
Abstract

The present study applied a semiparametric mixture model to a sample of 284 low-income boys to model developmental trajectories of overt conduct problems from ages 2 to 8. Consistent with research on older children, four developmental trajectories were identified: a persistent problem trajectory, a high-level desister trajectory, a moderate-level desister trajectory, and a persistent low trajectory. Follow-up analyses indicated that initially high and low groups were differentiated in early childhood by high child fearlessness and elevated maternal depressive symptomatology. Persistent problem and high desister trajectories were differentiated by high child fearlessness and maternal rejecting parenting. The implications of the results for early intervention research are discussed with an emphasis on the identification of at-risk parent-child dyads.