

# The missing link between emotion and motivation: insights from developmental research

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## **Abstract**

This talk will deal with a central misunderstanding in the field of cognitive and neurocognitive sciences: the misunderstanding of the dynamics of emotions. Emotions are seen as consequences, although they are causes of experiences. Infant experiences start with the synchronic sharing of postures and gestures that are enacted as a common property by the partners via imitative exchanges. Purposes guide the infants toward the generation of events that can be shared and thus that gain emotional meaning. This leads our human brain to spot emotion everywhere, to attribute mental states of emotion to expressive patterns devoid of humanity, as the report on neuroimaging experiments will show. We will invite you to follow Trevarthen (2005)'s stance when he said: "a valid psychology of emotions is concerned with motives"

## **Short bio**

Jacqueline Nadel is a CNRS Research Director (grade A), where she leads the team "Development and Psychopathology", co-director of a master program at the University Pierre & Marie Curie, and responsible of Autism-Science, an interdisciplinary network of research on autism. She has a wide experience of working with low-functioning children with autism and healthy infants. She has more than 120 publications, and has given numerous international invited keynote talks and invited lectures. She is a specialist of imitation and emotion in normal and impaired development and has edited the books *Emotional Development* (with Darwin Muir, Oxford University Press, 2005) and *Imitation in Infancy* (with George Butterworth, Cambridge University Press, 1999). She has designed innovative set-ups allowing to study emotional interaction of very young infants and children with autism in embedded situations. She has been and is involved in a number of interdisciplinary contracts on various aspects of social and emotional development, including EU-funded projects ADAPT, HUMAINE, MATHESIS and FEELIX GROWING.