

Title: Preschooler's Attention to a Demonstration Performed by One vs Two Actors

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Introduction:

Human evolution depends on behavior transmission for survival and learning. Previous research has shown that children are more likely to imitate when multiple people demonstrate an act compared to when only one person performs the act (Haun, Rekers, & Tomasello, 2012). This is true even if the children see the new act performed the same number of times. One explanation for this finding is that children presume behavior performed by multiple people is correct, whereas one person's behavior may be an individual choice. An alternative explanation is that children may pay more attention to the behavior performed by multiple versus one actor. This poster addresses these two possibilities.

Method & Results:

During the experiment, 3-year-olds are presented with four different boxes with items inside. On half of the trials, one experimenter demonstrates a target act twice before opening the box. On the other half of the trials, two experimenters demonstrate the target act once. The children are then given the chance to open the box. The amount of time children spend watching each of the demonstrations will be scored. Data collection is in progress.

Discussion:

The results of this project will help determine whether children's imitation is influenced solely by attention or whether the children are making inferences about the reasons behind acts.