

Study: Children Internalize Stereotypes About Abilities

July 09, 2012

Education Week:

Have you ever heard a girl say she hates math because she's "no good" at it? I've heard it plenty of times, even from my own daughter who actually has an aptitude for the subject.

Research has shown that children believe their ability to do certain things depends on how much natural ability they have for the task. These so-called "entity theories" can affect their performance.

And now a recent study from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign that involved 4- to 7-year-olds suggests that children can adopt these beliefs from information they hear about their gender or certain social groups.

According to the study, published in *Psychological Science*, researchers had "hypothesized that the mere act of linking success at an unfamiliar, challenging activity to a social group gives rise to entity beliefs that are so powerful as to interfere with children's ability to perform the activity."

Read the whole story: [Education Week](#)