Gender and Maternal Responsivity as Factors in Number of Conversational Turns in Adolescents with Developmental Disabilities
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Poster Presentation, Parlors, 3:00-4:00 PM

This study examines factors that influence interactions between adolescents with mild to moderate developmental disabilities (DD) and their mothers. It was hypothesized that girls would take more conversational turns than boys, and that higher maternal responsivity would be associated with more conversational turns taken by the adolescent. Each mother-child dyad was visited in their home and asked to interact naturally for 30 minutes. Interactions were videotaped and transcribed; transcripts were analyzed using Systematic Analysis of Language Transcripts (SALT) software. Measures obtained from SALT analysis were: number of total utterances, number of different words, and mean turn length for mother and adolescent. Responsivity was coded by two independent coders. Mothers were rated from 1 to 5 on six dimensions of maternal responsivity: affect (positive or negative), warmth, flexibility, control/discipline, guidance, and punitive tone. A preliminary analysis of the data (N=5) indicates that on average when mothers were interacting with their adolescents, mothers showed high levels of maternal responsivity and low levels of negative affect and punitive tone. Gender differences in maternal responsivity will also be discussed. Conversational differences between mother-daughter and mother-son dyads will be presented; as well as the relationship between conversational differences and maternal responsivity.