# Parent-Child Interactions among Children with and without ADHD

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## Introduction

- **Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a prevalent neurodevelopmental disorder with poor academic, social & health outcomes (Singh et. al, 2015)**
- **Parents of children with ADHD are less involved, provide less praise, and use more commands than parents of typically-developing children (Ellis & Nigg, 2009)**
- **Lack of research on reciprocating child effects – in which there is a bidirectional process where the child influences the parents' behavior simultaneously (Burke et. al, 2008)**
- **May be important contextual situations in which a child's ADHD status influences the degree to which a parent uses a particular parenting strategy**

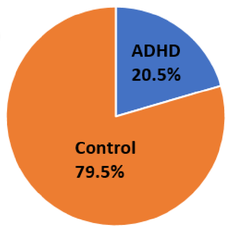
**Objective:** Better understand the parent-child dynamics of children with ADHD by investigating the simultaneous interactions between parents and their children on an observed level.

**Hypothesis:** The current study predicted that the child's ADHD status will drive parents to use 1) more negative talk, 2) more commands and 3) less praise, but only during the child-led play condition.

## Participants



**210 parents** (91% mothers) and their **children** (57.1% male; mean age = 6.02) participated in a larger longitudinal study on child behavioral development




*Parent Demographics:*
**Mean Age:** 37.2 **Median Income:** $92,000
**87% reported being married or living with spouse**

## Materials & Methods

**DISC:** Structured clinical interview with parent to assess child's ADHD symptoms based on DSM-IV criteria. Children met diagnostic criteria if parent reported 6 or more symptoms (of 18) with some level of impairment.

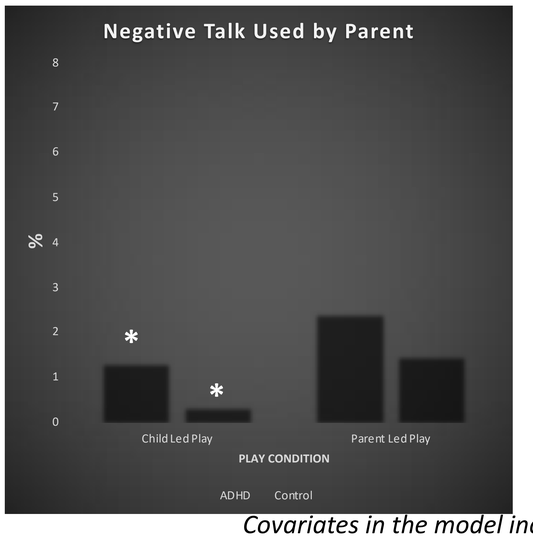
**DPICS:** A 25-minute video-recorded parent-child interaction task involving intervals of play situations. During Child-Led Play, parents are asked to let child choose any activity and follow according to child's rules. In Parent-Led Play, parents are instructed to get their child to play according to parent's rules. 3 dimensions used to assess parenting:

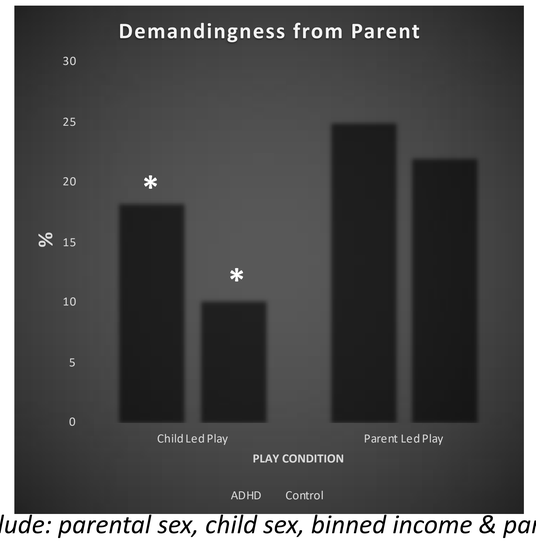
**Negative Talk =** Expression of disapproval of the child or child's attributes, products or choices (e.g., "that's not right") / total vocalizations by parent

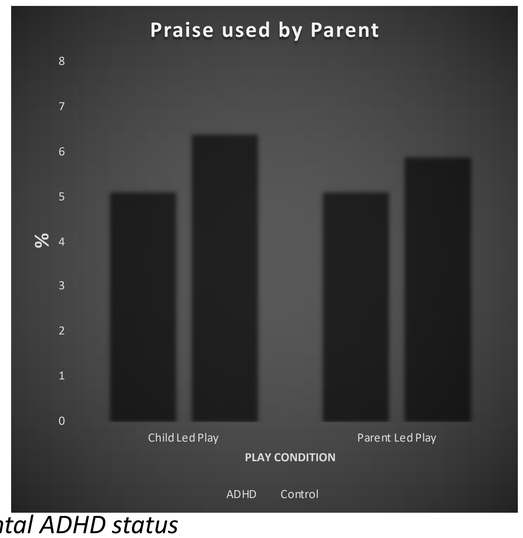
**Demandingness** = Direct Commands (e.g., "Read the instructions") + Indirect Commands (e.g., "Let's draw a house") / total vocalizations by parent

**Praise** = Labeled (e.g., "you did a great job building the tower") + Unlabeled (e.g., "great job") praise / total vocalizations by parent

## Results




*Covariates in the model include: parental sex, child sex, binned income & parental ADHD status*

## Discussion

- The context in which the parent and child were playing (i.e. controlled by the child vs. controlled by the parent) impacted the way parents of children with ADHD used **negative** parenting styles (i.e. demandingness and negative talk) but not **positive** parenting styles (i.e. praise).
- Suggests the idea of greater child effects, in that the child's ADHD status may be driving the negative parenting practices, as opposed to parents of children with ADHD simply being worse parents
- Contrary to expectations, praise used by the parent did not depend on context. Negative parenting practices, as measured in this study, may be qualitatively different than dimensions of positive parenting behaviors and may have a different relationship to parenting a child with ADHD (Kaiser, McBurnett, & Pfiffner, 2011).