



Imitation and the Social Mind: Autism and Typical Development

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From earliest infancy, a typically developing child imitates or mirrors the facial expressions, postures and gestures, and emotional behavior of others. Where does this capacity come from, and what function does it serve? What happens when imitation is impaired? Synthesizing cutting-edge research emerging from a range of disciplines, this important book examines the role of imitation in both autism and typical development. Topics include the neural and evolutionary bases of imitation, its pivotal connections to language development and relationships, and how early imitative deficits in autism might help explain the more overt social and communication problems of older children and adults.

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Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #2119032 in Books
- Brand: Brand: The Guilford Press
- Published on: 2006-05-25
- Ingredients: Example Ingredients
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.56" h x 1.30" w x 7.22" l, 1.81 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 466 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

"The importance of imitation as a fundamental component of social communication, and of its failure in autism, cannot be overstated. This is why imitation is one of the most active research themes in social-cognitive neuroscience. The leading researchers in the field have contributed to this volume, which is vital reading for all those currently trying to understand the social mind in both typical and atypical development."--Uta Frith, PhD, Institute of Cognitive Neuroscience and Department of Psychology, University College London, UK

"Truly an outstanding achievement! This unique volume brings together the world's foremost developmental psychologists, clinicians, and neuroscientists studying social cognition to provide critical, in-depth, and fresh perspectives on a topic that has captured the interest of philosophers and scientists for centuries. After reading the book, one appreciates more than ever how studies of typical and atypical populations mutually enhance our understanding of development. Scientists and practitioners alike will value this exceptional book."--Geraldine Dawson, PhD, Department of Psychology, University of Washington

"This outstanding volume brings together developmental and neurobiological research on the central role of imitation in the development of empathy, theory of mind, language, and social-affective reciprocity. The editors have brought together leading researchers whose work focuses on foundational aspects of imitation in typically and atypically developing children. The broad scope of this volume provides new theoretical insights on the neurocognitive mechanisms involved in imitation processes, highlighting the significance of the child's interactions with others. A timely publication, the book is likely to stimulate renewed interest in imitation and generate investigations into novel therapeutic approaches for children with autism and related disorders. It should be required reading for anyone interested in basic and clinical perspectives on social development."--Helen Tager-Flusberg, PhD, Lab of Cognitive Neuroscience, Boston University School of Medicine

"A book that should grace the shelves of anyone interested in normal or abnormal human development, including of course researchers and clinicians involved in and experts in social learning and imitation....An extremely welcome addition to a rapidly growing literature on imitation....What makes this particular edited volume unique and important is the focus upon one disorder, , and the important insights that the imitative performance of children with offers to our understanding of typical development and the phenomenon of imitation in its own right. The individual contributions are consistently excellent and thought provoking. Nearly every chapter ends in a very useful concluding section that lists further questions that need to be addressed....Such an excellent volume will no doubt act as a catalyst in stimulating further vital research."
(*Autism* 2006-05-27)

"Editors Sally J. Rogers and Justin H. G. Williams have given the field what promises to be the definitive work in this very complex area."
(*PsycCRITIQUES* 2006-05-27)

About the Author

Sally J. Rogers, PhD, is Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the MIND Institute, University of California, Davis. Her work in autism represents a lifetime interest in developmental disabilities. Dr. Rogers's research on imitation in autism grew out of her clinical and research experiences while Professor of Psychiatry at JFK Partners at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center. She was intrigued by the puzzling lack of normal mirroring and coordination with others' movements, gestures, and emotional displays that she experienced during interactions with children and adults with autism. This set in motion a line of studies focused on imitation problems in autism, and the creation of interventions to promote social responsivity and communication development.

Justin H. G. Williams, MRCPsych, commenced his scientific career in 1993, studying ecology and evolutionary biology before pursuing postgraduate training in psychiatry. He specialized in child psychiatry and moved to Scotland, where he started working with Andrew Whiten and David Perrett from the University of St. Andrews. Together, they considered the relationship of imitation to autism at a time when "mirror neurons" were a new phenomenon. In 2000 Dr. Williams became Senior Lecturer in Child Psychiatry, University of Aberdeen, where he has developed a research program to understand the neural substrate of autism. He also serves as Honorary Consultant in Child Psychiatry at Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital.

Users Review

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Leticia Hodges:

This Imitation and the Social Mind: Autism and Typical Development book is just not ordinary book, you have it then the world is in your hands. The benefit you have by reading this book is actually information inside this book incredible fresh, you will get details which is getting deeper you actually read a lot of information you will get. This particular Imitation and the Social Mind: Autism and Typical Development without we recognize teach the one who reading it become critical in considering and analyzing. Don't end up being worry Imitation and the Social Mind: Autism and Typical Development can bring when you are and not make your tote space or bookshelves' come to be full because you can have it inside your lovely laptop even cellphone. This Imitation and the Social Mind: Autism and Typical Development having excellent arrangement in word and layout, so you will not feel uninterested in reading.

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