

## Objective 12

### Remembers and connects experiences

Memory involves complex cognitive processes. To remember, children must attend to the important aspects of information so that it can be stored and later retrieved and used. Children store information in long-term memory if the information is meaningful to them, if they are able to connect it to something they already know, and if they sense its importance. When toddlers name common objects, preschoolers talk about something they did yesterday, and kindergartners retell a story in detail, they are remembering and connecting information and experiences.

When children determine whether something is the same as, similar to, or different from what they have encountered before, they are using *recognition memory*, e.g., the child recognizes a book he or she has heard before. *Recall memory* is harder; children must imagine something that is not present, e.g., recalls foods eaten by the hungry caterpillar without looking at the pictures. Cues improve children's free recall memory (Berk, 2002; Bjorklund, 2005).

As children develop their abilities to attend and to use memory strategies, their learning is enhanced. They use their existing knowledge and understanding as the basis for making new experiences, ideas, and concepts meaningful.

Making links between new and known information may be challenging for some children. Children with learning disabilities may find it hard to attend to relevant information or to organize information so it can be retrieved (Trawick-Smith, 2006). English-language learners must remember words and their meanings in more than one language.

Adults play an essential role in helping children improve their memory skills. Adults help children connect new experiences to prior knowledge and revise their previous thinking to fit with new experiences. Adult scaffolding, or support, helps children attend and use memory strategies such as categorizing (Barry, 2006; Larkina, Guler, Kleinknect, & Bauer, 2008; McAfee & Leong, 1994; Mussen, Conger, Kagan, & Huston, 1990).

Children from different families and communities may depend on different senses to help them obtain and retain information. Some children retain information that they hear for a longer time, while other children more easily remember information they obtained from drawings, photographs, or other graphics (Bjorklund, 2005; McAfee & Leong, 1994; Trawick-Smith, 2006).