

Infants participate in complex interactions with their parents

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A new study in the journal *Family Process* shows that infants appear to be active participants in complex interactional sequences with their parents far earlier than previously thought. Researchers documented the capacity of three-month old infants to share attention with two partners simultaneously.

Triangular capacities were defined as the frequency of babies' rapid multi-shift gaze transitions between parents, as the infants shifted their gaze back-and-forth between the two adults during a well-established family interaction paradigm. The babies did the same thing in a more stressful procedure in which the two adults challenged them by posing motionless faces following a period of free play.

Early patterns of coordinated infant eye gaze were seen as early as three months, and were linked to signs of better coparental coordination and adjustment within the family.

The infant-family linkages were found by James McHale, Elisabeth Fivaz-Depeursinge, Susan Dickstein, Janet Robertson and Matthew Daley, who evaluated comprehensive assessments of emergent co-parenting alliances completed in the homes of 113 families, and charted infants' eye gaze patterns during two different mother-father-infant assessments. The investigation was sponsored by the National Institute of Child Health and Development.

Source: Wiley

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