

Building relationships: Sibling dyadic interactions in children at an elevated likelihood for autism

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This study examined social engagement and socio-communicative episodes between 24-month-old toddlers and their older siblings during free play at home. The sample was drawn from the TRABERITEA-2 project and included two groups of sibling dyads: 20 dyads in which the toddler had an elevated likelihood for autism (EL) due to having an older sibling with autism spectrum disorder, and 22 dyads in which the toddler had a typical likelihood for autism (TL) with a neurotypical older sibling. Based on previous evidence (Bontinck, Warreyn, Demurie et al., 2018; Bontinck, Warreyn, Van der Paelt et al., 2018), we anticipate differences in the frequency and quality of social engagement and socio-communicative episodes in EL dyads. Our objective is to characterize early sibling interactions and identify factors that contribute to increased social engagement and successful communication. Findings will be discussed in terms of group differences and, more importantly, key features of sibling interactions that support enriched socio-communicative dynamics.

Keywords: Sibling; Play Interactions; Early Development; Autism