

In a battle of brains, chimpanzees match human toddlers

Many skills that we consider complex are in fact the result of relatively simple – and often universal – cognitive abilities shared by a great many species

Of course, the life skills a chimpanzee eventually acquires are nowhere near as complex as those I'm teaching my daughter. Don't get me wrong – [learning how to make a termite-fishing stick](#) is cognitively complex, but it's hardly up there with learning to read, or being able to differentiate between a Picasso and a Monet. After four years of dedicated training from her parents, my daughter should be able to beat a chimpanzee in a battle of wits, right?

Wrong. Or at least, it depends on the battle. In fact telling a Picasso from a Monet, for example, should be easy for a chimpanzee – both [honeybees](#) and [pigeons](#) have been trained to do it. Scientists taught these small-brained species that chambers next to pictures by one or other of these artists contained food. When later presented with new Picassos and Monets, they were more likely to opt for the artist whose work had previously led them to a reward – meaning they had picked up on underlying stylistic differences. Many skills that we consider complex are in fact the result of relatively simple – and often universal – cognitive abilities shared by a great many species.

Read full, original article: [Is your toddler really smarter than a chimpanzee?](#)