Abstract

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Based on past research that suggests an association between perspective-taking and theory of mind, the present study investigates the relationship between these two constructs by administering three perspective-taking and three theory of mind tasks, along with one measure of inhibition and one measure of expressive language, to eighty-four 3- and 4-year olds. The goals of this study were to (1) evaluate the relative difficulties of the six perspective-taking and theory of mind tasks, (2) assess whether the theory of mind and perspective-taking tasks scale onto the same dimension, (3) examine the distinctions proposed within the construct of perspective-taking, (4) investigate the relationship between inhibition and verbal ability with theory of mind and perspective-taking, and (5) examine the relationship between perspective-taking and theory of mind. The results show that the six theory of mind and perspective-taking tasks develop along a single continuum and produce a scale of the understanding of subjectivity for preschoolers. Results also demonstrate that the ability to take someone else’s perspective without directly confronting it with one’s own perspective is the least challenging, and understanding that others’ beliefs can be false is the most challenging task. Finally, results indicate that inhibition and verbal ability account for the relationship between almost all of the perspective-taking and theory of mind tasks.