

## **Low-Income African-American Fathers' Gendered Relationships with Their Children: A Study Examining the Impact of Child Gender on Father-Child Interactions**

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**Abstract :** This quantitative study explores the correlation between child gender and father-child interactions. The author analyzes data from videotaped interactions between African-American fathers and their boy or girl toddler to explain how African-American fathers and toddlers interact with each other and whether these interactions differ by child gender. The purpose of this study is to investigate the research question: 'How, if at all, do fathers' speech and gestures differ when interacting with their two-year-old sons versus daughters during free play?' The objectives of this study are to describe how child gender impacts African-American fathers' verbal communication, examine how fathers gesture and speak to their toddler by gender, and to guide interventions for low-income African-American families and their children in early language development. This study involves a sample of 41 low-income African-American fathers and their 24-month-old toddlers. The videotape data will be used to observe 10-minute father-child interactions during free play. This study uses the already transcribed and coded data provided by Dr. Meredith Rowe, who did her study on the impact of African-American fathers' verbal input on their children's language development. The Child Language Data Exchange System (CHILDES program), created to study conversational interactions, was used for transcription and coding of the videotape data. The findings focus on the quantity of speech, diversity of speech, complexity of speech, and the quantity of gesture to inform the vocabulary usage, number of spoken words, length of speech, and the number of object pointings observed during father-toddler interactions in a free play setting. This study will help intervention and prevention scientists understand early language development in the African-American population. It will contribute to knowledge of the role of African-American fathers' interactions on their children's language development. It will guide interventions for the early language development of African-American children.

**Keywords :** parental engagement, early language development, African-American families, quantity of speech, diversity of speech, complexity of speech and the quantity of gesture

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