The Social ABCs is a parent-mediated early intervention developed for toddlers with emerging or confirmed autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Although developed for 12- to 36-month-olds, we have identified a need to refine techniques for infants < 15 mos. Intervening early maximizes potential benefits both child and parent.

**Key Findings**
- Gains in parent fidelity
- Increased infant responsivity to communication opportunities
- Greater frequency of ‘checking in’ with parent
- Increased shared smiling (one dyad)

**Method**
- **The Intervention**
  - Virtual, 1:1, 45-min coaching sessions (varying duration to accommodate family availability and preference/ feasibility)
  - Child A: 9 weeks (11 sessions)
  - Child B: 12 weeks (20 sessions)
  - Parent instructional sessions: “While You Wait” presentation – three, 1:1, 20-min learning sessions during coaching sessions

- **Infant Version – Modifications from Standard Model**
  - Abbreviated session length and total duration of intervention
  - Streamlined parent teaching content
  - Coaching parent to provide verbal and nonverbal communication opportunities
  - Accepting all directed child communication acts
  - Greater focus on child’s developmental needs/stage

- **Video Coding Scheme**
  - Parent Fidelity (% correct use of 10 strategies)
  - Child Responsiveness (% responses to parent opportunities)
  - Shared Smiling (% occurrence/ min blocks)
  - Child Visual Check-Ins (count/ minute)

**Results**
- Implementation fidelity: Both parents made notable gains in strategy use, reaching ~ 80%
- Child responsiveness increased for both, reaching ~50%
- Visual check-ins increased at a rate of 2-3 x for each child
- At baseline, children were not sharing smiles with their mothers, despite both mothers offering warm, loving, smiles
- Shared smiling increased for Child B, but not for Child A (coding scheme may miss nuanced behaviour)

**Background**
- The Social ABCs is a parent-mediated early intervention developed for toddlers with emerging or confirmed autism spectrum disorder (ASD)
- Although developed for 12- to 36-month-olds, we have identified a need to refine techniques for infants < 15 mos
- Intervening early maximizes potential benefits both child and parent

**Objective & Plan**
- To develop, adapt, and describe the Infant Social ABCs in a case series of pilot participants
- This descriptive case series uses a multi-method approach to:
  1. describe the modifications of the Social ABCs
  2. explore the outcomes with two mother-infant dyads, and
  3. examine themes of feasibility and acceptability

**Next Steps**
- Develop a caregiver coaching manual, infant version
- Refine session protocol (length, rate, duration of sessions)
- Refine coding scheme to capture nuanced gains in shared smiling (e.g., interval coding in 10-s blocks)
- Continue to adapt fidelity of implementation metrics

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**Footnotes**
- Dowds, E., Zwaigenbaum, L., Smith, J.M., & Brian, J.A. - Autism Research Centres @ 1Holland Bloorview (Toronto, ON), 2Glenrose Rehab (Edmonton, AB), & 3WK (Halifax, NS) – CANADA

**References**
- E Dowds, L Zwaigenbaum, J M Smith, & JA Brian - Autism Research Centres @ 1Holland Bloorview (Toronto, ON), 2Glenrose Rehab (Edmonton, AB), & 3WK (Halifax, NS) – CANADA

**Participants**
- Two mother-infant dyads
- Age 15-months (Child A: 15m; Child B: 11m), both male
- Social communication challenges, but no formal diagnosis
- Symptoms: reduced babbling, lack of co-ordinated attention with eye contact, reduced social smile
- Inclusion: Referral by infant’s health care provider, parental concerns of ASD, & parent readiness / willingness to participate in virtual (video-recorded) coaching sessions

**Key Learning**
- Developmental Coaching through an ‘at-risk’ lens entails:
  - Picking up on, and actively coaching parents to respond to very subtle, hard-to-read cues, and subtle communicative behaviours (e.g., leaning toward parent, partial reach, unconventional/partial gestures)
  - Noticing and acknowledging healthy developmental moments, and pausing on social communication targets in-the-moment to support unfolding developmental progress
  - Navigating typical development alongside emergent ASD symptoms and social communication targets
  - Sensitive supporting parents with identified and emerging concerns

**Key Findings**
- Gains in parent fidelity
- Increased infant responsivity to communication opportunities
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