

The Toddlers Are on to You

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Pacific Standard:

Your toddler might be even more perceptive than you think. New research suggests that children as young as 13 months can understand that people's judgments of their peers aren't always true or accurate. The claim is likely to remain controversial, but if correct, it suggests that human beings develop a deep understanding of the social world around them much earlier than previously thought.

At issue is what psychologists call theory of mind. Roughly speaking, that's the ability to put ourselves in another's shoes and reason based on their beliefs, even if those beliefs are demonstrably false. Theory of mind is so ingrained in us that it can be difficult to comprehend life without it. For example, say everybody knows Bill's cheating on Amy—everybody except Amy, who denies any wrongdoing. Because we understand Amy might not know about Bill's infidelity, her non-suspicious behavior makes sense. After all, she doesn't know the truth about Bill.

Read the whole story: [*Pacific Standard*](#)