Introduction
- The development of humor requires the ability to distinguish fantasy from reality and the ability to recognize incongruities.1,2
- Children are sensitive to the intentions of others and are able to make judgments based on this knowledge.2,3

Hypotheses
- **Improbable** events will be chosen as funnier than impossible and realistic
- Preferred joke type will reflect cognitive mastery and age
- **Jokes** will be paired more frequently with essential errors, strengthening with age

Level of Possibility Story
- **Methods:** Create-Your-Own-Adventure
- Children chose funniest ending:
  - Realistic vs. Improbable vs. Impossible

Joke Book
- **Methods:** Rhymes, Puns, Meaning Reversal sets; 3 jokes, participant picks one to keep

Results

**Intention Stories**
- **Methods:** Four vignettes; One child makes a joke, one makes a mistake; Participant pairs mundane error or essential error

**Results:** Jokes were paired with essential errors more frequently than mundane errors, a trend that strengthened with age.

**Summary**
- Improbable and Impossible event endings are funnier than Realistic endings, and there is little difference between Improbable and Impossible
- Puns are rated as the funniest type of joke among both age groups; Rhymes and Meaning Reversal show no significant difference
- Essential errors are paired with jokes more frequently than mistakes, strengthening with age

Conclusions
- Any change from reality, slight or extreme, is funnier than a realistic event
- Rhymes may be too simple and Meaning Reversal too complex for both 6 and 8 year-olds
- Children understand the nuances involved with jokes and mistakes, as well as intention’s role in humor, which develops and refines with age

Acknowledgements
- This project would not have been possible without Jacqueline Woolley, Jenny Nissel, Theresa Jones, Ariel Handy, and the entire Imagination and Cognition Lab. Thanks to Marieke Alsguth for the pictures.

References