DoSC Lab Newsletter

A Brief Introduction

The Development of Social Cognition Lab at UC-Irvine investigates how children learn to think and reason about the social world around them and the cognitive competencies underlying these skills.

We look at how children learn about fairness and equality, choice, thinking about the future, and prosocial behaviors such as sharing and helping.

What do we do?

Our studies take the form of short games: puzzle games, number games, interactive computer games, storytelling games etc. We look at children's responses on these games to study how they think and behave at different stages of their lives i.e. to investigate the developmental trajectory of their acquired skills, behaviors and reasoning about the world.

Lab Updates: What we've been up to!

It's been an exciting first year for the Development of Social Cognition Lab! With our lab now up and running, our projects are full speed, sail, and swing ahead – and we can't wait to show you what we have in store!

We've been hard at work over the summer, hosting games both in and out of lab, in museums, preschools and local parks, and local communities.

Come join us for more games (and stickers!) at any of our locations and testing times (find out more at the end).

We're also excited to announce that we **successfully completed two studies**. Special thanks to our friends at University Montessori and Pretend City for participating.

Our lab manager, Sifana Sohail, post-bac researcher, Stephen Sanders, and lab director, Nadia Chernyak **presented findings at two conferences** (the SoCal Cognitive Development Conference in UCLA this June and the Society for Philosophy and Psychology Conference at UC San Diego) this August.

Our Research Updates

Our research looks at how children understand the social world around them; this year we've been focusing on how children's understanding of numbers relates to their ideas about fairness and other prosocial behaviors.

What did we find?

The relationship between fairness and numerical estimation skills:

- Children's counting skills predict their ideas about fairness.
- Specifically, children who are good at estimating quantities also believe that exactly equal sharing (sharing 5 out of 10 candies) is most fair.
- Children who are proficient counters are more likely to say that not sharing at all (sharing 0 out of 10 candies) is much less ok than sharing some candies.

Studying diverse forms of fairness:

- Between the ages of 2 and 5, children get better at sharing equally – but, it's not until much older that they start to share more with those who need more or those who work harder
- Counting skills help children become better at sharing resources equally, but they don't appear to help with other forms of fairness (for example, sharing more with those who are hungrier).

Thank you to all who participated in our research!

Development of Social Cognition Lab at UCI

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Monthly Feature:

Person, Picture & Project

This month's featured lab member is:

Rui Zhang

Rui is a third-year UCI undergraduate student, majoring in Psychology and Education. She is hoping to pursue a graduate degree in Developmental Psychology and is interested in moral development.

Rui Zhang has been doing research in the lab over the summer designing and collecting data for her own project, funded by SURP. The study investigates how learning fractions helps children learn about fairness. Participating children hear stories about kids sharing different amounts of sandwiches or juice boxes and are asked to figure out who shared better. Then, children play a game with spinners to figure out how they think about fractions. The children also play an "opposite game" in which they see happy or sad faces and asked them to say the opposite of what they see. This game measures how good children are at controlling impulses.

Rui has started collecting data and is looking forward to getting more participants.

Follow us on Twitter!

@dosc_lab

Want updates on when and where we're going to be this week? Check out our Twitter! We post before community visits so you can drop by and play some games!

Where to find us!

Interesting in participating? Sign up on our website, or

Pretend City
Thursday 10 A.M – 2 P.M.
Friday 10 A.M. – 2 P.M.

Discovery Cube
Tuesday 11:30 P.M – 2:30 P.M
Sunday 11:30 P.M – 3 P.M.

Local Parks!

Email us to find out more!

Come be a Child Scientist!

DoSC Games: Parent Play!

Looking for fun cognitive development games to play with your child? Try this one!

Heads, Toes, Knees, Shoulders

Who can play: **4 – 7 years old**

What concept it helps develop: **Cognitive Control**

You need:
1. Just your child!

How to play:

1. Ask your child to point to their head and toes. When they point correctly, tell them you're going to play an opposite game!

2. Rules of the game: When you say head, your child should point to their toes. When you say toes, your child points to their head.

3. Mix it up and see how much fun your child has trying to get it right!

Note: If your child is older, or if they seem to have mastered heads and toes, you can introduce knees and shoulders into the opposite game with the same rules!