

## Study: Predicting actions starts young

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Swedish scientists say children as young as 1 year can learn to predict the outcome of another person's actions as well as adults can.

The study by Uppsala University researchers suggests infants learn to predict the actions of others roughly about when they learn to perform such actions themselves.

A team led by Terje Falck-Ytter tracked the eye movements of babies at 6 months and 12 months -- as well as those of adults -- while the subjects watched video clips of an actor's hand placing toys into a bucket.

After repeated presentations of the video, both adults and 12-month-old babies looked at the bucket before the hand reached it, predicting the goal of the movement. In contrast, 6-month olds did not shift their gaze to the bucket until the hand had arrived, suggesting they could not predict the outcome of the action they saw.

The researchers say infants learn to perform actions such as those presented in the experiment at approximately 7 to 9 months of age, so the study's results suggest social cognition may start to develop as early in life as motor skills.

The study appears in the journal *Nature Neuroscience*.

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