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Sound-Object Associations - Knowing What We Hear!

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What Are Sound-Object Associations?



We make associations or connections between sounds and objects when we see an object, hear its sound(s), and then store that information in our memories. This process of recognizing and identifying what we see and *hear* is *sound-object association*. We live in a world full of sound, and different sounds mean different things. It is important for children to develop good sound-object association skills in order to make sense of their surroundings at home, at school, and in the community.

Sound-object associations develop early in a child's life. One of the first sound-object associations is a child's knowledge of his/her mother and her voice. Other early sounds children hear and see together

include animal noises (moo, quack, neigh, etc.), transportation noises (beep beep, choo choo, etc.), and toy noises (ping, crash, pop, etc.). As children grow and develop, they have more exposure to different objects and different sounds.

Why Is Sound-Object Association Important?



It is important for children to learn to recognize and make sense of the sounds they hear in their environments. The ability to hear, recognize, and attach meaning to environmental sounds is a first step toward phonological awareness (the ability to identify, mix together, break apart, and change around the sounds in words) and literacy. As well, knowing what sounds go with certain objects helps children develop both their vocabulary skills and their overall comprehension.

Learning different types of sound-object associations can also help children increase their perceptual skills. For example, children can learn that "moo" goes with "cow" in many different contexts. These can include seeing a real cow mooing on a farm; hearing a parent say "moo" while reading a book about a cow; watching a cartoon about a cow and hearing a "moo" sound; hearing a stuffed animal cow say "moo"; and making the "moo" sound themselves, possibly while playing dress-up! It is important to remember that children develop their sound-object association skills over time and with more exposure. As they become more advanced in their sound-object association skills, they can do a variety of listening tasks, which helps build a good foundation for success in the classroom.

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