me the other one.
A5 G – And here’s two. (6.1 sec) Now what else do we need?
A6 K – Look what I built George.
A7 ((George looks))
A8 K – Don’t, d-don’t, do not jump, do not ° If you, if you like turn it- I
A9 know, that could make it fall down right? So you can’t jump on the
A10 bed.
A11 G – But if the ground-
A12 K – But mice could jump on this bed.
A13 G – Okay, I’m gonna see- you build it, okay, I wanna see if it will fall
A14 down.
A15 K – But if it does, I’m not gonna tell cause it’s like okay.

Transcript B
February 6, 2001
George and Kyle playing in George’s room with Beanie Babies on his bunk beds.

B1 G – Good. That doesn’t even look like a swing cause it’s too long.
B2 K – Yeah but it still could be a swing, right?
B3 G – Yeah it’s gonna, it’s gonna be, it’s gonna //be
B4 K - We’re fishing, right?
B5 G - And there’s a swing on the raft, right? And this is the fishing pole.
B6 K – I know, but this is the swing on the raft, right?
B7 G – Yeah. And you have to be really really fat, right? Or not so fat, right?
B8 K – I know, this guy is fat.
B9 G – Yeah, he’s sorda fat, right?
B10 K – I know. He’s not as fat as that penguin over there.
B11 G – No, not as fat as Bobcat. Not as fat as this guy.
B12 K – His name is Bobcat?
B13 G – Yeah.
I don’t like Bobcat, but I like the name Bobcat.

Hey. I’ve got a great idea. We could tie this to that.

That’s easy. I’ll do it, okay?

Okay.

Cause you don’t know how to tie.

I know. But I do know how to tie like this. This is the only way I know how to tie right George?

Can you tie a double knot?

Okay, I’ll tie one.

No. I’ll tie it. I can tie it.

It’s hard for you cause it’s ribbon, right?

Right, but I have a hard time with ribbon sometimes cause it has really little holes in it, right?

Well, it has little holes in it and I still tied it.

Right, but-

Well, that one has bigger holes.

Littler holes.

No. This one has littler, that has like a little bigger, right? Now look, this is- wait, I’ll tell you how to put it so then you can- listen.

Just put this here

(3.2 sec)

Hey look Kyle I did it.

Now I can put another Beanie Baby on like this pink (one)

(someone) gave me that.

I know. It doesn’t matter that it is pink, right?

I like my pink (pig).

I know. It doesn’t matter if it’s pink cause all it wants to swing a lot.

Don’t swing him, Kyle.

Well, he likes to be swinging. I’ll just go down here and tie him.

Whee.

No. Tie him on this.

Okay. Pretend he wants to, pretend he’s rescued, right?

We’re rescuing him.

Don’t. Don’t. It’s really bad to let it go down, right? Whee.

(laughs)

Don’t let it go in the water. Don’t.

Are we gonna drop the raft down there for him to hold? Ahh.

Throw him the raft.

Yeah, go raft.

And we have //to-

HAUL ‘ER UP GEORGE. No, not the koala.

I get a green rock. Your guy doesn’t need a green //rock.

This is the elevator, right?

I know cause that’s- no, it’s not an elevator. It’s something that
they-
G – He fell out.
K – Koala bear’s //resting.
G – choo choo
K – Why’d you pick koala up? He doesn’t like to be up. Leave it like it is.
G – Drop him off. NO GEORGE.
K – Don’t take it off or you can’t get it back on.
K – I know. He doesn’t like this swing anymore.
G – Yes. He doesn’t like it.
G – I know. And now that he’s all grown up he doesn’t like this swing. I’ll
tell you why.
G – He’s all grown up. He’s a girl.
K – I know. Let’s throw him down into the ocean and let alligators eat him
up.
G – No. No. I wove him. ((speaking in a baby voice))
K – Who? You love that girl?
G – It is a boy bear.
K – Uh. Oh yeah, I don’t- why didn’t you tell me before?
G – I was- I was tryin’ to trick you.
K – LOOK. He’s a //worker.
K – What about me? I-I wanna be up here by koala.
G – = And that guy hammers it, right?
K – And koa- koala bear’s stirring in bullets. Bullets are the same thing as
ammo. Hey. This is a great idea. This could be a wall. CLOSING.
G – CLOSING. CLOSING.
K – LOOK. He’s a //worker.
G – NO.
K – At least using it stretched it.
(A mechanical train clock sound for 20 seconds, then conversation
and play resume.)
G – What about this guy?
K – OH NO. SWIPER. SWIPER. (1.5 sec) Swiper’s gonna swipe away
koala. (2 sec) Now he’ll never come here. George, give me koala.
K – You get swiper.
K – Ahh.
K – OH NO::: Swiper’s not gonna get eaten.
G – I love all these guys. This guy right over here is my favorite guy.
((George pretends to cry like a baby))
K – George, only koala bear’s crying. He got hurt.
G – I got hurt too.
H – Did somebody get hurt?
K – No, the Beanie Baby did.

H – Oh, that is the Beanie Baby crying. Well, let’s not yell, though,

okay because you’re worrying us.

K – Waa, waa, waa.

G – Waa, waa, waa.

H – You can do it like that just don’t scream.

((I leave and playing resumes.))

G – I know, that can be Tarzan’s room.

K – No. I don’t even like Tarzan.

G – He’s so dumb. Huh-huh.

K – Then why do you like him?

G – Well, I used to.

K – I know, but=

G –  OH. OH. This is a good idea.

K – I know. This could be one rope and then=

G –  And this could be

another.

K – I know, but look. This could—this is koala bear’s rope.

G – You can’t tie Kyle, right?

K – I know. I know how to tie knots.

G – Yeah.

K – No. No.

G – You kicked him in water. He’s not floating, he’s drowning.

K – I got him.

G – But this guy’s not drowning, especially not panda bear. ((laughs))

Panda bear’s a raft, right?

K – HEY. We could throw panda bear down there or penguin down there.

G – NO. It’s a raft, panda raft. This is a raft, it’s a zoo raft, and it has a

propeller on it.

K – Penguin. *It’s not so nice to penguin cause you only let koala on

there.

G – On what? The raft?

K – Yeah, not on the raft.

G – He can get on this raft.

K – I know. HEY. I got great idea. This is only for koala bear.

G – No it isn’t. It’s for everybody.

K – I know, but look, only this pillow could be for koala bear.

G – That’s his raft?

K – Uh-huh.

(2 sec)

G – You can’t have it. You can’t have the biggest pillow. Look how big

this one is. He likes pooh bear.

K – No he doesn’t.

G – Yes he does.

K – He does not like pooh bear.

G – Well I’m not letting you have that.
B152  K – Cool. That means I can take the pooh bear.
B153  G – No. You can have the sheep still.
B154  K – But he doesn’t like pooh bear right?
B155  G – You can have the pillow, and you have to leave it on the raft. That’s
B156  his part on the raft. He has a private place.
B157  (3 sec)
B158  K – Okay.
B159  G – At least he has a place on this raft.
B160  K – Yeah, at least he has a place on the raft.
B161  G – One of these guys doesn’t like pooh bear.
B162  K – It’s the koala bear right?
B163  G – No. It’s the penguin.
B164  K – But he likes koala bear, //right?
B165  G – Right.
B166  K – I know, but he doesn’t like pooh bear. HEY. Koala bear can go in that
B167  little raft.
B168  G – This raft?
B169  K – No, not that raft. This is for cheeser.
B170  G – Yeah, cheeser’s lost.
B171  K – Let’s go find him.
(They leave the room in search of cheeser, the mouse.)

Transcript C
February 6, 2001
George, Kyle, Joe, and Robert playing at George and Joe’s house with Legos.

C1  R – I need something else. A flat and long red one.
C2  J – Like this?
C3  R – Yeah, but it’s fatter. (1.5 sec) Something kinda like that.
C4  J – Here, I'll give you this one=
C5  R – =No, that’s okay.
C6  J – Let’s see if it’s in here.
C7  R – Why don’t we just dump it out?
C8  J – Look at this guy driving. This guy-
C9  G – I’ve got one.
C10  R – I have one. (1.5 sec) I have a white one. Here.
C11  K – I’ve got one.
C12  G - Mine has wings on it.
C13  (3.4 sec)
C14  J – Like this?
C15  R – No, this. (3 sec) JOE. Look what I have. These match. Joe we
C16  need to do a space one. Joe, we need to do a space one, right?
C17  J – Yeah.
C18  G – And you don’t need those two?
C19  (3 sec)
C20  G – Joe, can you take this off?
C21  R – That’s a spider.
C22  K – I know. That’s what I was going to tell you that.
C23  R – Yeah. I KNOW. I KNOW.
C24  J – Okay got it.
C25  K – I can bite it off.
C26  R – Actually this is too long.
C27  J – Here you go Ryan.
C28  R – I need a four one. Hey maybe I could just use these.
C29  K – There’s a witch.
C30  J – I wanna witch-witch. ((funny voice))
C31  R – There’s a witch?
C32  K – Yeah a witch.
C33  (7 sec)
C34  K – I need, um, this basket cause I want the- (2 sec) my guy has a gun.
C35  G – My guy has two white things.
C36  J – I mean, shouldn’t we just pour it all out?
C37  R – Yeah.
C38  ((Joe dumps out the box of legos.))
C39  K – Now I can find exactly what I want, probably.
C40  G – Look what I made.
C41  (9 sec)
C42  G – This is a better space helmet.
C43  R – Can I have it? I really need that space helmet (2 sec) cause my
guy’s goin’ out in space. Yes. THANKS.
C44  R – Actually, the alien helmet’s good- it’s better. Where’s that basket
thing you said you made for me?
C45  K – What basket thing?
C46  R – The one down there.
C47  J – Um, Robert, do you have any extra helmets?
C48  R – Oh look. I have one. You can take this one.
C49  J – Thanks.
C50  R – Cause I have this alien one. Look at this alien one, Joe. Joe. Joe.
C51  G – Kyle, I need this thing.
C52  (1.4 sec)
C53  K – I found a guy.
C54  G – I don’t need a guy, look.
C55  (4 sec)
C56  J – Is there anybody else who has a red ruby?
C57  K – You have a red ruby?
C58  J – No. George does.
C59  R – Okay, if I find a red ruby I’ll give it to you.
C60  J – Thanks.
C61  (3 sec)
C62  R – What’s a red ruby? JOE. JOE. What’s a red ruby?
C66 J - One of those. I wish George would let me have it.
C67 G - I need it. And you can’t even take them off.
C68 R - Oh here’s a fire thing.
C69 (2 sec)
C70 R - JOE. Where’s that little bat thing?
C71 (2 sec)
C72 K - Huh? Where’s that little bat thing?
C73 G - I need that.
C74 J - I need two other people.
C75 K - I know where a guy is with a head.
C76 R - I just have heads.
C77 G - Both of ’em have heads. Here.
C78 J - Thanks.
C79 (5 sec)
C80 G - This is a red ruby. There’s a yellow ruby.
C81 J - I want it.
C82 R - Oh. I have one. Aww. I really need a helmet.
C83 K - This helmet?
C84 R - No. Like this.
C85 K - Hat. Head, head, head.
C86 G - Here’s a helmet.
C87 R - Oohh. What’s this? A space helmet? (1 sec) Oh. It’s not even a
   helmet. That’s weird.
C88 G - No, it’s not. It’s a space helmet.
C89 R - No, it’s a CRYSTAL BALL.
C90 K - I’ve got a head guy. Who needs a head? Who needs a head?
C91 G - I have a head, Kyle.
C92 K - No, but I- well, you don’t know what (I need)=
C93 R - =Whoa. A space //helmet.
C94 J - I need a
C95 G - head or a space vase for one of my guys=
C96 R - =I need a head, Kyle.
C97 G -
C98 R - Here’s a-a- you can have this head. Look.
C99 G - You’ve got a space person. Here’s a head cause that’s a girl head.
C100 R - What is?
C101 G - That head.
C102 R - My guy’s head?
C103 J - Yeah, well this head.
C104 R - This head is?
C105 G - Yeah.
C106 (5 sec)
C107 R - I have two aliens.
C108 G - Look at this mean head.
C109 J - Robert you=
C110 R - =Look. I have aliens.
C111 G - Yesterday//
R - special
K - Who needs these? Who needs these? Who needs these? Who needs these?
R – I do. (2 sec) Look. He has a special mask on. It’s shirts.
G – My guys are standing on legos. *Standing on legos.
(3 sec)
K – Robert you need
R – WHEE.
G – My guys are standing on legos.
(2 sec) //Oh good.
R - Look. My guy’s got a car.
G – And this guy’s standing on legos.
R – That looks good.
(3 sec)
K – Robert you need
R – WHEE.
G – My guys are standing on legos.
R – Uh-Uh. (no)
K – No.
J – Uh-huh. (yes) Bull, he has a different one. It is.
R – What do you mean Joe? It’s a bullet.
J – That thing! ((pointing)) I mean that thing.
G – I also have //a
K - Oh. So that’s why you needed that mask.
R – Yeah.
(2 sec)
G – Oooh. I found a head.
R – I need one.
G – An invisible head. ((laughs))
R – AWESOME. (4 sec) Cool.
J – Robert look at this.
G – This is a ninja sword.
R – Whoa.
((Digging through legos))
K – I need some more legos.
G – I got a lot of legos.
J – You guys are goin up in space too?
G – Yeah.
R – My guy’s not. My guy’s done.
G – Look what I found. I found one, but it’s- it’s too little. Look at this.
K – I made a space car. Zoom.
R – All my guy’s are aliens. Here goes my car. Joe we have a crystal ball head.
K – Here goes my //space car.
R - What’s this?
J – It’s a backpack. It’s mine.
R – What’s this with it?
K – Awesome.
J – I’ll show you all the weapons that we have. We have a gun in the den.
R – Hey.
J – No. That’s mine.
G – I have a dagger.
R – I need a dagger. Can I have it?
G – A-and I have a glass.
J – Is that a snow car?
K – These are space cars, right George?
G – Look what I have Kyle.
K – Who wants to build this?
R – I need more weapons. I’m looking for weapons.
K – ((to George)) °You wanna build that?
J – Magic wand. Why don’t you turn ‘em into, um, whatever.
K – YOU HAVE A MAGIC WAND?
R – Yeah, I have a magic wand. It turns ‘em into aliens.
K – Can I have it?
G – I have this. (2 sec) Look what I have.
R – Joe, we can use this to turn aliens into people.
G – You need this to block out the aliens?
R – Nah. (1.6 sec) I only need weapons.
K – You need weapons?
G – I’ve got some more weapons. (2 sec) There’s a battle axe.
R – No, not those. I need a witch hat.
G – More weapons like I have?
J – We need a band witch.
R – A sword. And another magic wand. An //another sword.
G – I have some swords. I have
R – JOE, look at these weapons we have.
G – And a gun. A gun. I’VE GOT GUNS.
J – Oh. We don’t care.
G – I was telling Kyle.
K – I don’t care.
J – We could make a sword.
K – I know Joe. This is a little mini space car. I’ll tell you why they
G – have=
K - //I know.
R - And when they drive past cars, they cut the cars in half.
K – But not my space car.
G – Not my space car.
R – I know.
G – Cause mine’s a space ship.
R – Joe, I got a mask here. We have three masks.
J – No, we-
K – Robert, you can have my mask because I don’t want it.
J – Oh can I have you mask you don’t want Kyle?
R – Joe. We can share it.
J – Well, okay.
C204 R – I need, like, uh=
C205 K - =I need a=
C206 R - =I NEED ANOTHER PACK OF WHEELS.
C207 K- Oh, but- like what?
C208 R – I need another good pack of wheels.
C209 K- Like this?
C210 R – Yes.
C211 K – I need these.
C212 R – Awww.
C213 K – But i=
C214 R - =KYLE YOU HAVE LIKE THREE PAIRS. I need one pair.
C215 K – I need three pairs.
C216 J – I need wheels.
C217 R – I only need one.
C218 G – There’s some wheels.
C219 R – No these aren’t long enough. Look.
C220 (5.4 sec)
C221 J – Where’s that other pack of wheels that I had?
C222 K – GEORGE.
C223 G – Kyle, he really needs a pair of wheels.
C224 K – Well, I need two pairs. Three I mean.
C225 G – I need a pair of legs.
C227 R – Awesome. I need this. I need this for my spaceship. Actually-
C228 K – Here’s a good pair of wheels.

((Tape runs out and recording stops.))

Transcript D
June 11, 2001
Robert and Kyle playing at their house with toy motorcycles.

D1 K – Well, so, Robert, my guy’s goin’ to do a giant jump. It’s kinda hard.
D2 R – Mine’s gonna have to do a huge one. Ooh, let’s turn this around.
D3 K – I-I don’t thi//nk
D4 R - Here we go. AHH. On your marks, get set, go. (3.6 sec)
D7 The winner is Ricky Carmichael. ((Robert’s motorcycle driver))
D8 K – And then they claw him, right?
D9 R – ((laughs)) They spray him with the thing. Shhh.
D10 (5.2 sec)
D11 R – Alright, you wanna do a dirt race?
D12 K – Dirt bike race outside on the real ralley course. That was just practice
D13 on this one, right Robert?
D14  R – No let’s keep on playing on this one. He’s lost. I got him stuck
D15        behind a tree.
D16  K – Robert, they didn’t=
D17  R - =Aw, down, down, he crashes right //on his side.
D18 K -        I’m goin’
D19        outside to do the real ralley course.
D20  R – I’m not, but I’m still going to do it. On your marks, get set, go. He
D21 goes up a hill, and another hill, and another. He is flying. Well, I don’t
D22 really like this. I don’t like this. (2.3 sec) Except for the middle two
D23 blocks.
D24 ((Kyle comes back inside.))
D25  R – Kyle, ready for the two ralley car racing?
D26  K – You’re runnin’ rally car racing, but we need to use cars, remember?
D27  R – Rally bikes. Come on. On your marks=
D28 K – =I’m middle.
D29  R – No Kyle, we start here. There’s no middle. Kyle, we’re not doin’
D30 middle. That’s only if three at a time. On your marks, get set, and
D31 GO:::
D32 (5.5 sec)
D34  K – And then my guy doesn’t really want to win, right Robert?
D35  R – ((makes sound of cheering crowd))
D36 (8.1 sec)
D37  K- Robert, I have a different look. Robert, I took mine all apart and I took
D38 the guy off it.
D39  R – Ooh. I’m doin’ that to my dirt bike.
D40  K – And then- my- and do that and your guy can follow me, right Robert?
D41  R – ((Says something inaudible))
D42  K – I know, but that, this thing’s for my guy to do and this time he’s doin’ it
D43 backwards.
D44 (7 sec)
D46  K – SHOOTER.
D47 (4 sec)
D48  R – Cool. I’m gonna do a rally car circle. (8 sec)
D49  R – He’s doin’ a tunnel blackout. Watch this. Tunnel blackout. Ah jeez,
D50 he must be hurt.
D51  K – And you know what, you need an a:::mbulance.
D54  R – Shooter.
D55  K – Yeah, Shooter. Let’s go Shooter. (3 sec) Robert
D56 (2 sec)
D58 (6 sec)
K – Robert, let me show you something? This is gonna be different. He can do the bike road without holding on.

Transcript E
June 14, 2001
Robert, Kyle, Brian, and David playing at Robert and Kyle’s house in their parents’ bedroom.

E1 R - Let’s uh- here, I’ll do a flip.
E2 B - Okay.
E3 R - GET OFF. GET OFF.
E4 D - No, no, no, no.
E5 R - I’m king of the bed.
E6 K - Well you’re oldest.
E7 D - No, I’m oldest.
E8 R - Wait after I do a flip, David.
E9 D - No. You can’t do it, you can’t use pillows.
E10 B - I’M TRYIN’ TO BEAT HIM UP.
E11 R - I’m king of the bed.
E12 D - No pillows. No pillows.
E13 R - I’m king of the bed. You’re tryin’ to push me off. ((laughs)) You can only push.
E15 D - Come on, you have to be up at all times or else you have to get off, or if I push you down you’re off, all right?
E17 (4 sec)
E18 R - I’m knocked down. I fell. Can we get back up?
E19 D - Yeah.
E20 R - I like this. I played it with a grown-up once and she was pounding us.
E21 She made me almost cut my head open.
E22 ((fighting)) (3.9 sec)
E23 R - You’re not allowed to attack the person. You’re not allowed to attack the person.
E24 B - Oh, you just try and stay on?
E25 R - Yeah. But if he’s sorda hurting you, you just tell him to stop, stop hurting you.
E27 (7 sec, playing)
E28 D - You’re down. You’re off.
E29 B - Okay, if I’m off then that means I can start kidnapping.
E30 (3 sec, playing)
E32 B - You’re down.
E33 D - NO PUSHING.
E34 B - Ooh, ooh.
E35 R - We tried to stay on.
E36 D - He’s staying against the wall. Fine, if I pull you down.
E37 (7.1 sec)
D - You're down.
R - LET GO. *He was pulling me David.*

(6 sec)

R - That's how you play.
B - I'm making a cushy dock for your- you keep on doing it Robert.
D - Robert and me make the rules. I make the king's rules. No, I make your rules. No, I think it should be king's. Like no getting down and stuff. It's about me though.
K - Well, what about/
R - AHH.
B - Isn't it cushy?
R - Yeah.
B - This is gonna be here for your head.
D - Me and Kyle, okay, me and Kyle are on a team because we're tryin' to push him off.
K - I can't pull over 'cause I fell on the wooden.
D - When?
D - We just try to push them off. You guys. You guys=
R - WAIT. We're putting more cushions. We're just putting more cushion/ions
D - against the wall, remember? (2.2 sec) No matter what you can't hurt
K - He already got hurt.
R - ((screaming)) (2.8 sec)
D - You're hitting him go attack, Kyle's gonna attack you down there.
R - Kyle's the ground attacker.
D - Yeah.
B - We all attack.
D - Kyle, Kyle, you get down there.
B - You just stand right at the edge.
D - *Whoa.*
B - Kyle, no, you don't get there. You have to stand right/
D - show you what to do, watch. Kyle, Kyle, WATCH.
K - I'll stay.
D - Kyle, get against the wall, I'll show you what to do. Get against the wall and watch me. Okay, ready? This is what I do, this is what you're gonna do. Come down here Robert. Stand up. You're gonna go wham.
R - Wait Kyle. Do it on me, do it on me. We can't fight back, we just have to step like that, that's all you have to do.
(5 sec)
D - I'll give you, and after you get? I'll let you up here.
You cannot go against the wall.

They can up here. They can't down there. You have to stay down there for at least two minutes every time I push you off so Kyle can get a good chance.

Yeah. A good chance.

You're down. If //any body part is on the ground, you're automatically down on the ground except for your legs, um, even your hands.

Yeah, yeah.

Now you have to stay down there for as long as you think.

For long, wait, I pull down=

That means when you get up

I know but I-

Kyle, you have to let Kyle attack you. You have to stand up.

As soon as I go down, Brian goes up.

Okay, Brian can come back up now.

Robert may come back on, Brian has to get off.

You have to let Brian get off.

If you get ??

That's not a good game.

Now you can jump on the bed.

Girls drool, boys rule.
E130 D - Wait. Time out. KYLE.
E131 R - Brian, come on up.
E132 D - ((to Kyle)) No. You don’t come up here. Go sit down over there.
E133 D - You’re not in trouble. Don’t worry.
E134 R - You’re taking a rest. You’re taking a rest.
E135 D - Yeah. You’re not in trouble.
E136 R - Cause I’m gonna try and get both of these guys.
E137 ((fighting))
E138 D - Both of you guys get three tries. Robert, get down and Kyle gets to come up here.
E140 (2 sec)
E141 D - Time out. Time out. Every time somebody hits you hands, your body,
E142 whatever=
E143 B - =Your knees too.
E144 D - No, not your knees, from here up-
E145 R - Oh, so it can be like this.
E146 B - That’s not so smart.
E147 D - But if you hit three times down and you’re down there, Kyle gets to get up.
E148 R - He’s gonna punch you. He’s gonna tickle you.
E149 B - We get to do a tickle torture.
E150 R - For how long?
E151 B - Twenty seconds. TWENTY SECONDS.
E152 D - Wait a minute. Pretend Robert’s down there. I’ll hold his arms, you
E153 D - hold his legs. Kyle, you’ll tickle him.
E154 B - Or if you get off the bed. Or if you get off the bed.
E155 D - But you have to do it, okay? You can get each other off too. You can
get each other off, you just can’t get me off.
E156 R - Hey DAVID. DAVID. Watch me do this.
E157 B - Did you fall off?
E158 D - Can we flip each other off?
E159 R - Yeah. No, actually, you can’t. No you can’t.
E160 B - Tickle torture.
E161 D - NO. NO. He has to get up twice more.
E162 B - Oh.
E163 D - NO, NO KYLE. He has to get up twice more. So does Brian. But
E164 remember Kyle, you’re taking a rest.
E166 K - GET HIM.
E167 D - I’m tryin’ to get him, Kyle.
E168 K - Ready or not tickle torture, Robert, tickle torture.
E169 D - Robert doesn’t have tickle torture yet. One more.
E170 R - Water break for me.
E171 D - No water breaks. All water breaks are now or never. Do ya’ll want
E173 water?

((They all go downstairs for water.))
Transcript F
June 21, 2001
Kyle and George digging outside at Kyle’s house while Robert and Joe play nearby.

F1 G - We’re the BB kid digger, right?
F2 K - Right. (4.3 sec) My name is Moppy.
F3 G - My name is Soppy.
F4 (3 sec)
F5 K - What are you guys playing? ((Talking to their brothers))
F6 R - Golf.
F7 K - George, do you want to play golf?
F8 G - Okay. Let’s play just for a little bit.
F9 R - Bye guys. I guess you don’t want to play golf.
F10 G - Okay. We want to play a minute.
F11 K - Only for a minute.
F12 ((They go to play ball)) (52 sec)
F13 K - I’m not, I’m not, I’m tryin’ to dig it deeper.
F14 G - What are we tryin’ to do?
F15 K - We’re tryin’ to dig a whole big wall.
F16 (6 sec)
F17 K - George, isn’t this place under construction?
F18 G - There he is. There he is.
F19 (4 sec)
F20 G - DIGGING BIG STICKS.
F21 K - Let’s keep digg//ing. Let’s keep digging.
F22 G - Dig dig dig dig.
F23 K - George, you are digging too hard.
F24 G - Look at that.
F25 K - Whooops.
F26 G - Holy cow. Look at this guy.
F27 K - George, you’re not saying the BB kid words.
F28 G - Boopee gawoopee.
F29 K - No that’s not the BB kid word. Woobee goobee.
F30 G - You didn’t look up that word.
F31 K - George, uh, can I please, um-
F32 (2 sec)
F33 K - I don’t- I’m not digging anymore.
F34 G - You dug that.
F35 K - I don’t have anything to dig. I’m taking the cones away. You know why George?
F36 G - Okay, you can take the cones away. That’s okay.
F38 K - Yeah.
F39 G - Okay. You can dig some by yourself and then I get to dig. I get the dirt out and then you dig, right?
F41 (11 sec)
F42 G - Now it’s my turn, okay?
F43 K - George, I think we dug. GEORGE.
F44 G - This is really super duper deepy, right gloshy?
F45 K - Right sloshy.
F46 (5 sec)
F47 G - Why don’t you start digging that?
F48 K - HEY, it’s my turn to dig now.
F49 G - It’s my turn to get out the dirt.
F50 (9 sec)
F51 G - Sticks. Now we got to dig together. You dig that side, I’ll dig this side.
F52 K - George, my shovel’s too wide. I need this.
F53 G - We take turns.
F54 K - My turn with that shovel.
F55 G - Now my turn with this shovel.
F56 K - Now I have to dig.
F57 G - No. I get to dig. Kyle, how about I get it deep and-
F58 K - I clean it out?
F59 G - Yeah. You’re only dumping.
F60 K - There. Now I cleaned it out.
F61 (5.6 sec)
F62 G - Can you do it?
F63 K - George, I think we’re digging the deepest hole.
F64 G - Kyle, did your brother tell you we saw a dead- a dead b- a dead bird’s feathers. Did you? ((to Robert))
F65 K - No.
F66 R - ((laughing))
F67 G - That was a good idea.
F68 R - Whoa. That’s a dead ball.
F87 (4 sec)
F88 R - WAIT. WAIT.
F89 G - You’re going to kill a worm. Wormy nice.
F90 R - God.
F91 (1.8 sec)
F92 R - °Wormy got a cut. Wormy got a cut.
F93 G - Wormy got a cut.
F94 K - George.
F95 G - Wormy’s dead.
F96 K - We’re workers.
F97 R - Don’t kill wormy. ((baby voice))
F98 G - Wormy get killed.
F99 R - George, you are mean.
F100 K - He didn’t kill wormy.
F101 R - Wormy free wherever he wants.
F102 K - ((laughing)) He landed on the cement.
F103 G - He’s dead, right?
F104 K - George, I’m ???
F105 G - Where was it?
F106 K - But when she comes out I have to throw this thing under the deck.
F107 G - Why?
F108 K - Cause she ??? (whispers)
F109 G - Why don’t you get some other thing?
F110 K - ((coughs))
F111 G - Kyle, I’d like to use that fork.
F112 K - Okay. I’ll use the fork part. I’ll use the—YOU WANT ME TO USE THE FORK PART.
F113 G - Yeah. I know. (2 sec) That will make it so I can do it better.
F114 K - George, we dug the deepest hole.
F115 G - WE AREN’T FINISHED WITH IT.
F116 K - No mosquito. George=
F117 G - I’m gonna give you a bug bite.
F118 K - I DON’T CARE. I just want (to finish) this hole. I don’t care about mosquitos.
F119 (5.3 sec)
F120 K - George, TIME. TIME. We’re not working. George, we’re not working.
F121 (8.7 sec)
F122 G - Stop?
F123 (3.1 sec)
F124 G - What?
F125 K - Hey George, when we get past clay we’re still diggin’.
F126 G - We’re diggin’ still.
F127 K - Yep. We’re diggin’. Digger workers.
F128 G - Dig.
Transcript G
June 28, 2001
Robert, Kyle, and Chris playing at Kyle’s house in his parents bedroom.

G1  R – Chris, watch this.  Aww.  Look, all the pillows.  They’re scattered.
G2   Wait.  Wait.  You guys know how to scatter them?  Just toss them up
G3   in the air.
G4   (2 sec)
G5  C – I’m gonna kill you.
G6  R – Toss ‘em up here C.  And leave ‘em wherever they fall.
G7  K – Okay.  I got it.
G8  C – I got it.
G9   (7 sec)
G11 (Robert makes flatulence noises into the recorder)
G12 C – I’m going to kill you.
G13 (Robert makes burping noises into the recorder)
G14 R – You better get up there.
G15 K – Ouh.
G16 (1.8 sec)
G17 R – Bombs away.
G18 (4 sec)
G19 C – Ouh.  Ouh.
G20 K – Hey.  Hey you.  I could kill you.
G21 C – I could kill you:::
G22 R – You guys have to stuff these up.
G23 (3.2 sec)
G24 K – Guys, guess what?  I’m gonna bite you with this thing.
G25 R – Okay.  I’m gonna kill you.
G26 (3.7 sec)
G28 C – Not me.
G29 K – Not me.  You did Robert.
G30 R – Nuh-uh.
G31 C – Not me.
G32 K – Smelt it, dealt it.
G33 (8 sec)
G34 R – Say goodbye.
G35 C – Ahh.
G36 R – Say goodbye pie.
G37 (7 sec)
G38 K – Robert, wanna play king of the court?
G39 (4 sec)
G40 K – Hey you.  Hey you guys.  Wanna play king of the court?

((They go into another bedroom.))
Transcript H
June 28, 2001
Chris and Kyle playing pool at Chris’s house.

C - That’s a good shot.
H2 (3.1 sec)
K - I’m solids, okay? I’m the solid ball.
C - You’re not. You have to hit that ball.
K - No.
C - Yeah.
K - No I don’t. I’m solids so- ((hits the ball))
H8 (4.3 sec)
C - YOU CAN’T DO THAT.
K - All out. All out.
C - You didn’t get any in.
K - I know.
(12 sec)
C - That is a good shot.
(3 sec)
C - You need to put this in here.
K - Yeah, but now I’m not solids anymore, just not.
(3.3 sec)
C - Stop it. You have to shoot right there.
K - Start over. Ooh, you got a good shot.
C - Hit it.
K - I got one striped, one solid.
C - That’s not fair.
K - No, it’s not your ball.
C - I get to go.
(6 sec)
K - Darn.
C - No, you don’t get (the ball).
K - I’m tryin’ to get the stick to stand up Chris.
(8 sec)
C - No. You have to hit the ball.
K - I’m gonna get this in.
C - No, don’t hit the (eight) ball.
K - I didn’t hit the white ball.
C - I know, but you don’t get to put the eight ball in.
K - Yeah.
C - NO. YOU DON’T GET TO PUT THE EIGHT BALL IN.
K - (I’ll try to get that one later.)
C - So. So. You get that in and you lose.
H43  K - I'm solids.  My turn.
H44  C - You don't get to put the-
H45  (5 sec)
H46  K - She's recording us.  ((laughing))
H47  (7 sec)
H48  C - That's a great shot.
H49  K - Is that the eight ball?
H50  C - No.  That's the four ball.
H51  (3.4 sec)
H52  C - That's not the eight ball.  That's the four ball.
H53  K - If it gets in there it's mine.
H54  C - Cool, I get to flip- that's not fair.
H55  K - That's not a fair ball.
H56  C - Yeah.
H57  K - It has to get in one of those things.
H58  C - I get to go.  Yeah, that's not the white ball.
H59  K - Ooh, don't hit the white ball in.
H60  C - That's the white ball.
H61  (2.1 sec)
H62  K - A very good shot.
H63  (4 sec)
H64  C - Cool.  I got three, three balls.
H65  (9 sec)
H66  C - I'm winning against you.
H67  K - Hit.
H68  C - White ball is right there.
H69  K - That is going to be a good shot.
H70  C - I know.  It isn't too hard.
H71  K - Whoa.  Don't hit the-
H72  (4 sec)
H73  C - Whoa.  That's ???
H74  K - No.  That's a fair ball.
H75  C - You have to-
H76  K - Fair ball.  That a fair ball.
H77  C - There's no FAIR BALLS in this.
H78  K - No.
H79  C - No.  That's not, I thought you were going, I thought you were going-
H80  HIT IT.
H81  K - Yeah.
H82  C - I get to put this wherever I want.
H83  K - I get to put this on my pool stick.  I'm killin' ya.
H84  C - No I'm killing you.
H85  K - No. I am.
H86  C - YOU GET TO PUT IT WHEREVER YOU WANT.
H87  K - Oh yeah?  Thanks.  He told me to put it wherever I want.
H88  C - Hum.  I get to break cause it's my turn.
K - I put it wherever I want.
C - I get to put this wherever I want.
K - Yeah.
C - I get to put this wherever I want.
K - You're (not still winning) 'cause I got the orange ball.
(5 sec)
K - My ball.
(9 sec)
C - You got the white ball in.
K - All right, I'll get it out.
C - No.
K - Yeah.
(6 sec)
K - If it's my turn I keep going.
C - No. It just, it goes right there. Like that.
(6 sec)
C - It's gonna be like (shew).
(5 sec)
K - You got killed. (2 sec) That counts, count it.
C - Okay. That's one, you got one=
K - =No. NO.
(3.1 sec)
K - Uh. Uh. I was so close. ((frustrated))
C - Thank you.
K - Be quiet.
(10 sec)
K - Huh? Stupid thing. The white ball in. You're the eight ball, you
C - You have to go like that.
K - Yeah. I know. It popped up.
C - Do not hit that. ((the eight ball))
(2.1 sec)
C - No, you don't get to go again.
K - I know. I understand.
(12 sec)
K - I know you're gonna hit one of those things.
C - No way.
(7 sec)
K - Yea. Good move.
(9.2 sec)
K - Oh. Thanks. My ball.
C - Don't get that in. Don't get that in.
K - Yes.
(4.4 sec)
C - (uncool)
H135  K - Fine, your ball. Like, where’s the white ball?
H136  C - It’s right there, where you hit it.
H137  K - And I get one.
H138  ((Knock at the front door. Chris goes to answer it.))
H139  C - ((from far off)) Don’t shoot it yet.
H140  K - Yeah, I can shoot. ((hits the ball))
H141  K - YEAH. Got a goal. Got a goal. Got a goal. Got a goal.
H142  Got a goal=
H143  C - That’s not fair ’cause I wasn’t playing.
H144  K - Yeah, it was fair. Yes.
H145  C - NO.
H146  K - Yes it is.
H147  C - NO cause I was not playing.
H148  K - Well, I still am. I still am.
H149  C - I thought that was the eight ball.
H150  K - The eight ball was right there.
H151  (3 sec)
H152  K - Okay, and there’s one more ball for me.
H153  (11 sec)
H154  K - Holli, can we go outside?

((They leave to play outside.))

Transcript J
August 28, 2001
Kyle, George, and Chris playing with trucks and blocks at Kyle’s house.

J1  K - Chris is here.
J2  (3.2 sec)
J3  K - And (put this one in here) so this can back out. You want to?
J4  G - Okay. ((laughing)) Chris what the heck were you eating?
J5  K - WHAT IN THE WORLD YOU WERE EATING A BALLOON.
J6  C - Ah. Ha Ha Ha
J7  G - Let’s go make water balloons.
J8  K - ((knocking over blocks)) °I’m wrecking our garage right George?
J9  G - Let’s go make water balloons you guys.
J10  C - Yeah.
J11  G - Whoa. Let’s go make water balloons you guys. ((funny voice))
J12  K - I don’t think this is a good idea.
J13  G - Well it is //if you were doing it too.
J14  C - I don’t have-
J15  K - What?
J16  C - And-
J17  K - I don’t think this is a good idea because George won’t fit into my
J18  bathing suit and Chris won’t fit into my other bathing suit because I
J19  don’t have anoth- I only have two.
J20  G - Two what?
J21  K - Bathing suits.
J22  C - Well, you don’t have to have a bathing suit.
J23  G - Or we can just change when we get home or something like that.
J24  C - Yeah.
J25  K - You could put one in there.
J26  G - Okay.
J27  K - And then one in your pocket.
J28  G - I can put two in my pockets. I can put two, I can put two, two I one. I
can put like three in one=
J30  K - No you can put=
J31  G - =Oh.
J32  C - I can have, I can put=
J33  G - =Okay, let’s go outside.
J34  K - I have more pockets. I have three pockets.
J35  G - Oh. I don’t have pockets.
J36  C - I have two pockets.
J37  K - I have THREE pockets.

(They go outside to play with water balloons for twenty minutes.)