

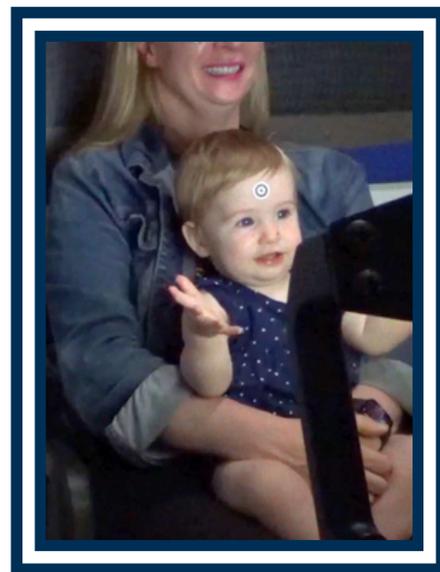
# BUFFALO EARLY LEARNING LAB

Annual Newsletter | January 2024



The Buffalo Early Learning Lab has been busy in its first year! Read about our ongoing studies and learn how YOU are helping us advance science!

Families from all over the Buffalo, NY area, as well as across the country, have helped us further explore topics related to language development! We are excited to share our first newsletter with you as we continue to collect data and begin to work on new projects!



Charlotte | Image courtesy of Kathryn Helfer



Lab Director: Dr. Federica Bulgarelli  
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<https://ubwp.buffalo.edu/buffaloeearlylearning>



# ABOUT US!

We are a new lab! We were founded at UB in 2022 by Dr. Federica Bulgarelli and began collecting data in May 2023. We now have a team of 8 undergraduate research assistants, a graduate student, and a full-time lab manager!

We study how infants and kids learn when there is variability in their environments (e.g., multiple talkers, languages, contexts, etc). You can learn more on our website!



## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

When I first started learning English as a second language, I was a kid and had no idea about grammatical rules and what a question, word or pronoun was. So I used to memorize the whole English sentence as a single word and match it with an equivalent sentence in my language!!

-Marzie (1st Year PhD Student)

My first word was “boofby.” There was a bear named Boof in one of my favorite books and somehow I decided that boofby meant dog! My family still uses this word today!

-Marina (Lab Manager)

# What do infants think about speech from older children?

Infants hear language from many people in their environments: parents, grandparents, teachers, and even siblings or cousins!

Most existing language development research focuses on what infants hear from adults, but many infants have older siblings, and if your child has an older sibling you may notice that they find them very exciting!



In this in-person study, we are investigating how 9-15 month-olds, with and without siblings, listen to and understand speech from older children.



Otto | Image courtesy of Kelly

Do infants prefer to listen to adults or children?

In the first part, we played them excerpts from common children's books, read by adults or 5-year-old children, and asked which type of speech infants wanted to listen to most.

We also showed them two pictures on a screen and they heard a sentence directing them to look at one or the other, either by an adult or a child. We measured if infants are faster at looking at the correct image when they hear it from an adult or a child.

*How do infants understand words spoken by adults and children?*

## 18-Month Follow-Up!



Layan | Image courtesy of Hiba

We can't study language development if we only consider one moment in time! Once your child turns 18 months, we are also asking families to tell us about all the words their children have learned since they were in the lab by filling out another questionnaire. If your child isn't 18 months old yet, be on the lookout!



Thank you for helping us understand how language develops over the course of infancy! We still need many more participants before we can know the answers to our questions, so please let any of your friends know!

# Learning Words from Multiple People

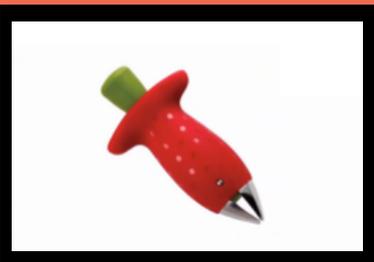


Words sound different every time they are said- how does this influence word learning? In this Zoom study, we taught your 16 to 17 month-old two new words, each paired with an object! Some heard words that sounded pretty similar (buk/puk) while others heard words that sounded more distinct (neem/lof). These words were produced by one or multiple talkers.

We played these pictures and words until your child got bored of them (which tells us they learned the words). Then we see if they get interested again if we switch the word that goes with the learned object. Results so far suggest that talker variability changes how infants learn words.

How does talker variability influence word learning?

Londyn | Images courtesy of Leah



Londyn is interested in the new words she is learning!



Londyn has learned the two new word-object pairs and wants to see something else!

We want to thank you all very much for your participation in our studies and your continued interest in our research! Without your help, we wouldn't be able to advance our knowledge of child development, or help others understand why this is such a crucial time in your children's lives.

## WHAT'S NEXT?

In 2024, we are excited to continue running these studies and also to begin new studies with kids up to age 5! We can't wait to share more of our findings with you!



Axel

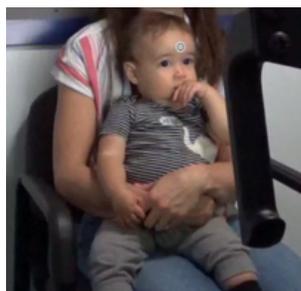
Image courtesy of Katelyn



Kingston

Image courtesy of Kathlyn

If you have friends or family with kids (0-17 years) who might be interested in participating in studies at UB, please send them here!



Arthur

Image courtesy of parent



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