It's your turn: Conversational turn-taking in father-child interaction and child executive function development

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OVERVIEW

Parent-child interaction provides critical infrastructure for development. Very little research has been conducted on interaction in the context of Down Syndrome (DS). This research addresses this gap and will contribute to our understanding of the factors that influence the developmental profile in children with DS.

INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

Figure 1. IQ distribution for individuals with DS. Cognitive impairment can range from severe to mild. There is significant individual variability.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

• Does child-directed speech (CDS) differ between parents of children with DS and typically developing children?

• Is complexity and quantity of parent language input related to...

(i) Child language during parent-child interactions?

(ii) Performance on standardized assessment of expressive and receptive language?

Does parental CDS influence pragmatic language ...

(i) Observed during parent-child interactions – indexed by levels of engagement in joint attention (JA) behaviors

PARTNERSHIP

Participants. 27 infants & children with DS (9 months – 40 months; $M = 23.77$ months, $SD = 9.16$) and their parents.

Bayley Scales of Infant Development (3rd Ed.) Cognitive, Social-emotional, Adaptive behaviour, Motor (gross, fine), Language (receptive, expressive).

Communication & Symbolic Behaviour Scales. Joint attention, gaze following, non-verbal communication, symbolic play, turn-taking.


METHOD

Participants. 27 infants & children with DS (9 months – 40 months; $M = 23.77$ months, $SD = 9.16$) and their parents.

PRELIMINARY RESULTS

Language is considered the domain of greatest vulnerability (Karmiloff-Smith et al., 2013).

Our data suggests individual differences in language are evident throughout development, with some children performing close to typical range.

PARENT PERSPECTIVES

Parents often advised to "accept language will be a significant difficulty" and "simplify their own language to compensate".

Expectations impact parent-child interaction. Parents may oversimplify language, and miss opportunities to support learning (Zampini, Fasolo & D’Orico, 2011).

Next analysis will assess parent language input to children with DS and expectations for their development.

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