



Assessing the Infant Language Environment: Parental Speech Variability Pre- and Post-Intervention



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Will a brief, 10-minute intervention increase infant-caregiver interactions and encourage parents to talk to their children?

Background

- Children in low-income households have fewer words spoken directly to them and experience fewer joint attention literary activities (Hart & Risley, 1995; Hoff, 2003; Evans, 2004)
- Children who hear more words and a higher variety of words have larger vocabularies (Rowe, Özçalyskan, & Goldin-Meadow, 2008)

Goals and Objectives

- Create a brief, simple, inexpensive and effective parent education program
 - Teach parents about the importance of talking to their infants
 - Increase frequency and quality of infant-caregiver interaction
 - Increase infant vocabulary

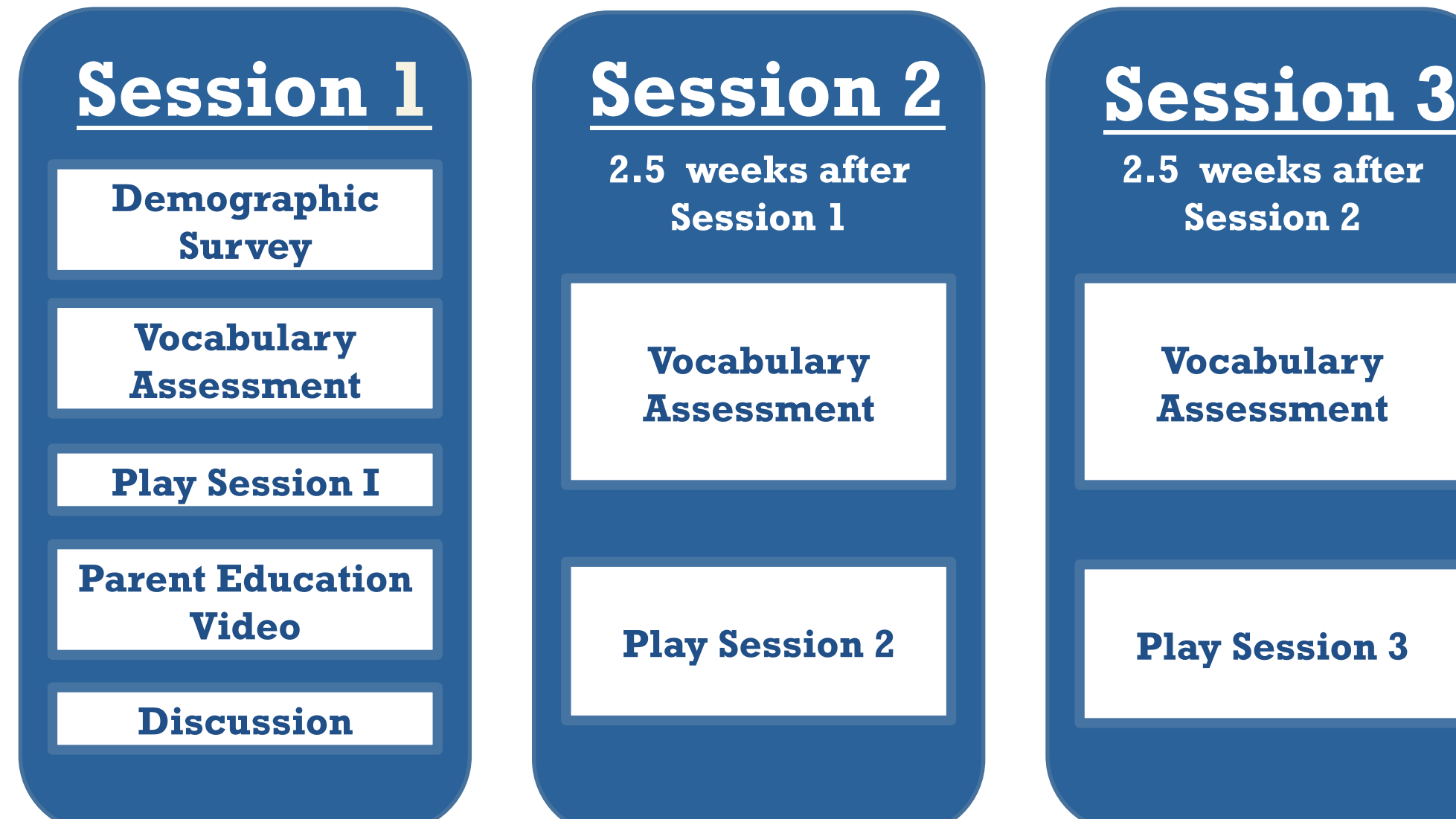
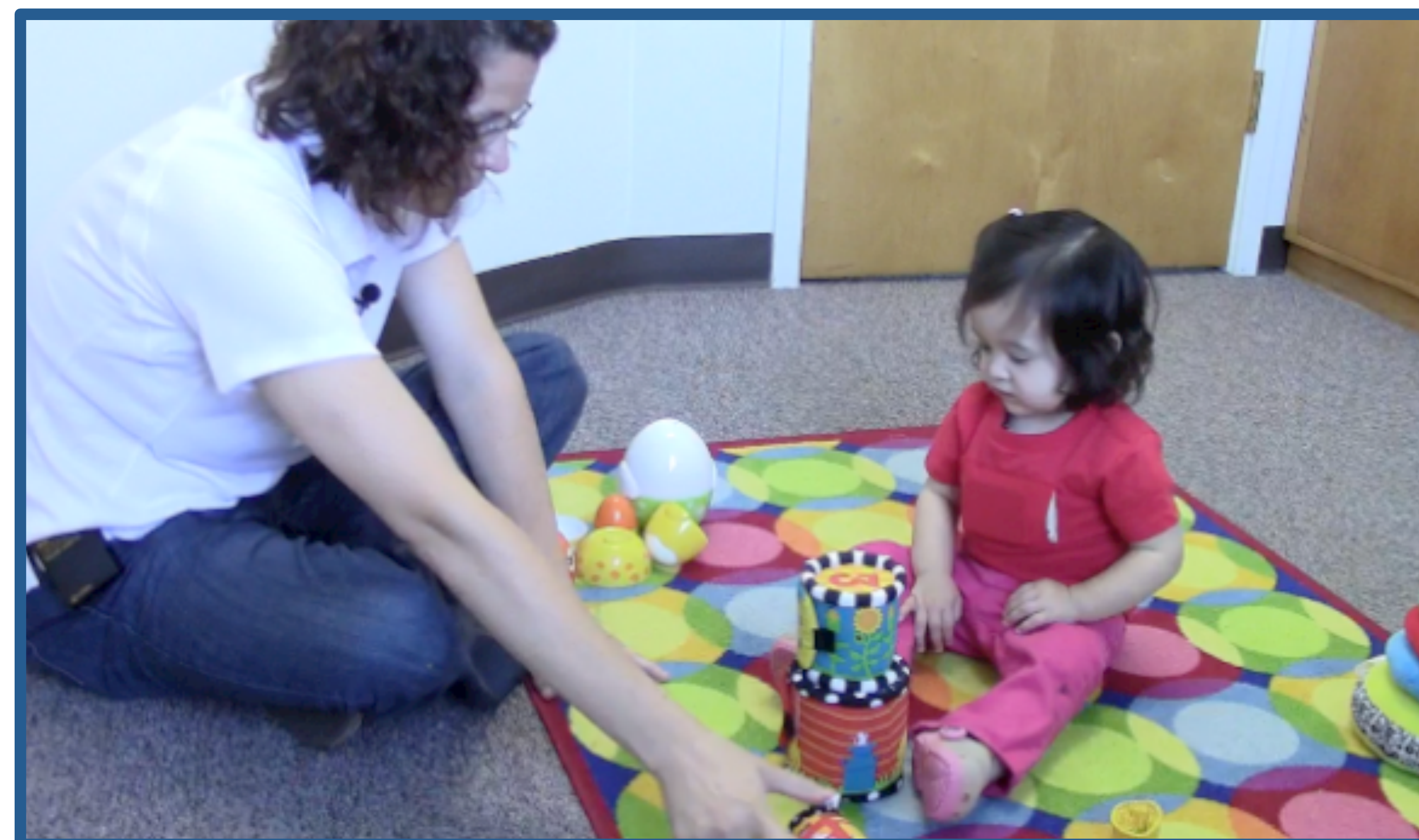
Participants

- Primary caregivers and their 8- to 16-month-old infants ($M = 12.07$ months, $SD = 2.771$)
 - Intervention Group: $n = 14$
 - Control Group: $n = 4$

Method

- 20-minute play sessions
- 10-minute parent education video about the importance of talking to children and promoting vocabulary development
- Caregiver and researcher discuss video
- Caregiver receives magnets and cards with video information

Dyadic Play Session



Magnets and Cards

TIPS For Talking To Your Baby

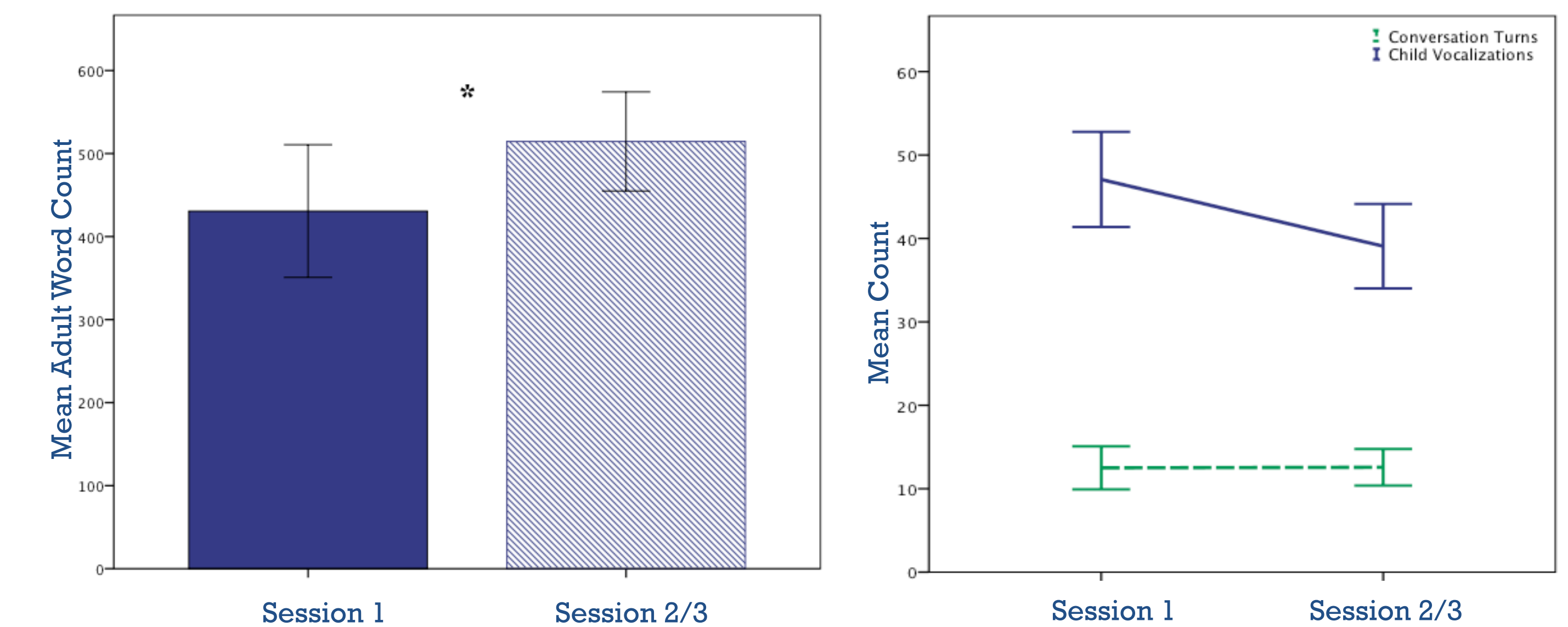
- Be Positive and Patient
- Act Naturally
- Name Objects for Your Baby
- Practice

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Results

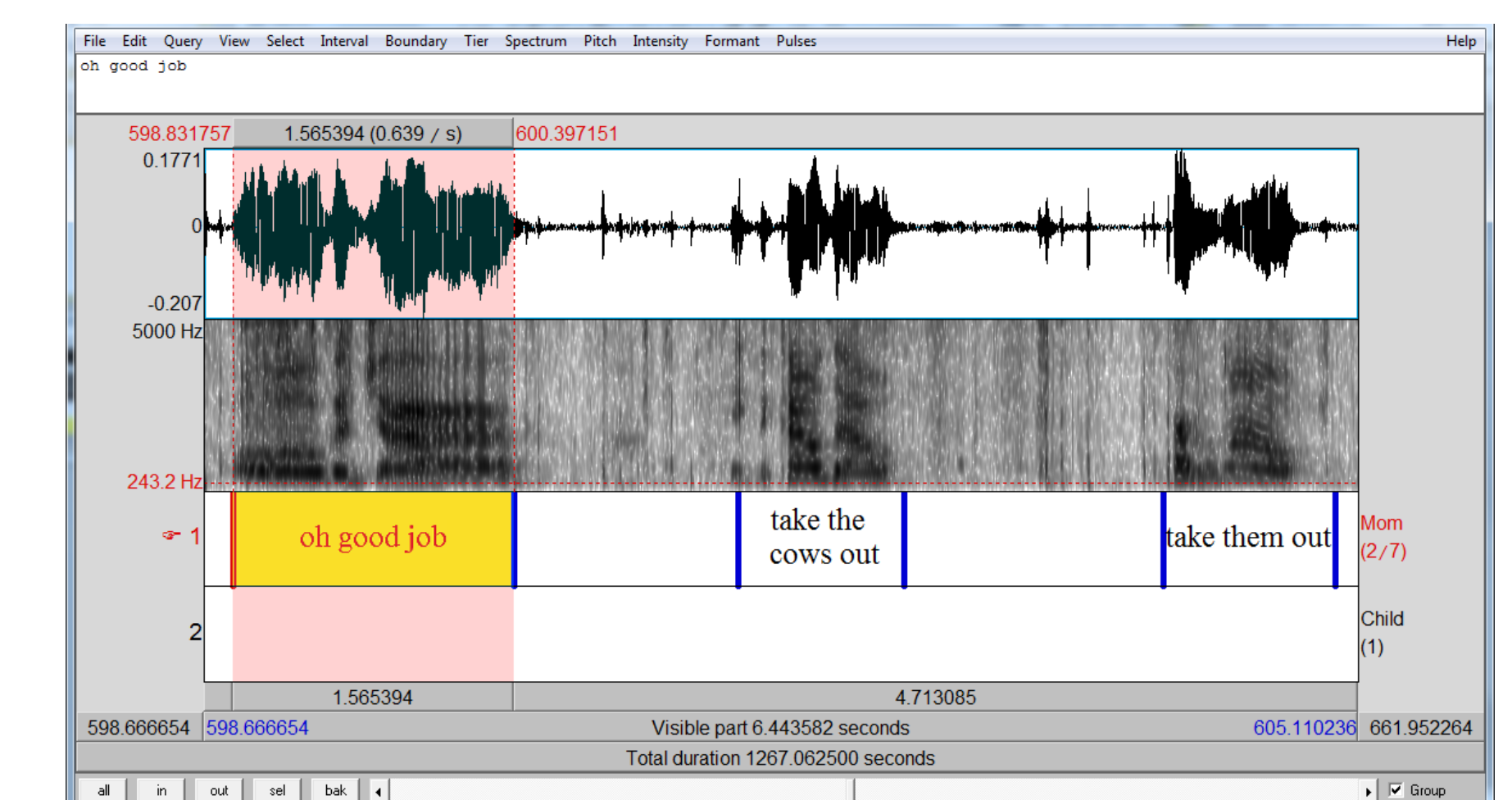
Intervention Group



- Post-intervention data (i.e., Sessions 2 and 3) was combined
- No differences found for Control Group
- Intervention Group
 - Marginally significant mean increase in Adult Word Count ($p = 0.053$)
 - No significant differences in Child Vocalization Count or Conversation Turn Count

Future Directions

- Speech Analysis and Transcription
 - Speech complexity (mean length of utterance)
 - Grammatical classes and variability (e.g., nouns, verbs, adjectives)



References

- Evans, G.W. (2004). The environment of childhood poverty. *American Psychologist*, 59, 77-92.
- Hart, B., & Risley, T.R. (1995). *Meaningful differences in the everyday experiences of young American children*. Baltimore: Brookes.
- Hoff, E. (2003). The specificity of environmental influence: Socioeconomic status affects early vocabulary development via maternal speech. *Child Development*, 74, 1368-1378.
- Rowe, M. L., Özçalyskan, S., & Goldin-Meadow, S. (2008). Learning words by hand: Gesture's role in predicting vocabulary development. *First Language*, 28, 182-199.