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Specific features of personality character formation under conditions of visual deprivation

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Abstract
The article analyzes how early visual-sensory deprivation influences the formation of character and a child's mental development. Drawing on psychophysiological findings from early ontogenesis (0-3 years), it highlights the role of cortical maturation and interhemispheric specialization in shaping sensory, motor, and communicative functions. It shows that a deficit of visual stimulation alters the developmental trajectory of attention, emotional reactivity, motivation, object-centered activity, and play, and indirectly affects character traits. The paper discusses mechanisms of "reactive formations" and compensation (L. S. Vygotsky), data on affective disturbances and communicative orientations in preschoolers with low vision (I. M. Nekrasova), and the phenomenon of adolescent character accentuations (K. Leonhard) under visual deprivation. Practical guidelines for early intervention are proposed: a polysensory environment, stimulation of haptic and auditory perception, purposeful development of locomotor skills, verbal mediation of actions, and work with parents to prevent overprotection and to foster an internal locus of control.

Keywords: Visual impairment, sensory deprivation, early ontogenesis, character, affective behavior, object-centered activity, play, character accentuations, locus of control

Introduction
In psychology, character (from Greek *charaktḗr*—"feature," "mark," "imprint") is understood as the set of stable individual characteristics of personality that take shape and manifest themselves in activity and communication, determining typical modes of behavior. Structural components of character include a person's attitudes toward work, other people, self, nature, and things; properties (wholeness, integrity, definiteness, strength) and traits (intellectual, emotional, volitional). All of these components are also present in persons with profound visual impairment; however, visual-sensory deprivation from early childhood modifies their formation, intensifying the roles of compensation and social influences.
Aim of the article—to synthesize empirical and theoretical data on the effects of visual deprivation on the formation of a child's character and to outline practical approaches to pedagogical and psychological support.

Theoretical Framework and Data on Early Ontogenesis
Psychophysiological studies of infants (0-3 years) indicate that early maturation of cortical projection zones ensures sensory input from the first hours of life; at the outset, the right hemisphere plays the leading role in visual perception, and with age the contribution of the left hemisphere increases (classification of stimuli, language). The parieto-temporo-occipital complexes, which subserve higher-level integration of sensory streams, mature later. Early sensory deprivation is associated with a deficit in the motivational component of attention, negative emotional reactivity to external influences, and avoidance of novelty, thereby raising the risk of a secondary delay in mental development.
Even with severe visual impairment, during the first 2-3 months behavior shows much in common with sighted infants—thanks to the multimodal nature of early sensory acts. Following J. Piaget, the "anticipatory" sucking response forms to a complex of stimuli (touch, warmth, smell, the mother's voice). Consequently, partial "loss" of the visual component at the outset does not destroy the integrity of the behavioral program; however, beginning around 2-3 months, absence of gaze fixation and pursuit eye movements becomes a factor limiting development.

Development of Auditory and Haptic Perception and the Motor System

A child with visual impairment relies heavily on auditory information: differentiated auditory perception typically strengthens by around the 5th month, when the infant begins to isolate the sound features of objects. According to T. Cutsforth, establishing a stable link between sound and its source requires the development of locomotion and purposeful interaction; otherwise, there is a risk of language formalism (verbalism).

In sighted children, vision-mediated coordination accelerates the formation of fine manipulation, whereas under visual deprivation delays in hand coordination and fine motor skills stem from the lack of visual control and the slower maturation of proprioception. From 4-5 months, the roles of haptic and kinesthetic sensations increase; by about 6 months, children who are blind form readiness for a haptic field of perception, which then supports the differentiation of distal auditory signals and the organization of behavior in relation to them.

Communication and Speech Development

During the first months, communication can develop according to the same principles as in sighted infants: tactile contact, an adult's voice, warmth, and smell are effective social stimuli. Later, limitations in visual expressive means (gaze, facial expression, gesture) complicate the growth of communication, shifting emphasis to verbal mediation and vocalizations. Language becomes a compensatory "bypass," yet the risk of a formal vocabulary persists unless a rich object-centered, hands-on experience is ensured.

Object-Centered Activity and Play

From mid-first year in sighted children, object-centered action intensifies and becomes the basis for touch as a perceptual action (B. G. Ananyev; E. F. Rybalko). In blind/low-vision children this process is slower because motor components are underdeveloped; first specific manipulations often appear after age two, and genuinely object-centered activity tends to become leading closer to age three. Without systematic instruction in manual-motor ways of handling objects, spontaneous formation of this activity is incomplete in children who are blind.

Creative play is both possible and necessary, but it follows a different dynamic: it relies on verbal knowledge and poorer motor imagery, which leads to stereotypy and manipulative play actions. The adult's task is to enrich the child's experience through joint object activity with staged verbalization of actions.

Formation of Perceptual Actions, Representations, and Thinking

The development of perception rests on mastering sensory standards (etalons) and perceptual actions (A. V. Zaporozhets; L. A. Venger; V. P. Zinchenko). In preschoolers who are blind, chaotic tactile actions persist longer; the objectness of the image forms gradually through systematic exploration, the highlighting of essential features, and verbalization. The shift from practical actions to visual-figurative thinking requires specially organized instruction "by rule," training mental operations with images, and mastering basic cognitive invariants (including the principle of conservation per J. Piaget).

Characterological Features under Visual Deprivation

L. S. Vygotsky described mechanisms of reactive formations and compensation: a defect can elicit heightened sensitivity, anxiety, suspiciousness—as a "psychological superstructure" that overlays the primary deficit and, socially mediated, shapes the logic of character [8]. For children with visual impairment, the rearing context is critical: overprotection or neglect increase the risk of deformations in moral, volitional, emotional, and intellectual traits (egocentrism, indecision, negativism, emotional callousness, loss of curiosity). Limited social contacts promote withdrawal, low communicativeness, and retreat into one's inner world.

Data from I. M. Nekrasova on preschoolers with low vision indicate 36.3% with affective disturbances associated with conflicted self-esteem, impulsivity, low empathy, verbal aggression, anxiety-phobic reactions, and more [9]. In 83% of cases, aggressive, anxious, and aggressive-anxious communicative orientations predominate (versus ≈40% in groups with higher visual acuity). A typical trait is unmotivated stubbornness (as a social defensive reaction), more frequent in children with aggressive/anxious profiles. Parental overprotection correlates with the child's stance of "I want but cannot," inner tension, and conflicted self-esteem.

Adolescent Character Accentuation (K. Leonhard) and Visual Impairment

In adolescence, under conditions of visual deprivation and delayed socialization, character accentuations (rigid, pedantic, anxious, dysthymic, hyperthymic, cyclothymic, demonstrative, emotive, exalted, unstable, etc.) tend to be more pronounced. These are not pathologies but overly expressed variants of the norm that confer selective vulnerability to certain stressors and can complicate upbringing. With timely psychoeducational support, accentuations may become a resource for an individualized style of life activity (self-control, acceptable modes of self-assertion, rules for group interaction).

Locus of Control and the Emergence of Responsible Behavior

For children and adolescents with visual impairment, a key prognostic factor is the locus of control: an internal locus is associated with stronger self-regulation, persistence, and proactivity; an external locus—with anxiety and avoidance. Pedagogical strategies should foster internalization (attainable goals; feedback on effort; gradual autonomy).

Practical Guidelines for Early Intervention and Education

- **Polysensory environment:** Combine distal auditory and contact tactile cues; introduce anchors and safe routes.
- **Motor and locomotor development:** Train coordination of "hand—eye/touch," fine motor skills; gradual space mastery.
- **Verbal mediation of actions:** Systematic "say-do" routines; verbal schemas for object operations; labeling actions and properties.
- **Object-centered activity and play:** Stepwise instruction in manual strategies; play scripts with real objects; transitions from practice to imagery.

- **Communication and emotional regulation:** Introduce alternative/augmentative communication (AAC) where needed; exercises for empathy and self-control.
- **Parent work:** Prevent overprotection; build pedagogical competence; establish consistent family routines.
- **Monitoring character development:** Screen for anxiety/aggression; individualized plans for social-emotional skills.

Conclusions

Visual deprivation not only changes the pace and quality of sensori-motor and cognitive development; it also indirectly shapes character formation through mechanisms of compensation, social interaction, and rearing practices. Early polysensory intervention, systematic development of object-centered activity, verbal mediation, family support, and targeted work on emotional-volitional regulation minimize risks of affective disturbances and maladaptive traits and foster autonomy, responsibility, and social participation.

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