

## **Early Speech Development in Children with Williams Syndrome: Meaningful versus Non-Meaningful Vocalizations at 18 Months vs. 24 Months**

### **Abstract**

Williams syndrome (WS) is a rare genetic neurodevelopmental disorder often characterized by a number of physical and intellectual disabilities, including speech and language delays. This study examines the speech profiles of a group children with WS by comparing their phonotactic (word and syllable shapes) and phonetic (speech sounds) repertoires at 18 months of age and 24 months of age. Both meaningful (words) vs. non-meaningful (babble) vocalizations are analyzed at both ages for consonant and vowel variety, typicality of phonetic repertoires, and phonotactic complexity. Our data indicates that the children with WS make progress between 18 and 24 months, demonstrating phonetic repertoires close to those of age-matched peers by age two. However, phonotactic repertoires still continue to show delays.