

Kids are cynics, too? Yeah, right

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Yale University researchers have determined first or second grade children display definite signs of developing cynicism.

Researchers Candice Mills and Frank Keil found children as young as 7 years exhibit reluctance to accept the spoken word as truth.

A group of children ages 5 to 11 years were told stories in which people made statements either congruent with or counter to their own self-interests about the outcome of an event.

The children were then asked to rate to what extent they believed each statement and how they judged those revealed as false.

The scientists discovered by age 7, children were able to recognize and discount statements clearly aligned with the self-interest of the speaker.

The 7- to 11-year-olds couldn't grasp the idea that bias could be accidental; consequently they believed all false statements made in self-interest were lies and those made against self-interest were mistakes.

Before age 7, children are relatively gullible, believing most self-interest-motivated statements.

The findings appear in *Psychological Science*, a journal of the American Psychological Society,

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