University of Birmingham

Dr Sarah Beck PhD

Reader in Cognitive Development

School of Psychology (/schools/psychology/index.aspx)

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About

(/university/colleges/les/research-gallery/sarah-beck.aspx) My research examines children's and adults' thinking about time and knowledge. I am interested in how children become able to speculate about events in the past and future and how they handle uncertainty, and how adults' apparently sophisticated thinking in these areas is often irrational. More information about my research and my lab can be found at **www.sarahruthbeck.net (http://www.sarahruthbeck.net/)** .

Feedback and office hours

I set office hours during term time. For meetings at other times please contact me by email.

Qualifications

- PhD (Birmingham)
- BA (Oxford)

Biography

Dr Beck completed her undergraduate degree at the University of Oxford in Psychology and Philosophy (PPP) before moving to become a research assistant at the University of Birmingham, where she has studied and worked ever since.

Teaching

Sarah Beck teaches a 3rd year optional module on comparative and developmental cognition: Higher Cognitive Functions.

Postgraduate supervision

Current PhD students:

Eva Reindl: Tool Cognition, co-supervised with Dr Claudio Tennie (Lead) and Prof Ian Apperly.

Clare Williams: Development of innovation and tool-making, co-supervised with Prof Ian Apperly and Dr Jackie Chappell

Caroline Putt: Counterfactuals and regret in neuropsychological patients, co-supervised with Prof Glyn Humphreys

Livia Colda: Counterfactual thinking in children (MSc by Research)

Catherine Darnell: Children's decision making under uncertainty

Victoria Johnson, Decision Making and Executive Function in Cornelia de Lange Syndrome, co-supervised with Prof Chris Oliver

Previous PhD students:

Nina Powell: (2013) Moral reasoning, co-supervised with Dr Kim Quinn

Amélie Gourdon (2013) Communicating nonverbal probabilities

Nicola Cutting (2013) Children's tool innovation, co-supervised with Prof Ian Apperly

Jane Waite (2012) Repetitive behaviours in Rubenstein Taybi Syndrome, co-supervised with Prof Chris Oliver

Daniel Weisberg (2011) Children's regret and relief

Clare Eddy (2009) Social cognition in basal ganglia patients, co-spervised with Dr Ian Mitchell

Gill Waters (2009) Children's source monitoring

PhD opportunities

Research

- Counterfactual thinking
- Executive function
- Metacognition and uncertainty
- Tool use

Other activities

- Awarded the 2011 Margaret Donaldson Early Career Prize by the British Psychological Society Developmental Section
- Psychology Programme Chair for the for the European Society for Philosophy and Psychology between 2008 – 2011

Publications

Representative publications

A full list of publications with reprints can be found at: **www.sarahruthbeck.net (http://www.sarahruthbeck.net/)**

Beck, S.R., Wiesberg, D.P., Burns, P., & Riggs, K.J. (in press). Conditional reasoning and emotional experience: a review of the development of counterfactual thinking. Studia Logica. (Special Issue on Logic of Causal and Probabilistic Reasoning in Uncertain Environments. Schurz & Unterhuber (Eds.). DOI: 10.1007/s11225-013-9508-1

Chappell, J., Cutting, N., Apperly, I.A., & Beck, S.R. (In press). The development of tool manufacture in humans: what helps young children make innovative tools? Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society

Beck, S.R. & Riggs, K.J. (2013). Counterfactuals and reality. Chapter in The Oxford Handbook of the Development of the Imagination. M. Taylor (Ed.). New York, USA: OUP.

Eddy, C.M., Beck, S.R., Mitchell, I.J., Praamstra, P., & Pall, H.S. (2013). Theory of Mind deficits in Parkinson's disease: a product of executive dysfunction? Neuropsychology, 27, 37-47. DOI: **10.1037/a0031302 (http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0031302)**

Weisberg, D.P. & Beck, S.R. (2012). The development of children's regret and relief. Cognition and Emotion, 26, 820-835.

Hoerl, C., McCormack, T., & Beck, S.R. (Eds.) Understanding counterfactuals, understanding causation. Oxford University Press (2011).

Beck, S.R., McColgan, K.L.T., Robinson, E.J., & Rowley, M.G. (2011). Imagining what might be: why children under-estimate uncertainty. Journal of Experimental Child Psychology, 110, 603-610. DOI: 10.1016/j.jecp.2011.06.010

Beck, S.R. & Guthrie, C. (2011). Almost thinking counterfactually: children's understanding of close counterfactuals. Child Development, 82, 1189-1198. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8624.2011.01590.x

Beck, S.R., Apperly, I.A., Chappell, J., Guthrie, C., & Cutting, N. (2011). Making tools isn't child's play. Cognition, 119, 301-306.

Beck, S.R., Riggs, K.J., & Gorniak, S.L. (2009) Relating developments in children's counterfactual thinking and executive functions. Thinking and Reasoning, 15, 337-354.

Robinson, E.J., Rowley, M., Beck, S.R., Carroll, D.J., Apperly, I.A. (2006) Children's sensitivity to their own relative ignorance: Handling of possibilities under conditions of epistemic and physical uncertainty. Child Development, 77(6), pp. 1642 - 1655

Beck. S.R., Robinson, E.J., Carroll, D.J, & Apperly, I.A. (2006) Children's thinking about counterfactuals and future hypotheticals as possibilities. Child Development, 77(2), pp. 413 - 426.

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