

# **The Development of Children's Understanding of Arguments by Analogy**

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## **Abstract**

Analogical reasoning allows humans to make inferences about novel experiences and transfer learning across contexts. There is substantial literature on how analogical reasoning develops, but less is known about how children understand a common use of analogy argument by analogy. Considering the importance argument by analogy plays in politics and the law, we examined the developmental trajectory of the ability to understand arguments by analogy. We measured childrens (N = 128, ages 3-12 years old) performance on a commonly used analogical reasoning task (i.e., a picture-mapping task; see Richland et al., 2006) and their understanding of arguments by analogy. We found that at age 4, children have as much difficulty understanding arguments by analogy as they do performing a picture-mapping task. However, by age five, childrens performance improves more rapidly in an argument by analogy task compared to a picture-mapping task.