

## Introduction

- Aspects contributing to Parent Stress:
  - impaired social communication skills<sup>3</sup>
  - isolation from friends and family<sup>1</sup>
  - problem behaviours<sup>4</sup>
  - financial requirements and access to care<sup>4</sup>
- Parents with an autistic child report higher levels of burden → this is associated with perceived parenting self-efficacy<sup>5</sup>
- Few studies to date have assessed the family's experience quantitatively → this has been addressed with the recent development of the Autism Family Experience Questionnaire (AFEQ)<sup>2</sup>

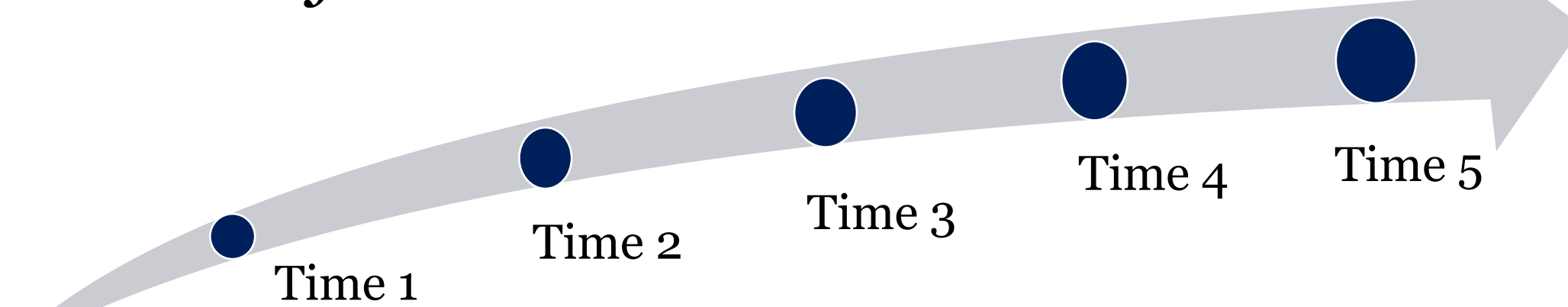
## Research Objectives

**Hypothesis:** We hypothesized that lower parental experience scores, representing a more negative perceived experience, would be associated with lower scores in parent-reported child development.

## Methods

**Participants:** 91 autistic children (76 boys) with a mean age at enrollment of 49.01 months (SD=9.23)

- Data obtained from the pilot phase of the *Pediatric Autism Research Cohort Project*



**Analysis:** Correlation analysis was conducted, followed by Fisher's z transformation to assess differences between timepoints.

**Results suggest a possible association between how parents feel about their parenting experience and parent-reported development in their autistic child; however, it may not be evident until the child is slightly older and/or has carried their ASD diagnosis for more than 2 years.**



Parenting Experience (AFEQ1)

Time 4 = < .001  
Time 5 = .022

Child Development (AFEQ3)

Time 1

$p = .574$

Time 5

Time 2

$p = 0.941$

$p = .158$

Time 4

Time 3

$p < .001$

## Discussion

- The significant difference between time 3 & 4 may indicate an important time period in the relationship between parent's perceived family experience and their autistic child's development → or at least their perception of this development.
- Results from this study will:
  - inform the continuation of the full-phase PARC study when full data samples have been collected
  - may help us to further understand the relationship between family experiences of having an autistic child and the autistic child's development as perceived by their parents
  - This may be influential, and therefore important to consider, when adapting or developing support systems for these families and their autistic child.

## References

- Gorlin, E. I., McAlpine, C. P., Garwick, A., Wieling, E. (2016). Severe childhood autism: The family lived experience. *Journal of Pediatric Nursing*, 31(6), 580-597. doi:10.1016/j.pedn.2016.09.002
- Leadbitter, K., Macdonald, W., Taylor, C., Buckle, K. L., & PACT Consortium. (2020). Parent perceptions of participation in a parent-mediated communication focussed intervention with their young child with autism spectrum disorder. *Autism*, 24(8), 2129-2141. doi:10.1177/1362361320936394
- Russel, S. & McCloskey, C. R., (2016). Parent perceptions of care received by children with an autism spectrum disorder. *Journal of Pediatric Nursing*, 31(1), 21-31. doi:10.1016/j.pedn.2015.11.002
- Shepherd, D., Landon, J., Taylor, S., & Goedeke, S. (2018). Coping and care-related stress in parents of a child with autism spectrum disorder. *Anxiety, Stress, & Coping*, 31(3), 277-290. doi:10.1080/10615806.2018.1442614
- Weiss, J.A., Tint, A., Paquette-Smith, M., & Lunskey, Y. (2016). Perceived self-efficacy in parents of adolescents and adults with autism spectrum disorder. *Autism*, 20(4), pp. 425-434.

**Contact Information**  
Laura de la Roche  
14LDLR@QUEENSU.CA

