

Effects of Privation – The Case of ‘Genie’ (Curtiss, 1977; 1989)



This activity will help you to:

- Understand and recall the case of ‘Genie’, a study of the effects of privation*
- Comment on the possible effects of extreme privation*
- Comment on the extent to which privation effects can be overcome*
- Assess the weaknesses of the case study methodology for studying privation*

Using information from the video and the other sources available to you, make a set of notes in answer to the following questions. You should make your notes in rough first, then transfer the most relevant information to this sheet.

Briefly summarise Genie’s life experience up to the point where she was taken into care.

How had her experiences affected Genie’s physical development?

How had her experiences affected Genie’s psychological development?

What do developmental psychologists mean by a 'critical period'? How might the Genie case help test out this idea?

How did the psychologists attempt to rehabilitate Genie's intellectual and emotional functioning?

Intellectual

Emotional

How successful were these attempts?

Some psychologists believe that the case of Genie shows that the effects of severe early deprivation cannot be overcome. How far do you agree with this view? Explain your answer.

The case of Genie raises many ethical issues. Briefly outline some of them.