School-age children talking about humor: Data from focus groups.
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Published Online: 2013-11-27 | DOI: https://doi.org/10.1515/humor-2013-0047

Abstract
School-age children use humor to form relationships with peers and adults, to celebrate life through expressions of joy and laughter, to play with words to develop cognitive and linguistic competence, and as a way of coping with the psychological, social, and physical constraints of growing up. The purpose of this study was to gain insight into school-age children's understanding of humor and explore ways the children use humor to cope with daily life stressors using focus group methodology. In this study, eleven focus groups were conducted with four to six participants in each group at a local elementary and middle school. As anticipated, the developmental level influenced the type of humor the child thought was funny ranging from recalled riddles of second graders to more complex jokes and humorous observations of fourth graders to elaborate jokes and spontaneous witticisms from the sixth graders. Gender also played a role, with tickling being a common theme among the girls and the minor misfortunes of others among the boys. The children used humor to help them cope with the daily life stressors associated with interpersonal relationships, school and after-school activities, and life at home.

**Keywords:** school-age children; humor; qualitative research; focus group methodology
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Published Online: 2013-11-27
Published in Print: 2014-02-01

Citation Information: HUMOR, Volume 27, Issue 1, Pages 121-139, ISSN (Online) 1613-3722, ISSN (Print) 0933-1719, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1515/humor-2013-0047.

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