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# YOUNG CHILDREN'S ABILITY TO USE AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS AS MAPS

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### Abstract

In a series of three experiments we investigated four- and five-year old children's ability to use aerial photographs in identification and location tasks, including searching for hidden objects in a variety of types of hiding places. In the first two experiments we compared different representations. In Experiment 1 children completed the tasks using aerial photographs with oblique and vertical projections. Overall performance was better with the oblique photograph. Five-year-olds were more successful than four-year-olds. In Experiment 2 we compared the difficulty of different hiding places. Some hiding places were "distinctive" ones (i.e. unique places) and some were "nondistinctive" (e.g. one among several similar trees, or different places along the same boundary). The former were easier to locate, and the relationship between type of photograph and hiding place is discussed. In Experiment 3 children used an aerial photograph and a map

that had been drawn from it. Using the photograph before the map improved success with the map, but there was no reverse effect. Overall the young children in these experiments showed a good ability to understand and use the aerial photographs.



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