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Katherine Whitaker  
*University of Louisville*

Katherine G. Golway  
*University of Louisville*

Cara Cashon PhD  
*University of Louisville*

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# Parental Well-being, Technoference, and Parent-Child Interactions During the 2<sup>nd</sup> Year of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Katherine G. Whitaker, Katherine G. Golway, Cara H. Cashon

Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences, University of Louisville



## Background

- Parent-child interactions during the first five years of life have been associated with the child's social and cognitive development (Edwards, Sheridan, & Knoche, 2008).
- The amount and quality of parent-child interactions may be associated with a parent's mental health (Milkie et al., 2020).
- Mothers with depression tend to show increased withdrawal and intrusion from their infants during interactions than non-depressed mothers (Field, 1995).
- Increased distractions from technology during parent-child interactions may be associated with differences in infants' social and cognitive development (Reed, Hirsch-Pasek, and Golinkoff, 2017).
- *Technoference* refers to the, sometimes invasive and persuasive, interference of technology that may influence the way one interacts with others (McDaniel & Coyne, 2016).
- Maternal depression has been associated with increased technoference in some studies, but it has not influenced technoference scores in others (Newsham, Drouin, & McDaniel, 2020), (McDaniel & Radesky, 2020).
- Greater technology usage has been associated with parental anxiety (McDaniel & Radesky, 2020).
- Increased parental stress has been associated with greater technoference (McDaniel & Radesky, 2020).

**Research Question:** Is parental well-being related to level of technoference and time spent interacting with their young children during the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the COVID-19 pandemic?

## Hypotheses

- Parents in the elevated range for depression, anxiety, and stress symptoms will report less time spent on parent-child interactions than those in the normal range.
- Parents in the elevated range for depression, anxiety, and stress symptoms will score higher on the technoference scale than those in the normal range.

## Method

Parents of children ages 3-48 months in Kentucky are being recruited to participate in an online survey. Recruitment is being conducted online through email and social media posts. The data collection is from June 25<sup>th</sup> to July 30<sup>th</sup>.

The survey includes:

- **Parent-Child Interaction Questionnaire**
  - Includes different categories of activities and asks parents how long they spend doing each with their child
- **Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS-21)**
  - Measures symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995)
  - Parents scores for each of the three subscales (depression, anxiety, and stress) are converted to z-scores and then used to categorize them as either within normal range or elevated range based on a normative sample.
- **Distraction in Social Relations and Use of Parent Technology Scale (DISRUPT)**
  - Examines parent's disruptive phone usage around their children (McDaniel, 2020)
  - 4-item scale that asks for parents to agree or disagree with statements like, "I feel like I use my phone or other mobile device too much."

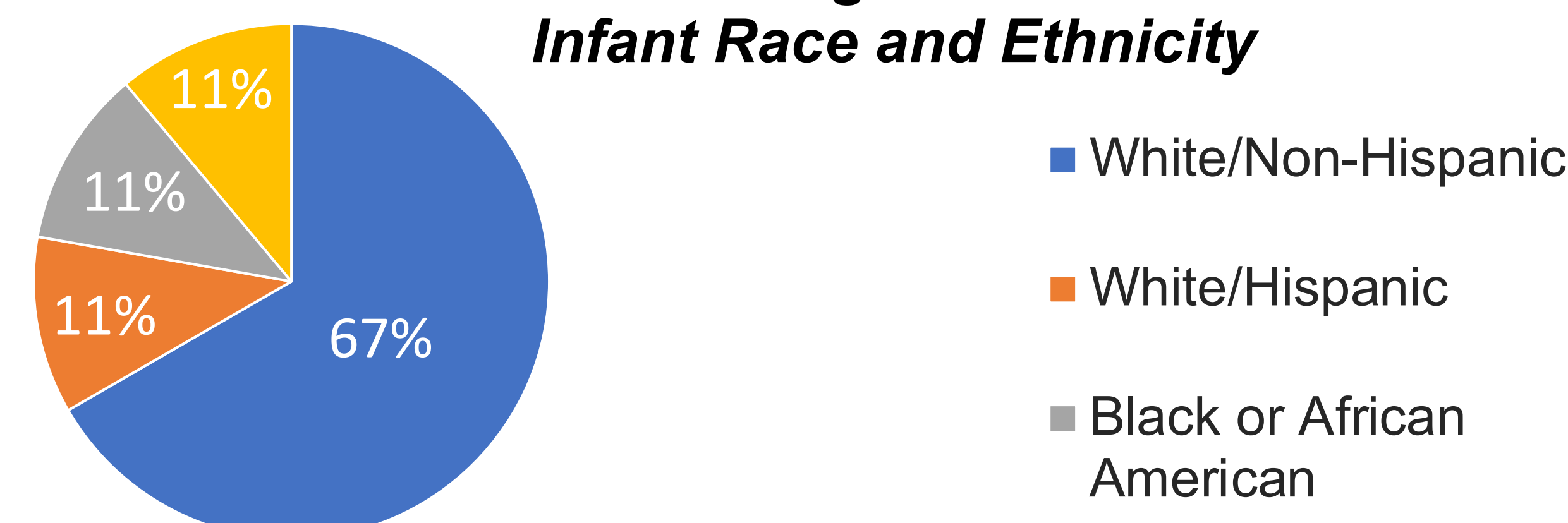
## Current Data

### Current Participant Demographics

Our current sample consists of nine mothers and infants.

- Mean infant age = 22.12 months
- Our sample consists of 5 male infants and 4 female infants.
- 55% of the infants are currently attending some form of childcare.
- The median family income is \$75,001 - \$100,000.
- 88% of the mothers are currently employed.

**Figure 1**  
*Infant Race and Ethnicity*



## Current Data (cont.)

### Current Key Variable Statistics

**Table 1**

*Parent-Child Interaction Means*

	PARENT-CHILD INTERACTIONS						
	Reading	Free Play	Singing	Engaging meaningfully	Speaking about emotions	Outdoor activities	Using digital devices
<b>Mean</b>	4.66	5.77	5.00	.66	5.22	5.22	5.00
<b>Time per day</b>	15 – 30 mins	30 – 60 mins	15 – 30 mins	1 – 2 hours	15 – 30 mins	15 – 30 mins	15 – 30 mins

**Table 2**

*Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale Z-Score Means, Standard Deviations, and Group Percentages*

	DEPRESSION, ANXIETY, AND STRESS SCALE (DASS-21)		
	Depression	Anxiety	Stress
<b>Mean</b>	z = .43	z = .31	z = 1.28
<b>SD</b>	z = .80	z = .94	z = 1.24
<b>% in Normal Range</b>	44.44%	55.56%	44.44%
<b>% in Elevated Range</b>	55.56%	44.44%	55.56%

The mean DISRUPT score is 4.52.

## Discussion

- Data collection is ongoing and will continue through the end of July.
- Once completed, we will analyze the data to determine if parents with elevated DASS-21 scores are associated with different parent-child interactions or different amounts of time spent interacting.
- We will also examine the data using the DISRUPT score to determine if technoference is associated with certain DASS-21 symptoms or certain parent-child interactions.
- While all data depends on parent's self-reports, this study will provide more information about whether parental mental health and technoference are associated with how parents interact with their children.