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Testing the Altercentrism Hypothesis in Young Infants

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Abstract

We test for infants' proposed altercentric learning bias (Southgate, 2020). By tracking others' attention, infants build their own models of the environment based on the well developed models of the adults. If true, an event will be better remembered if witnessed together with someone else than if attended alone. Eight-month-old-infants (6 conditions, $n = 32/\text{group}$) saw an object being hidden first in one, then in another location. At the end of each trial, one of the locations was revealed, always empty. Participants correctly remembered the location and looked longer if it was empty (conditions 1-2). When an agent attends the first hiding but not the second, infants misremember the object in the first location (condition 3), providing initial evidence for the altercentric bias. Contrary to our predictions, when the agent only attends to the last hiding location, or both, infants have no expectation of the object's whereabouts (conditions 4-6).