We know very little about the lexical representations of children with ASD. In particular, we know little about their phonological representations.

- Toddlers with typical language development (TLD) are sensitive to mispronunciations of familiar words and treat them differently than both familiar and unfamiliar words (White & Morgan, 2008).
- There is some evidence that children with ASD have enhanced low-level perceptual skills, so they may be even more sensitive to mispronunciations.

**Current Study**

- Do children with ASD differentiate between nonwords and mispronunciations of familiar words?
- Is their performance related to nonverbal IQ?
- Is their performance related to language comprehension?

**METHOD**

**Participants:** 18 children with ASD. Additional 2 lacked sufficient eye-tracking data.

**Standardized tests**

- Nonverbal Ratio IQ: from Mullen Scales of Early Learning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (months)</th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
<th>Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>56 (4)</td>
<td>49 – 62</td>
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</table>

| Autism Severity | 8 (2) | 4 – 10 |

| Nonverbal Ratio IQ | 77 (27) | 39 – 108 |
| Aud. Comp. Standard Score | 77 (24) | 50 – 118 |
| Expr. Comm. Standard Score | 68 (16) | 50 – 95 |

**CONCLUSIONS**

- While eye-tracking tasks are considered to have low task demands and work well with very young listeners, we found that the children with ASD with low nonverbal IQ (< 70) did not show reliable looking behavior on this particular task.
- Children with ASD above this threshold reliably mapped nonwords to novel objects and real words to familiar objects.
- Like their TD peers, most children with ASD were sensitive to one-feature mispronunciations of familiar words, indicating that they have detailed phonological representations.
- Autism severity and other child-level measures were not associated with responses to mispronunciations within this sample.

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