



Yours & Mine: Sharing in 1- & 2-Year-Olds in Relation to Possession & Ownership Understanding

Celia A. Brownell, Stephanie Sivers, Sara R. Nichols, Margarita Svetlova
University of Pittsburgh



Introduction

Evidence has been accumulating that toddlers exhibit empathy, cooperation, and helping, but much less is known about sharing (Hay & Cook, 2007).

We examine development of sharing over the second year using a unique "low-cost" procedure in which children have an abundance of toys, thereby reducing the motivational barrier to sharing.

Sharing requires willingness to give up something that one owns or possesses to benefit another. We thus examine how sharing relates to emerging understanding of possession & ownership in this period.

Procedures

PARTICIPANTS

18-month olds (N = 25)
24-month olds (N = 23)

6 SHARING TASKS

Child has many things; adult playmate has none

Adult delivers 4 progressive cues to communicate her need/desire:

1. Facial/bodily expression
2. State need (I don't have any; I need some so I can play)
3. Reach toward toy
4. Specific request (Can I have some [x]?)

Sharing score: Cue at which sharing occurred

Also coded frequency of non-sharing behaviors:

- Hypothesis-testing: try to figure out what other wants, needs
- Ignore/Refuse: self-oriented, rather than other-oriented

Possession Understanding

Parent requests child to perform actions to parent (me/my) and to child (you/your)... e.g., "Brush my/your hair" (Levine, 1983)
Score: # correct

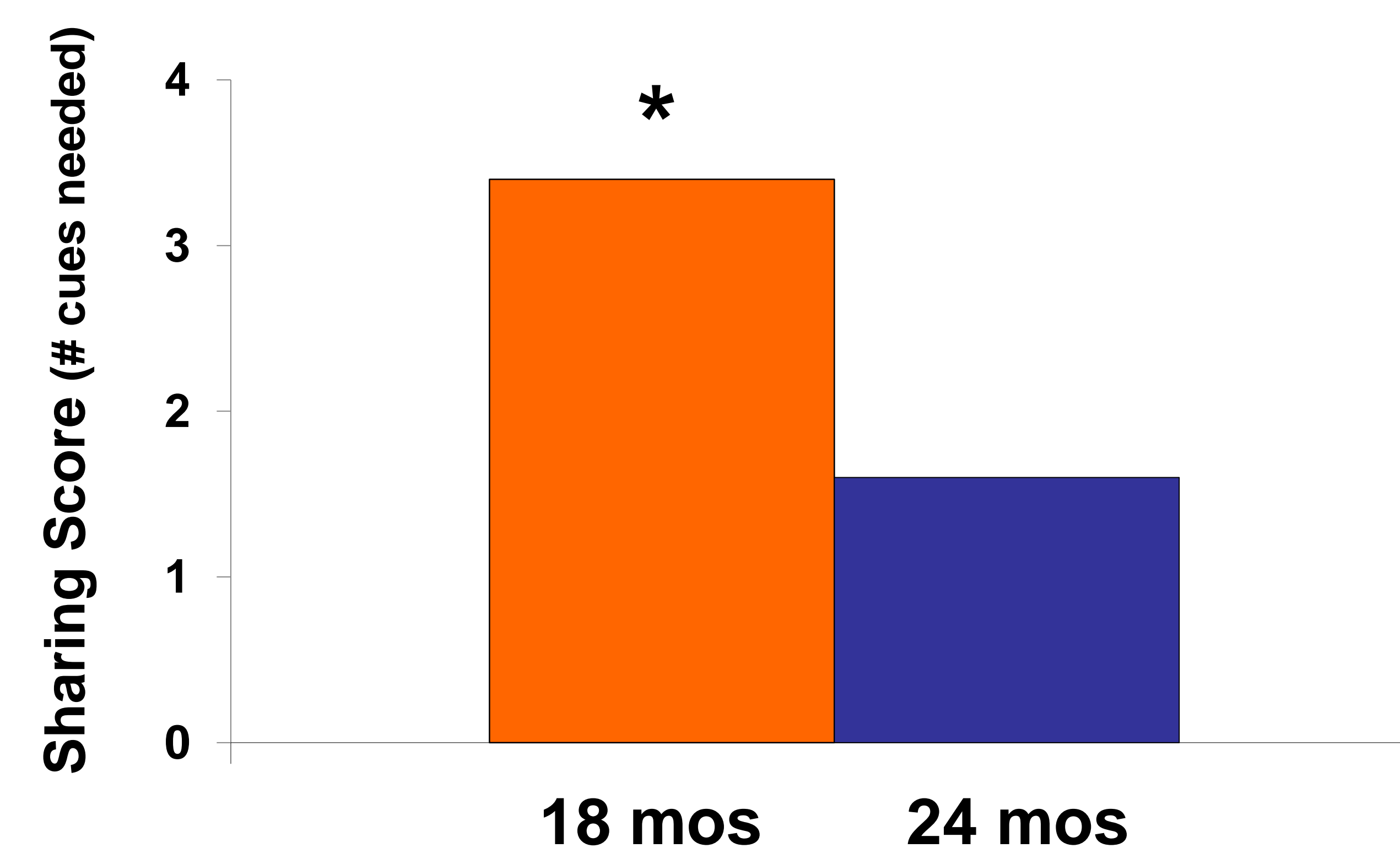
Ownership Understanding

E asks child to choose parent's or child's belonging from pairs of items brought from home, e.g., "Get Mommy's/Nora's hat" (Fasig, 2000) Score: # correct



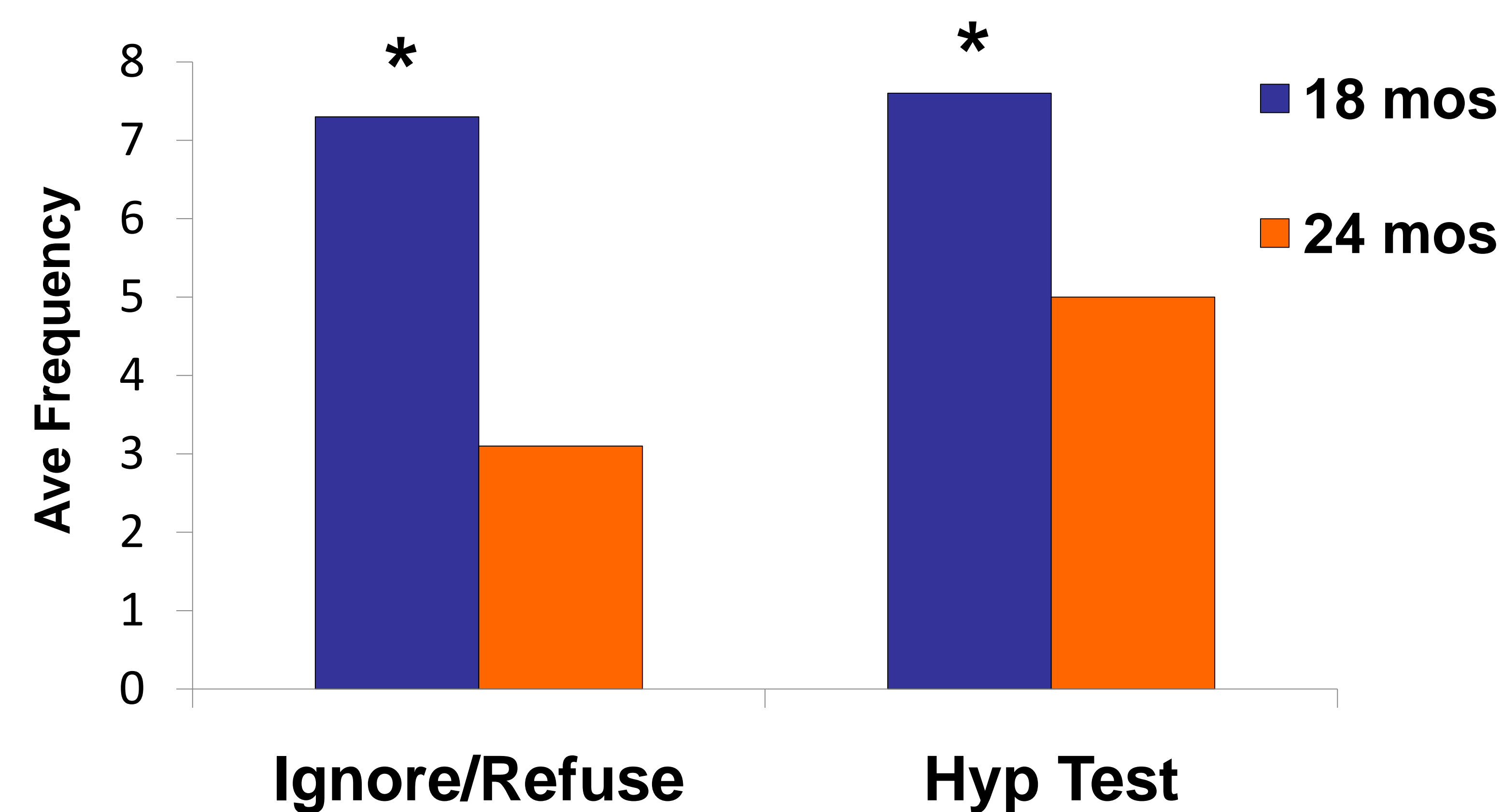
Results

AGE DIFFERENCES: SHARING



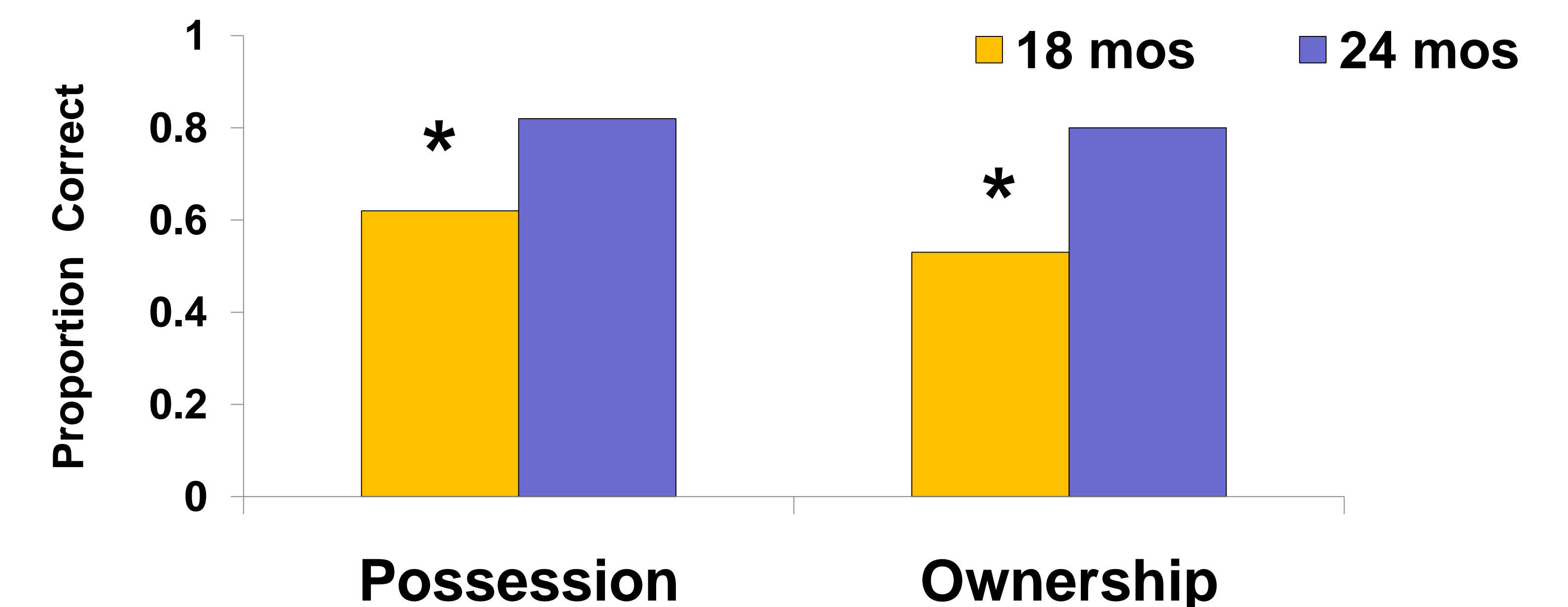
- 1-yr olds shared only half the time, and required more cues from adult playmate before sharing
- 2-yr olds shared most of the time, with fewer cues

AGE DIFFERENCES: NOT SHARING



- 1-yr olds engaged in more self-oriented behavior and more often tried to figure out what the other person wanted or needed than did 2-yr olds

AGE DIFFERENCES: SOCIAL UNDERSTANDING



SHARING x SOCIAL UNDERSTANDING

	Possession Understanding	Ownership Understanding
Sharing Score	.41*	.61**
Ever share? (% trials with any sharing)	.53***	.68***
Hypothesis Test	--	--
Ignore/Refuse	-.52**	-.58***

Age controlled

Conclusions

1-yr olds share less than 2-yr olds, and need more adult support to behave prosocially.

Possession and ownership understanding also increase over the 2nd year. Better social understanding is associated with more sharing, less self-oriented responding, and lower levels of adult communicative support needed to initiate sharing.

Social understanding and need for adult support trade off in the development of prosocial behavior.

Hay, D. & Cook, K. (2007). The transformation of prosocial behavior from infancy to childhood. In C. Brownell & C. Kopp (Eds). *Socioemotional development in the toddler years: Transitions & Transformations*. Guilford Press.

Fasig, L. (2000). Toddlers' understanding of ownership: Implications for self-concept development. *Social Development*, 9, 370-382.

Levine, L. (1983). Mine: Self-definition in 2-year-old boys. *Developmental Psychology*, 19, 544-549.

CONTACT: Celia A. Brownell, Psychology Department, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA 15260
brownell@pitt.edu