Jonathan F. Kominsky

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Academic Positions

Associate professor **2026-**
Central European University
Department of Cognitive Science

Assistant professor **2022-2026**
Central European University
Department of Cognitive Science

Postdoctoral researcher **2021-2022**
Harvard University Graduate School of Education
PI: Dr. Elizabeth Bonawitz

Postdoctoral researcher **2019-2020**
Rutgers University Newark
PIs: Drs. Elizabeth Bonawitz and Patrick Shafto

NIH NRSA Postdoctoral fellow **2016-2019**
Harvard University
Mentor: Dr. Susan Carey

Education

Yale University **2011-2016**
Ph.D. in Developmental Psychology, 2016
M.S. in Psychology, 2014
Advisor: Dr. Frank C. Keil

Reed College **2005-2009**
B.A. in Psychology
Commendation for Academic Excellence: 2006-2007, 2008-2009

Grants and Awards

Simons Collaboration on Ecological Neuroscience (SCENE) **2025-2030(-2035)**
20-PI consortium supported by the Simons foundation
$80 million over 10 years (divided 20 ways)
Topic: Whether/how/which/when minds represent affordances

FWF PROFI PAT1931423 **2024-2027**
€480,000 to conduct comparative pupillometry studies with human infants and dogs
Project title: *Infants' and dogs' perception of causality and animacy*

NSF EAGER **2022**
$74,999 to develop a data collection platform for parent/child conversations.
Project title: *Science of Learning: "Talk of the Town" app development*

Developing Belief Network Postdoctoral Fellowship **2021**
$55,000 to develop a novel data collection platform for parent/child conversations.
Project title: *A Flexible Mobile Testing Platform for Large-scale Studies of Developing Beliefs*

Social Science Research Council COVID-19 rapid response grant **2020**
$4,500 for studies of behavior related to the COVID-19 pandemic.
Project title: *Understanding Intuitive Judgments of "Overreaction"*

NICHD National Research Service Award F32HD089595 **2016-2019**
Postdoctoral fellowship
Project title: *Causal Event Categories in Infancy: The Origins and Consequences of Causal Perception*

Editorships and appointments

Budapest CEU Conference on Cognitive Development (BCCCD) **2024**
Co-chair

Abstract review committee, Cognitive Science Society Annual Meeting) **2025-2026**
Chair

Infant and Child Development **2022-present**
Associate editor

Collabra **2022-present**
Associate editor

Professional service

Committees: CEU Department of Cognitive Science 2023-2024 strategic review committee; CEU Department of Cognitive Science BA planning committee (2024-); CEU Department of Cognitive Science doctoral committee (2022-)

Service: CEU Department of Cognitive Science teaching practicum assignment (2023-);

Meta-reviewer: Cognitive Science Society Annual Meeting (2022-2025)

Ad-hoc grant proposal review: National Science Foundation (2018 - 2023)

Journal peer review: *Attention, Perception, & Psychophysics; Child Development; Cognition; Cognitive Development; Cognitive Science; Developmental Psychology; Infancy; iPerception; Journal of Experimental Psychology: General; JEP: Human Perception & Performance; JEP: Learning, Memory, & Cognition; Mind & Language; OpenMind; PLoS ONE; Psychological Science; Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology; Review of Philosophy & Psychology; Visual Cognition*

Conference peer review: *Cognitive Development Society (2017); Cognitive Science Society (2015, 2016, 2018-2025); Society for Philosophy and Psychology (2016, 2019)*

Publications

Angelaki, D. E., Batista, A., Fitzgerald, T., **Kominsky, J. F.**, Lengyel, M., Mathis, A., Mathis, M. W., Moss, C. F., Niell, C. M., Noel, J.-P., Pitkow, X., Rothkopf, C. A., Savin, C., Stachenfeld, K., Suthana, N., Tolias, A., Ulanovsky, N., Wolpert, D. M., Wong, A., & Zimmermann, J. (2026).

The simons collaboration on ecological neuroscience: Studying how the brain interacts with the world. *Neuron*, (pp. S0896–6273(26)00331).

Arslan, A., & **Kominsky, J. F.** (2026). Causal coherence improves episodic memory of dynamic events. *Cognition*, *266*, 106317.

Yao, X., Jardón, N., **Kominsky, J. F.**, & Wittenberg, E. (2026). Remembering times ahead: The effect of linguistic framing on representational momentum in state-change events. *Journal of Memory and Language*, *149*, 104752.

Arslan, A., & **Kominsky, J. F.** (2025). Navigating decision space: Causal structure improves performance in a branching choice task. *PloS One*, *20*(12), e0336899.

Cifti, B., **Kominsky, J. F.**, & Csibra, G. (2025). Do infants use cues of saliva sharing to infer close relationships? A replication of Thomas et al. (2022). *Royal Society Open Science*.

Kominsky, J. F., Knobe, J., & Bonawitz, E. (2025). The development of the "first thing that comes to mind". *Developmental Psychology*.

Kominsky, J. F., & Phillips, J. (2025). Actual norm violations. *Australasian Philosophical Review*, *9*(2), 198–204.

Kominsky, J. F., & Wenig, K. (2025). Causal perception(s). *Cognitive Science*.

ManyBabies4 Consortium (2025). Infants' social evaluation of helpers and hinderers: A large-scale, multi-lab, coordinated replication study. *Developmental science*, *28*(1), e13581.

Kominsky, J. F., & Carey, S. (2024). Infants' representations of michottean triggering events. *Cognition*, *250*, 105844.

Kominsky, J. F., Bascandziev, I., Shafto, P., & Bonawitz, E. (2023). Talk of the town mobile app platform: New method for engaging family in stem learning and research in homes and communities. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *14*.

Gill, M., **Kominsky, J. F.**, Icard, T., & Knobe, J. (2022). An interaction effect of norm violations on causal judgment. *Cognition*, *228*, 105183.

Kominsky, J. F. (2022). The challenges of improving infant research methods. *Infant and Child Development*, *31*(5), e2232.

Kominsky, J. F., Li, Y., & Carey, S. (2022a). Infants' attributions of insides and animacy in causal interactions. *Cognitive Science*, *46*(1), e13087.

Kominsky, J. F., Lucca, K., Thomas, A. J., Frank, M. C., & Hamlin, J. K. (2022b). Simplicity and validity in infant research. *Cognitive Development*, *63*, 101213.

Kominsky, J. F., Baker, L., Keil, F. C., & Strickland, B. (2021a). Causality and continuity close the gaps in event representations. *Memory and Cognition*, *49*, 518–531.

Kominsky, J. F., Begus, K., Bass, I., Colantonio, J., Leonard, J. A., Mackey, A. P., & Bonawitz, E. (2021b). Organizing the methodological toolbox: Lessons learned from implementing developmental methods online. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *12*, 4081.

Kominsky, J. F., Gerstenberg, T., Pelz, M., Sheskin, M., Singmann, H., Schulz, L., & Keil, F. C. (2021c). The trajectory of counterfactual reasoning in development. *Developmental Psychology*, *57*(2), 253–268.

Kominsky, J. F., Reardon, D., & Bonawitz, E. (2021d). Intuitive judgments of 'overreaction' and their relationship to compliance with public health measures. *Journal of Applied Research in Memory and Cognition*, *10*(4), 542–553.

Kominsky, J. F., Shafto, P., & Bonawitz, E. (2021e). "there's something inside": Children's intuitions about animate agents. *PloS one*, *16*(5), e0251081.

Byers-Heinlein, K., Bergmann, C., Davies, C., Frank, M., Hamlin, J., Kline, M., **Kominsky, J. F.**, Kosie, J., Lew-Williams, C., Liu, L., Mastroberardino, M., Singh, L., Waddell, C., Zettersten, M., & Soderstrom, M. (2020). Building a collaborative psychological science: Lessons learned from ManyBabies 1. *Canadian Psychology*, *61*(4), 349–363.

Kominsky, J. F., & Scholl, B. J. (2020). Retinotopic adaptation reveals distinct categories of causal perception. *Cognition*, *203*, 104339.

ManyBabies Consortium (2020). Quantifying sources of variability in infancy research using the infant-directed-speech preference. *Advances in Methods and Practices in Psychological Science*, *3*(1), 24–52.

Kominsky, J. F. (2019). Pyhab: Open-source real time infant gaze coding and stimulus presentation software. *Infant Behavior and Development*, *54*, 114–119. **[Repository: https://github.com/jfkominsky/PyHab]**.

Kominsky, J. F., & Phillips, J. (2019). Immoral professors and malfunctioning tools: Counterfactual relevance accounts explain the effect of norm violations on causal selection. *Cognitive Science*, *43*, e12792.

Kominsky, J. F., Zamm, A. P., & Keil, F. C. (2018). Knowing when help is needed: A developing sense of causal complexity. *Cognitive Science*, *42*(2), 491–523.

Icard, T. F., **Kominsky, J. F.**, & Knobe, J. (2017). Normality and actual causal strength. *Cognition*, *161*, 80–93.

Kominsky, J. F., Strickland, B., Wertz, A. E., Elsner, C., Wynn, K., & Keil, F. C. (2017). Categories and constraints in causal perception. *Psychological Science*, *28*(11), 1649–1662.

Kominsky, J. F., Langthorne, P., & Keil, F. C. (2016). The better part of not knowing: Virtuous ignorance. *Developmental Psychology*, *52*(1), 31–45.

Banerjee, K., **Kominsky, J. F.**, Fernando, M., & Keil, F. (2015). Figuring out function: Children's and adults' use of ownership information in judgments of artifact function. *Developmental Psychology*, *51*(12), 1791–1801.

Keil, F. C., & **Kominsky, J. F.** (2015). Grounding concepts. In E. Margolis & S. Laurence (Eds.), *The Conceptual Mind: New Directions in the Study of Concepts* (pp. 677–692). Cambridge, MA: MIT press.

Kominsky, J. F., Phillips, J., Gerstenberg, T., Lagnado, D., & Knobe, J. (2015). Causal superseding. *Cognition*, *137*, 196–209.

Kominsky, J. F., & Keil, F. C. (2014). Overestimation of knowledge about word meanings: The "misplaced meaning" effect. *Cognitive Science*, *38*(8), 1604–1633.

Rottman, B. M., **Kominsky, J. F.**, & Keil, F. C. (2014). Children use temporal cues to learn causal directionality. *Cognitive Science*, *38*(3), 489–513.

Brand, R. J., Hollenbeck, E., & **Kominsky, J. F.** (2013). Mothers' infant-directed gaze during object demonstration highlights action boundaries and goals. *IEEE Transactions on Autonomous Mental Development*, *5*(3), 192–201.

Keil, F. C., & **Kominsky, J. F.** (2013). Missing links in middle school: Developing use of disciplinary relatedness in evaluating internet search results. *PLoS One*, *8*(6), e67777.

Kominsky, J. F., & Casasanto, D. (2013). Specific to whose body? Perspective-taking and the spatial mapping of valence. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *4*, 266.

Brand, R. J., McGee, A., **Kominsky, J. F.**, Briggs, K., Gruneisen, A., & Orbach, T. (2009). Repetition in infant-directed action depends on the goal structure of the object: Evidence for statistical regularities. *Gesture*, *9*(3), 337–353.

Manuscripts and preprints

Lumecisi, G. **Kominsky, J. F.** (under review). Plant avoidance or plant affordance?.

Kominsky, J. F., Phillips, J. (in press). Actual norm violations. *Australasian Philosophical Review*

Kominsky, J. F. (accepted). Core causality goes beyond perception.

Kovacevic, K., Bonalumi, F. **Kominsky, J. F.**, & Heintz, C. (under review). The causal role of counterfactuals in responsibility ascriptions to ignorant agents.

Selected Students' Presentations

Arslan, A., & **Kominsky, J. F.** *Blind spots in the mind's eye: Mental imagery often lacks detail and coherence* Talk and proceedings paper, Cognitive Science Society annual meeting, July 2025

Kovacevic, K., Bonalumi, F., **Kominsky, J. F.**, & Heintz, C. *The causal role of counterfactuals in responsibility ascriptions to ignorant agents* Poster and proceedings paper, Cognitive Science Society annual meeting, July 2025

Blazek, R., Heintz, C., & **Kominsky, J. F.** *Who owns new creations? Initiation weighs more than completion* Poster and proceedings paper, Cognitive Science Society annual meeting, July 2025

Cifti, B., **Kominsky, J. F.**, & Csibra, G. *Do infants use cues of saliva sharing to infer close relationships? A replication of Thomas et al. (2022)* Poster and proceedings abstract, Cognitive Science Society annual meeting, July 2025

Diané, M., **Kominsky, J. F.**, & Csibra, G. *The detection of configuration and identity changes of object arrays in infancy* Poster and proceedings abstract, Cognitive Science Society annual meeting, July 2025

Eickhoff, L-A., **Kominsky, J. F.**, Csibra, G., & Völter, C. *Dogs' and Infants' perception of causality in launching events* Poster presentation, Austrian-Bavarian Child Development workshop, June 2025

Selected Presentations

Kominsky, J. F. *What could they be doing? Studying children's 'failures' in counterfactual reasoning tasks* Talk for invited workshop on causal and counterfactual reasoning, Institut Jean Nicod, June 2025

Kominsky, J. F. *Causal perception(s) and causal representation(s)* Invited symposium talk, European Society for Philosophy and Psychology annual meeting, July 2024

Kominsky, J. F., & Wenig, K. *Causal perception(s): The human visual system encodes multiple mutually exclusive categories of cause and effect interaction* Talk presentation, Cognitive Science Society annual meeting, July 2024

Kominsky, J. F., Knobe, J., & Bonawitz, E. *Children use positive prescriptive information to predict random samples* Poster presentation, Cognitive Science Society annual meeting, July 2024

Kominsky, J. F., & Carey, S. *Infants' representation of causal launching is bounded by approximate Newtonian constraints on elastic collisions* Poster presentation, International Congress of Infant Studies, July 2024

Kominsky, J. F., Knobe, J., & Bonawitz, E. *What's first to a child's mind?* Poster presentation, BCCCD, January 2023

Kominsky, J. F. *Online developmental research methods: Limitations and opportunities* Invited workshop presentation, Cognitive Development Society Biennial meeting, Madison, WI, April 2022

Kominsky, J. F., Shafto, P., & Bonawitz, E. *Do children make pedagogical interpretations of counterfactual questions?* Oral presentation, BCCCD (virtual), January 2022

Kominsky, J. F., Reardon, D., & Bonawitz, E. *If it works we didn't need it: Intuitive judgments of 'overreaction'* Conference proceeding and poster, Cognitive Science Society Annual Meeting (virtual), July 2021

Kominsky, J. F., Shafto, P., & Bonawitz, E. *Children's intuitions about the insides of animate agents.* Poster, Society for Research on Child Development biennial meeting (virtual), April 2021.

Kominsky, J. F., Benton, D., Wood, S. M. W., & Begus, K. *The origins of causal thought.* Symposium, International Conference on Infant Studies (virtual), July 2020.

Kominsky, J. F. *PyHab: Open-source tools for infant looking-time research across multiple paradigms.* Poster, International Conference on Infant Studies (virtual), July 2020.

Kominsky, J. F., Baker, L., Keil, F. C., & Strickland, B. *Causality and continuity close the gaps in event representations.* Poster, Vision Sciences Society (virtual) annual meeting, June 2020.

Kominsky, J. F., Gerstenberg, T., Pelz, M., Singmann, H., Sheskin, M., & Keil, F. C. *The trajectory of counterfactual simulation in development.* Poster presentation, Cognitive Development Society Biennial meeting, October 17-19, 2019.

Li, Y., Carey, S., & **Kominsky, J. F.** *Infants' inferences about insides.* Poster presentation, Cognitive Development Society Biennial meeting, October 17-19, 2019.

Kominsky, J. F., Gerstenberg, T., Pelz, M., Singmann, H., Sheskin, M., & Keil, F. C. *The trajectory of counterfactual simulation in development.* Conference proceeding and poster presentation, Cognitive Science Society annual meeting, July 24-27, 2019.

Gill, M., **Kominsky, J. F.**, Knobe, J., & Icard, T. *Inflated inflation and superseded supersession: testing counterfactual sampling accounts of causal strength judgments.* Member abstract and poster presentation, Cognitive Science Society annual meeting, July 24-27, 2019.

Kominsky, J. F., & Carey, S. *Early-developing causal perception is sensitive to multiple physical constraints.* Conference proceeding and oral presentation, Cognitive Science Society annual meeting, July 25-28, 2018.

Kominsky, J. F., & Scholl, B. J. *Retinotopically specific visual adaptation reveals the structure of causal events in perception.* Conference abstract and oral presentation, Cognitive Science Society annual meeting, July 25-28, 2018.

Kominsky, J. F., & Scholl, B. J. *Retinotopically specific adaptation reveals different categories of causal events: Launching vs. Entraining.* Poster presentation, Vision Sciences Society annual meeting, May 18-23, 2018.

Kominsky, J. F., Strickland, B., Wertz, A. E., Elsner, C., Wynn, K., Keil, F. C, & Carey, S. *Early-developing causal perception is sensitive to physical constraints on collision events.* Poster presentation, Cognitive Development Society biennial meeting, October 12-14, 2017.

Phillips, J., & **Kominsky, J. F.** *Causation and norms of proper functioning: Counterfactuals are (still) relevant.* Conference proceeding and oral presentation, Cognitive Science Society annual meeting, July 26-29, 2017.

Kominsky, J. F., & Phillips, J. *What's in a cause? Counterfactual relevance and hierarchical event structure in causal judgment.* Poster presentation, Society for Philosophy and Psychology annual meeting, June 28 - July 1, 2017.

Kominsky, J. F., Strickland, B., Wertz, A., Elsner, C., Wynn, K., & Keil, F. C. *Causal perception is constrained by principles of Newtonian mechanics.* Poster presentation, Cognitive Science Society annual meeting, August 11-13, 2016.

Kominsky, J. F., & Scholl, B. J. *Retinotopic adaptation reveals multiple distinct categories of causal perception.* Poster presentation, Vision Sciences Society annual meeting, May 13-18, 2016.

Kominsky, J. F., Phillips, J., Knobe, J., & Keil, F. C. *Norm violations affect children's causal judgments.* Poster presentation, Cognitive Development Society biennial meeting, October 8-10, 2015.

Kominsky, J. F., Langthorne, P., & Keil, F. C. *The better part of not knowing: Virtuous ignorance.* Conference proceeding and oral presentation, Cognitive Science Society annual meeting, July 23-25, 2015.

Kominsky, J. F., Zamm, A. P., & Keil, F. C. *A developing understanding of causal complexity.* Poster presentation, Society for Research in Child Development biennial meeting, March 20-22, 2015.

Kominsky, J. F., Phillips, J., Gerstenberg, T., Lagnado, D., & Knobe, J. *Causal Supersession.* Conference paper and oral presentation, Cognitive Science Society annual meeting, July 24-26, 2014.

Kominsky, J. F., Strickland, B., & Keil, F. C. *Sensitivity to Newtonian regularities in causal perception: Evidence from attention.* Poster presentation, Vision Sciences Society annual meeting, May 16-21, 2014.

Kominsky, J. F., Zamm, A., & Keil, F. C. *Intuitive causal complexity in the absence of causal understanding.* Poster presentation, Cognitive Development Society biennial meeting, October 18-19, 2013.

Kominsky, J. F., Banerjee, K., Fernando, M., & Keil, F. C. *The impact of agent information on judgments of artifact function.* Poster presentation, Society for Research in Child Development biennial meeting, April 18-20, 2013.

Kominsky, J. F., & Scholl, B. J. *The window of 'postdiction' in visual perception is flexible: Evidence from causal perception.* Poster presentation, Vision Sciences Society annual meeting, May 11-16, 2012.

Orbach, T., Gruneisen, A., Briggs, K., **Kominsky, J. F.**, McGee, A., & Brand, R. J. *Structure in mothers' demonstrations to infants of objects with and without a salient end-goal.* Poster presentation, SRCD biennial meeting, April 2-4, 2009.

Coverage

"Das Gehirn von Babys beim Lernen beobachten" ("Observing babies' brains while learning") – Die Presse, July 2026 (https://www.diepresse.com/38097429/das-gehirn-von-babys-beim-lernen-beobachten)

"Wie Newton ktliche Intelligenz vorantreiben könnte" ("How Newton could drive artificial intelligence forward") – Profil.at, January 2026 (https://www.profil.at/cm/wien-wills-wissen/wie-newton-kuenstliche-intelligenz-vorantreiben-koennte/403119213)

"Was KI from Gehirn lernen kann" ("What AI can learn from minds") – Der Standard, October 2025 (https://www.derstandard.de/consent/tcf/story/3000000287301/was-ki-vom-gehirn-lernen-kann)

"Central European University Joins Groundbreaking Simons Collaboration on Ecological Neuroscience" (https://www.ceu.edu/article/2025-04-29/central-european-university-joins-groundbreaking-simons-collaboration-ecological)

"Psychology Researchers Awarded Covid-19 Grant to Study Intervention Responses of U.S. Population" (https://sasn.rutgers.edu/news-events/news/psychology-researchers-awarded-covid-19-grant-study-intervention-responses-us-population)

Podcast appearance: The "It's Innate" podcast, episode 7: "Is poking the cat causal?" (https://itsinnate.fireside.fm/7)