Early in childhood infants learn to do social referencing when confronted with a novel object. Social referencing consists of consulting an adult's emotional response to the novel object, in particular the facial expression, and acting towards the novel object accordingly (either interact with the object or reject it). Some theories of social referencing describe it as either an imitation of the adult's emotional response to the novel object, or as "mood contagion", where the infant's mood is modified to match that of the adult. More recent interpretations see social referencing as the infant consulting with the adult in order to inform itself about the new object previous to taking any action, thus attributing more cognitive sophistication to the infant. We present a computational model of social referencing that supports this later hypothesis. This actor-critic reinforcement learning model of infant behavior learns to consult the facial expression of the adult when confronted with a novel object, or act directly when the object is known. The model is described in the context of the development of other social cognition skills such as imitation and theory-of-mind.