

DoSC Lab January Newsletter



A Brief Introduction

The Development of Social Cognition Lab at UC-Irvine investigates how children learn to think and reason about their social worlds.

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

Lab Updates: What we've been up to!

Happy New Year from the Development of Social Cognition Lab! During these unprecedented times, we have transferred all our studies online in order to practice research responsibly and safely.

We're excited to announce that we have **successfully completed two studies online**. We worked with approximately 300 children and adults from all across the United States. Special thanks to all our child scientists from across the United States for participating!

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.

We are presenting our work virtually at the Society for Research in Child Development!

- Lab manager, **Lucy Stowe** will be presenting work on children's emotions in relation to their views on fairness and inequality.
- Lab director, **Nadia Chernyak**, will be presenting work on how children's math skills help them learn about fairness
- Postdoc collaborator, **Allegra, Midgette**, will present work on how children pick on inequality in their homes.
- Project coordinator, **Jose Ramirez**, will present work on how social framing might help children pay attention to numerical information.

Our Research Updates

Our recent studies investigated what might influence children's and adults' ideas about fairness. Given the Covid-19 pandemic, we thought it would be important to study how people's experiences with difficult setbacks affect what they believe is fair.

What did we find?

Exposure to disadvantage influences prosocial behavior in adults:

- When asked to recall a personal setback, adults displayed more prosocial behavior when their setback was a result of a group they belonged to (structural).
- People's beliefs in Covid-19 as a threat also influenced how fair they thought the world was and how motivated they felt to help others.

Children assign moral values to stealing actions but not to prosocial actions:

- We know that by the preschool age, children see some actions as **obligatory** while others are merely helpful and **voluntary**.
- Our research found that 4-8-year-olds viewed sharing as similar to other voluntary actions, not to obligatory actions.

Development of Social
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Monthly Feature: Person, Picture & Project



Jose Ramirez
Project Coordinator

Jose is a graduate of UCI with a degree in Psychology. He hopes to pursue a graduate degree in either Educational or Developmental Psychology and is interested in how children learn about math concepts.

Jose conducted research in the lab over the summer, transferring his project entitled 'Learning about Proportions' (LAP) to an online format. LAP came about in hopes of helping children grasp the idea of proportions and fractions easier. Current research suggests that one area of math development that children struggle with greatly is fractions and proportions. Additionally, despite this difficulty learning about fractions and proportions, young children are relatively adept at proportional reasoning when it comes to the social actions of agents (people). Thus, LAP incorporates social framing in the form of sharing contexts to aid children's attention to relational information, and thus improve attention to proportional information. In action, LAP is a computer game in which a machine or person shares



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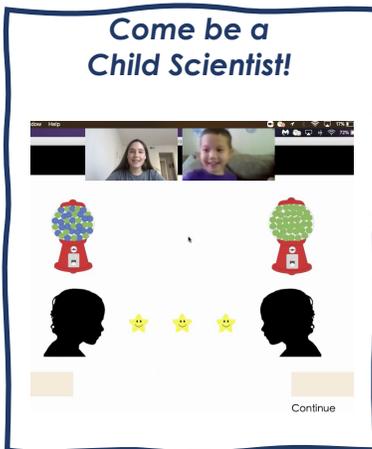
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Interested in participating? Sign
up on our website! We currently
have studies for 3- to 9-year-olds.

www.dosclab.com/online-studies

stickers with a child, and the child then shares stickers with a researcher just as they had seen the person or machine do with them. We hope that the incorporation of social framing in the form of sharing (with people) will help bring children's attention to proportional reasoning.

Jose is almost finished collecting data and is looking forward to getting more participants!



The DoSC Lab's Current Online Games:

Reading with Kids (4 – 5 years old): How do parents and children interact while reading together?

Judging Actions (3 – 6 years old): How do children judge different kinds of actions at different ages?

Sharing with Friends (5 – 7 years old): What does your child think about different kinds of sharing?

Playing with Patterns (4 – 6 years old): How do kids learn about patterns?

Thinking about Inequality (5 – 8 years old): How do kids across ages think about inequality?

Fairness and Religion (5 – 8 years old): How do kids raised with or without religion think about fairness?

Chores Around the House (6 – 9 years old): How do kids think about who does work around the house?

Different Reasons for Inequality (4 – 8 years old): How do kids justify different types of inequalities?