

Abstract

The present study was a first attempt to explore Hong Kong Chinese preschoolers' emotional understanding performance, and its relationship to theory of mind. One hundred and nineteen 3- to 5-year-old children were assessed on Denham's affective perspective taking task and 2 standard false belief tasks. The results of both measures indicated that: (a) 5-year-olds have better understanding of emotional and mental concepts than that of 3- and 4-year-olds; (b) the ability to recognize emotions was greater than that of verbal labeling across all age groups; and (c) there is a close link between emotional understanding and theory of mind development in preschool children. The present study also suggests that an understanding of desire and belief have a potential influence on understanding emotions, especially when facing equivocal situations.