

Baboons, infants show similar gesturing behavior, suggesting shared communication systems

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Both human infants and baboons have a stronger preference for using their right hand to gesture than for a simple grasping task, supporting the hypothesis that language development, which is lateralized in the left part of the human brain, is based on a common gestural communication system.

The results are reported in the Mar. 21 issue of the open access journal [PLoS ONE](#).

The researchers, led by Helene Meunier of the University of Strasbourg in France, found that hand preference of both infants and baboons for grasping tasks depended on the location of the object, but there was significant preference for the right hand when pointing (using a communicative gesture) at a specific stimulus, even when the stimulus was closer to the left hand. The authors conclude that their results suggest a common gestural communication system localized in the left hemisphere of the brain that in humans was later "invaded" by [vocalization](#) to become language.

More information: Meunier H, Vauclair J, Fagard J (2012) Human Infants and Baboons Show the Same Pattern of Handedness for a Communicative Gesture. *PLoS ONE* 7(3):e33959.
[doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0033959](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0033959)

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