

Ability to process information as a baby continues into adulthood

August 7 2009

Infants who excel at processing new information at 6- and 12-months-old, typically excel in intelligence and academic achievements as young adults in their 20's, according to a study directed by Case Western Reserve University Psychologist Joseph Fagan.

Fagan's "The prediction, from infancy, of adult [IQ](#) and achievement," published in the journal [Intelligence](#), is receiving accolades. Mensa International, Limited,-- the international organization of 100,000 people who score at the 98 percentile on IQ tests—and their Mensa Education & Research Foundation, recently recognized Fagan's work with the 2009 Award for Excellence in Research.

The research honored by the Mensa groups examined the question of whether the more intelligent infant becomes the more intelligent and more highly achieving adult.

"Yes" is the answer Fagan and his research team found.

Intelligence involves processing new information and then making associations with other information an individual encounters throughout life. These processes work together to allow an individual to grow in knowledge, says Fagan.

Over 20 years ago, Fagan developed the Fagan Test of Infant Intelligence. The test measures the response infants have to pictures of novel objects.

The infant test works by pairing two pictures together for a set period of time. A researcher watches the length of time an infant looks at the pictures. Then one of these pictures is paired with a new image and again the time the infant focuses on the new and old images is recorded. Infants generally spend about 60 percent of the time looking at new images.

In the research project for the award-winning paper, Fagan and his co-investigators Cynthia Holland from Cuyahoga Community College and undergraduate student Karyn Wheeler revisited 61 young [adults](#), who had taken the Fagan Test as babies in their first year of life. They also looked at their first IQ tests at the age of 3 and compared them with their scores at 21 years old.

They discovered an association with intelligence between this early ability to process information and IQ during their young adult years. These infants with ability to process new information at an early age showed higher levels of academic achievement later in life.

The researchers say that attention to novelty "tells us that intelligence is continuous from infancy to adulthood" and "underscore the importance of information processing as a means for studying intelligence."

They added that this knowledge may help researchers also understand how genetics and environment can influence intelligence.

Source: Case Western Reserve University ([news](#) : [web](#))

Citation: Ability to process information as a baby continues into adulthood (2009, August 7) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2009-08-ability-baby-adulthood.html>

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