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## Do children understand how feelings affect school performance?

From [EurekAlert! - Breaking News](#):

A new study of 70 five-, six- and seven-year-old children and adults finds that children -- like adults -- understand that negative emotions can cause poor school performance and that levels of interest, effort and classroom noise can also affect performance. Findings also suggest that if children know how and why emotions affect them, they will be better able to prepare for and control the impact of emotions on school performance.

And previous studies have found that people do worse on tests and solving problems when they're tired, hungry, or upset.

But do children understand the link between feelings and performance?

A new study by researchers at the University of Washington and the University of California, Davis, tells us that children comprehend the influence of one on the other, but only under certain circumstances.

The study is reported in the January/February 2009 issue of the journal *Child Development*.

Study participants heard stories about children who felt different positive and negative emotions (such as happiness or sadness) or different physical feelings (such as feeling well-rested or hungry), then faced challenging tasks at school (such as a spelling test, math problems, and a science lesson).

For example, in one story, a girl loses her favorite teddy bear on the way to school and feels sad.

Later that day, still feeling sad, she has to complete a difficult math assignment.

The researchers also looked at the participants' understanding of how other factors---such as how much effort a student makes and the amount of noise in the classroom---affect school performance.

The researchers also found that children understood that levels of interest, effort, and classroom noise would affect performance.

When it came to positive feelings, however, only 7-year-olds recognized, as adults do, that positive feelings could improve school performance.

For the younger children, seeing the tie between positive emotions and school performance was difficult; it was easier for them to grasp how positive physical feelings would lead to doing well in school.

<http://webclipper.handsnet.org/2009/02/do-children-und.php>