Morality is at the core of what it means to be social. Moral judgments reflect one aspect of morality. In my laboratory we investigate how children and adolescents evaluate familiar, daily social interactions with others. I draw on social domain theory to understand the intersections of morality and psychological knowledge (intentionality) as well as morality and societal knowledge (intergroup attitudes). Moral judgments require the recognition of intentionality, that is, an attribution of the target's intentions towards another. One line of research on theory of mind in morally relevant contexts will be described. A second line of research is on morality in intergroup contexts. Most research on the origins of morality has focused on intragroup morality, that is, applying morality to the ingroup. Yet, increasingly, there has been new evidence that the ability to apply morality to the outgroup exists in early development, but it appears to be complex. The challenges associated with applying moral judgments to members of outgroups includes understanding the intentions of others who are different from the self, group dynamics, and having the capacity to challenge stereotypic expectations of others who are different from the ingroup. Research with children provides a window into the complexities of moral judgment and for forming evidence-based interventions to promote justice and fairness as well as to reduce prejudice and bias.

Refreshments to follow. All are welcome.

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