

Scientists Say Young Toddlers Can Tell When You're Not Telling the Truth



*According to scientists, toddlers have the ability to tell when someone is telling the truth or not.
(Photo : Credit: Christopher Furlong / Staff)*

If you thought you could lie to your [toddler](#), you thought wrong.

According to psychologists who are working with young toddlers say that these kids actually have the ability to recognize when someone is lying, pretending or cheating. They found that kids as young as 2 and a half years old are aware of others' false beliefs.

The researchers have used a test called "false belief" task to measure and check whether another person's belief is different from their own. They conducted this study among 140 toddlers in the United States.

False beliefs incorrect perceptions that result from

incorrect reasoning. When the researchers conducted the experiment, they found that toddlers's bias is built right in and that they were able to understand the questions which enabled them to articulate a response. This is in contrary to our belief that these kids do not understand what adults think and believe.

"When children around the world are asked what someone with a false belief will do next, it is usually not until age four or five that they answer correctly," said Renee Baillargeon, a psychology professor at the University of Illinois.

"Our study shows that when the task is made simpler, even two-and-a-half year olds succeed. So the ability to answer questions about persons with false beliefs is present very early in development, contrary to what was traditionally thought."

According to the researchers, even if these kids are able to recognize false beliefs, they may not necessarily be able to demonstrate understanding.

"Having the ability to represent false beliefs means recognising that others can have different thoughts from us," said Assistant Professor Setoh Pei Pei, of Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.

"This ability enables children to recognise when others are lying, cheating, or pretending.

"If parents believe that children do not understand complicated matters, they may tell simpler versions of the truth and 'dumb down' what they view as complicated content for kids.

"Our findings suggest that children may be able to spot when parents are doing this from as early as two-and-a-half years old.

"Parents of young children and early childhood educators should be aware that children's early cognitive abilities may be more advanced than previously thought."

