Institutskolloquium Psychologisches Institut

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„Children's processing of faces"

Mittwoch, 13.05.2015, 16.15 – 17.45 Uhr,
Raum 01-231 (Binger Str. 14-16)

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Abstract:

"Children's processing of faces"

The processing of faces constitutes an important early channel for children's communication with their social world. It allows children to identify a person, to recognize emotional expressions, visual speech or gaze of an individual and to encode audio-visual information. The purpose of the talk is to describe and to explain how this early channel for communication operates during childhood.
A series of experiments will focus on the modes of face processing infants and children use when they perceive and recognize faces. The studies investigate whether children process different features of faces analytically or configurally. In addition, the experiments examine how children process more abstract face information such as face identity and social face information like emotional expression. Whereas in infants facial identity and emotional expression are processed interactively with each other, in older children, the processing of face identity became more and more independent of the emotional expression processing.
Another series of experiments will address the impact of infants' and children's experience with the ethnic variety of faces on their development of face recognition. Results show that infants' early experience with their own face ethnicity shapes their development of face recognition. In addition, it will be demonstrated that also infants' early experience with their native language affects their ability to integrate visual and language face cues.
All in all this contribution will demonstrate that children's increasing face processing capabilities during the first decade of life depend on an effective and differential use of analytical and configural face processing and on the ethnic face categories as well as language categories infants and children are mainly familiar with.