

Abstract

Preschoolers' understanding of the basic mental concepts of "pretend" and "know", as well as the interrelations between concepts was assessed. It was hypothesized that children as young as 3 would have already acquired the basic concepts. However, their acknowledgement of the interrelations between concepts needed language to assist. As a result, such recognition would only be possible by the end of the preschool years. 21 K1 and 22 K3 children were recruited in the main studies. Results suggested that K3 as well as K1 children were showing understanding of "know" and "pretend" as predicted. However, children of both groups revealed difficulty in succeeding the test which required an understanding of the interrelations between the two concepts. The research suggested an early acquisition of mental concepts, which was consistent with the view of the theory of mind mechanism.