A community based preliminary evaluation of LENA Start™: Promoting responsive parent-child interactions

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Introduction
- The language disparities originally observed by Hart & Risley (1995) observed between high and low SES homes is ‘alive & well’ (Golinkoff et al. 2018).
- Parents can implement language-based interventions effectively (Roberts & Kaiser, 2011).
- Greenwood et al. (2017) suggests adopting a multicomponent prevention approach to reducing language disparities that involves parents.

Study Purpose
- To evaluate the effect of LENA Start™, a parent education program that provides information on language development and quantitative feedback.
- To determine if there are differences in parent-child interactions, measured by parent-child freeplay observation, as a function of participating in LENA Start™?

Method
- Child Participants – 0 to 2;11
- Non-equivalent comparison group design
- Parent-child LENA Start™ dyad completed a 13 week training program targeting strategies to enrich home language environment
- Comparison parent-child dyad participated in regularly programmed ECFE classes
- Pre- and post-intervention videos were transcribed and coded, by blind to study transcribers and coders

Preliminary results indicate no differences in proximal measures of parent-child interactions as a result of participating in LENA Start™.

Discussion Questions
- Are parents able to generalize language-facilitating techniques across contexts?
- What measures should we use to evaluate parent-implemented interventions?
- Who should be delivering parent education programs?
- Should parent-implemented communication interventions target an array of language promoting strategies or a select few that are most likely to promote language development?