



LANGUAGE LINKS

Newsletter of Purdue University Child Language Research Projects



Department of Speech, Language,
and Hearing Sciences

SPRING 2023

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Language Links is the Newsletter of the Child Language Research Projects in the Department of Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences at Purdue University. Through this publication, we keep in touch with families who have participated in our research, as well as people who have referred families to our programs.

We are grateful for the contributions that you have made to our research, and we hope that you find the newsletter interesting and informative.

DEVELOPMENTAL LANGUAGE DISORDER

In the spotlight

An estimated 7% of children struggle to learn, understand, and use language in the absence of a clear cause (such as hearing loss or autism). These children have Developmental Language Disorder or DLD. Children with DLD are often bright and able to learn, but struggle to communicate. While DLD is much more common than autism (7% vs. 1%), few people know about it. It is estimated that 60% of children with DLD go undiagnosed. To complicate things further, depending on the specialist who first sees such children, they may be described as having a language delay, a learning disability, or a sound processing disorder.

One reason why DLD is difficult to diagnose is that its symptoms change as children mature. A summary of key symptoms of DLD at different ages is shown below. School years may be particularly difficult for such children because most learning is language-based. They often fall behind their peers academically, but the underlying problem is often poor language skills and not the ability to learn. For an excellent online resource, see <https://dldandme.org>.

Preschool

- Often start talking later than other children.
- When word combinations emerge, they may be short and contain grammatical errors (such as “Where he going?” or “Her like ice cream.”)
- May be harder to understand due to speech problems, in addition to delayed language.
- May have difficulty following directions when not embedded in a routine.

Elementary & Middle School

- Struggle to remember multistep instructions.
- Make some grammatical errors, such as “my friends is...”
- Speak and write in short, simple sentences.
- May struggle with reading, writing, and spelling.
- Omit many details when retelling a story.
- Struggle to find words and often avoid speaking.

Find our websites here:



(Continued on p. 2)

Child Phonology

Lab Update



Most children learn to produce accurate speech sounds without formal teaching. However, children with speech sound disorder (SSD) have more difficulty producing speech accurately and are harder to understand than their peers. Studies in our lab aim to better understand the causes of SSD.

In previous studies, we asked how children's ability to hear or perceive sounds relates to their ability to say those sounds. We found that all children with SSD had more difficulty perceiving sounds in the middle of the word compared to children with typical speech. Many also had difficulty perceiving the sounds they mispronounce. However, some of the children with SSD had difficulty perceiving a wide range of speech sounds; these children are more at risk for later problems learning how to read and spell. Our most recent publication is a tutorial on how to integrate phonological awareness activities, a crucial pre-reading skill, during speech production practice https://doi.org/10.1044/2022_LSHSS-21-00117.

We are now conducting a longitudinal study to better predict which children are likely to outgrow their speech difficulties; which children would benefit from more intensive intervention; and which types of speech therapy would be most effective for them. Thank you to all the families who participated in our studies!

DLD IN THE SPOTLIGHT (Continued from p. 1)

Researchers and clinicians in the SLHS Department have had a long history of working to improve identification, understanding, and treatment of DLD, especially in younger children (see "Summer Fun", p. 3). However, there is a great need to understand how language problems can be better diagnosed and treated during school years.

The Auditory Cognitive Neuroscience Laboratory headed by Dr. Kaganovich is looking for **8-12-year-old children with DLD to participate in a study funded by the NIH**. As part of the study, parents will receive a comprehensive evaluation of their child's language, hearing, vision, and non-verbal intelligence. Both children and parents are paid for participation (~\$10/hour for children and \$10/session for parents). Help us to better understand this serious disorder by enrolling your child! Contact: Jennifer Schumaker at jschumak@purdue.edu or 765.494.4445 with questions. **We can schedule sessions during afternoons/evenings and weekends, and we make sure that children enjoy their visits.** Learn more about us at <https://hhs.purdue.edu/auditory-cognitive-neuroscience-lab/>.



Dr. Justin Kueser
Dr. Michelle Erskine
Dr. Amanda Yuile

NEWS FROM THE LLAMA LAB

We're welcoming two new post-doctoral language researchers to the LLAMA Lab!

Dr. Michelle Erskine's work focuses on how children leverage information about speakers like the quality of their voice or social interests to learn new words. She is looking for 3-5-year-old children for an eye-tracking study on this topic. Contact: merskine@purdue.edu.

Dr. Amanda Yuile's work focuses on how children's existing vocabulary knowledge impacts word learning and how children integrate information across sentences. They are looking for 2-3-year-old children for a related eye-tracking study. Contact: ayuile@purdue.edu.

Dr. Justin Kueser is continuing his research in the lab for the next year. His work focuses on understanding how verb knowledge impacts verb learning and processing. Justin is looking for 2-3-year-old children for a brain waves study about understanding words. Contact: jkueser@purdue.edu and see a video about the visit here <https://youtu.be/TvnTWDWQv3Q>.

If you are interested in participating, we would love to hear from you! You can e-mail, call 765.494.4229, or reach out to us through our website purdue.edu/hhs/slhs/llamalab/contact.

Summer Programs

Each Summer, SLHS researchers and clinical staff offer programs in which children participate in federally-funded research and receive therapy, continuing to build skills over the summer when school-based services are not available. All activities are offered at no cost to families. **Call now to schedule eligibility testing!**



SUPUR FRIENDS PROGRAM

The Summer Purdue (SuPur) Friends Program is for **9-to 12-year-old children with autism**. In SuPur Friends, children participate in pragmatic language groups, which are designed to provide opportunities to interact with peers, to learn and practice skills for social interaction, and to develop friendships. Two-hour sessions provide opportunities for participants to learn and practice skills during motivating activities. Parents have the opportunity to meet with clinical staff at the end of the program to discuss their child's progress. Compensation for participation includes a written report on results of standardized testing and \$10 per hour for eligibility testing and research participation.

When and Where?

The program begins on July 18 and concludes on August 3, meeting in Lyles-Porter Hall on Purdue's campus from 9-11:30 each TWTh.

Contact:

Dr. Brandon Keehn, 765.496.0204
bkeehn@purdue.edu



During Summer Fun, children participate in fun and language-enriching preschool activities. Individualized communication goals are addressed daily during half-hour therapy sessions. Parents receive a written report of standardized test scores and meet with clinical staff to discuss their child's progress. Families receive \$10 per session for eligibility testing and research participation.

Who is eligible?

4- and 5-year old children with a significant delay in language development but without accompanying medical problems, hearing impairment or other significant developmental delays.

When and Where?

The program meets TWTh mornings from 9-11:30 from June 13-July 6, 2023 in Lyles-Porter Hall on Purdue's campus.

Contact:

Dr. Pat Deevy, 765.496.1821
deevy@purdue.edu

Kids Needed

SPEECH LEARNING STUDY

Ages: 48-71 months old
(4 years - 5 years, 11 months)

Compensation: \$10 per session (2-3 sessions); children receive a toy at each session.

Location: Child Phonology Lab at Purdue (Lyles-Porter Hall)

Contact:

Françoise Brosseau-Lapré;
765.496.0345, childspeech@purdue.edu

WORD LEARNING STUDY

Ages: 4- and 5-year-olds

Compensation: Families receive \$10 per hour for 6 one-hour sessions. An assessment of your child's speech, language, and hearing is completed.

Location: Purdue's Speech, Language & Hearing Science Lab Indianapolis, 8445 Keystone Crossing

Contact:

Dr. Sofia Souto, 317.940.9493,
ssouto@butler.edu



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