

Critical & Sensitive Periods

Psychology

When timing matters for development, and how much.

Evidence from deprivation and from typical development.

Domain	Window	Evidence
Binocular vision	First few years	Amblyopia if uncorrected
First language	Roughly to puberty	Deprivation cases
Second-language accent	Declines from childhood	Age-of-arrival studies
Attachment	First few years	Romanian adoptee studies
Imprinting (birds)	Hours after hatching	Lorenz

The Romanian adoptee studies show substantial recovery with early placement, and persisting effects with later placement.