



# Assessing Passivity/Initiative in Post-Institutionalized Children



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## Background

- \* Fearfulness is a significant factor in the development of young children.
- \* However, the extent to which a child anticipates being able to control or affect frightening/novel stimuli lessens the risk of fearful or freezing behaviors leading to future psychopathology (Buss, 2010).
- \* Institutional care provides children with few response-contingent experiences, thus we hypothesize that a longer, more physically and socially deprived environment will lead to the development of more passive behaviors.

## Aims

- \* To examine if the length of institutionalization and the extent of related physical and social deprivation predict passivity/initiative two months post-adoption.
- \* To analyze if fearful/distressing or positive emotional contexts affect how physical and social deprivation predict passivity/initiative two months post-adoption.



## Method

### Participants:

	N	Age at Session	Sex
PI Children Session 1	104	18-36 months M=27	F=57 M=47

- \* Post-institutionalized children were adopted from 18-36 months of age
- \* The laboratory session took approx. 2 hours and was completed 2 months post-adoption

- \* Taken mainly from Goldsmith's Lab-TAB, the session is comprised of five different vignettes, but only four are considered in this analysis.
- \* The positive vignettes presented bubbles and balloons, and the fearful/distressing vignettes presented a remote-controlled car, and a "creature" (a costumed car).
- \* Passivity/Initiative was rated on a scale of zero to three, from "consistently passive" to "high initiative." The item was taken from the Lab-TAB Temperament Rating scale.
- \* Multiple linear regression analysis was used to evaluate how length of institutionalization and an averaged interviewer/parent rating of physical/social conditions predict child passivity/initiative during session 1.

## Correlations

Correlation of Physical Deprivation and Initiative in Fearful/Distressing Vignettes				Correlation of Length of Institutional Care and Initiative across all vignettes				Correlation of Physical Deprivation and Initiative in Positive Vignettes			
Pearson Correlation	Initiative - Fear/Distress Context	Initiative - Fear/Distress Context	Phys. Deprivation	Pearson Correlation	Averaged Initiative	Averaged Initiative	Length institutional care in mos.	Pearson Correlation	Initiative - Positive context	Initiative - Positive context	Phys. Deprivation
	1.000		-.262		1.000		-.016		1.000		-.225
	<b>Phys.</b>	<b>-.262</b>	1.000		<b>Length</b>	<b>-.016</b>	1.000		<b>Phys.</b>	<b>-.225</b>	1.000
	<b>Deprivation</b>				<b>instit. care in mos.</b>				<b>Deprivation</b>		
	Social Deprivation	-.073	.366						Social Deprivation	.036	.369
Sig. (1-tailed)	Initiative - Fear/Distress Context		.014	Sig. (1-tailed)	Averaged Initiative		.439	Sig. (1-tailed)	Initiative - Positive context		.031
	<b>Phys.</b>	<b>.014</b>			<b>Length</b>	<b>.439</b>			<b>Phys.</b>	<b>.031</b>	
	<b>Deprivation</b>				<b>instit. care in mos.</b>				<b>Deprivation</b>		
	Social Deprivation	.279	.001						Social Deprivation	.386	.001

## Results/Discussion

- The physical rating of the institution showed to significantly predict both positive ( $r(68) = -.262, p = .014$ ) and fearful ( $r(68) = -.225, p = .014$ ) vignettes. Specifically, more deprived physical environments were correlated with a lower rating of initiative in the first session.
- In contrast, the social rating showed virtually no effect on session one initiative ( $r(75) = -.225, NS$ ). This is an unsurprising but significant find, as social needs are of secondary concern and physical needs are of prime necessity. It makes sense that children with their basic needs met would show more initiative within the first session.
- Surprisingly, the length of institutional care showed to have virtually no predictive power in session one passivity/initiative ( $r(98) = -.017, NS$ ). Past studies have shown this variable to be predictive of positive adjustment patterns, but these results suggest adjustment even more heavily depends on the quality of institutionalization (Maclean, 2003).

## References

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