

Dear Parent,

I would like to invite you and your child to participate in a study of parent-child talking patterns, being conducted in the Speech and Language Lab at WSU. For this study we are interested in studying how children learn to listen to language and discover meaning in what is said to them.

We want to learn how much parents and children talk with each other over the course of a typical day. We are interested in the amount of words children are exposed to as listeners at various ages and when and with whom the children themselves choose to talk in a variety of natural settings. We are interested in looking at differences and similarities of language use in families with children who have a hearing loss (including children with hearing aids and cochlear implants) and with children without hearing loss. Findings from our work are used in many domains, including better understanding family dynamics, language development in children with and without hearing loss, and in terms of education, prevention, and intervention for families of children with disabilities.

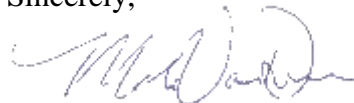
If you would like to participate in this study, we will first send you a packet of information detailing our project, consent forms indicating your willingness to participate, and ask you about some background information.

The procedure is simple. First, we will perform testing in person in our labs using tests similar to those administered in schools. Next, we will agree on a day for your child to wear a special audio recorder, ideally a weekend day or a day when parents are at home. Your child will wear a small audio recording device in a custom shirt we provide starting when he/she wakes up in the morning and only turning it off at final bedtime. The recorder needs to be turned on in the morning and turned off at night, but no action is required during the day. The recorder makes an uninterrupted audio record of the whole day. After the recording is made, you return the recorder to our labs (at our cost) and we will transfer the recording to a computer. A computer program uses formulas to extract features such as how often your child talks, the approximate number of words he/she speaks in an utterance, and what kind of audio signals your child experiences during the day. Our plan is to repeat the at-home recordings once per month for a year, then we will invite you back to the Speech and Language Lab for post-testing similar to the initial visit.

There is no cost to you and you are under no obligation to consent. Everything for the monthly recordings can be exchanged in the mail or over the phone so you are not required to visit the lab other than for an initial and final visit (although we welcome your family to our facilities if you wish).

If you would like your family to participate, or if you have any questions, please call or e-mail me at the contact information below.

Sincerely,



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