

# Long-Term Impact and Moderators of Early Peer Deviancy Training

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## Deviant Peers

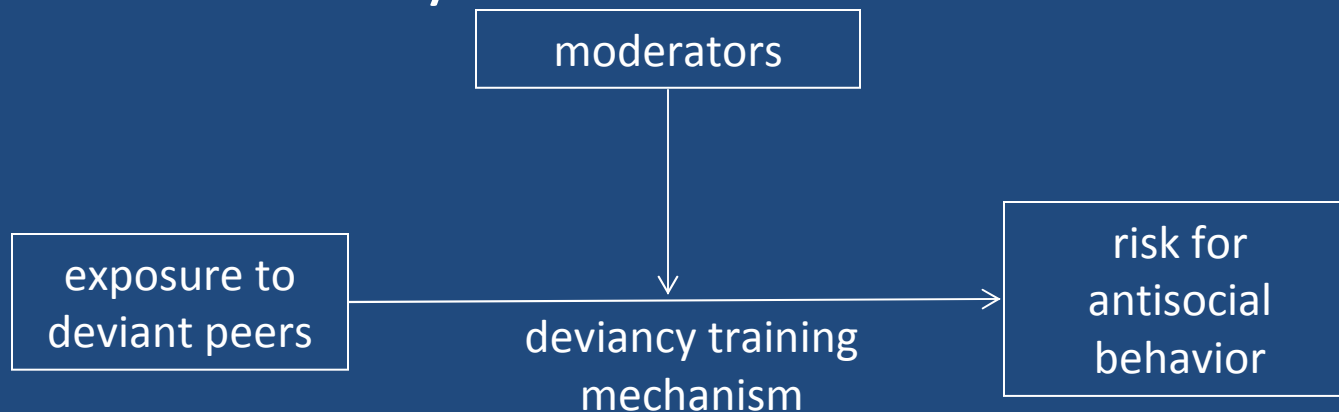
- Association with Deviant Peers
  - Powerful risk factor for antisocial behavior
  - Effects from preschool years into adolescence
  - Ubiquitous across social ecologies
    - elective affiliations (friendships, cliques)
    - programmatic aggregation (group treatment, educational placement)
    - Incidental exposure (classrooms, neighborhoods)

## Moderators of the Effects of Deviant Peers

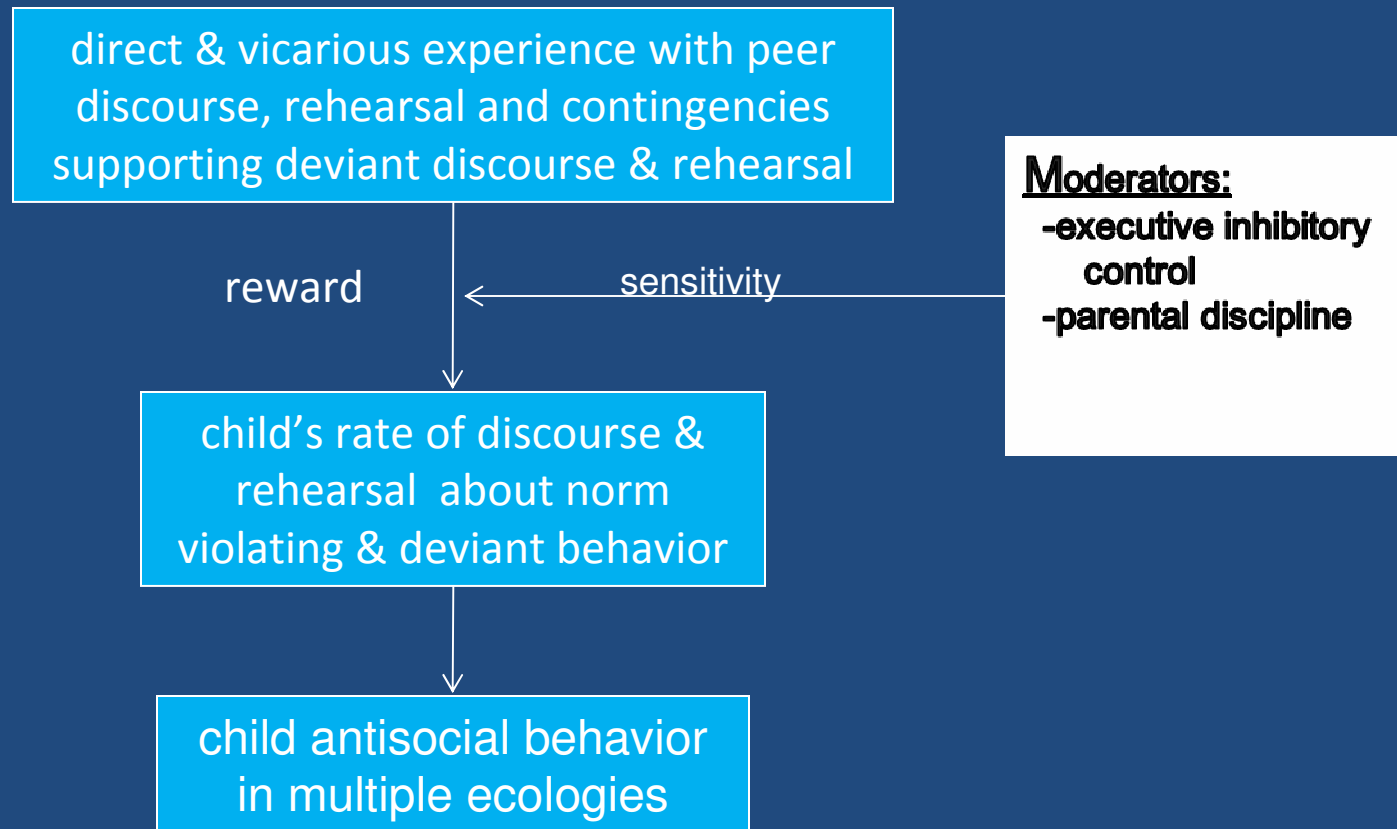
- nearly all children are likely to come into contact with deviant peers for some time in open social ecologies
- not all children may be equally affected by such contact
- Question:
  - What factors **moderate** (mitigate or amplify) the impact of deviant peer contacts on antisocial behavior : **who is at risk?**

## Mechanisms & Moderators

- To know who's more or less at risk, very useful to know the **mechanism** by which risk is transmitted
- Mechanisms tell us “where to look” for moderators and “how they work”



# Moderators of Deviancy Training



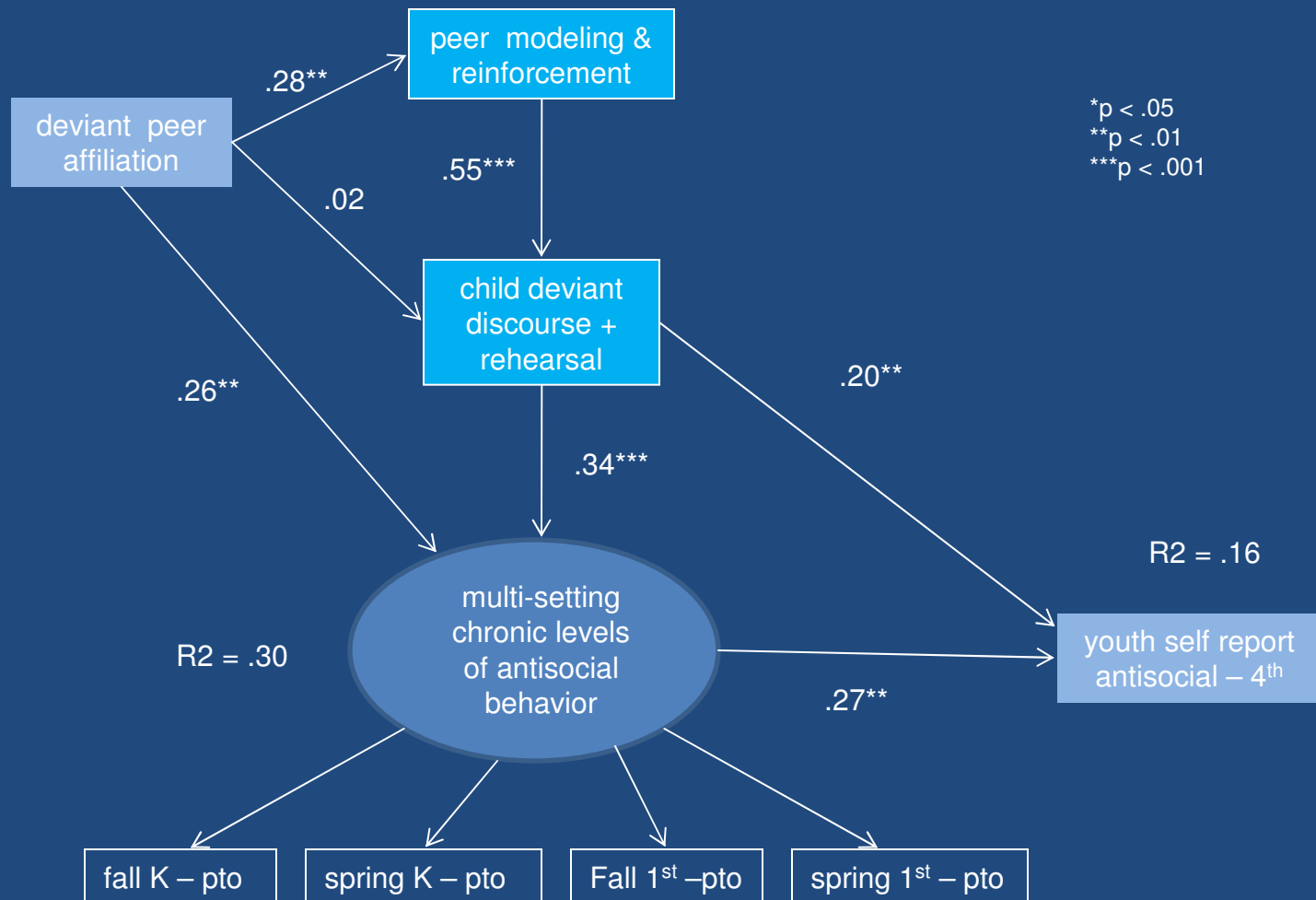
## Method

- Participants
  - 267 boys & girls
  - from at-risk, low SES families, freq marital transitions, high % teen childbearing
  - Assess in kindergarten through 4th grade
- Measures
  - antisocial behavior
    - Parent report (K, 1<sup>st</sup>)
    - Teacher report (K, 1<sup>st</sup>)
    - playground observation of child (K, 1<sup>st</sup>)
    - Youth self report (4<sup>th</sup>)

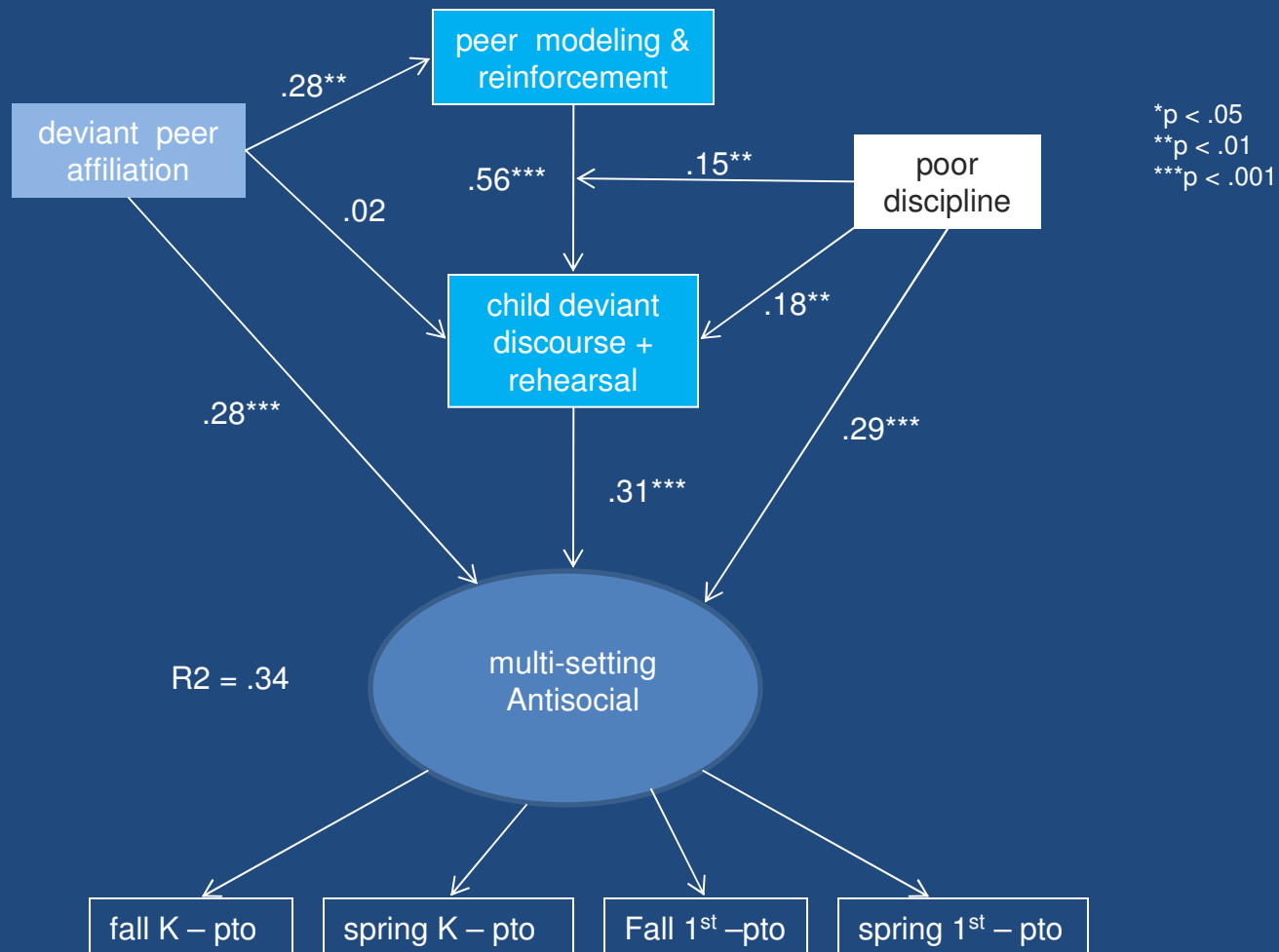
## Method (cont.)

- Measures (cont.)
  - Deviancy Training: observation of social exchange with randomly selected classmates (K)
    - Peer deviant modeling & reinforcement (direct + vicarious)
    - Child rates of deviant discourse & rehearsal
  - Moderators (K)
    - Executive frontal inhibition – tests, observations, ratings
    - Parental Discipline – observed rates & ratings from parent-child interaction
  - Deviant Peer Affiliation (K)
    - Parent & teacher ratings of conduct problems of child's self-nominated best classroom friends

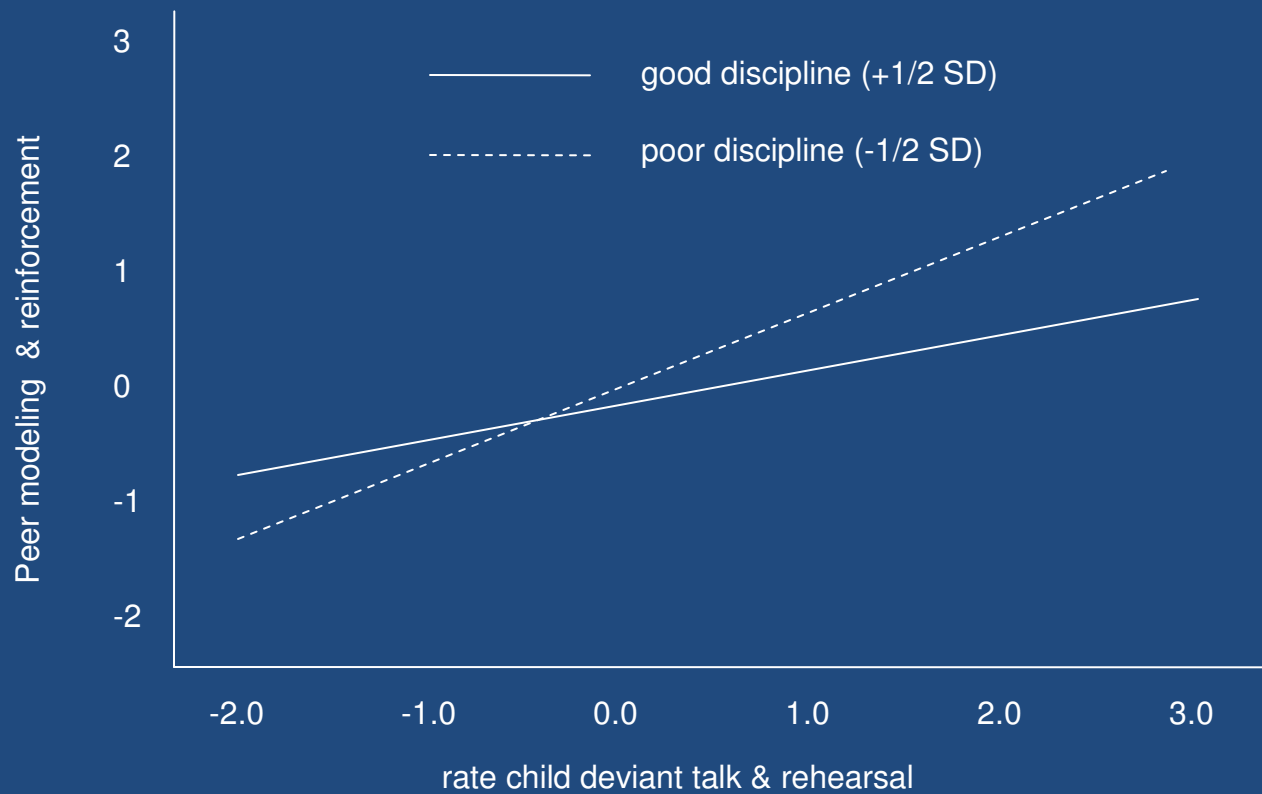
# Results: Basic Model



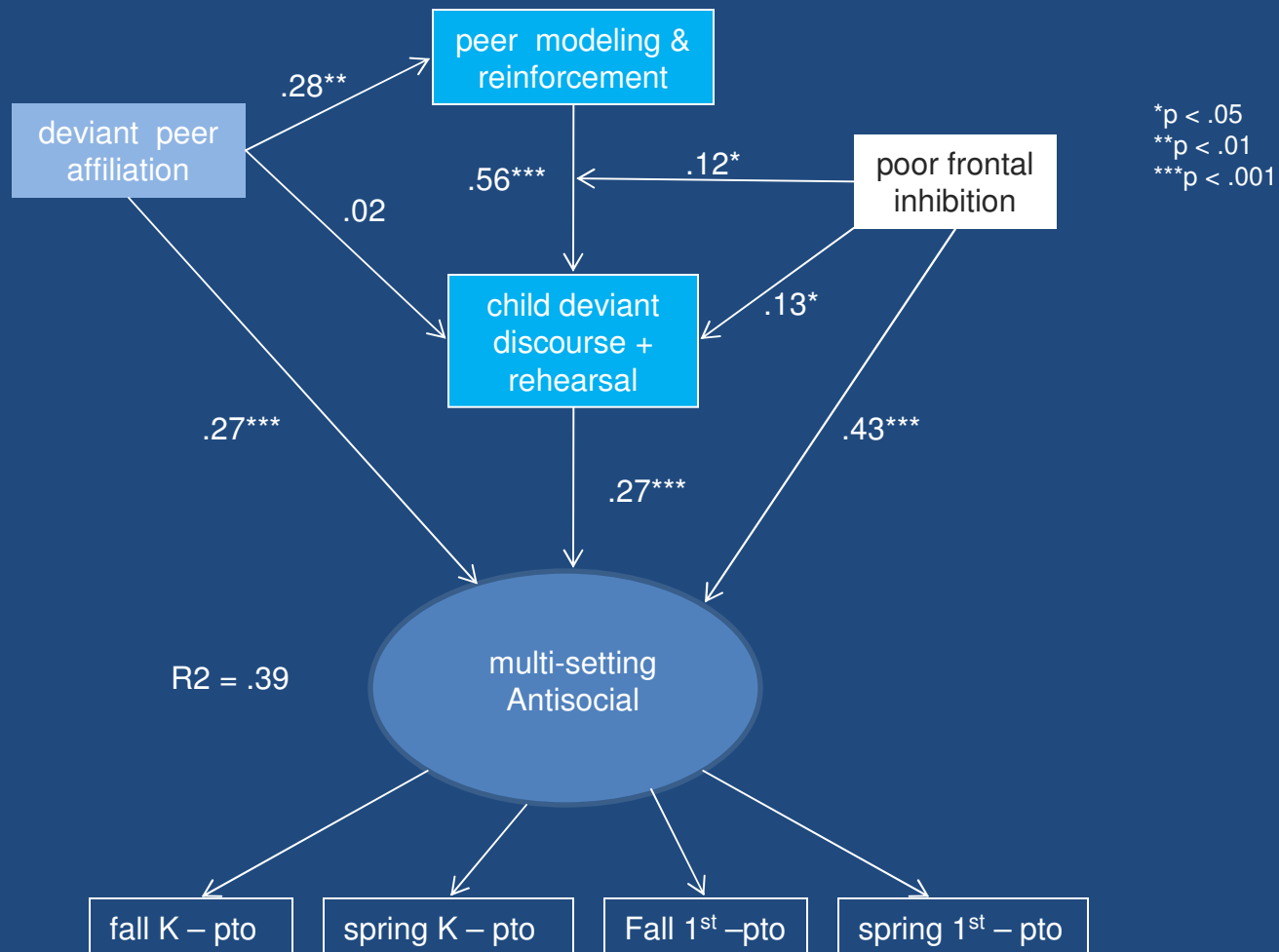
# Results: Moderator



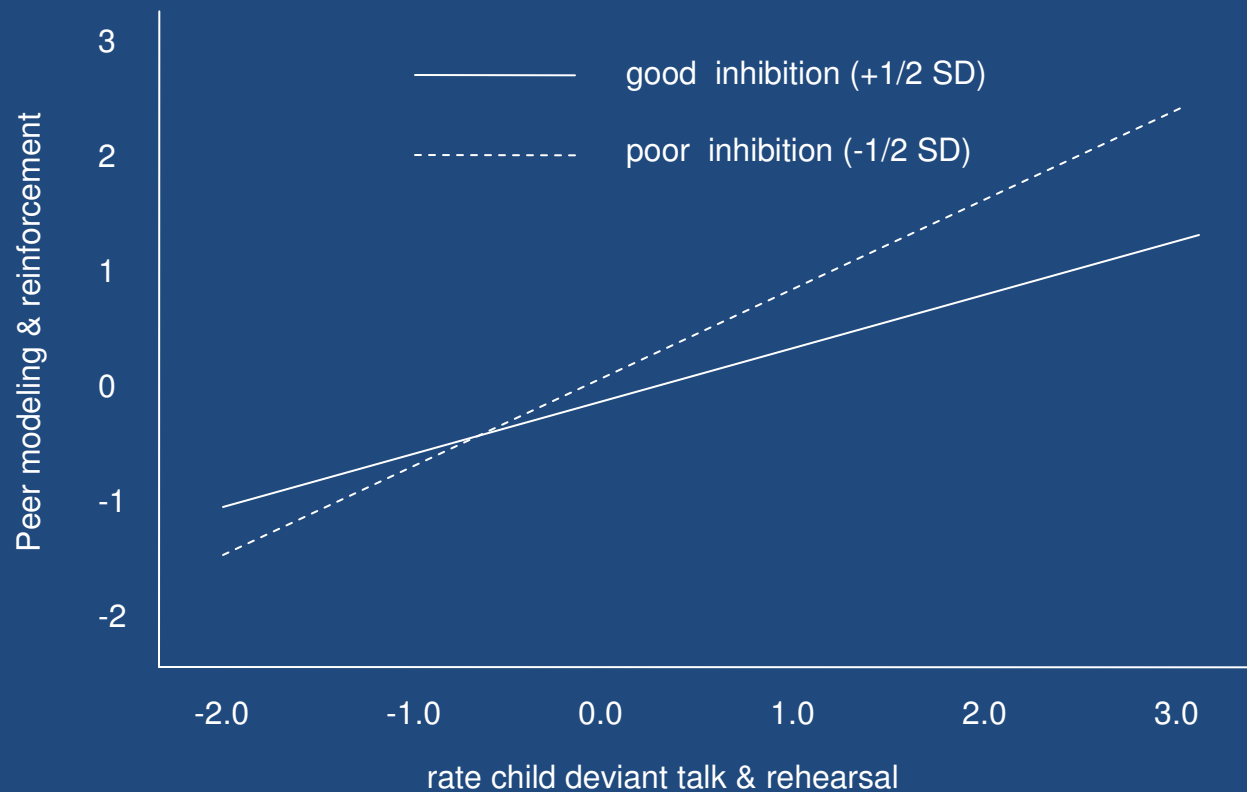
# Moderator: Parental Discipline



# Results: Basic Moderator

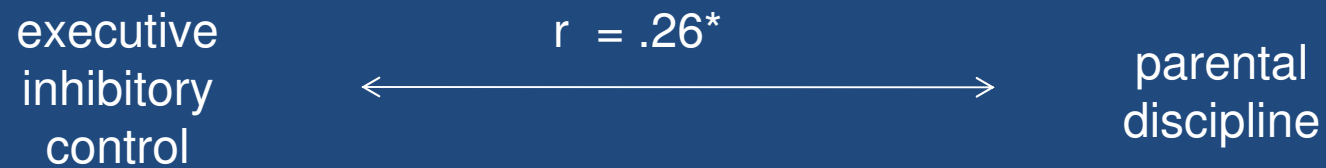


## Moderator: frontal inhibition



## Moderators

- moderators are not redundant



- $*p < .001$

## Implications

- Peer deviancy training is
  - Observed in young children
  - A powerful risk factor antisocial behavior over a 4 year period even in context of other risk factors, including:
    - earlier antisocial
    - deviant peer affiliation
    - parental discipline
    - executive inhibitory control
  - NOT every child is equally affected

## Implications

- Sensitivity to peer deviancy training processes is exacerbated by
  - Poor parental discipline – failure in learning history promoting self regulation
  - Poor frontal inhibitory control – increased responsiveness to the excitement and attention associated with deviancy training

## Implications

- Interventions to reduce deviancy training processes in schools
  - Increase adult monitoring to track what children say and how they play as well as overt forms of aggressive and disruptive behavior
  - alter peer contingencies for deviant discourse & rehearsal (e.g., expanding the Good Behavior Game to include deviant discourse and rehearsal)
  - encourage & reward pro-social discourse & rehearsal

## Implications

- Interventions to reduce sensitivity to deviancy training
  - identify children who are most sensitive ☾ use to inform selection of youth for group treatment
  - effective parenting as a protective factor (early discipline) (Forgatch, Dishion & Shaw)
  - skills training to enhance positive peer relationships and to “resist” peer deviant discourse and rehearsal (Lochman)
  - skills training to enhance executive inhibitory control (Posner & Rothbart)