Children's Museum of Houston

What's in the Bag?

Introduction: Sometimes you need to rely on resources that you don't usually use to solve a problem. This activity introduces young children to this idea. To figure out what is in the bag, the children need to use their sense of touch rather than looking into the bag.

Materials:
- Clothe bags each with a different familiar object (wooden blocks, plastic animals, plastic keys, dice, hand lens, timer, plastic food, whistle, coins, zipper, light bulb, etc.)

Procedure:
- Explain that we rely on our senses to help us gather information around us. In this activity, we will use our sense of touch to figure out what a familiar object is without looking at it.
- Each bag has one object in it. Have children work in pairs and give each pair a bag.
- Explain to children that pairs will take turns- one is the "peaker" and gets to peak in the bag while the other is the "senser" and has to use his sense of touch to figure out the object.
- The "peaker" in the pair will first peak in the bag to see the object. Then, he/she will hand the bag to the "senser".
- Without looking in the bag, the "senser" will reach in and feel the object in the bag. Ask the "senser" to describe to his/her partner what he/she feels. "Is it bumpy? Does it have a head? How many legs does it have?"
- When the "senser" is ready to make a guess, he/she will ask "Is it a ….?" If he/she is right, then the "peaker" will allow the "senser" to see the object. If the "senser" is wrong, then the "peaker" says "Try again. What else do you feel?" Partners continue until he/she has figured out the object.
- When everyone is done, they switch bags with another pair and switch roles. Continue activity until time is up.

Questions to Ask:
- Understanding the link between what they feel and what that tells the child about an object comes with cognitive development as well as through experience. Continue with the experiences as long as the child does not become frustrated even if the child has not yet developed the concept.
- You are using your sense of touch to gather information in this activity. What other ways do you use to get information? What other senses can you use?