



Presentation Title: Children's Exploratory Behaviors and Parent Guidance during Shared Experiences

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Abstract:

Compelled by curiosity and a desire to learn, children naturally explore. Hands-on object exploration is important for building vocabulary and knowledge about how the world works, especially during shared discovery with caregivers who often provide guidance. Among children who are born deaf, a large majority may experience long-term learning delays because of early lack of access to ambient language, even with audiological intervention. This milieu may impact how deaf children explore. Moreover, children who rely on visual-manual signed languages for communication may have different ways of exploring for learning, compared to children who rely on speech for communication. This talk will present ongoing research conducted in the NTID PLAY Lab that describes the quality, depth and frequency of children's exploratory behaviors. We also examine how parents guide their children's exploratory behaviors. We hypothesize that deaf signing children have unique exploratory behaviors that are adaptive and that parents have unique intuitive ways of guiding their child's exploration but some guidance behaviors may be more or less helpful for children's exploration. By the end of this talk, we will have a better understanding of the importance of child's exploration and parent guidance on child's learning. We will consider the possible ways that deafness and signed language experience may impact children's free and structured sensorimotor exploratory behaviors in various settings -- a classroom with peers, free exploration in a museum, cooperative interaction with a parent, and structured physical manipulation of a toy set.