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Do peer interactions influence infant communication development?

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Abstract: Studying infants in daycare or school settings enables us to ask whether infants influence each others' development, and if so, whether peer influences are similar to influences from adult caregivers. Answering these questions will not only inform infant educators but can also help us understand the mechanisms underlying infant learning. We have collected audio recordings from 21 1- to 21-month-old infants in two infant rooms in our campus early childhood education center. Recordings took place nearly every school day over a continuous 8 month period, for an average of 231 hours of recording per child. Multiple infants within the same room were recorded simultaneously. We will present our approach to synchronizing, coding, and analyzing these recordings toward the goal of understanding peer influences on vocal communication development, present preliminary results, and seek input on how to further analyze this large and unique dataset.