**Learning to play fair: Is it the same for kids around the world?**

**1.. Read passage and annotate with CURE: Circle main idea, Underline details and unknown words, Respond in margin (T2T,T2S,T2W), Examine Vocabulary**

**2. Answer multiple choice / short answer questions.**

**3. Turn in for quiz grade on Friday.**

By Star Tribune, adapted by Newsela staff 01.26.16

Life isn’t fair.

That truth is something that children seem to understand almost intuitively at a young age. However, the path through which they develop a sense of what’s fair and what isn’t — and how they act on injustices — is something that has been a puzzle for social scientists.

Fairness is a willingness to sacrifice for the sake of equality. It is an ideal that supports cooperation, sharing and sacrifice. But it also can lead to competition and greed.

A team of social scientists sought to understand how much of this idea is hard-wired into our DNA and how much of it is cultural. The team was led by Felix Warneken, a professor at Harvard University. The team members traveled to seven countries to study how different groups of children play fair.

**Two Types Of Unfair Situations**

Their work was published in the magazine Nature. It focused on how children responded to two types of unfair scenarios. The first, disadvantageous inequity, occurs when one person receives less than a peer. The second, advantageous inequity, happens when one person receives more than a peer.

The theory has been that these are two distinct ideas that emerge at different ages and use different parts of the brain. But little has been known about environmental influences until this study.

Both are believed to be part of the glue that holds societies together.

Being opposed to disadvantageous inequity, or having less than other people, “can provide long-term benefits,” Warneken and his co-authors wrote. This can prevent competitors from gaining an advantage over someone. It also signals that the person will not let others take advantage of them.

**Idea Of Sacrifice Comes Later**

However, when a person is opposed to advantageous inequity, or having more than other people, they may sacrifice an advantage they have over someone else. This signals that the person can be a good partner who will treat others fairly.

Previous studies found that children as young as 4 years old are opposed to having less than others. However, children do not become opposed to having more than others until they are 8. That seems to indicate the influence of social norms.

The new study is believed to be the first to look at inequity opposition across societies in children. It sought to find out which parts of fairness might be the same everywhere, and which might be culturally driven. To that end, the researchers designed an “inequity game” that they used to test 866 pairs of children aged 4 to 15. The study was conducted in Canada, India, Mexico, Peru, Senegal, Uganda and the United States.

Co-author Peter Blake is a professor at Boston University. He explained that the experiment was designed to see how children would respond to the two kinds of inequity. It also wanted to see how the children made decisions that affected both themselves and a peer.

**Kids React To Portions Of Candy**

The rules were simple. Two children of the same sex and similar age were seated across from each other. They were offered some Skittles candy. Sometimes the portion of candy given to each child was equal. Sometimes it was not. Only one child got to decide whether both children accepted or rejected the candy they were given.

The "deciding" child did this by pulling one of two handles on a machine. The first handle accepted the portions, causing the candy to be poured into a bowl for each child. The second handle rejected the portions, dumping the candy into a third bowl where neither child could have it.

In all seven societies — which ranged from small farming villages to large cities — the results showed a rejection of disadvantageous inequity. That is, when the children were given less candy than their peers, they tended to dump the candy into the bowl that no one could eat from.

That was expected. “This seems to be a basic human response to getting less than someone else,” said study co-author Katherine McAuliffe, a professor at Boston College.

Whether they were rejecting the candy out of frustration or meanness, the children were motivated to deny others an advantage, she said.

**Results Different For Kids Who Had More**

The results to the advantageous inequity experiment were more mixed. Children in only three countries were likely to reject unequal portions of candy when they had more than their peers. Those countries were the United States, Canada and Uganda.

The researchers found that “in these societies, rejections of advantageous allocations increased with age." They explained this by stating that since "Western societies tend to emphasize establishing and enforcing norms of equality," these children face more social pressure to treat others fairly than children in other societies. Uganda, a country in eastern Africa, is not a Western society. Yet the researchers noted that the students at the Ugandan schools often had Western teachers.

Blake tried to explain the differing results on the two types of inequality. He said that they show that “different psychological processes may be at work depending on whether someone is at an advantage or disadvantage.”