

# Why Babies Love (And Learn From) Magic Tricks

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**NPR:**

To survive, we humans need to be able to do a handful of things: breathe, of course. And drink and eat. Those are obvious.

We're going to focus now on a less obvious — but no less vital — human function: learning. Because new research out today in the journal *Science* sheds light on the very building blocks of learning.

Imagine an 11-month-old sitting in a high chair opposite a small stage where you might expect, say, a puppet show. Except this is a lab at Johns Hopkins University. Instead of a puppeteer, a researcher is rolling a red and blue striped ball down a ramp, toward a little wall at the bottom.

Even babies seem to know the ball can't go through that wall, though not necessarily because they learned it. It's what some scientists call core knowledge — something, they say, we're born with.

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“Some pieces of knowledge are so fundamental in guiding regular, everyday interactions with the environment, navigating through space, reaching out and picking up an object, avoiding an oncoming object — those things are so fundamental to survival that they're really selected for by evolution,” says Lisa Feigenson, a professor of psychological and brain sciences at Hopkins and one of the researchers behind this study.

Read the whole story: [NPR](#)