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Title

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Journal

Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society, 48(0)

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Publication Date

2026

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Peer reviewed

Developmental changes in children's production of line drawings in a picture-sparse environment: Evidence from Kisumu, Kenya

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Abstract

Children growing up in environments with many drawing opportunities improve dramatically at producing recognizable drawings over the course of childhood. Does this same developmental trajectory hold for children growing up in environments with fewer drawing opportunities? We measured children's drawing recognizability cross-sectionally in a drawing-sparse context. Moreover, by leveraging within-context variation in children's drawing experiences, we investigated whether, at an individual level, drawing recognizability increases with children's drawing experiences. A preregistered sample of 120 4- to 9-year-olds in Kisumu, Kenya drew 12 object categories in random order. Older children produced more recognizable drawings even after controlling for tracing ability, and children with more drawing experience produced more recognizable drawings even after controlling for tracing ability and home environment variables. These results suggest commonalities in drawing development across cultures and document the experience-dependence of drawing development in drawing-sparse contexts.