

CHAPTER 18: ALTRUISM AMONG CHILDREN

1. Tomasello, M. (2009). *Why We Cooperate*. *Op. cit.*, p. 3.
2. Tremblay, R. E., *Prévenir la violence dès la petite enfance*, Odile Jacob, 2008. In English: McCord, J., & Tremblay, R. E. (Eds.), *Preventing Antisocial Behavior: Interventions from Birth Through Adolescence*, Guilford Press, 1992.
3. Sagi, A., & Hoffman, M. L. (1976). Empathic distress in the newborn. *Developmental Psychology*, 12(2), 175.

For an account of the various phases of development in children, from self-awareness and reaction to others' distress to compassionate

- behavior, see Hoffman, M. L., *Empathy and Moral Development: Implications for Caring and Justice*, Cambridge University Press, 2000.
4. Martin, G. B., & Clark, R. D. (1982). Distress crying in neonates: Species and peer specificity. *Developmental Psychology*, 18(1), 3.
 5. Sagi and Hoffman had deduced the presence of a “rudimentary empathic reaction of distress,” which allows the newborn to tune into the emotional state of another infant, without clearly distinguishing its own emotions from those of others. According to the neuroscientist Jean Decety, “these results demonstrate that the newborn possesses the two essential aspects of empathy: 1) the ability to share emotions with people with whom it can identify; and 2) the distinction between self and other.” (Decety, J., “L’empathie est-elle une simulation mentale de la subjectivité d’autrui.” In Berthoz, A., Jorland, G., et al. *L’Empathie*, Odile Jacob, 2004.) Other researchers, like the neuroscientist Tania Singer, are more cautious in their interpretations, since indubitable signs of distinction between self and other appear only after the age of fourteen months. Questioned about this, Tania Singer thinks the discrimination made between the different cries by the newborn stems simply from the fact that its constitution allows it at birth to distinguish a human voice from an ordinary sound and to grant various degrees of importance to different kinds of voices. The intensity of emotional contagion could be linked to the degree of similarity between the infant and the crying child. According to Singer, the reason newborns do not cry upon hearing a recording of their own cries can be attributed to the fact that our brain anticipates the effects of our own reactions (our tears, for instance) and automatically neutralizes them before these reactions occur. That is why we cannot tickle ourselves. Similarly, placing one of my hands over another as a sign of comfort will have the same calming effect only if someone takes my hand when I am suffering (Tania Singer, in conversation, February 2012).
 6. Soltis, J. (2004). The signal functions of early infant crying. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 27, 443–490; Zeifman, D. M. (2001). An ethological analysis of human infant crying: Answering Tinbergen’s four questions. *Developmental Psychobiology*, 39, 265–285. Quoted in Batson, R. D. (2011). *Altruism in humans*. *Op. cit.*
 7. Hamlin, J. K., Wynn, K., & Bloom, P. (2007). Social evaluation by preverbal infants. *Nature*, 450(7169), 557–559.

This experiment had already been successfully carried out in the same laboratory with older children, from twelve to sixteen months. Kuhlmeier, V., Wynn, K., & Bloom, P. (2003). Attribution of

dispositional states by 12-month-olds. *Psychological Science*, 14(5), 402–408. If this experiment is repeated with inanimate objects (instead of figurines presenting a human appearance), none of the objects are preferred over the other.

8. Quoted in Hoffman, M. L. (2000). *Empathy and Moral Development*. *Op. cit.*, p. 100. The children sometimes call an adult for help, but relationships of alterity remain quite vague, and a fourteen-month-old might take the hand of a crying child to lead it not to the latter's mother, who is present, but to its own mother.
9. Hoffman, M. L. (2000). *Op. cit.*; Lecomte, J. (2012). *La Bonté humaine*. *Op. cit.*, pp. 232–235.

Carolyn Zahn-Waxler, who for over thirty years has studied the emergence of empathy among children, observed the way young children react *in daily life* when people close to them find themselves in difficulty. For example, she asked mothers to simulate the pain of bumping into something, or pretend to be sad or exhausted, or to seem to have trouble breathing. Almost always, the children behaved in a consoling way, kissing the mother and giving her other signs of affection, or acting in a considerate way, by bringing, for instance, a bottle to a younger brother or sister, or a blanket to someone shivering with cold. Zahn-Waxler, C., & Radke-Yarrow, M. (1982). The development of altruism: Alternative research strategies. *Development of Prosocial Behavior*, 109–137.

10. The children who pass the mirror test begin to show empathy to someone who is sobbing or seems to be upset (at eighteen months for girls, twenty-one months for boys). Bischof-Köhler, D. (1991), The development of empathy in infants. <http://epub.ub.uni-muenchen.de/2915/1/2915.pdf>; Bretherton, I., Fritz, J., Zahn-Waxler, C., & Ridgeway, D. (1986). Learning to talk about emotions: A functionalist perspective. *Child Development*, 529–548.
11. Quoted in Kohn, A. (1998). *The Brighter Side of Human Nature*. *Op. cit.*
12. Voir Barber, N., *Why Parents Matter: Parental Investment and Child Outcomes*, Praeger Pub Text, 2000, p. 124.
13. Rheingold, H. L. (1982). Little children's participation in the work of adults, a nascent prosocial behavior. *Child Development*, 114–125.
14. Report on BBC Radio by Helen Briggs, science correspondent.
15. Aside from the studies by Rheingold, H. L. (1982). *Op. cit.*
16. Piaget, J., *Le Jugement moral chez l'enfant*, F. Alcan, 1932.
17. Eisenberg, N., & Fabes, R. A. (1998). "Prosocial development." In Eisenberg, N., & Damon, W., *Handbook of Child Psychology*, John Wiley & Sons, 3: 701–778, 1998.

18. Svetlova, M., Nichols, S. R., & Brownell, C. A. (2010). Toddlers' prosocial behavior: From instrumental to empathic to altruistic helping. *Child Development, 81*(6), 1814–1827.
19. Warneken, F., & Tomasello, M. (2006). Altruistic helping in human infants and young chimpanzees. *Science, 311*(5765), 1301; Warneken, F., & Tomasello, M. (2009). The roots of human altruism. *British Journal of Psychology, 100*(3), 455–471. Videos of these experiments can also be seen on the site <http://email.eva.mpg.de/~warneken/video>.
20. Warneken, F., & Tomasello, M. (2009). *Op. cit.* Tomasello, M. (2009). *Op. cit.*
21. *Ibid.*
22. See, for instance, the many studies published by Joan E. Grusec, especially Grusec, J. E., & Redler, E. (1980). Attribution, reinforcement, and altruism: A developmental analysis. *Developmental Psychology, 16* (5), 525–534.
23. Tomasello, M. (2009). *Op. cit.*
24. Aknin, L. B., Hamlin, J. K., & Dunn, E. W. (2012). Giving leads to happiness in young children. *PLoS One, 7*(6), e39211.
25. In the first experiment, the experimenter takes a treat out of his pocket, gives it to the child, and asks the child either to keep it for himself, or to give it to someone else: the child shows more happiness in the second case. In the second experiment, the experimenter gives some treats to the child, who puts them in his bowl. A little later, he suggests to the child that he give a treat to someone else: it's in this situation that the child shows the most happiness.
26. Warneken, F., & Tomasello, M. (2009). *Op. cit.*
27. Hay, D. F. (1994). Prosocial development. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 35*(1), 29–71.
28. Freud, S., *The Interpretation of Dreams*, p. 283. Trans. and ed. by James Strachey, Avon Discus, 1965.
29. Eisenberg, N., Cumberland, A., Guthrie, I. K., Murphy, B. C., & Shepard, S. A. (2005). Age changes in prosocial responding and moral reasoning in adolescence and early adulthood. *Journal of Research on Adolescence, 15*(3), 235–260.
30. Turiel, E., *The Development of Social Knowledge: Morality and Convention*, Cambridge University Press, 1983; Helwig, C. C., & Turiel, E., *Children's Social and Moral Reasoning. The Wiley-Blackwell Handbook of Childhood Social Development*, 2002, 567–583. Many books and articles have been written about this. For an excellent summary, see Baumard, N., *Comment nous sommes devenus moraux: Une histoire naturelle du bien et du mal*, Odile Jacob, 2010.

31. Greene, J., & Haidt, J. (2002). How (and where) does moral judgment work? *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 6(12), 517–523.
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33. Kochanska, G. (2002). Mutually responsive orientation between mothers and their young children: A context for the early development of conscience. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 11(6), 191. See also Kochanska, G., & Murray, K. T. (2000). Mother–child mutually responsive orientation and conscience development: From toddler to early school age. *Child Development*, 71(2), 417–431. Cited by Lecomte, J. (2012). *Op. cit.*, p. 239.
34. Barber, N., *Why Parents Matter: Parental Investment and Child Outcomes*, Praeger Publications, 2000, p. 124.
35. Quoted in Kohn, A. (1998). *Op. cit.*
36. Eisenberg, N., & Fabes, R. A. (1998). Prosocial development. *Op. cit.*
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38. Tremblay, R. E., Nagin, D. S., Séguin, J. R., Zoccolillo, M., Zelazo, P. D., Boivin, M.,...Japel, C. (2004). Physical aggression during early childhood: Trajectories and predictors. *Pediatrics*, 114(1), e43–e50.
39. Domitrovich, C. E., Greenberg, M. T., Tremblay, R., Barr, R., & Peters, R. V., “Preventive Interventions that Reduce Aggression in Young Children.” *Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development*. Montreal, Quebec: Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development, Recuperado El, 2003, p. 25.
40. Tomasello, M. (2009). *Op. cit.*
41. Hoffman, M. L., *Empathy and Moral Development: Implications for Caring and Justice*, Cambridge University Press, 2001.
42. Janssens, J. M., & Gerris, J. R. M., “Child Rearing, Empathy and Prosocial Development.” In J. M. Janssens & J. R. M. Gerris (eds.), *Child Rearing: Influence on Prosocial and Moral Development*, Swets & Zeitlinger, 1992, pp. 57–75. Krevans, J., & Gibbs, J. C. (1996). Parents’ use of inductive discipline: Relations to children’s empathy and prosocial behavior. *Child Development*, 67(6), 3263–3277.
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46. Lecomte, J. (2012). *La Bonté humaine*. *Op. cit.*, p. 245. See also Crockenberg, S., & Litman, C. (1990). Autonomy as competence in 2-year-olds: Maternal correlates of child defiance, compliance, and self-assertion. *Developmental Psychology*, 26(6), 961.
47. Lecomte, J., *Donner un sens à sa vie*, Odile Jacob, 2007, Chapter 3.
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49. Lecomte, J. (2012). *La Bonté humaine*. *Op. cit.*, p. 240.
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from the English and Romanian adoptees study. *Child Development*, 77(3), 696–711.

55. Nanni, V., Uher, R., & Danese, A. (2012). Childhood maltreatment predicts unfavorable course of illness and treatment outcome in depression: A meta-analysis. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 169(2), 141–151.
56. Jacques Lecomte, in conversation. According to him, belief in inter-generational re-occurrence of abuse comes from the statistical angle of inversion of probabilities (most abusive parents were abused, and so it is wrongly deduced that most abused children become abusive). See Lecomte, J., *Guérir de son enfance*, Odile Jacob, 2010.