

UC Merced

Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society

Title

Children's representations of others' gender biases

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/37t3b3m3>

Journal

Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society, 45(45)

Authors

Asaba, Mika
Zhang, Marianna Y.
Leonard, Julia Anne

Publication Date

2023

Peer reviewed

Children's representations of others' gender biases

Mika Asaba

Yale, New Haven, Connecticut, United States

Marianna Zhang

Stanford University, Stanford, California, United States

Julia Leonard

Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, United States

Abstract

How do young children acquire harmful gender stereotypes? This project tests one potential input: representations of others' stereotypes. In a pilot study (n=16), 6-8 year-olds learned about a classroom with engineering games and story games. Children were shown four teacher-student pairs and for each were told that the teacher chose the game that the teacher thought a girl or boy student would like more. In line with gender-stereotypical reasoning, participants were more likely to predict that the teacher gave the engineering game to boys (68.75%) than to girls (28.13%, $p = .031$). Ongoing work is testing whether children make these same predictions when they, but not the teacher, know the students' non-stereotypical interests (e.g., when a boy student likes stories over engineering), and how their responses are related to their own stereotypes. So far, this work suggests that young children expect adults to hold harmful gender stereotypes.