

Introduction

- **Hindsight bias**, often called “I knew it all along” bias, is a memory distortion that entails changing one’s judgments after being exposed to new information (Bernstein et al., 2007).
- Hindsight bias has long been studied in **adults** (e.g., Fischhoff, 1975; Werth, Strack, & Förster, 2002), and recently, it has also been studied in **children** (see Birch & Bernstein, 2007 for a review). In the present investigation, we have developed a new method of detecting hindsight bias in preschoolers based on a study by Taylor, Cartwright, and Bowden (1991).
- We have been asking **3-year-olds** what they know now (**self-now**) and what they knew as babies (**self-past**).
- To correctly answer the self-past questions, the children must **disregard what they currently know**.
- We think that children might answer the self-past questions as if they were the self-now questions. If this is the case, the children might be displaying **hindsight bias**.

Method

- The 3-year-olds are asked **six questions** about their general knowledge. Two of these questions (#1 and #2) are intended to be ones that 3-year-olds know now and would have known as babies, whereas the remaining four (#3 to #6) are intended to be ones that 3-year-olds only know now (and wouldn’t have known as babies).
- Children are **shown a sex-matched picture** of a 6-month-old before being asked the self-past questions and an instant photo of themselves before being asked the self-now questions.
- **Parents** are asked what their children know in order to confirm that the 3-year-olds actually know what we think they know.

Table 1. Questions and Correct Responses

#	Self-Now	Self-Past
1	Do you know what a diaper looks like? ✓ 80% correctly answered yes.	When you were a baby, did you know what a diaper looked like? ✓ 40% correctly answered yes.
2	Do you know what milk tastes like? ✓ 100% correctly answered yes.	When you were a baby, did you know what milk tasted like? ✓ 20% correctly answered yes.
3	Do you know how to count to three? ✓ 40% correctly answered yes.	When you were a baby, did you know how to count to three? ✓ 100% correctly answered no.
4	Do you know what the animal called an elephant looks like? ✓ 80% correctly answered yes.	When you were a baby, did you know what the animal called an elephant looked like? ✓ 100% correctly answered no.
5	Do you know what the word “happy” means? ✓ 75% correctly answered yes.	When you were a baby, did you know what the word “happy” meant? ✓ 100% correctly answered no.
6	Do you know what your Mommy’s name is? ✓ 100% correctly answered yes.	When you were a baby, did you know what your Mommy’s name was? ✓ 80% correctly answered no.

Results to Date

- **Five** 3-year-olds have been tested so far.
- **No evidence of hindsight bias** is present: For the most part, children have answered both the self-now and self-past questions correctly.
- The children have performed **poorly** on the **first two self-past questions**, answering that when they were babies they did not know what a diaper looked like or what milk tasted like.
- Three out of five children answered that they could not count to three, even though their parents said they could. We may need to **modify/replace** this question.

Discussion

- Children are **not displaying hindsight bias**.
- However, the fact that children have been having trouble answering the first two self-past questions suggests that children might just be operating under the belief that **babies know nothing**.
- Another possibility is that 3-year-olds **lack the experience** necessary to answer these questions.
- Before we can make any firm conclusions, we will have to **increase our sample size**.
- Our next step is to also ask **4- and 5-year-olds** these questions.

