



RESEARCH NEWSLETTER

June 2023

[Informing Mothers about the Benefits of Conversing with Infants: Experimental Evidence](#)

[from Ghana](#)

Pascaline Dupas, Camille Falezan, Seema Jayachandran, and Mark

Walsh

Working Paper, May 2023

Abstract: Despite the well-established importance of verbal engagement for infant language and cognitive development, many parents in low-income contexts do not converse with their infants regularly.

We report on a randomized field experiment evaluating a low-cost intervention that aims to raise verbal engagement with infants by showing recent or expectant mothers a 3-minute informational video and giving them a themed wall calendar. Six to eight months later, mothers selected for the intervention report greater belief in the benefits of verbally engaging with infants, more frequent parent-infant conversations, and that their infants have more advanced language and cognitive skills.

We measure positive but noisy effects on parental verbal inputs in a day-long recording and on surveyor-observed infant cognitive skills. The intervention could be delivered to expectant mothers through existing health clinics at very low marginal cost so could be a highly cost-effective early childhood development policy in low-income contexts.

[Read the full paper »](#) https://www.povertyactionlab.org/sites/default/files/research-paper/WP4596_Informing-Mothers-about-the-Benefits-of-Conversing-with-Infants-in-Ghana_Dupas-et-al_May2023.pdf