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Sommario/riassunto	Long description: There is a growing understanding of the integrated nature of speech and gesture in children's multi-modal communication. However, research to date mainly focused on gestures with speech and has not yet shown a larger interest in children's abilities to create gestural messages without accompanying speech. This dissertation focuses on the development of gestures with and without speech in five- and nine-year-old children. It presents the results of two empirical studies. While Study 1 aims to grasp children's representational capacities in pantomime of object use, Study 2 addresses the question of how children are able to produce more complex pantomimes by asking them to tell stories by only using their hands. The findings of the two studies provide new insight into children's developing understanding of how to use gesture for communication in increasingly sophisticated ways during the course of the elementary school years.