

Research on conversational turns:

What are conversational turns?

A conversational turn occurs when a child vocalizes and an adult responds, or vice versa. LENA technology measures conversational turns, providing objective data insight into one of the most predictive metrics of child outcomes.

Why do they matter?

According to a rapidly growing body of scientific research, responsive interactions are key to optimal early child development. Rich interactions are also central to many measures of child care quality.

Conversational turns have been linked to...

1. Brain function

Children who experienced more conversational turns showed more activation in a region of the brain responsible for speech production. **The more conversational turns, the more language-related brain function!**

2. Brain structure

Conversational turns were strongly correlated to white matter connectivity between two brain regions critical for language. **Words matter, but conversational turns matter more!**

3. Reading skills

Children who experienced more conversational turns had greater surface area in regions of the brain **associated with reading skills.**

4. Social-emotional development

Children's social-emotional development at 30 months was predicted by the conversational turns they experienced at 18 months. **The more conversational turns a child experienced, the better their emotional regulation and emotional communication.**

5. Executive functioning

Conversational turns are **positively correlated with changes in children's language scores, nonverbal cognition, and executive functioning.**

6. Long-term outcomes

A 10-year longitudinal study conducted by the LENA research team found a correlation between the amount of conversational turns children experienced between 18-24 months and their **verbal abilities, language skills, and IQ scores as teenagers.**

How LENA can help:

Our programs put research into action, serving early childhood educators and parents around the world. Combining objective measurement with focused coaching, LENA programs help adults increase interactive talk with the children in their care.

LENA
GROW®

Make every interaction count in early childhood education.

LENA
START®

Build school readiness and strengthen families with parent-group classes.




More research on conversational turns is published all the time.
Visit our website to stay in the know:

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