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Childhood Learning: An Examination of Ability and Attitudes toward School

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Author(s)

Jeffrey David Geddes, Amy Rebekah Murrell, Jessica Bauguss

ABSTRACT

A child's ability to learn and school performance are influenced by various factors. Variables that affect learning and academic performance in 46 children, 4 - 7 years old, were examined. Children, parents, and teachers completed questionnaires rating children's attitudes toward and behavior in school. Children completed a computerized matching-to-sample (MTS) task, which trained the children to form 3 stimulus classes. One stimulus class included three arbitrary stimuli, the others contained a positively or negatively valenced stimulus, a school-related stimulus, and an arbitrary stimulus. Class formation performance (including rate of learning, or the number of correct relations formed divided by the time spent in each training class) was assessed. Rate of learning predicted attitudes toward school, and school attitudes predicted academic performance. Future directions for intervention in the early education of students who have poor attitudes toward school are discussed.

KEYWORDS

Childhood, Learning, Ability, Attitudes, School

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