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*Predictors of Conversation Style and Social Skills in School Age
Children who were Internationally Adopted*

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International adoption has steadily increased since 1970, with almost 250,000 children adopted into the United States. Most internationally adopted (IA) children experience very deprived conditions prior to adoption, particularly those who lived in an institutionalized setting, such as an orphanage. Exposure to extreme poverty, poor prenatal care, inadequate health care, and lack of quality social interactions reflect only a portion of the adverse circumstances experienced by post-institutionalized (PI) IA children. In fact, the majority of PI children do not experience one-on-one care from a consistent caregiver until they are adopted. These pre-adoptive experiences impact children's physical, behavioral, cognitive, social, and language outcomes. Previous investigations of IA children's language outcomes suggest delays in the form and content of children's language skills, particularly during the first few years following adoption. However, few studies have examined IA children's abilities to use language within everyday social and academic contexts. The goal of the present study was to determine the factors that impact IA children's styles of communicating with their parents during conversations about past events. Forty parent-child dyads were videotaped participating in two conversations about events occurring within the past four months. Examples include birthday parties, family vacations, and school activities. It was predicted that, parents' elaborativeness during the conversations about past events, parents' ratings of their child's language skills, and duration of time spent in institutional care would significantly predict the children's assertiveness during the conversations. Implications regarding the conversational skills of IA children and future research directions will be discussed.