

Development 1: Cognition in infancy

Elizabeth Spelke, Dept. of Psychology, Harvard
CBMM Summer School
August 25, 2015

Development

Two mornings (Thurs: Laura & Tomer; also Josh, Shimon)

The topic is actually narrower:

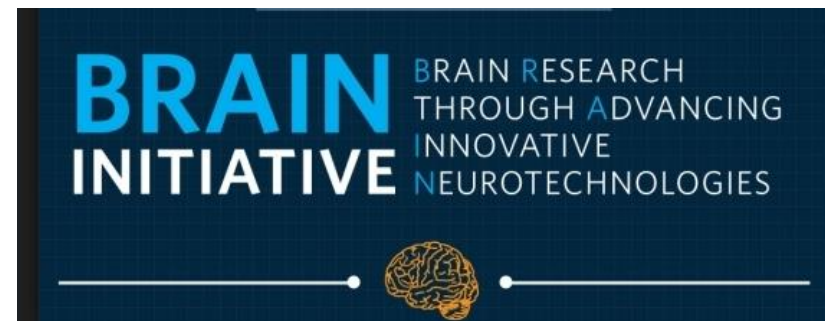
human development

cognitive development

mostly as revealed through behavioral experiments

And my topic is narrower than this: human infants

Why??



Why cognition in human infancy?

Intrinsically fascinating:

From birth to maturity, we go from knowing almost nothing to become the smartest, most knowledgeable entities on the planet. Many of the biggest changes occur early. How do we do it?

Historically, recognized as important for understanding minds and brains & for building smart machines.

Helmholtz

Turing

Hubel/Wiesel

Useful for BMM today:

Studies of human cognitive development can shed light on 3 questions at the heart of the study of intelligence.

One question today, from Josh

How do we get so much from so little?

prior knowledge: compositional, causal explanatory models

but what are these models?

how are they organized?

Can study this in adults (Nancy, Josh, Rebecca)

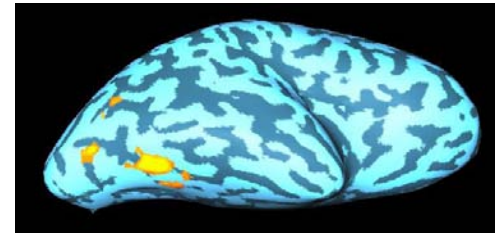
But in adults, these questions are hard to answer

we know too much

we can connect anything we know to anything else (e.g.,
analogical reasoning).

Human infants know far less and are less flexible at linking knowledge across domains. But they are in the business of learning about the world, and they seem to do it by developing models.

Studies of infants may shed light on the fundamental cognitive systems that support learning, organize human knowledge and underlie human intelligence.



© Source Unknown. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>.

How can we study what infants know?

They can't talk to us.

They can't do much:

Before 5 months, no reaching

Before 7 months, no locomotion

Before 10-12 months, no pointing, talking....

But infants observe the world and start learning about it from the beginning.

Their observations are systematic and are reflected in simple exploratory behaviors: looking, orienting to sound.

These behaviors can tell us something about what infants perceive and understand.

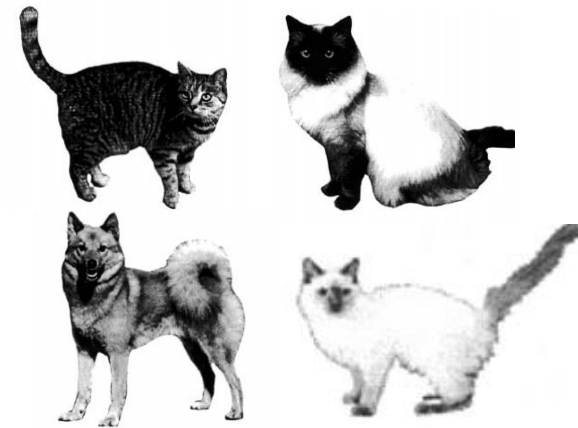
Infants' looking patterns

Infants look at some things more than others (Fantz):

black/white stripes > gray
moving > stationary arrays
sphere > disc

Infants look more at new things (e.g., Quinn)

ex: 6 pairs of cats → dog > new cat



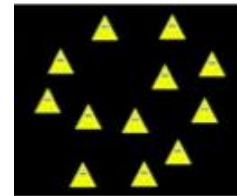
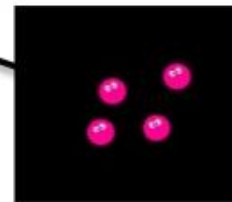
Courtesy of Elsevier, Inc., <http://www.sciencedirect.com>.
Used with permission.
Source: Quinn, Paul C., Peter D. Eimas, and Michael J. Tarr.
"Perceptual categorization of cat and dog silhouettes by 3-to 4-month-old infants." *Journal of experimental child psychology* 79, no. 1 (2001): 78-94; doi:10.1006/jecp.2000.2609.

Infants look longer when what they see relates to what they hear (e.g., Izard)

4 vs. 12 syllables:

... « tuuuuu-tuuuuu-tuuuuu-tuuuuu » ...

... « tu-tu-tu-tu-tu-tu-tu-tu-tu-tu » ...



© AAAS. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>.
Source: Coubart, Aurélie, Véronique Izard, Elizabeth S. Spelke, Julien Marie, and Arlette Streri. "Dissociation between small and large numerosities in newborn infants." *Developmental science* 17, no. 1 (2014): 11-22.



newborn infants

© Alamy.com. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>.

An unanswered question: what do infants perceive or understand?

(Fantz, 1958; Quinn et al., 1990s; Izard et al., 2009 and since)

Infants' looking patterns

To find out, need systematic experiments connecting infants' performance to that of adults:

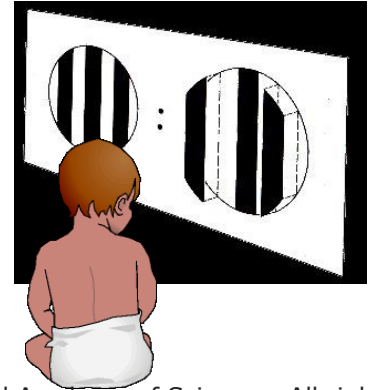
1. sphere vs. disc: perceive 3D objects?

Held's experiments with stereopsis.

2. cats vs. dogs??

Quinn, others: faces....

3. abstract number? Izard's experiments testing for signatures of approx. number



© Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>. Source: Held, Richard, Eileen Birch, and Jane Gwiazda. "Stereoacuity of human infants." Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences 77, no. 9 (1980): 5572-5574.

Good news: these questions can be answered.

Bad news: the research is slow. But it's going to get faster.

Lookit: web-based testing of infants (Scott & Schulz)

fNIRS: more specific measures from passive observation
(Powell & Saxe)

?new technologies to enhance infants' motor capacities?

And it has already shed some light on infants' knowledge.

What I think this research tells us

Our starting state includes a set of domain-specific cognitive systems:

objects (motions, collisions....)

people as agents (actions, intentions)

people as social partners (interactions, experiences)

number

places

forms

} geometry

Each system operates as a whole (internally compositional)

is partially distinct from the others

is limited

is shared by other animals

functions throughout life and supports new, uniquely

human concepts and knowledge systems

What I think this research tells us (but won't discuss today)

Humans have a species-unique capacity to combine representations from these systems productively, yielding new concepts

These productive combinations underlie our uniquely human, later-emerging systems of knowledge (and abstract concepts):

- object kinds (animals, plants, artifacts)

- natural number and Euclidean geometry

- persons and mental states (*Alia*)

Hypothesis: this capacity = natural language (words, productively combinatorial syntax, compositional semantics)

Its words and rules apply across core domains and so give rise to new families of concepts capturing abstract properties of the world.

Language is learned from other people, and so it points children toward the concepts that others consider most worth having.

What I think this research tells us

Our starting state includes a set of domain-specific cognitive systems:

objects (motions, collisions....)

people as agents (actions, intentions)

people as social partners (interactions, experiences)

number

places

forms

} geometry

Each system operates as a whole (internally compositional)

is partially distinct from the others

is limited

is shared by other animals

functions throughout life and supports new, uniquely

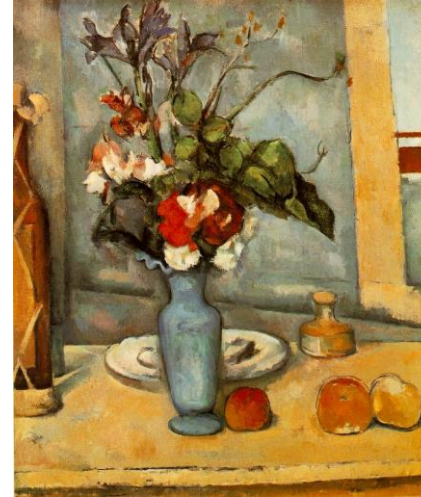
human concepts and knowledge systems

Objects

segmentation

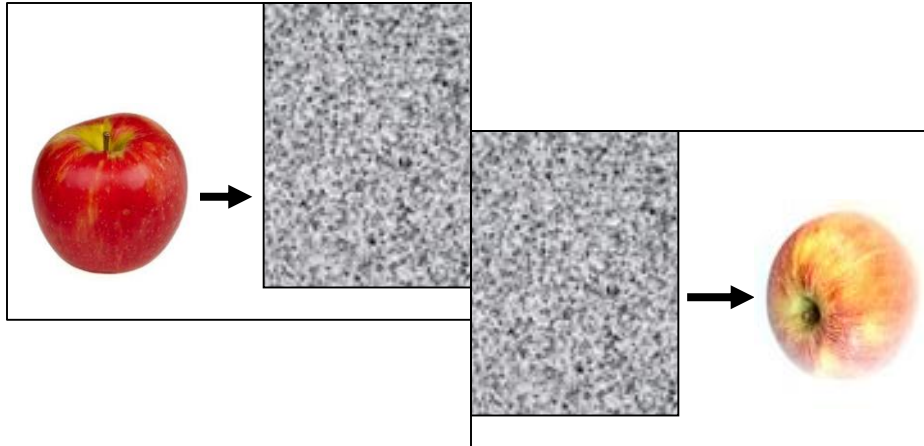


completion



This painting by Paul Cezanne is in the public domain.

Identity



© Source Unknown. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>.

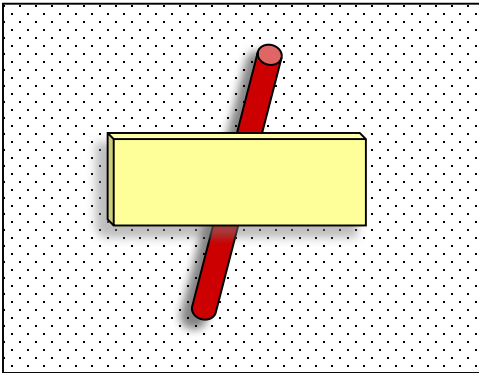
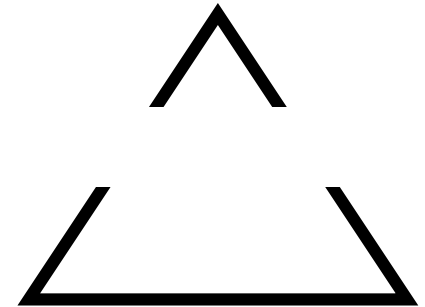
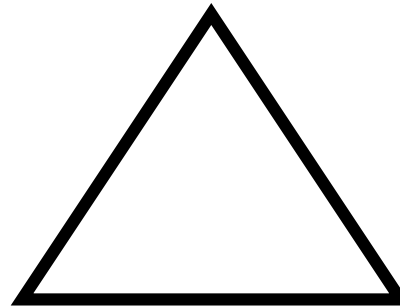
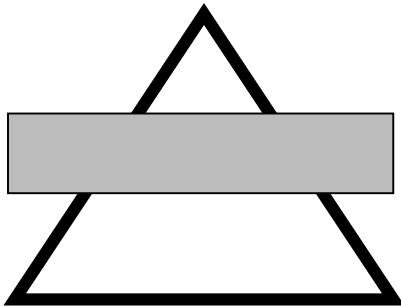
mechanics



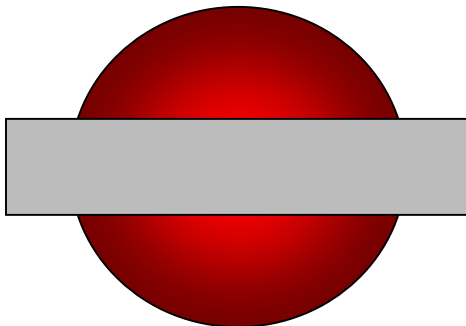
Courtesy of National Academy of Sciences, U. S. A. Used with permission. Source: Battaglia, Peter W., Jessica B. Hamrick, and Joshua B. Tenenbaum. "Simulation as an engine of physical scene understanding." Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences 110, no. 45 (2013): 18327-18332. Copyright © 2013 National Academy of Sciences, U.S.A.

Amodal completion

(4 months)



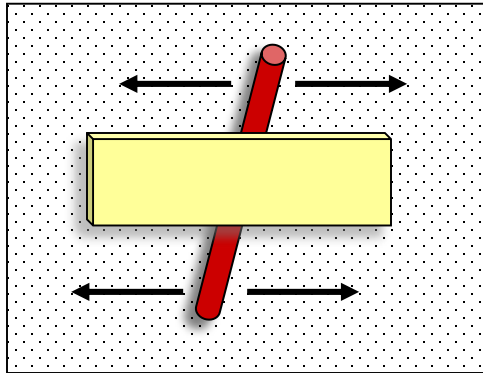
Equal increase in looking at
the two test displays



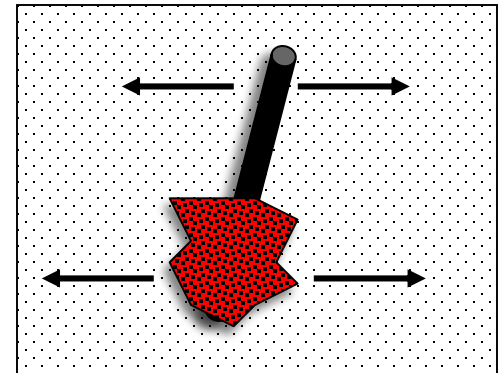
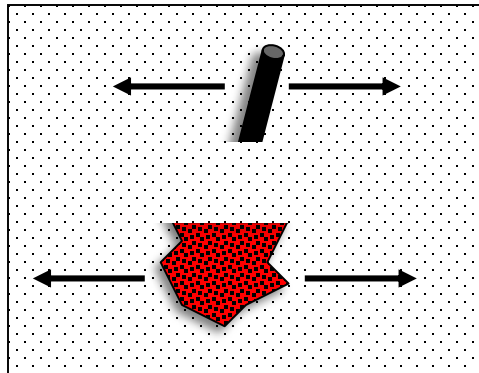
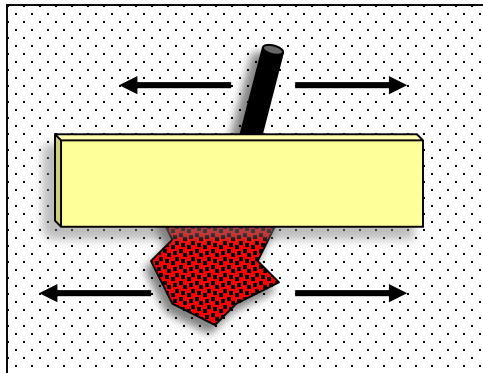
Amodal completion

(4 months)

Longer looking at the test display with the gap.



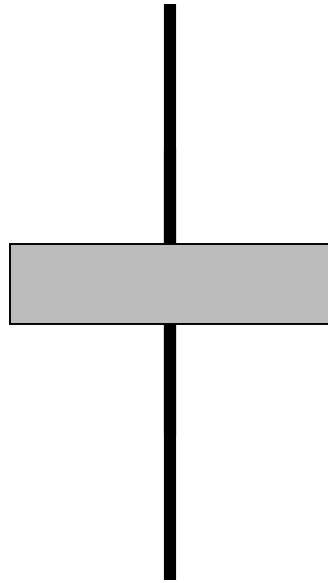
Why motion: calls attention to alignment?



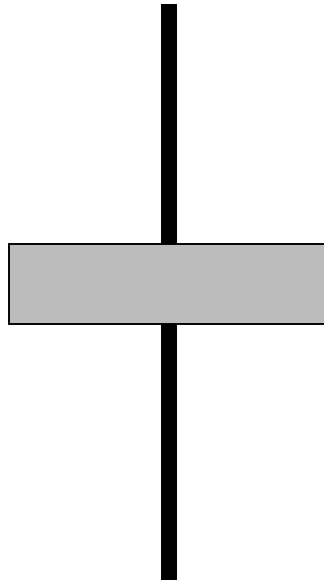
Same pattern, as strong as for the rod.

Common motion: a suspicious coincidence, unless the ends are connected.

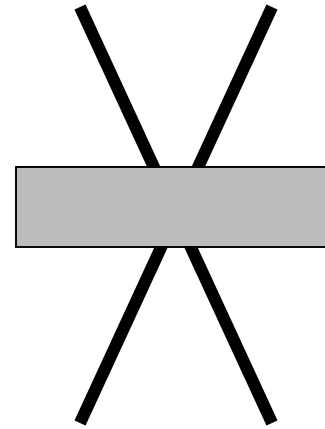
What kind of motion?



vertical



depth

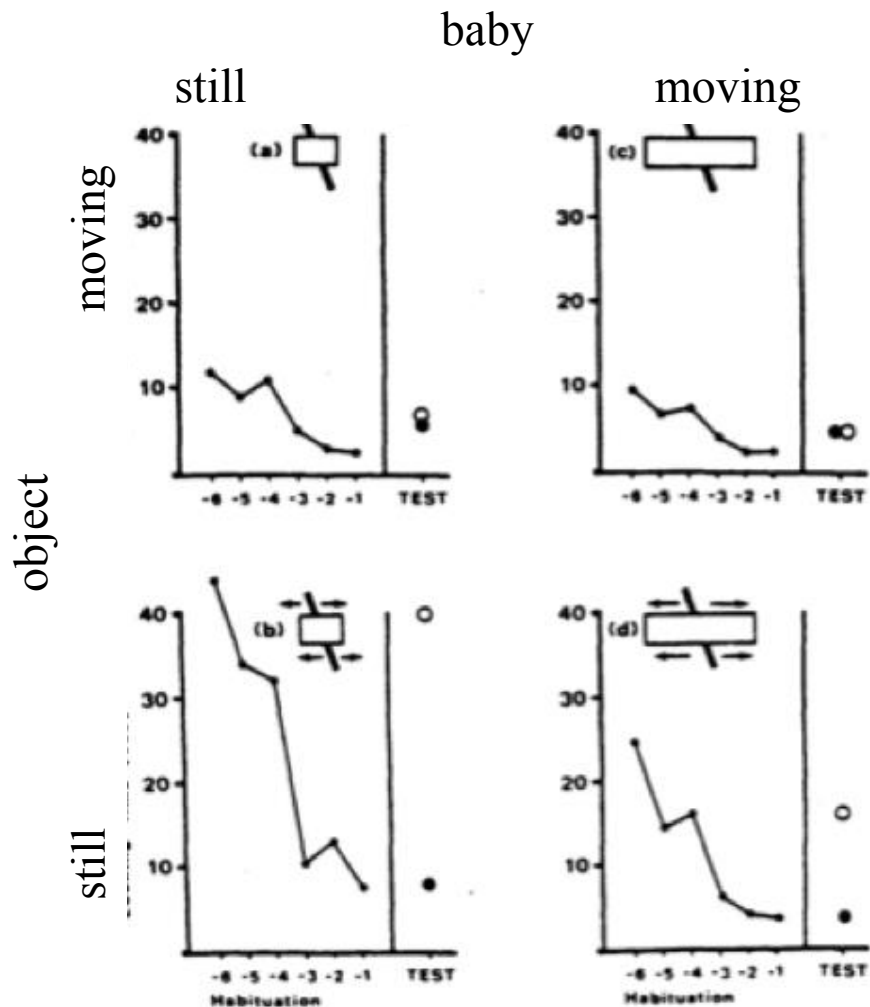
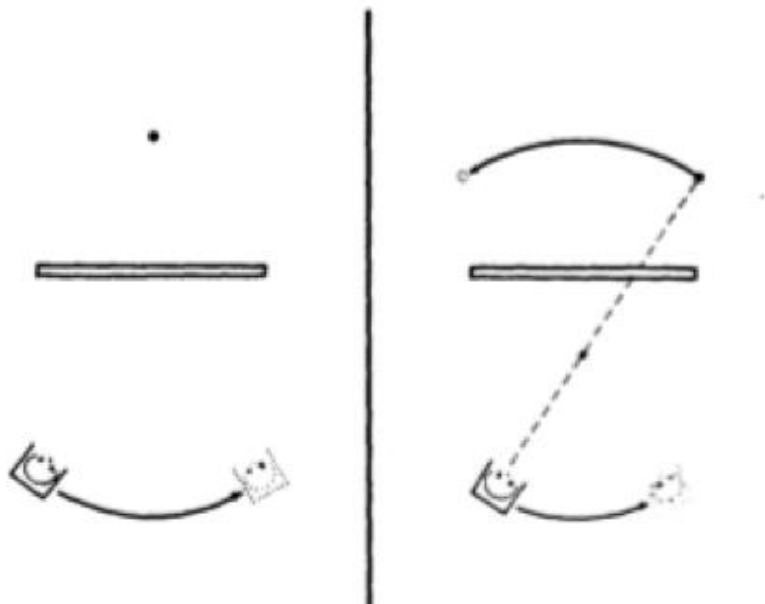


rotation



(Kellman papers)

What kind of motion?



Courtesy of American Psychological Association. Used with permission.
 Source: Kellman, Philip J., Henry Gleitman, and Elizabeth S. Spelke. "Object and observer motion in the perception of objects by infants." *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance* 13, no. 4 (1987): 586.

Movement of the object through the scene, with or without displacement of its image in the infant's visual field

(Kellman et al., 80s)

Are these effects found only with vision?

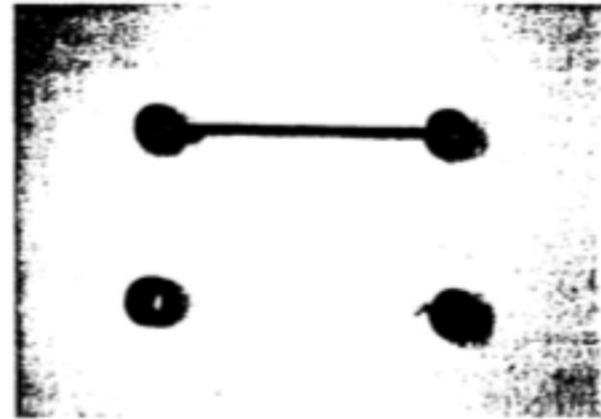
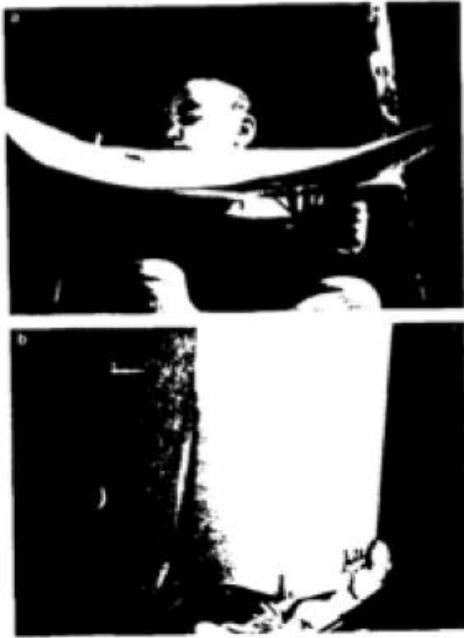


FIG. 2. The stimulus objects.

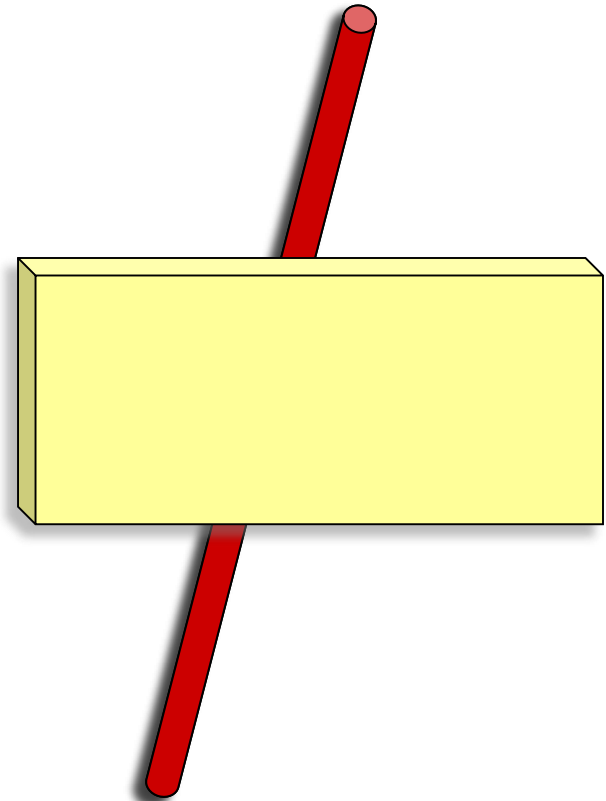
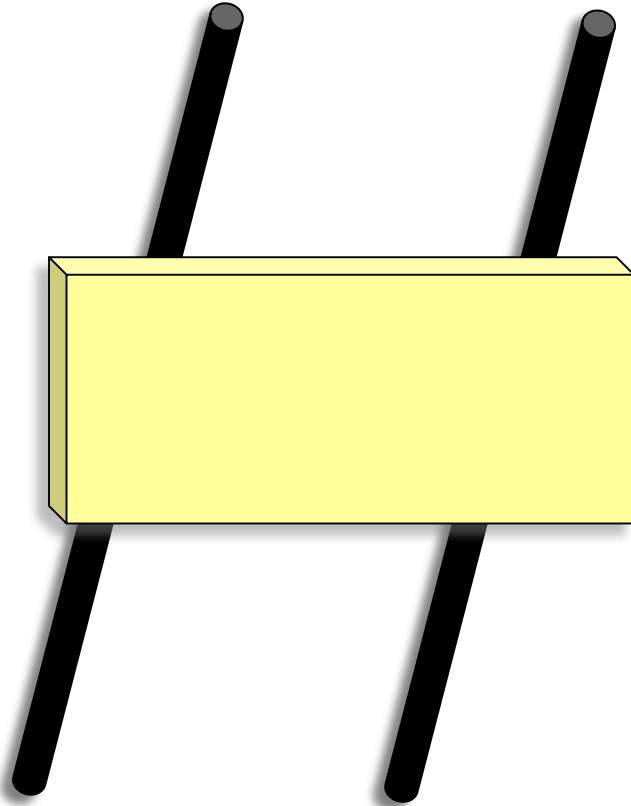
Courtesy of Elsevier, Inc., <http://www.sciencedirect.com>. Used with permission.
Source: Streri, Arlette, and Elizabeth S. Spelke. "Haptic perception of objects in infancy." *Cognitive Psychology* 20, no. 1 (1988): 1-23.

common motion → connected object
independent motion → separate objects
no effect of shape, texture or substance
properties of the rings.

Same effects in the visual and haptic modes: one model at
work in both modalities?

(Streri & Spelke papers, 80s & 90s)

Only motion?



Both displays elicited high attention.

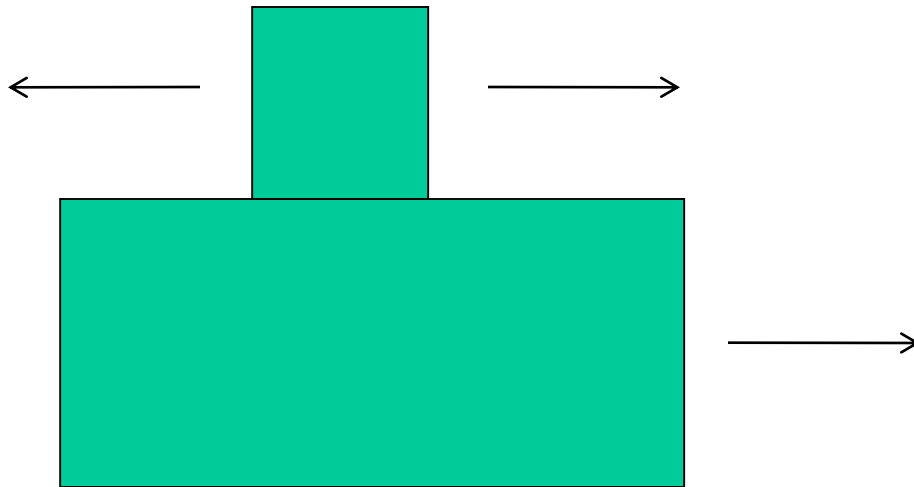
Only the motion display was seen as connected behind the occluder.

Motion, not color change (other changes?)

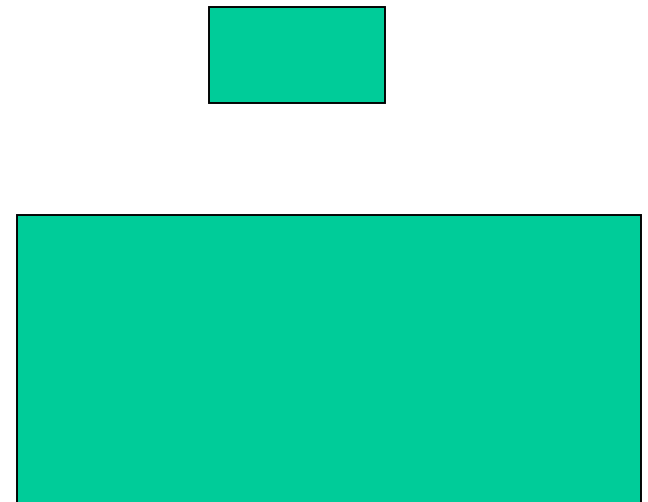
(Jusczyk, et al., 1990s)

Only motion?

Objects adjacent
vertically



Objects separated
vertically



common motion --> connected

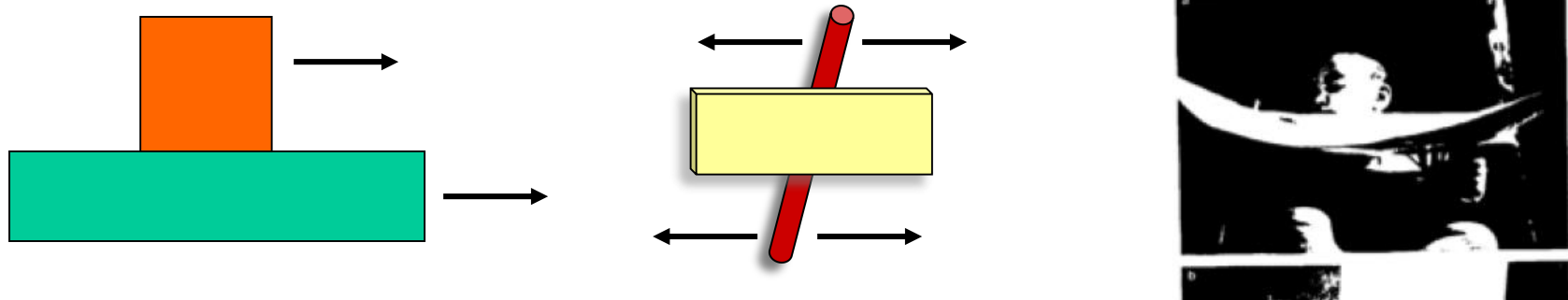
opposite motion --> not connected

no motion: inconsistent findings, often
connected or ambiguous

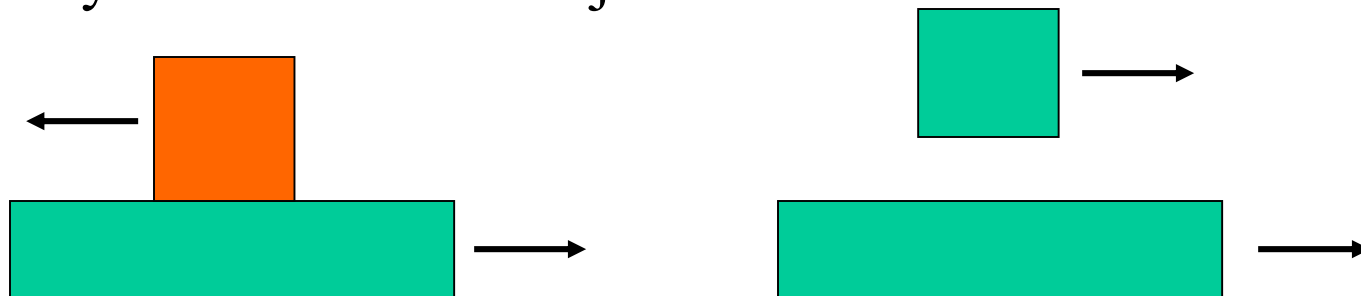
not connected, regardless of
motion

(Hofsten/Spelke/Kestenbaum, Needham)

First principle of object representation: Cohesion



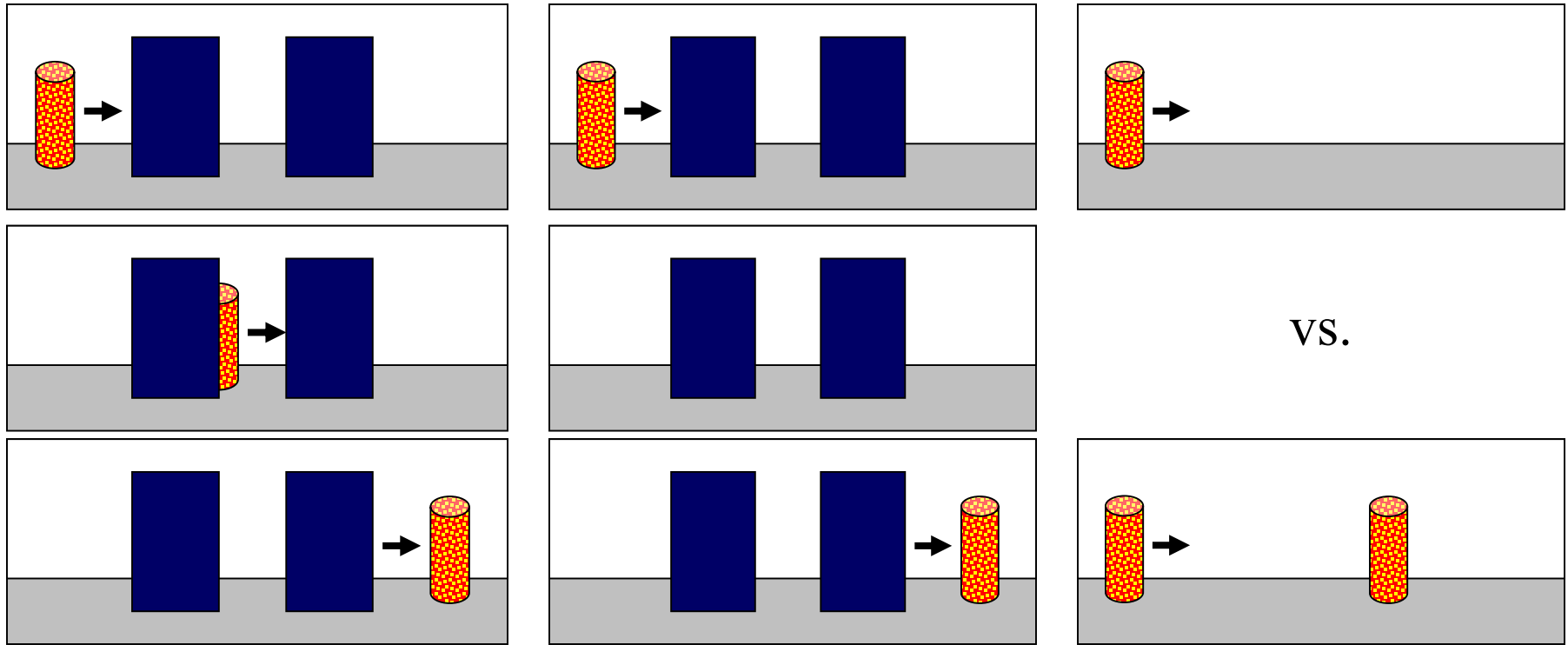
Surfaces that move together with no visible gap between them probably lie on the same object.



Surfaces that move separately, or are separated by a visible gap, probably lie on distinct objects.

(Spelke, 1990)

Can infants use motion to perceive object persistence or distinctness when objects move fully out of view?



Group 1:

continuous motion

Group 2:

discontinuous motion

Test

A second principle of object representation: continuity.

If motion is continuous, likely 1 object. If discontinuous, likely 2 objects.

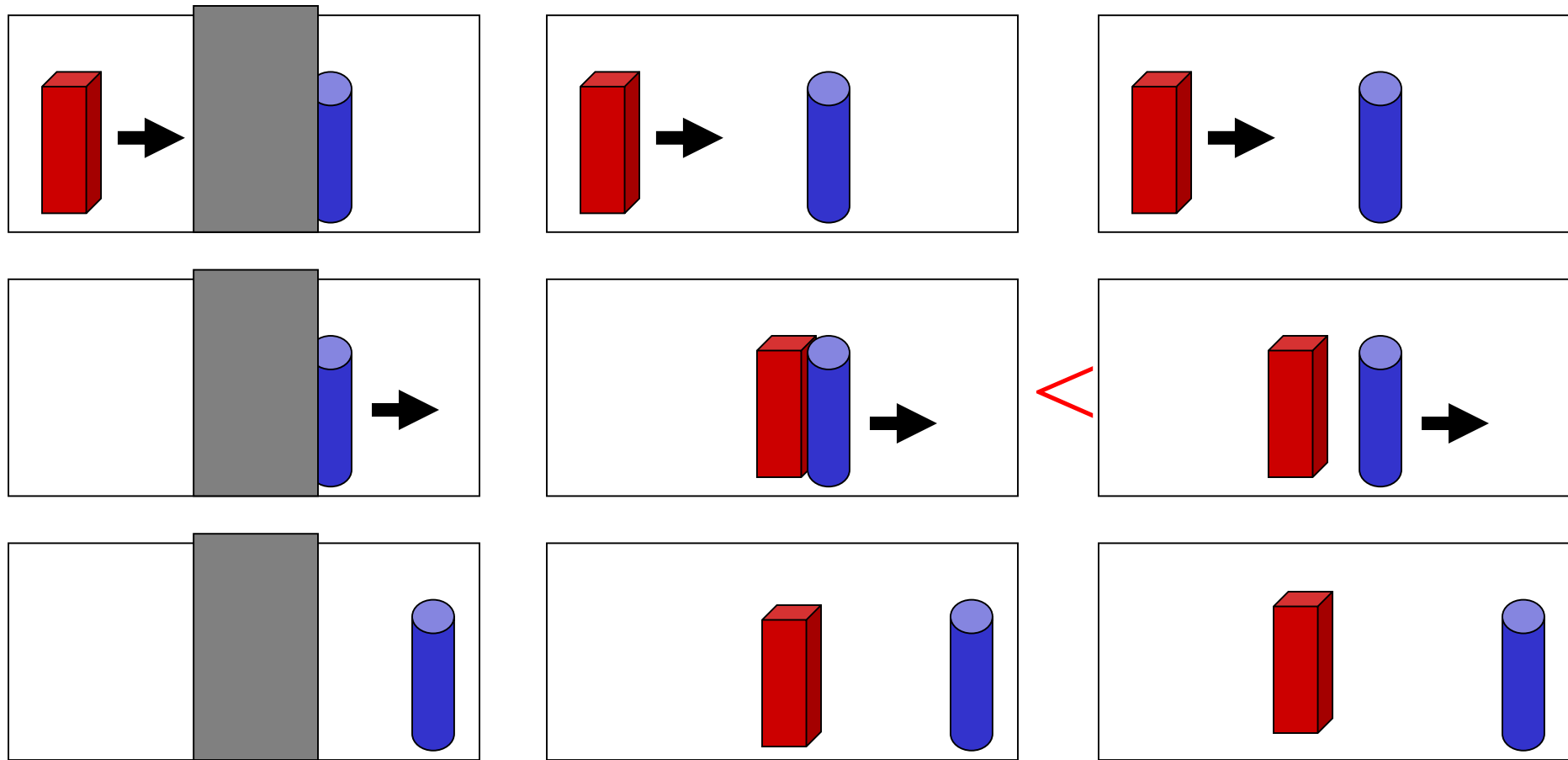
Stronger tests with older infants (10-12 months)



Number of cookies, not number of acts or of visible cookie events.

(Feigenson & Carey, 2003)

Collisions (3+ months)



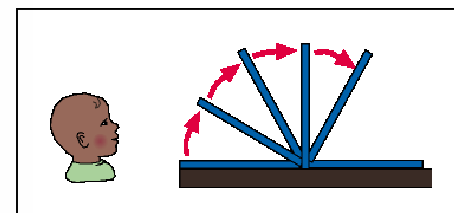
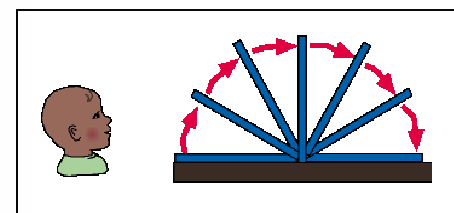
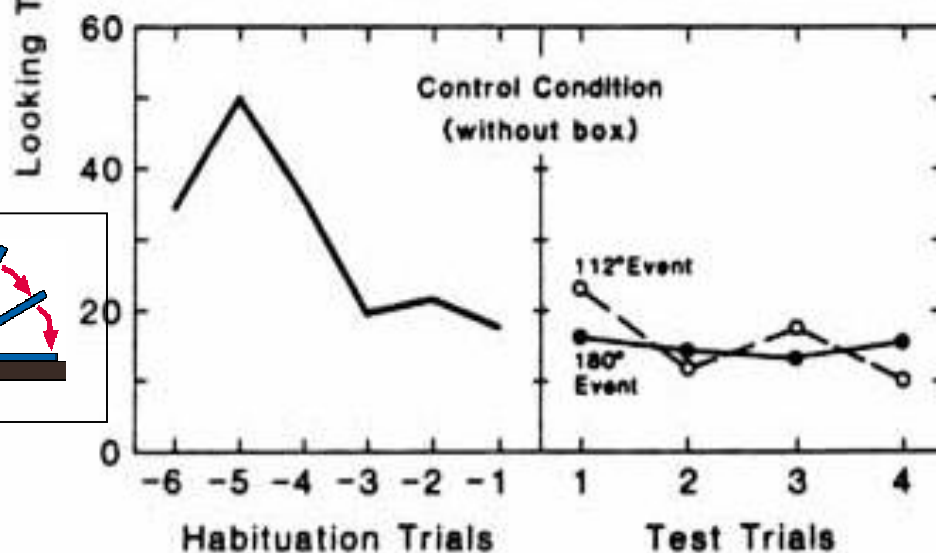
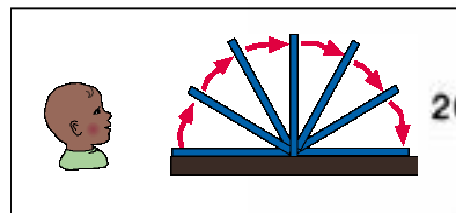
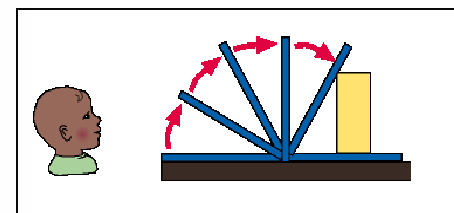
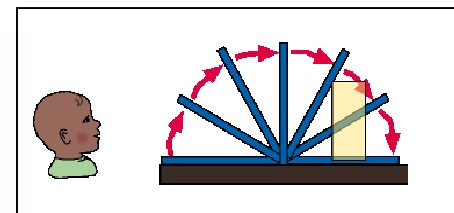
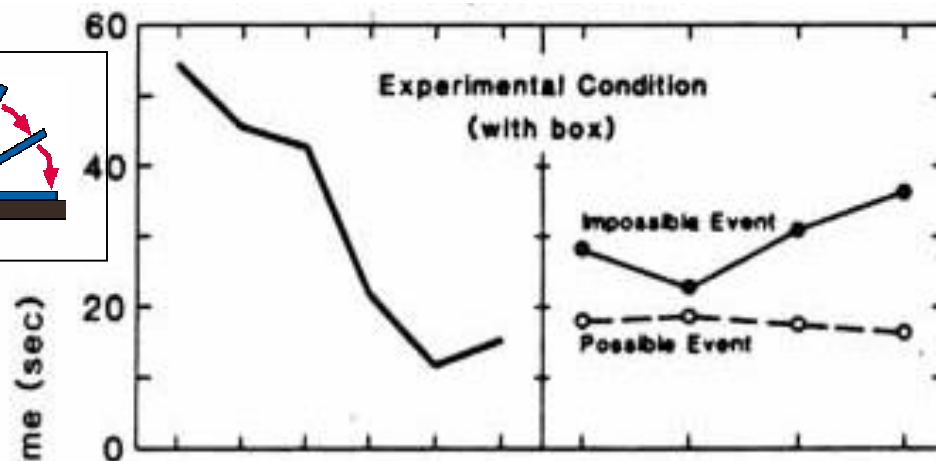
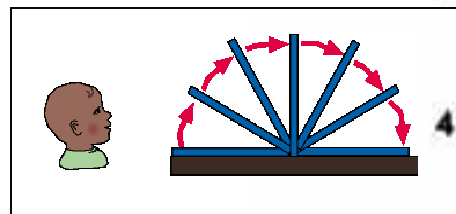
Habituation

Contact Test

No Contact Test

Infants infer that the block hit the cylinder behind the occluder... when the 2nd object moves but not when it beeps & changes color.

Solidity (3-4 months)

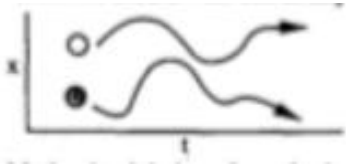


Courtesy of The American Psychological Association. Used with permission.
 Source: Baillargeon, Renee. "Object permanence in 3½- and 4½-month-old infants." *Developmental psychology* 23, no. 5 (1987): 655.

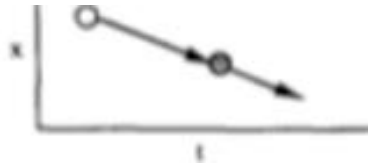
Infants represent hidden objects as permanent and solid
 (Baillargeon, et al., 1985; Baillargeon, 1987)

Object representations at 4 months

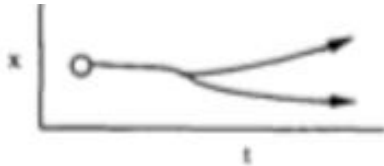
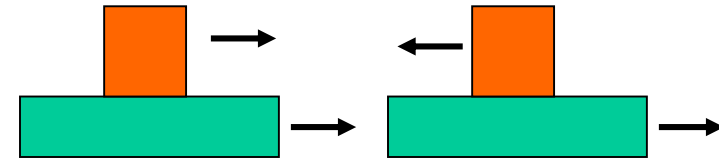
Cohesion, Continuity, Contact



no splitting



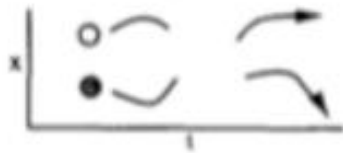
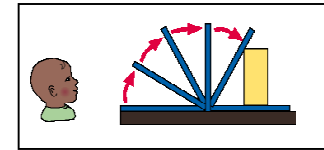
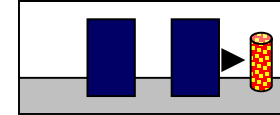
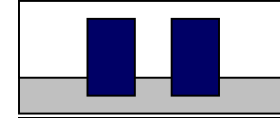
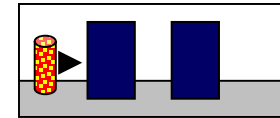
no merging



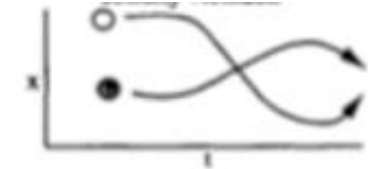
no gaps



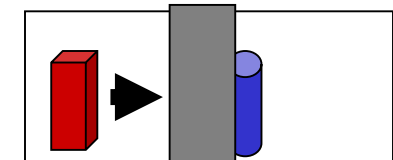
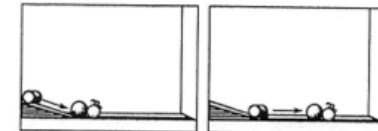
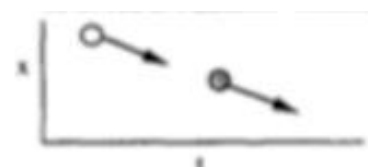
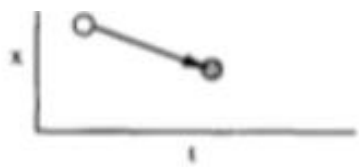
no intersections



action on contact



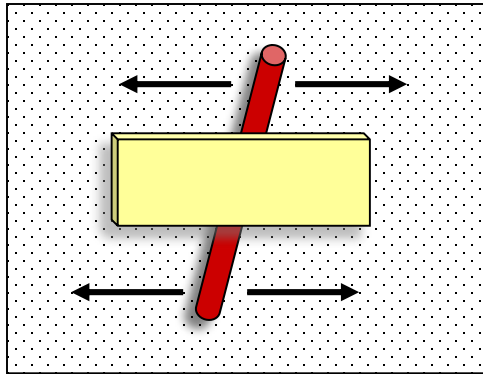
no action at a distance



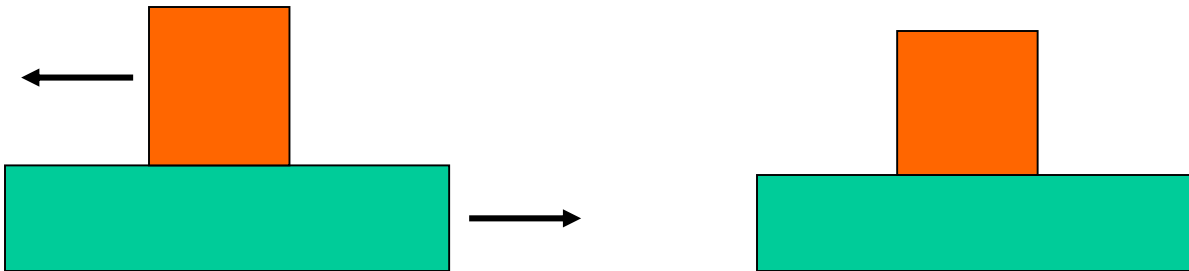
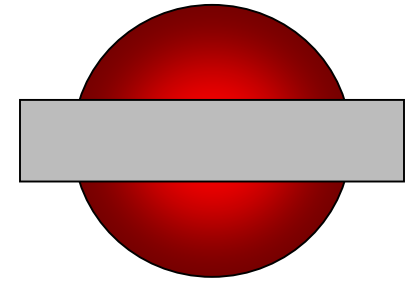
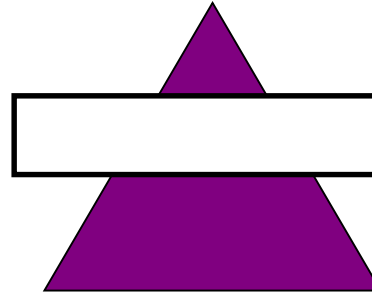
© Oxford University Press. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>.
Source: Spelke, Elizabeth S., Ann Phillips, and Amanda L. Woodward. "Infants' knowledge of object motion and human action." (1995).

Infants' perception of objects is limited

success



failure

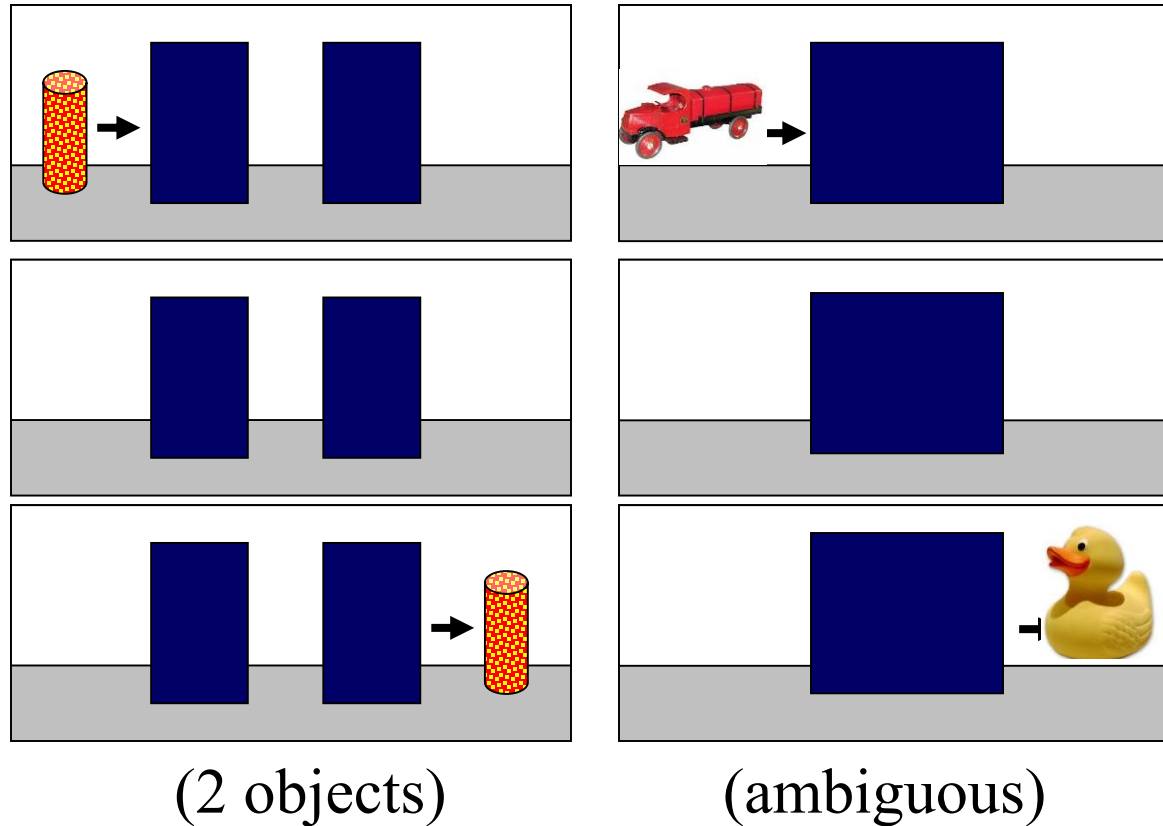


© Elsevier. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>. Source: Xu, Fei, Susan Carey, and Jenny Welch. "Infants' ability to use object kind information for object individuation." *Cognition* 70, no. 2 (1999): 137-166.

Infants use limited information to parse objects:
motion but not shape, surface color, kind....
(kind info begins to be used between 10-12 months)

(Xu et al., 1999)

Infants' tracking of hidden objects is limited



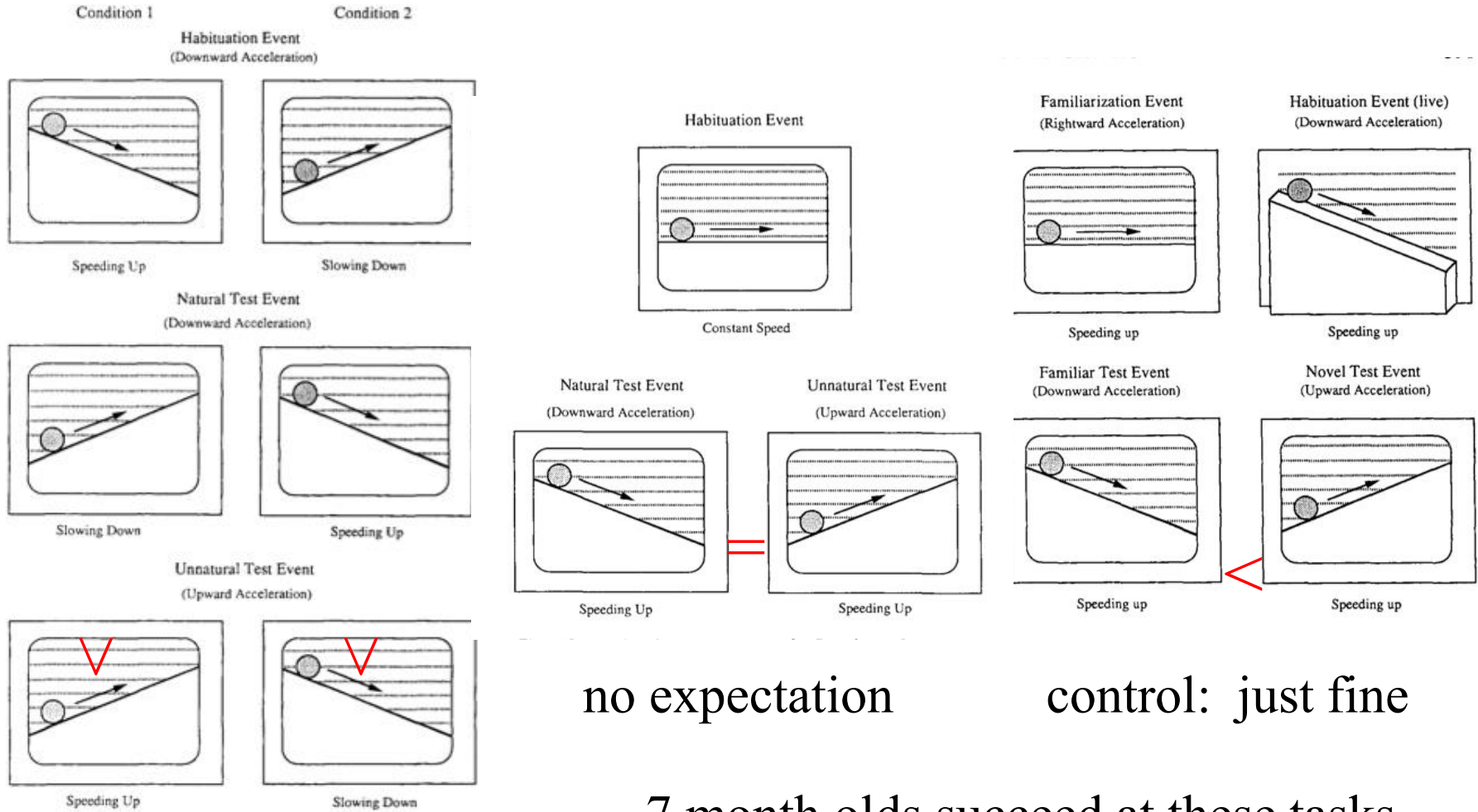
© Elsevier. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>.
Source: Xu, Fei, and Susan Carey. "Infants' metaphysics: The case of numerical identity." *Cognitive psychology* 30, no. 2 (1996): 111-153. <https://doi.org/10.1006/cogp.1996.0005>.

Infants use limited information to track objects over occlusion.

Success with toy ducks & trucks between 10-12 months.

Interesting effects of language.... (Xu & Carey, 1996)

Developments within infancy: Gravity at 5 months



no expectation

control: just fine

7 month olds succeed at these tasks.

expect wrong motion

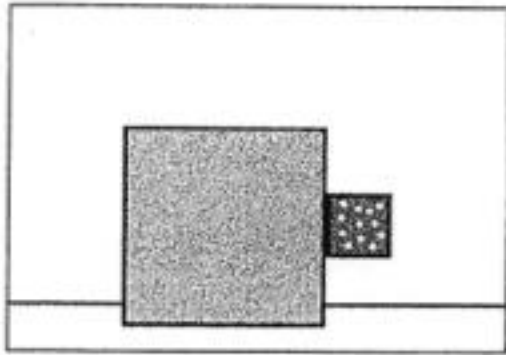
Courtesy of American Psychological Association. Used with permission.

Source: Kim, In Kyeong, and Elizabeth S. Spelke. "Infants' sensitivity to effects of gravity on visible object motion." *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance* 18, no. 2 (1992): 385. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0096-1523.18.2.385>.

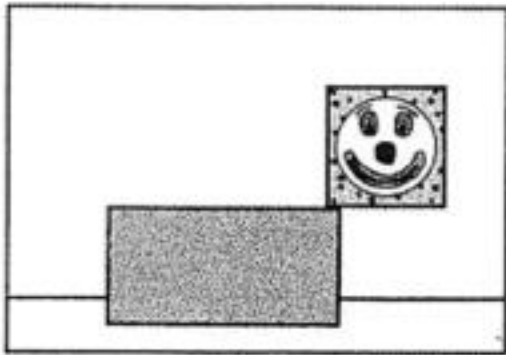
Sensitivity to some effects of gravity develops from 5-7 months.

(Kim & Spelke, 1992)

Gravity



first success around 5 months



first success around 6-7 months

Courtesy of Elsevier, Inc., <http://www.sciencedirect.com>. Used with permission.
Source: Baillargeon, Renée. "Infants' understanding of the physical world."
Journal of the Neurological Sciences 143, no. 1-2 (1996): 199.

What are infants coming to understand, and how should we characterize their understanding: local rules? general forces? something else?

What do young infants fail to understand: do they expect forces but not know their magnitude or direction?

Tomer: in progress!

Baillargeon et al., 1995

Object perception at the start of visual experience

Most of these abilities have not been tested in newborn infants
(exception: partly occluded objects)

Almost all have been tested in other animals, from monkeys to birds
and fish: Other animals can do what infants do.

Controlled reared studies of precocial animals have probed
representations of objects in visual arrays at the start of visual
experience.

Ex: domestic chicks

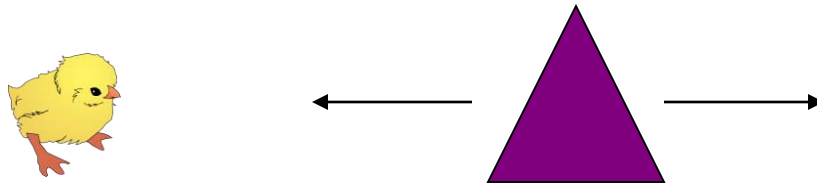
An "imprinting" method: isolate chick at
hatching and familiarize with one moving
object; chick will approach that object in
new environments.



Courtesy of Giorgio Vallortigara. Used with permission.

Amodal completion in chicks

imprinting phase (day 1, home cage, no occluded objects)



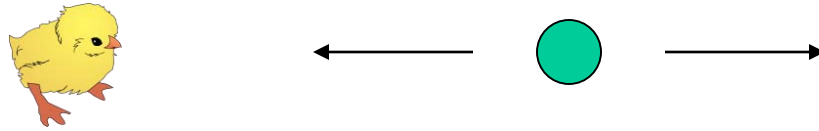
test phase (day 2, new cage)



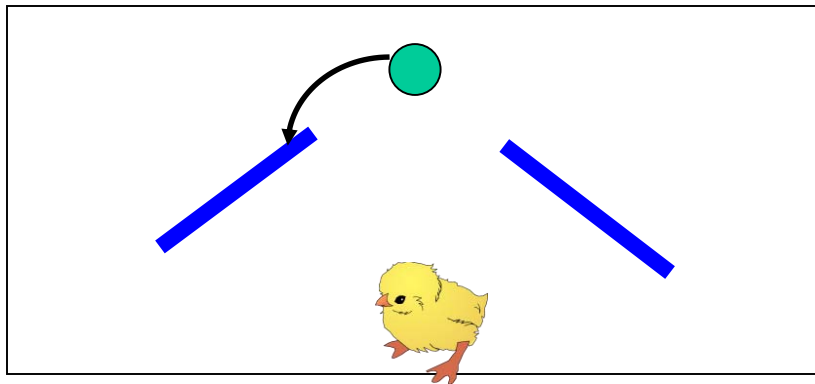
Perception of occluded objects without prior visual experience of occlusion (NB: with or without motion: better than infants).

Object permanence in chicks

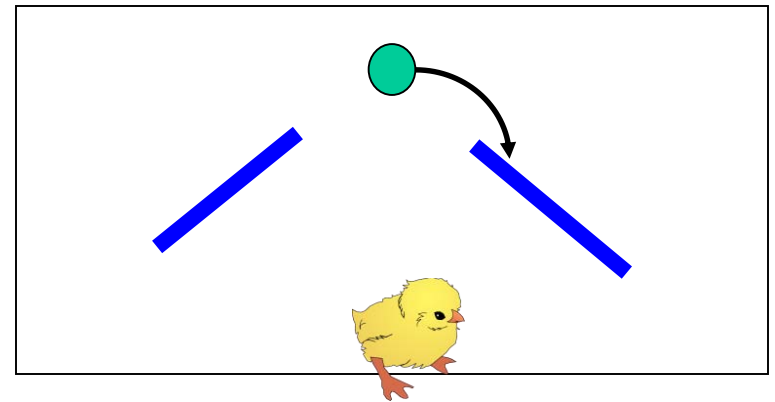
imprinting phase (day 1, home cage)



Piaget's stage 4 test:



Piaget's stage 5 test:



© Attention Perception and Psychophysics. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>. Source: Regolin, Lucia, and Giorgio Vallortigara. "Perception of partly occluded objects by young chicks." *Attention, Perception, & Psychophysics* 57, no. 7 (1995): 971-976.

Chicks solve all Piaget's search tasks to stage 5 at one day of age! (human infants take 12 months to catch up....)

Regolin & Vallortigara, 1995

Solidity in chicks

Imprinting with glass wall preventing any contact with the object (hereafter, Mom).

Familiarization: Mom moves behind each screen and reappears there.

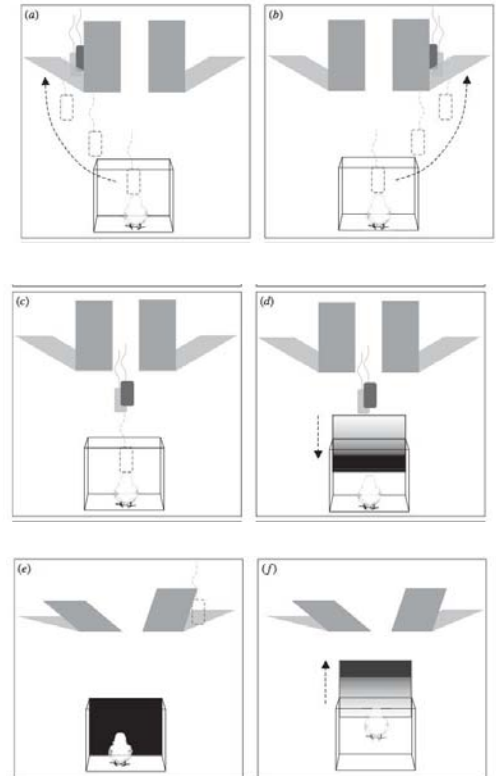
Then the display is covered before Mom turns; she reappears at each side.

Test: Screens are rotated, Mom does not reappear, chick is released. Chicks use degree of rotation to infer where Mom is and go directly to that screen.

Knowledge of solidity is **innate** in chicks:
Chicks apply solidity to objects with no prior experience of its effects on objects.
It could be innate in humans.



Courtesy of Giorgio Vallortigara. Used with permission.



© Royal Society Publishing. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>. Source: Chiandetti, Cinzia, and Giorgio Vallortigara. "Intuitive physical reasoning about occluded objects by inexperienced chicks." *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London B: Biological Sciences* 278, no. 1718 (2011): 2621-2627.

Object knowledge in infants: Further questions

Do infants have, and build further, a model of the physical world that is compositional and causal? Do they seek to understand how the world works and explain the events they see?

Or, do they just have, and learn more, ways to predict how their perceptual experiences of objects will change over time?

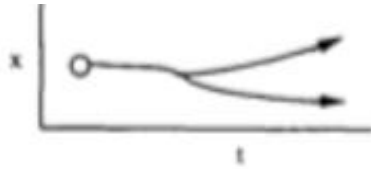
At older ages (8-11 months), the evidence favors compositional, causal models.

At younger ages, no clear evidence yet....

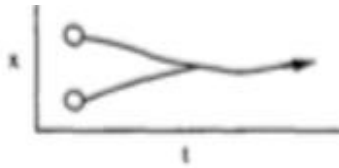
Compositionality

(8 months and up)

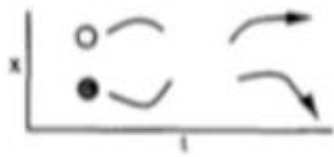
no splitting



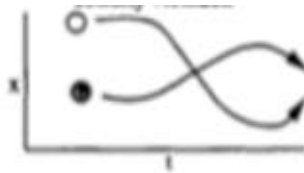
no merging



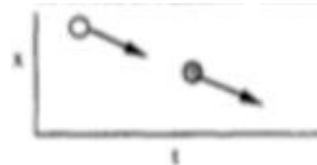
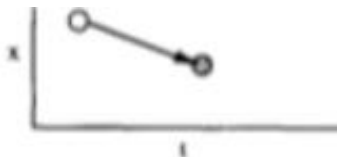
no gaps



no intersections



action on contact no action at a distance



Experiments (Carey):
show infants an object that
violates cohesion:

sand pile

block constructions

a cookie broken in 2

Test whether infants expect
the object to obey the other
constraints.

They do not.

Evidence against one
constraint weakens

expectations about the others.

© Oxford University Press. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>.
Source: Spelke, Elizabeth S., Ann Phillips, and Amanda L. Woodward. "Infants' knowledge of object motion and human action." (1995).

Huntley-Fenner & Carey, 2002; Muentener & Carey, 2010; Cheries et al., 2008)

Causality

(11 months)

measure learning and exploration.

Learning: with looking time held constant, infants learn more about objects that violate solidity or gravity.

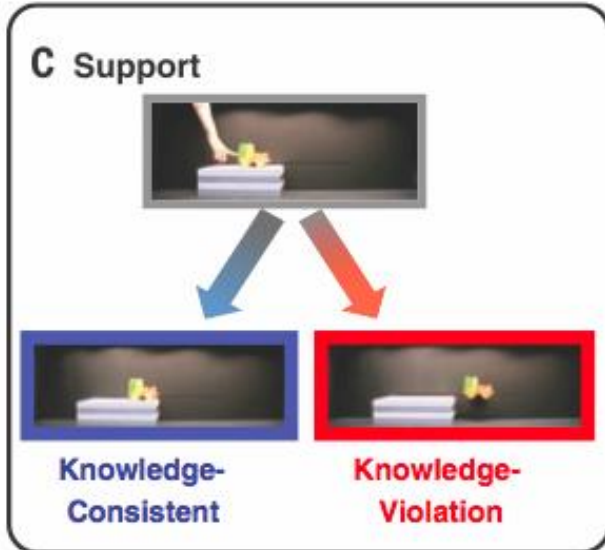
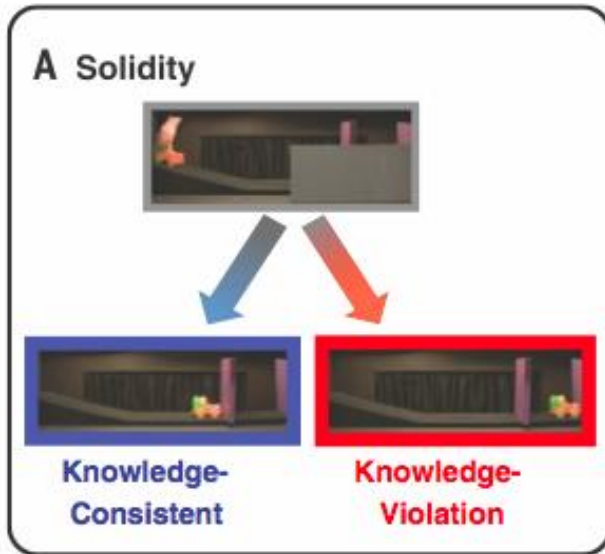
Duration of looking *is* a sign of exploration and learning, but a bad one (here, equal looking, unequal learning).

Exploration: specific to the violation.

--after solidity violation, banging

--after support violation, dropping.

Older infants actively seek to understand the causes of the events they failed to predict (Laura, Thurs.)



Core knowledge of objects: Summary and questions

From early in development, infants have a system for representing objects and inferring their future or unseen motions and interactions.

The system is compositional, at least in older infants: they don't learn a list of local properties of how objects behave.

At the end of infancy, it also captures causal understanding: infants seek to explain the events they see.

Are infants Newtonians from the beginning (maybe partial/deficient ones) or do they start as Keplerians?

we have the tools to find out: Tomer's research program.

Infants' concepts of agents (6-12 months)

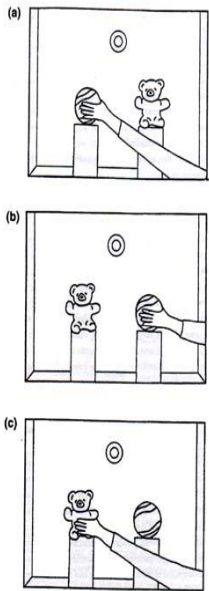
agents act (self-propelled, goal-directed motion)

agents act on objects that are or were visually accessible

agents act efficiently

agents cause things to happen

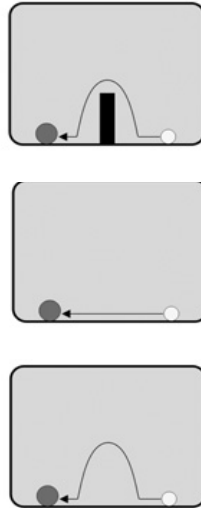
including things that violate constraints on objects.



Courtesy of Elsevier, Inc., <http://www.sciencedirect.com>.
Used with permission.
Source: Woodward, Amanda L. "Infants selectively encode the goal object of an actor's reach." *Cognition* 69, no. 1 (1998): 1-34.



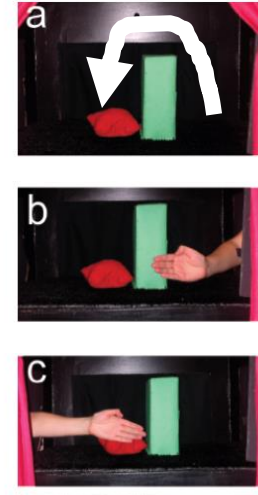
© Wiley. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>.
Source: Luo, Yuyan, and Susan C. Johnson. "Recognizing the role of perception in action at 6 months." *Developmental science* 12, no. 1 (2009): 142-149.



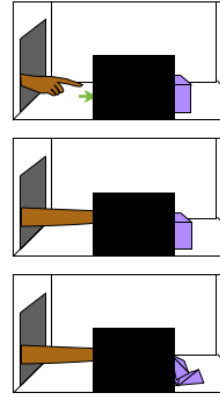
© Elsevier. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>.
Source: Gergely, György, Zoltán Nádasy, Gergely Csibra, and Szilvia Bíró. "Taking the intentional stance at 12 months of age." *Cognition* 56, no. 2 (1995): 165-193.



Courtesy of Elsevier, Inc., <http://www.sciencedirect.com>. Used with permission.
Source: Pauen, Sabina, and Birgit Träuble. "How 7-month-olds interpret ambiguous motion events: Category-based reasoning in infancy." *Cognitive psychology* 59, no. 3 (2009): 275-295.

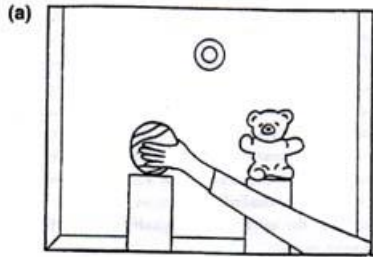


© Psychological Science. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>.
Source: Saxe, Rebecca, J. B. Tenenbaum, and Susan Carey. "Secret agents inferences about hidden causes by 10-and 12-month-old infants." *Psychological Science* 16, no. 12 (2005): 995-1001.

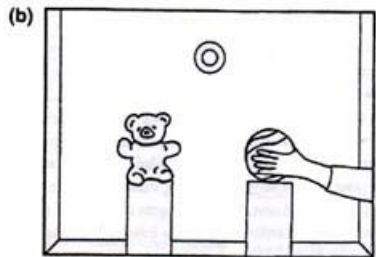


Core knowledge of agents?

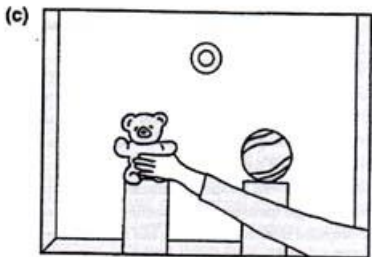
These abilities are found in infants aged 6 months or more.
Younger infants fail some of these tests.



Success at 5 months, failure at 3 months.



Do infants have any unlearned abilities to represent agents?

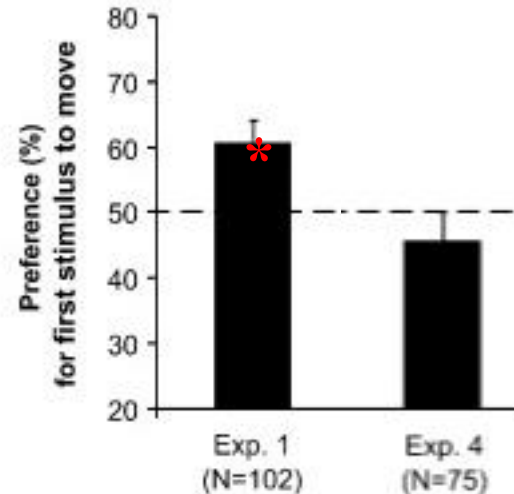
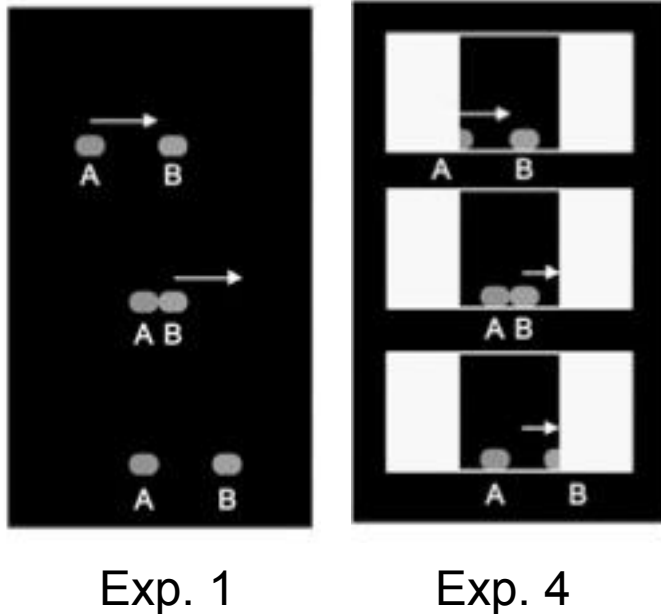


Courtesy of Elsevier, Inc., <http://www.sciencedirect.com>.
Used with permission.
Source: Woodward, Amanda L. "Infants selectively encode the goal object of an actor's reach." *Cognition* 69, no. 1 (1998): 1-34.

Woodward, 1998, 2000, 2003

Suggestions from controlled-reared animals

Newly hatched chicks: imprinting method.



A is self-propelled
A causes B's motion

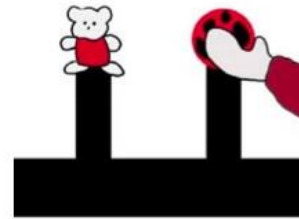
Courtesy of National Academy of Sciences, U. S. A. Used with permission.
Source: Mascialzoni, Elena, Lucia Regolin, and Giorgio Vallortigara. "Innate sensitivity for self-propelled causal agency in newly hatched chicks." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 107, no. 9 (2010): 4483-4485. Copyright © 2010 National Academy of Sciences, U.S.A.

Some parts of the older infant's agent concept are innate in chicks:
an existence proof that they *could* be innate in humans.

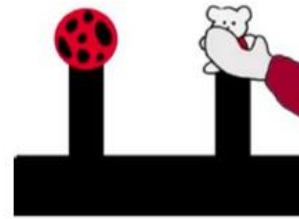
Mascialzoni, Regolin & Vallortigara, *PNAS*, 2010

But some parts are learned....

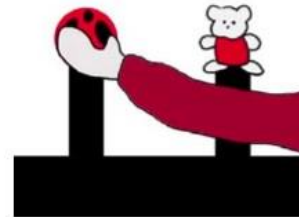
The "sticky mittens" experiments (3-month-old infants)



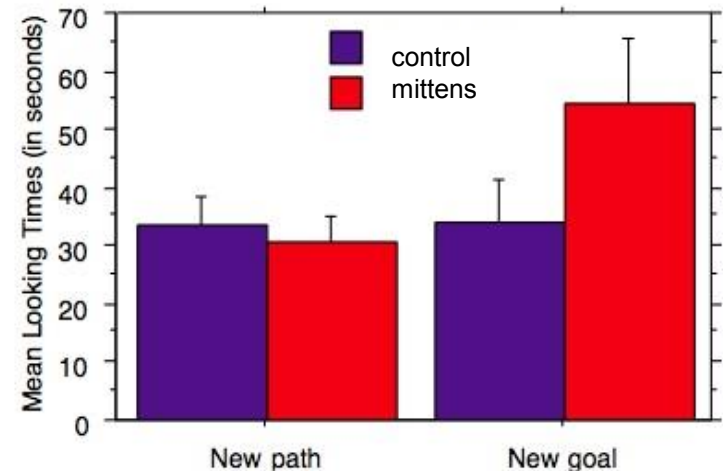
New goal event



New path event



exp: mittens → test
control: test → mittens



Courtesy of Elsevier, Inc., <http://www.sciencedirect.com>. Used with permission.
Source: Sommerville, Jessica A., Amanda L. Woodward, and Amy Needham.
"Action experience alters 3-month-old infants' perception of others' actions."
Cognition 96, no. 1 (2005): B1-B11.

After brief experience reaching successfully for objects, infants represented another person's reaching as goal-directed.

Evidence that experience affects infants' action representations.

But do any action concepts predate this experience?

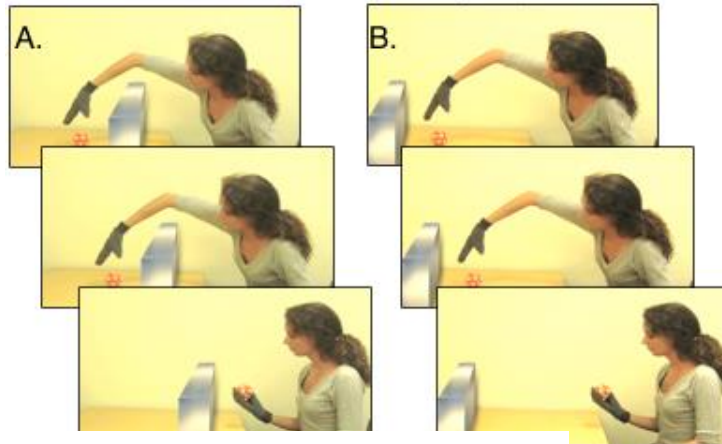
Sommerville, et al., *Cognition*, 2005

more sticky mittens experiments

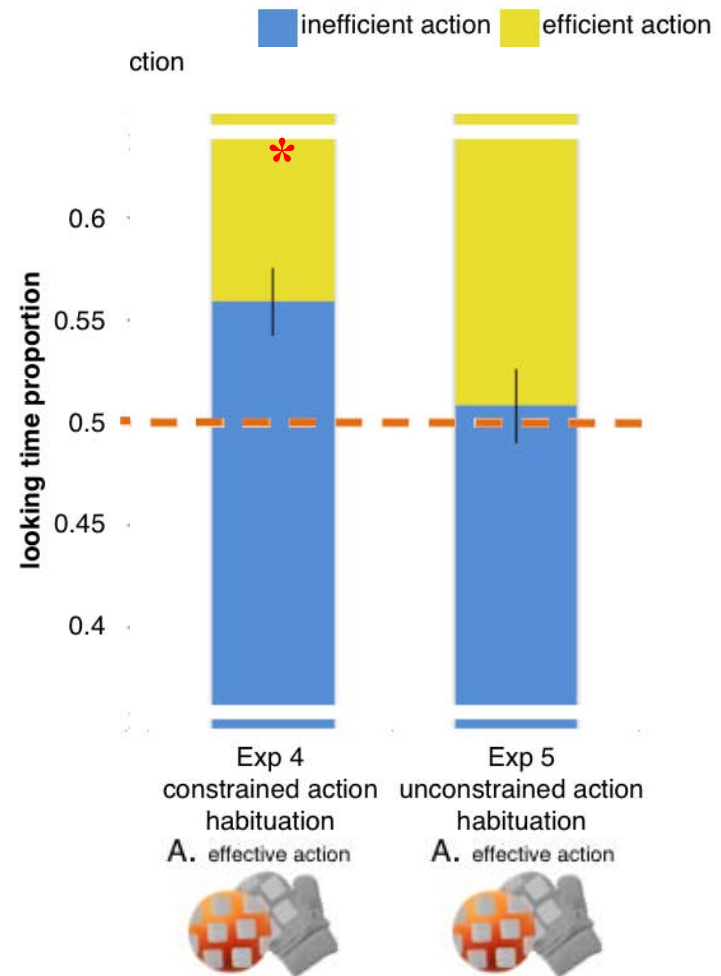
Training with no barriers



Repeated presentation:



Test:



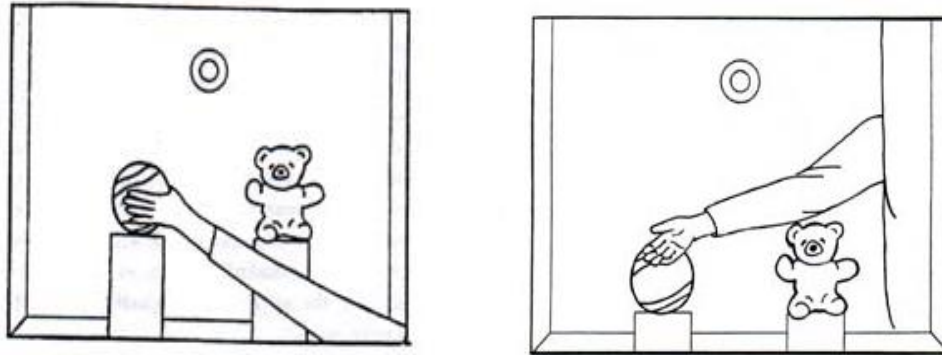
© Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>. Source: Skerry, Amy E., Susan E. Carey, and Elizabeth S. Spelke. "First-person action experience reveals sensitivity to action efficiency in prereaching infants." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 110, no. 46 (2013): 18728-18733.

Infants expect straight motion only when the agent's previous actions were constrained by a barrier (and therefore efficient).

Skerry, et al., *PNAS*, 2013

Action experience and agent concepts

Infants have to learn what movements are goal-directed actions. Infants' own action experience is a useful source of information.



Courtesy of Elsevier, Inc., <http://www.sciencedirect.com>. Used with permission. Source: Woodward, Amanda L. "Infants selectively encode the goal object of an actor's reach." *Cognition* 69, no. 1 (1998): 1-34.

But infants don't learn, from their own action experience, that agents' actions are efficient and constrained by barriers.

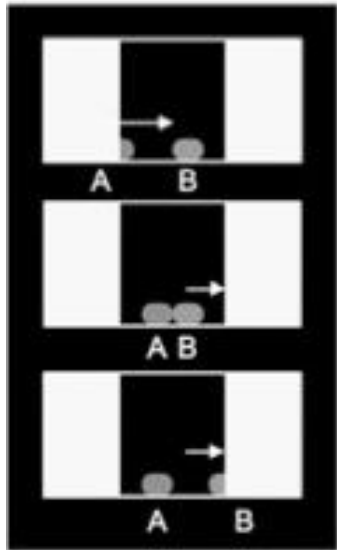
Untested: do infants learn this from prior visual experience, or would newborn infants and controlled-reared chicks also represent agents as efficient actors?

Early knowledge of agents

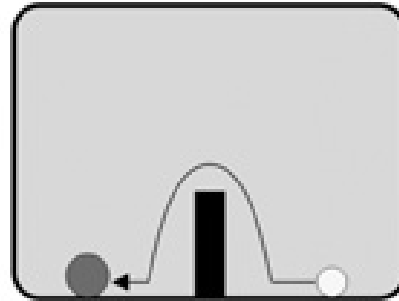
agents are self-propelled and cause changes in objects on contact.

agents' actions are goal-directed and efficient.

agents act on things to which they have perceptual access.

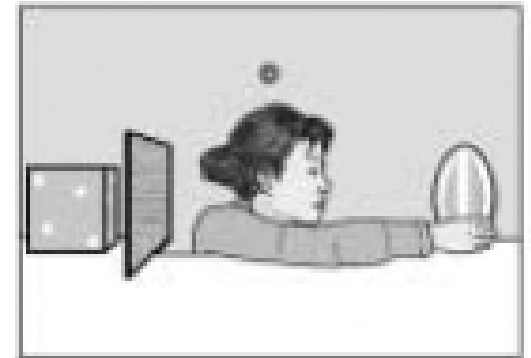


Courtesy of National Academy of Sciences, U. S. A. Used with permission.
Source: Mascialzoni, Elena, Lucia Regolin, and Giorgio Vallortigara. "Innate sensitivity for self-propelled causal agency in newly hatched chicks." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 107, no. 9 (2010): 4483-4485.
Copyright © 2010 National Academy of Sciences, U.S.A.



© Elsevier. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>.
Source: Gergely, György, Zoltán Nádasdy, Gergely Csibra, and Szilvia Bíró. "Taking the intentional stance at 12 months of age." *Cognition* 56, no. 2 (1995): 165-193.

White's goal is Gray; White reached Gray by taking the shortest available path.



© Wiley. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>.
Source: Luo, Yuyan, and Susan C. Johnson. "Recognizing the role of perception in action at 6 months." *Developmental science* 12, no. 1 (2009): 142-149.

She may take the ball but not the cube as her goal

A made B move.

Infants' knowledge of agents is limited

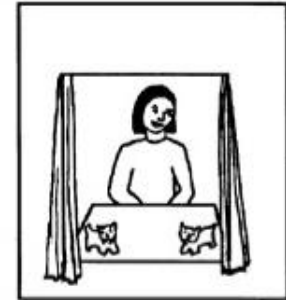
Agents' actions depend on visual access but not direction of gaze; agents don't share attention: a limited understanding of seeing.



© Wiley. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>. Source: Luo, Yuyan, and Susan C. Johnson. "Recognizing the role of perception in action at 6 months." *Developmental science* 12, no. 1 (2009): 142-149.



© The Cognitive Development Society (CDS). All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>. Source: Poulin-Dubois, Diane, Alexandra Polonia, and Jessica Yott. "Is False Belief Skin-Deep? The Agent's Eye Status Influences Infants' Reasoning in Belief-Inducing Situations." *Journal of cognition and development* 14, no. 1 (2013): 87-99.



Courtesy of Elsevier, Inc., <http://www.sciencedirect.com>. Used with permission. Source: Phillips, Ann T., Henry M. Wellman, and Elizabeth S. Spelke. "Infants' ability to connect gaze and emotional expression to intentional action." *Cognition* 85, no. 1 (2002): 53-78.

Infants attribute first-order but not second-order goals to agents.



Courtesy of American Psychological Association. Used with permission.

Source: Sommerville, Jessica A., Elina A. Hildebrand, and Catharyn C. Crane. "Experience matters: The impact of doing versus watching on infants' subsequent perception of tool-use events." *Developmental psychology* 44, no. 5 (2008): 1249.

So far, no aspect of young infants' agent representations appears to be unique to humans (but efficiency hasn't been tested in animals).

Luo & Johnson, 2006, Phillips, et al., 2002, Poulin-Dubois et al., 2013

Sommerville et al., 2008 Sommerville & Woodward, 2005

Flombaum & Santos, 2005, Santos et al., 2006, Call et al., 2000

Agents and objects: open questions

Agents can do things objects can't do (they cause their own changes in motion, have goals, perceive objects in some sense), and infants are sensitive to these differences.

Agents also *are* objects (they move continuously, act on contact, don't break into pieces, can't pass through walls....), and infants are sensitive to these properties.

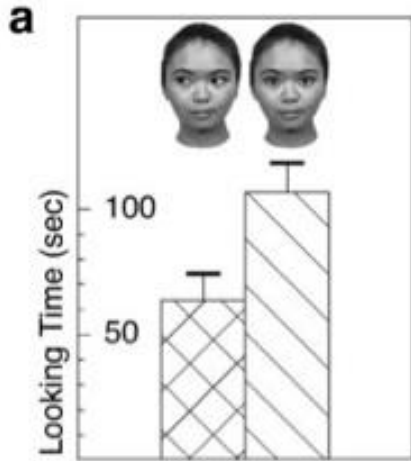
Do objects and agents form a hierarchy for infants?

How much knowledge of objects enters into infants' reasoning about agents' goals, preferences, and actions?

These are unanswered but answerable questions.

Social partners

(newborn infants)



Courtesy of National Academy of Sciences, U. S. A. Used with permission.
 Source: Farroni, Teresa, Gergely Csibra, Francesca Simion, and Mark H. Johnson. "Eye contact detection in humans from birth." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 99, no. 14 (2002): 9602-9605. Copyright © 2002 National Academy of Sciences, U.S.A.

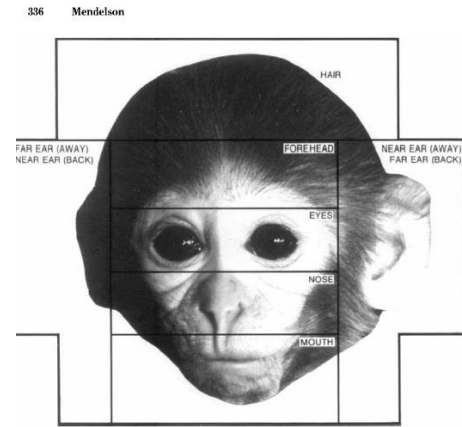


Fig. 2. Stimulus monkey looking to its right. (Two color pictures were used in the study: this one and its mirror image. The lines bound the face regions referred to in the text.)

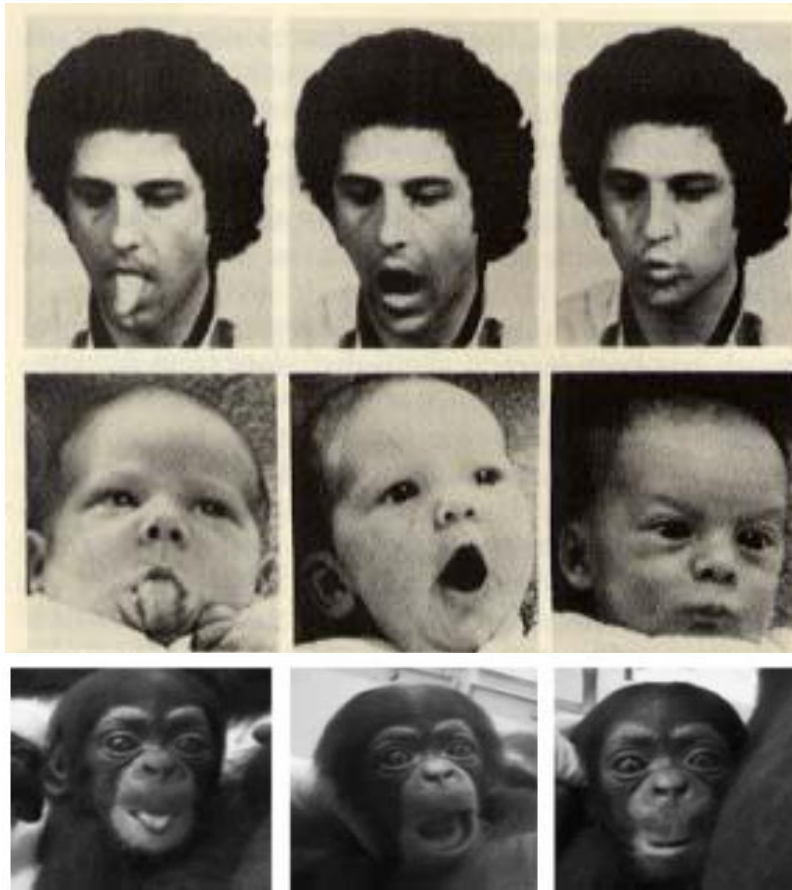
Courtesy of American Psychological Association. Used with permission.
 Source: Mendelson, Morton J., Marshall M. Haith, and Patricia S. Goldman-Rakic. "Face scanning and responsiveness to social cues in infant rhesus monkeys." *Developmental Psychology* 18, no. 2 (1982): 222.



Newborn infants (human & monkey) engage in mutual gaze

Farroni et al., *PNAS*, 2002 Mendelson, et al., *Dev Psych*, 1982 Suomi, Parr, Matsuzawa...

Social partners



© AAAS. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>.
Source: Meltzoff, Andrew N., and M. Keith Moore. "Imitation of facial and manual gestures by human neonates." *Science* 198, no. 4312 (1977): 75-78.

Ferrari, Pier F., Elisabetta Visalberghi, Annika Paukner, Leonardo Fogassi, Angela Ruggiero, and Stephen J. Suomi. "Neonatal imitation in rhesus macaques." *PLoS Biol* 4, no. 9 (2006): e302. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pbio.0040302>. License CC BY.

Newborn infants imitate people who look at them and then gesture
(and so do infant chimpanzees and monkeys)

Meltzoff & Moore, *Science*, 1977

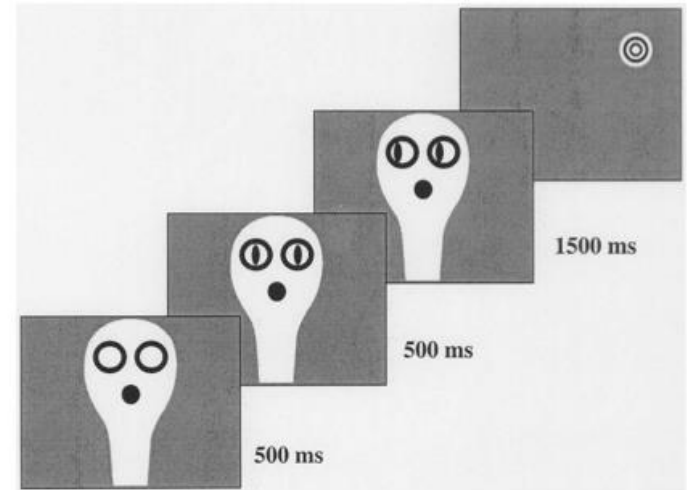
Myowa-Yamakoshi et al., *Dev. Sci.* 2004; Ferrari et al., *PLoS Bio.* 2006

Social partners

(2-month-old infants)

(newborn infants)

Figure removed due to copyright restrictions. Please see the video.
Source: Hood, Bruce M., J. Douglas Willen, and Jon Driver. "Adult's eyes trigger shifts of visual attention in human infants." *Psychological Science* 9, no. 2 (1998): 131-134.



© Wiley. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>.
Source: Farroni, Teresa, Stefano Massaccesi, Donatella Pividori, and Mark H. Johnson. "Gaze following in newborns." *Infancy* 5, no. 1 (2004): 39-60.

Newborn infants attend where a person shifts her gaze

NB: no gaze shift if the face stays present: *not* sharing attention to objects

mutual attention? empathy?

Hood, et al., *Psych Sci*, 1998

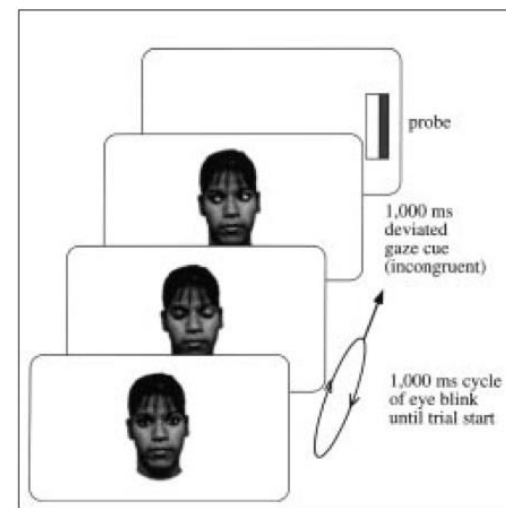
Farroni et al., *Infancy*, 2004

Hypothesis: core social knowledge

social partners signal their engagement by direct gaze

engaged social partners align their actions

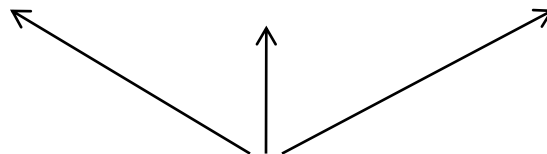
engaged social partners share phenomenal states (attention, emotion)



© AAAS. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>.
Source: Meltzoff, Andrew N., and M. Keith Moore. "Imitation of facial and manual gestures by human neonates." *Science* 198, no. 4312 (1977): 75-78.



you are engaged
with me.



I am acting
with you.



I feel your
feelings.

MIT OpenCourseWare
<https://ocw.mit.edu>

Resource: Brains, Minds and Machines Summer Course
Tomaso Poggio and Gabriel Kreiman

The following may not correspond to a particular course on MIT OpenCourseWare, but has been provided by the author as an individual learning resource.

For information about citing these materials or our Terms of Use, visit: <https://ocw.mit.edu/terms>.