



Early Development Research Group

The EDRG Newsletter

Winter, 2013

The Early Development Research Group is comprised of a group of researchers in the Department of Psychology at UBC. We are interested in the development of language, cognition, and moral and social reasoning in infants and children (newborn to 8 years old).



If you are interested in participating in our studies with your child(ren), please contact us:

earlydev@psych.ubc.ca
604-822-9540

Visit us online!
<http://edrg.psych.ubc.ca>

Over the past year, hundreds of parents and children have participated in our studies. We would like to take this opportunity to thank these parents as our research would not be possible without their support.

In this newsletter, we will highlight some of the work that we have done in the past year, and also share some recent findings on how your little ones think and learn!

In the News!



Dr. Kiley Hamlin's work on infant morality was highlighted in an episode of "The Nature of Things" by David Suzuki. Check out the link below:

<http://www.cbc.ca/natureofthings/episode/born-to-be-good-1.html?subpage=behind>



Dr. Janet Werker's findings on the effects of maternal depression on language development in babies also received widespread coverage on radio, newspaper, and online media.

<http://thechart.blogs.cnn.com/2012/10/08/does-moms-depression-affect-babys-language/>

Some of our findings...

Does maternal depression affect baby's language?

A recent study from the Infant Studies Centre shows that maternal depression and its treatment can change the timing of language development in babies. This work puts us in a better position to support maternal well being and optimal language development in children.

Do babies evaluate the actions of others?

The Centre for Infant Cognition has found that young infants are capable of privileging the mental states of others when evaluating prosocial and antisocial actions. For example, 8 month old infants find that individuals who try to help, even if their attempts are unsuccessful and lead to a bad outcome, are just as good as those who succeed at helping, and that likewise individuals who try and fail at hindering are just as bad as successful hinderers.

Can two wrongs make a right?

The K.I.D. Studies Centre set out to explore whether preschoolers possess seeds of critical thinking. In a recent study, 3-year-olds were given the option to learn new words from a puppet who was always wrong. Wisely, they remained skeptical. However, if two puppets were consistently wrong, children were more credulous – as long as the puppets agreed with each other. In other words, critical thinking skills are present in early childhood but with room for improvement!

How do children learn brand concepts?

Children's worlds are filled with branded artifacts: Disney dolls, and iPod players. To tell a real Nike shoe from a fake Nike shoe, children must take into account who made the object – a property that they cannot see. The Language Development Centre has been conducting a series of studies to explore children's ability to learn brand concepts – including their skill at distinguishing authentic objects from counterfeits. So far, we are finding that 5- and 6-year-old children are very good at learning brand concepts under a range of conditions.

More fun stuff...

Living Lab at Telus World of Science!

In addition to the Social Cognitive Development Lab at UBC, Dr. Andrew Baron is also leading the Living Lab at the Telus World of Science (Vancouver).

Located on the 2nd floor of Science World, the Living Lab is designed to examine children's cognitive development through interactive computer games. Researchers from the EDRG are conducting studies every day of the week with babies from 6-months of age to 19-year-old children.

If you would like to learn more about the Living Lab, contact: livinglab@psych.ubc.ca or visit: <http://www.scienceworld.ca/lab>.