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Dear Editor,

Please find enclosed our manuscript “*Analysing the effect of sibling number on input and output in the first 18 months*”*,* submitted for consideration in *Infancy*. Drawing on >300 hours of naturalistic home-recorded data combined with monthly vocabulary checklists, we report an important advance in our knowledge of the ‘sibling effect’ in early infancy. We show, for the first time, that **sibling *number* plays a crucial role in predicting variability in both infant vocabulary size and caregiver input across the first 18 months of life**. Crucially, in our data, having one sibling does not affect vocabulary size during this period, though it does affect the infant’s early language environment in one of our two input measures. Having two or more siblings, on the other hand, negatively affects vocabulary development *as well as* both measures of caregiver input. Previous research has typically observed the effect of siblings on language development by comparing first-borns with later-borns as a single group, or first- versus second-borns only (e.g. Hoff-Ginsberg, 1998; Oshima-Takane & Robbins, 2003). By considering the effect of more versus fewer siblings, we show that the very fact of having a sibling does not affect vocabulary size, and has less of an effect on input than has been reported in the literature (e.g. Oshima-Takane & Robbins, 2003); only when an infant has two or more siblings do we begin to see variability in input and output measures. The emerging narrative suggests that **infants with one sibling may benefit from observing/overhearing interactions between sibling and caregiver, such that this may outweigh the negative effect seen on the early language environment, whereas having more than one sibling may throw this off-balance**.

Please contact the corresponding author (Catherine Laing) if you have any queries about our submission. We can confirm that this study complies with all ethical standards required for publication in *Infancy*, and both authors have approved the manuscript and agree with its submission to this journal. We further confirm that this manuscript has not been published elsewhere and is not under consideration by another journal. The manuscript provides links to all the code that generated this manuscript on github, creating an important resource for the community to extend this work.

We believe this paper will be of great interest to your readership, as it spans cognitive psychology and developmental linguistics, and has potential for future cross-sectional and cross-cultural research in this area.

Yours sincerely,

Catherine Laing & Elika Bergelson