

# New Research From Psychological Science

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Read about the latest research published in *Psychological Science*:

## [Is Playing Video Games Related to Cognitive Abilities?](#)

*Nash Unsworth, Thomas S. Redick, Brittany D. McMillan, David Z. Hambrick, Michael J. Kane, and Randall W. Engle*

Although many recent studies have indicated that playing video games may enhance various cognitive abilities, other studies have failed to replicate these findings. The authors suggest that this discrepancy may be a result of methodological issues such as small sample sizes and extreme-groups designs. The authors reanalyzed two large sets of data on participants' video-game playing in relation to their performance on a variety of cognitive-ability assessments. An extreme-groups analysis indicated that video-game players outperformed non-video-game players on several cognitive tasks; however, when the data sets were analyzed using the full range of participants, many of the findings were no longer significant. These findings cast doubt on claims that video-game playing enhances cognitive ability.

*Randall W. Engle will be giving the invited address "Working Memory Capacity and Fluid Intelligence" at the [27th APS Annual Convention](#) in New York, NY, USA.*

## [8-Month-Old Infants Spontaneously Learn and Generalize Hierarchical Rules](#)

*Denise M. Werchan, Anne G. E. Collins, Michael J. Frank, and Dima Amso*

Research has shown that adults spontaneously extract hierarchical rule structures from their environments; however, it is not known whether children also have this ability. Eight-month-olds completed a task that involved that pairing of cues of different shapes and colors with target locations. The relationships between the cues and target locations could be learned using individual associations or using a hierarchical structure. The infants then completed a generalization task that included cues and targets following rules similar to or different from those used in the previous task. The researchers found that the majority of infants showed evidence of learning a hierarchical rule structure rather than individual associations between the stimuli. Infants were also able to generalize these hierarchical rules to new contexts.

## [When Does the In-Group Like the Out-Group? Bias Among Children as a Function of Group Norms](#)

*Adam Rutland, Aline Hitti, Kelly Lynn Mulvey, Dominic Abrams, and Melanie Killen*

Under what conditions do children prefer out-group members to in-group members? Participants age 9 to 16 years were given a scenario involving an in-group and an out-group. The groups had a shared

behavioral norm and a behavioral norm that was specific to their own group. Participants were told of two deviants from each group who opposed their own group's norm, one of whom conformed (traditional deviant) and one of whom did not conform (nontraditional deviant) to the shared norm. Participants rated the traditional deviant act as being more acceptable from an out-group member than from an in-group member. Nontraditional deviant acts were considered similarly unacceptable regardless of whether they were conducted by an in-group or an out-group member. These findings indicate how deviant behavior can influence in-group and out-group favoritism.