Sandalee Dansie & McCall Cook

Who Knows what Little Red Riding Hood Believes and Feels?

To comprehend the story of Little Red Riding Hood (LRRH), children must understand that LRRH is excited when at the door to her grandmother’s house because she has the (false) belief that only the grandmother (and not the wolf) is in the house. Although understanding that LRRH believes that only her grandmother is in the house, children from 4 – 5 still attribute fear to LRRH due to the wolf’s actual presence. In the present study, 60 4- to 7-year-old children played roles of the narrator, Little Red, or the wolf in a version of LRRH. Just as Little Red knocks on Grandma’s door, the participants were independently asked about what LRRH believes and feels. Participants playing the wolf role were better able than others to correctly answer questions about what LRRH believed and felt when knocking on Grandma’s door. The finding is a preliminary confirmation that acting out the deception may be key in children’s understanding of not only false belief but also the emotions which follow as a consequence.