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Color–Shape Associations in children and parent–child pairs

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Abstract

Non-synesthetic people systematically associate shapes with particular colors (e.g., circle–red, triangle–yellow, square–blue). Although there has been increasing evidence on color–shape associations in adults, little is known about how it develops. We therefore examined color–shape associations in children for the first time. Sixty 5 13-year-old children and their parents participated in a questionnaire survey, asking to choose a color best matched for a shape, and to choose a most preferred color and shape. Results showed that children could systematically associate shapes with colors, consistent with those observed in adults’ group and previous findings. Moreover, there was modest agreement on those color–shape associations within parent–child pairs. Those results suggest that children around the age of eight could have established systematic color–shape associations, providing further evidence for the semantic sensory correspondence hypothesis and revealing the factors contributing to the formation of those associations.