

# Early Childhood

Observing & Measuring Communication

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## Measuring Communication Behaviors Applied to Early Childhood




- Frequency
  - Number of messages
  - Number of kinds of messages
  - Number of kinds of messages by time unit
  - Number of messages by discourse unit
- Duration
  - Length of message, turn, episode
- Pattern
  - Message behaviors across time
- Latency
  - Time between message behaviors
- Intensity
  - Degree of message urgency or amplitude (How vigorous?)

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## Observing: Point of View



- Etic—catalog behaviors
- Emic—assign meaning to behaviors
- Outsider viewpoint:
  - Tinbergen's Four Questions:
    - How does it work?
    - How does the behavior of the individual develop over time?
    - What is the function of the behavior?
    - How did the behavior evolve across generations?

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### Observing: Point of View



- Insider
  - Ethnography, from the point of view of the participants
  - Systematic observation and participation
  - Comparative
  - Fieldwork
    - Participant Observation
    - Interviewing
    - Case Studies
    - Projective techniques—stimuli
  - Data adequate? Data varied?

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### Categories of Behaviors



- Rating Forms
  - Dimensions
    - Children (Examples)
    - Mothers to Children (Maternal Behavior Rating Scale—Mahoney, Powell, Finger, 1986)
      - Positive/warm affect
      - Responsive/sensitive
      - Facilitates/teaches
      - Social Stimulation
      - Controlling/Negative

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### Transcription/Coding/ Analysis



- Transcription
  - Audio files, video files
- Coding
- Reliability Assessment
- Analysis
  - Nominal level data
  - Non-parametric statistics
- Computer-based analysis systems:
  - [Ethnograph](#)

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