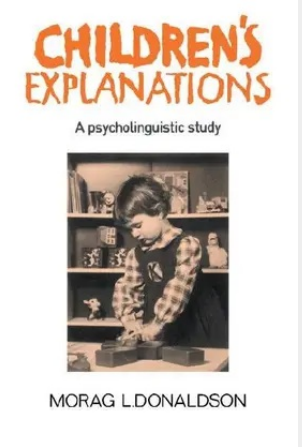
Donaldson

Children's Explanations

A Psycholinguistic Study

How and when does the ability to give and understand explanations develop? Morag Donaldson directly addresses this question in the present study, providing evidence from a series of imaginative experiments she carried out with 3- to 10-year-olds. In contrast to many earlier accounts, she demonstrates that children can distinguish between cause and effect and among physical, psychological and logical relations well before the age of 7. The study focuses primarily on the linguistic abilities that are needed for explanation, in particular the understanding of because, so, why?, and how do you know?, and it makes a substantial contribution to our understanding of the semantics and pragmatics of causal connectives. However, the study also provides valuable insights into children's related cognitive abilities. Children's Explanations is a book that will be of equal interest to cognitive and developmental psychologists and to psycholinguistics, as well as to researchers in education for whom its topic must be of crucial importance.

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46,70 €
46,70 € (zzgl. MwSt.)

Lieferfrist: bis zu 10 Tage

Artikelnummer: 9780521024006
Medium: Buch
ISBN: 978-0-521-02400-6
Verlag: Cambridge University Press
Erscheinungstermin: 12.01.2006
Sprache(n): Englisch
Auflage: Erscheinungsjahr 2006
Produktform: Kartoniert
Gewicht: 339 g
Seiten: 200
Format (B x H): 152 x 229 mm

Kundenservice Verlag Dr. Otto Schmidt KG
Neumannstraße 10, 40235 Düsseldorf | kundenservice@otto-schmidt.de | 0221-93738-997 (Inland)