

# Study: Babies have inherent number sense

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Duke University scientists have found 7-month-old babies have an inherent sense of numerical concepts, regardless of their mathematical abilities.

Neuroscientists Professor Elizabeth Brannon and graduate student Kerry Jordan previously demonstrated rhesus monkeys have a natural ability to match the number of voices they hear to the number of individuals they expect to see. The researchers expected the same to be true of human babies, despite studies that failed to demonstrate such ability in human infants, Scientific American reported Wednesday.

In their own study the Duke researchers found babies spent more time looking at videos showing the same number of unfamiliar human faces as those represented in a simultaneous soundtrack of "look" sounds.

"As a result of our experiments, we conclude that the babies are showing an internal representation of 'two-ness' or 'three-ness' that is separate from the (sounds and sights) and, thus, reflects an abstract internal process," they wrote.

The research is detailed in the current issue of the Proceedings of the National Academies of Science.

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