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Professor Meredy Goldberg Edelson has conducted research related to the intelligence of individuals with autism. Below is an excerpt from an article reporting the results of a recent study. It was hypothesized that individuals with autism may not score as well on measures of intelligence if the measures include real-world knowledge items compared to more abstract measures of intelligence because individuals with autism often have social deficits that would prevent them from obtaining real-world information.”

A study was conducted to attempt to determine whether real-world knowledge deficits might affect the intelligence test

[from Edelson, M.G. (in press). A car goes in the garage like a can of peas goes in the refrigerator: Do deficits in real-world knowledge affect the assessment of intelligence in individuals with autism? *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disorders*, 20].

The practice of measuring intelligence in individuals with autism is commonplace. However, there is evidence to suggest that the level of intelligence in individuals with autism reported in the literature may depend on the nature of the test utilized to measure intelligence (Edelson, 2004). Most researchers agree that it is often difficult to determine the true level of intelligence in individuals with autism unless the possible interference of the symptoms of autism are recognized and controlled for in the assessment process (see Koegel, Koegel, & Smith, 1997).

It has been shown that children with autism can perform well on behaviors in which social interaction is not a vital component (Wetherby et al., 2000), and it has been suggested that one reason individuals with autism may have deficits in social or real-world knowledge may be due to incomplete or less sophisticated cognitive scripts for social situations (Volden & Johnston, 1999). The failure to have developed cognitive scripts for the social world may mean that, when faced with questions on tests requiring knowledge of how one acts or relationships in the real world, individuals with autism do not have a database to access for this information.



