

INVESTIGATION AND PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTING OF U.S. CHILDREN WHO CLAIM TO REMEMBER PREVIOUS LIVES

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Bial Fellowship Programme 01/00

Abstract

Numerous cases of children reporting past-life experiences (PLEs) have previously been described. Most have come from cultures with a predominant belief in reincarnation, but the current study involves the investigation and psychological study of 15 cases from the United States.

With each case, the parents and the child, aged 3-6 years, are interviewed, and a number of psychological test instruments are administered, including the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale, the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales, the Child Dissociative Checklist, the Family Questionnaire, the Child Behavior Checklist, and the Children's Apperception Test.

At the present time, nine of the 15 children have been interviewed and tested. Most of their parents reported having neutral feelings about reincarnation before the cases developed, with only one describing a significant prior belief in reincarnation. Seven children described PLEs as strangers who remain unidentified, and two reported lives as deceased family members. Testing results of these nine indicated that the children as a group scored in the high average range on intelligence testing with a relative weakness in short-term memory. Their adaptive behavior abilities were average, and they did not demonstrate significant dissociative symptoms. Except for several parents who noted behaviors suggestive of anxiety, they did not, in general, report any clinically significant behavioral problems.

Further statistical analysis is planned upon completion of all 15 cases.

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