

Get Bent: The Nonlinear, Contextually-Embedded Psychophysiology of Prosocial Development

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Abstract: In both the scientific and popular spheres, humans are often characterized as predominantly motivated by self-interest, often resulting in selfish and antagonistic behavior. Yet, examples of generosity, compassion, and actions that serve the interests of others are both ubiquitous and evident very early in life. What underlies the inclination and ability of children and youth to be prosocial with others? Drawing on data from multiple studies of children, adolescents and adults, I will discuss how the socially and contextually embedded nature of physiological regulation supports emotional and behavioral expressions of prosociality, with particular focus on polyvagal theory, neurovisceral integration, and analyses of temporally dynamic processes and nonlinear associations between physiology and behavior.



Professor Hastings is chair and professor of psychology at the University of California, Davis, and a member of the core faculty of The Health Emotions, Relationships and Development Lab (HERD), which explores the factors contributing to children's social and emotional development. He examines the contributions of "nurture" through children's close relationships with family and friends, and "nature" through their autonomic and neuroendocrine regulatory systems. His research focuses on understanding how these factors shape developmental trajectories toward adaptive functioning, like compassion and social competence, and maladaptive functioning, like aggression and anxiety. Professor Hastings is a member of several professional organizations, including American Psychological Association-Division 7, Association for Psychological Science, California Psychological Association, International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development and Society for Research in Child Development. He has also served as a consulting editor for the *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology* and on the editorial boards of several publications, including *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science*, *Parenting: Science and Practice*, *Social Development*, *Developmental Psychology*, and *Child Development*.