Language and Cognitive Development During the Pandemic

Nayeli Gonzalez-Gomez, Alexandra Hendry, Catherine Davies, Teodora Gliga, & Michelle McGillion
Social Distancing and Development Study (SDDS)

Language Development
- Parent-Child interactions
- Screen use

Executive Functions
- Parental Mental Health
- Child’s Sleep
- SES

Activities
Executive Functions

Cognitive
“Thinking skills”

Regulation
Methods

Participants:
- 892 families with 8-to-36-month-olds
  \( \text{M}_{\text{age}} = 19\text{m 20d}; 452 \text{ girls} \)
- 532 completed T1/T2 + T3
- 251 completed + T4
- 345 completed + T5
Methods

Online Questionnaire:

- **Family's Background:** Demographic questionnaire
- **Parenting:** Early Parenting Attitudes questionnaire
- **Language:** Oxford CDI
- **Sleep:** Sleep and Settle Questionnaire
- **Home Activities:** Caregiver-Child/Child-only Activities Questionnaire
- **Executive Functions:** Early Executive Functions Questionnaire
- **Mental Health:** Depression Anxiety Stress Scale
- **Parent-child interactions:** 10 min recordings
- **ECEC**
What were babies doing during lockdown?
Increase in time 🥰👀 doing indoor/outdoor activities
Increase in screen time
During Spring Lockdown Lower-SES:
- Enriching Activities ≠ + Screen
Links between SES and parenting activities
Language Development
Activities and Language Growth
Parent-Child Interactions
Parental sensitivity

Expressive Vocabulary

Enriching Activities

McGillion, Davies, Hendry, Gibson, & Gonzalez-Gomez, in preparation
Executive Functions
Parenting factors during Lockdown associated with EF

Enriching Activities

Thinking Skills

Hendry, Gibson, Davies, Gliga, McGillion & Gonzalez-Gomez, submitted
Parenting factors during Lockdown associated with EF

Screen Time

Regulation

Thinking Skills

Hendry, Gibson, Davies, Gliga, McGillion & Gonzalez-Gomez, submitted
What happens in the home in the first 3 years of life matters for early cognitive development
ECEC Language & EF
Social gradients
Receptive Vocabulary

*Lower-SES

Thinking Skills

Davies, Hendry, Gibson, Gliga, McGillion & Gonzalez-Gomez, 2021
Attending ECEC matters for early cognitive development
How can we support parents to help their children to thrive?

- **Inform parents**
- **Reduce barriers**
- **Provide options**
Inform

Spread the message
playing, talking and singing with your child makes a difference

Inform
risks associated with high screen use in early childhood

Reduce barriers

Ensure access
communal resources such as libraries and playgrounds is restricted only as a last resort

Reduce barriers
Ensure access

Provide options

Increase funding
community groups who support the parent-child relationship or offer affordable parent-child activities

Increase funding

Increase funding & Support
paid parental leave

Increase funding & Support
Increase funding

Increase awareness
risks associated with high screen use in early childhood

Increase awareness

Increase awareness
risks associated with high screen use in early childhood

Increase awareness

Increase funding
Early childcare and education, and put in measures to encourage take-up

Increase funding
Increase funding
Follow up

Language Development

Parent-Child interactions

Lockdown Activities

Executive Functions

Parental Mental Health

Child’s Sleep

SES

Longer-term effects
Thank you!

ngonzalez-gomez@brookes.ac.uk   Alexandra.Hendry@psy.ox.ac.uk
https://babylab.brookes.ac.uk/research/social-distancing-and-development