Social Development In A Family System

- Toddlers learn social skills through their interactions with caregivers.
- Autistic toddlers engage in vocal turn-taking differently than neurotypical infants do (e.g., they engage in less synchronous speech).
- Caregivers are sensitive responders to toddler actions, but elevated levels of stress and role strain reduce caregiver responsivity.

Hypotheses

Autistic toddlers engage in vocal turn-taking with caregivers differently than neurotypical toddlers and their caregivers.

Caregivers of autistic toddlers report higher levels of strain and stress than caregivers of neurotypical toddlers.

Higher caregiver strain/stress relates to reduced quality of vocal turn-taking between caregivers and toddlers.

Methods

Collected 1-hour videos of $N = 6$ toddlers during natural activity at home.

Conclusions & Future Directions

- Pilot data shows differences in caregiver stress and vocal turn-taking.
- In the future, I will test whether differences in caregiver stress account for trend in vocal turn-taking.
- I will continue data collection to reach $N=60$ toddler-caregiver dyads.
- Systems view of development is critical for understanding development in autism.