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Reflective Critique

One in every 12 children has experienced disorders related to speech, voice, and language in the past 12 months. Impaired communication may impact the development of children's social, emotional, cognitive, and even academic skills. Although there is a lot of research about the benefits of teaching American Sign Language (ASL) to young children in my field of study, there is not any research about how comfortable parents and caregivers are with teaching their children ASL themselves. This is why this project surveys parents' knowledge and confidence related to using American Sign Language (ASL) with children ages birth to three. My research project aims to help add research about how comfortable parents and caregivers are with teaching American Sign Language to young children in this age range. All children develop at different rates when it comes to milestones like talking and motor movements, such as walking or gesturing. The short-term goal of this survey project is to assess parent's knowledge and confidence related to using ASL with children before and after an instructional video about the potential benefits and uses of ASL. The long-term goal for this project is that by sharing informational videos, it can be determined if these are beneficial to helping parents become more confident and comfortable with teaching their children ASL basics. Furthermore, by providing parents with the knowledge about the potential benefits of ASL use and the skills to teach their children some simple, but useful signs, this can facilitate communication for families with young children with and without communication disorders.

The research questions for this study were as follows: How confident do parents with no previous exposure to ASL feel using sign language to communicate with their child before and after viewing videos describing the potential benefits of ASL and common signs? How confident do parents feel using ASL to communicate with their child before and after viewing videos describing the potential benefits of ASL and common signs? Are parents more likely to use ASL with their child after viewing videos describing the potential benefits of ASL and common signs? These questions were targeted using an anonymous Qualtrics survey for parents and caregivers of children ages birth to three years old. 106 caregivers opened the survey and began answering questions, but 46 caregivers completed all of the questions. Of these, 14 of these participants reported no familiarity with ASL; however, only 10 of these participants completed all questions. This survey assessed parents' and caregivers' knowledge, comfortability, confidence, and likelihood of teaching their children American Sign Language before and after watching two informational videos included in the survey.

These results indicate that both parents with no previous exposure to ASL and parents with exposure to ASL benefited from being informed about the potential benefits of ASL and being shown a few demonstrations of common signs. Parents or caregivers also reported that they were more confident in teaching their child ASL after viewing the educational videos. Data showed that after watching these videos, parents or caregivers are more likely to use ASL with their children. Although these results support initial hypotheses to the research questions, there were a few limitations in the data that we examined. The survey had a high attrition rate, in which many caregivers began the survey, but did not finish. Additionally, approximately half of the participants had a graduate degree, which may skew these results. These limitations suggest

that the findings may not be representative of the general population. Future research could benefit from including a more diverse sample to strengthen the validity of these results.