

## **Interactions in Focus: Understanding Early Relationships and the Environment in the Communicational and Linguistic Development of Babies with Down Syndrome**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Early interactions between parents and their children form the foundation for communicational and linguistic development. In the context of babies with Down syndrome, these interactions carry unique characteristics and challenges that influence developmental outcomes. This workshop, "*Interactions in Focus: Understanding Early Relationships and the Environment in the Communicational and Linguistic Development of Babies with Down Syndrome*," explores the dynamic interplay between early relationships, the home environment, and communicational, language and literacy development, with comparisons to infants and toddlers with typical development.

Research reveals that early parent-child interactions in families of children with Down syndrome are often characterized by lower sensitivity and higher directiveness compared to those with typically developing children. While these patterns may stem from a need to guide and scaffold their child's learning, they can impact the quality and reciprocity of communication exchanges. This workshop examines these differences, highlighting their implications for the communicational and linguistic development of children with Down syndrome.

We will also emphasize the role of a stimulating home environment and early literacy exposure. For infants and toddlers, engaging in shared reading, storytelling, and interactive play fosters not only language comprehension and expression but also critical preliteracy skills. Comparisons with typical development will shed light on how these activities can be adapted to address the specific developmental profiles of children with Down syndrome, leveraging their social strengths while addressing language challenges. Through case studies and interactive discussions participants will gain insights into early relationships and environments for children with Down syndrome.

**Keywords:** Down syndrome, Intellectual Disability, early interactions, environment, language development