

REASONING ABOUT ABDUCTIVE, INDUCTIVE AND DEDUCTIVE CONDITIONALS ACROSS DEVELOPMENT

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Are children sensitive to the type of inferential connection in a conditional when performing reasoning tasks?

Our predictions: (1) explanatory considerations will be the easier to access since a younger age, thus increasing endorsement of the conclusion in MP/MT tasks with abductive conditionals for children at all ages; (2) endorsement will be less likely in MT tasks regardless of conditional and across development; (3) endorsement will increase with age.

Methods. In a within-subject experiment (n=106, data collection still in progress) with 12 trials, children evaluated the conclusion (“right/not right”) of MP and MT arguments with conditionals of either of three types embedded in the major premise.

“My friend knows that:

DED. If a lion wants to eat, then it will hunt.

ABD. If a lion is hunting, then it wants to eat.

IND. If a lion wants to eat, then it will likely hunt.

And: **DED/IND.** Larry the lion wants to eat.

ABD. Larry the lion is hunting.

So my friends says:

DED/IND. Larry the lion is going to hunt.

ABD. Larry the lion wants to eat.”

Results. (1) Performance on MT arguments is worse across all types of conditionals, (2) Performance for all tasks is at the lowest for younger children and increases with age; (3) We found no clear effect of conditional type on performance for children and no interaction between conditional type and performance. However, study is incomplete as of now.

