

# New Research From Psychological Science

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## [Young Children See a Single Action and Infer a Social Norm: Promiscuous Normativity in 3-Year-Olds](#)

*Marco F. H. Schmidt, Lucas P. Butler, Julia Heinz, and Michael Tomasello*

Children live in a social world, and that world has norms relating to behavior. Studies of how children learn these norms often explicitly instruct the children, indicating that an observed behavior is the “right way” to perform an action. The researchers examined whether children would naturally infer behavioral norms without explicit instruction. In the first of two studies, 3-year-olds witnessed an experimenter perform an action and then saw a puppet perform a different action that resulted in the same outcome. The action performed by the researcher was either intentionally performed for the benefit of the child (pedagogical-action condition), seemingly performed accidentally (accidental-action condition), or performed intentionally but not specifically for the child’s benefit (intentional-action condition). Children protested the action made by the puppet more in the pedagogical- and the intentional-action conditions than in the accidental-action condition. This suggests that children infer social norms from the observed behavior and apply those norms to others.

## [Conscious Access to Suppressed Threatening Information Is Modulated by Working Memory](#)

*Dong Liu, Li Wang, Ying Wang, and Yi Jiang*

Past studies have found that the content of working memory modulates emotional processing; however, it is unknown whether the contents of working memory influence the processing of emotional information suppressed from conscious awareness. In the first of three studies, participants were shown a fearful or neutral face and told to remember it for a test at the end of the trial. Participants were then shown a continuous flash-suppression display with a fearful or neutral face embedded in it. The face increased in contrast until the participant indicated seeing the face or until 5 seconds had elapsed. Last, participants were shown a fearful or neutral face and asked to indicate whether it had the same identity as the face presented at the beginning of the trial. Participants became aware of fearful faces presented during continuous flash suppression faster if the emotion of the initial face (i.e., the face held in working memory) was fearful. This effect was not found for neutral faces. This finding suggests that the contents of working memory influence emotional processing of suppressed threat-related stimuli.