



An Examination of Mother-Child Interactions for Mothers Participating in a Parenting Education Series

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Overview

- Mother-child Interactions & Parenting Education
 - Maternal Play Behaviors
 - Maternal Stress
- Review of OPEC Parenting Series
- Research Study
 - Aims
 - Methods
 - Results
- Limitations & Next Steps



Mother-Child Interactions and Child Development

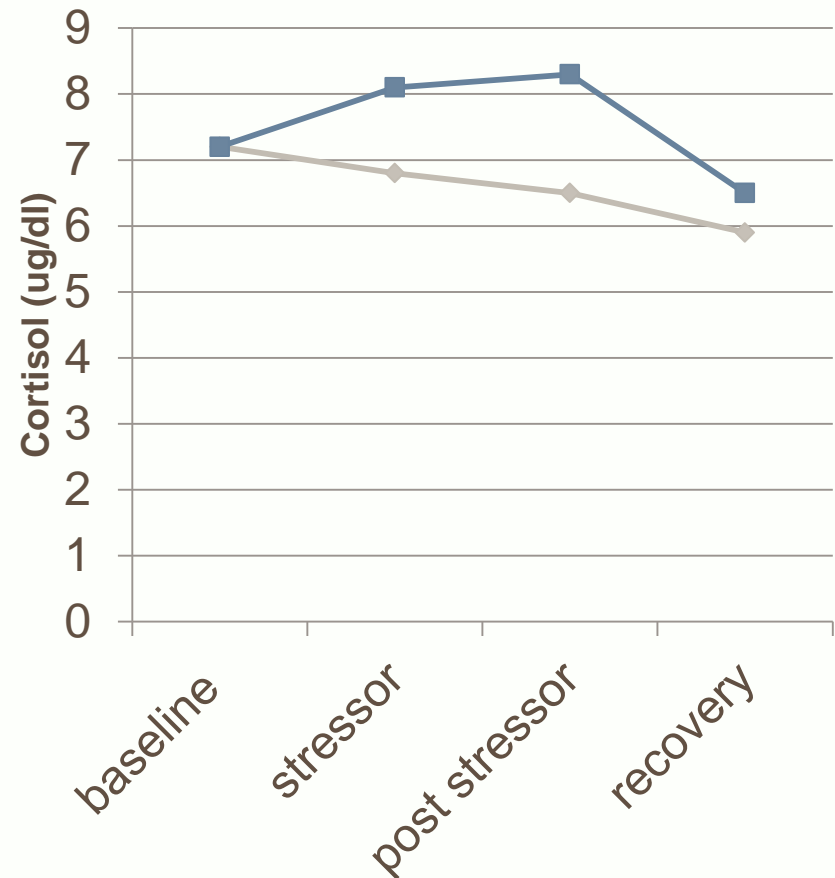
- Sensitive and responsive mother-child interactions
 - Language (Baumwell & Tamis-LeMonda, 1997)
 - Behavior (Mintz et al., 2011)
 - Brain development (NSCDC, 2007)
 - Stress response system (Gunnar & Quevedo, 2007)
- Maternal Harshness (e.g., Bradley & Corwyn, 2007; McElwain & Volling, 2004; NICHD ECCRN, 2003)
 - Lower academic success,
 - Social skills,
 - Behavior regulation.



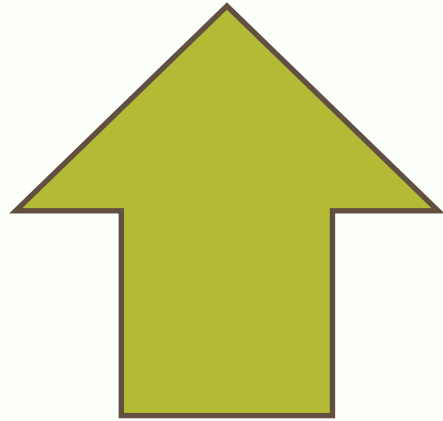
<http://sarahockwell-smith.com/tag/daily-mail/>

Maternal Stress: Cortisol

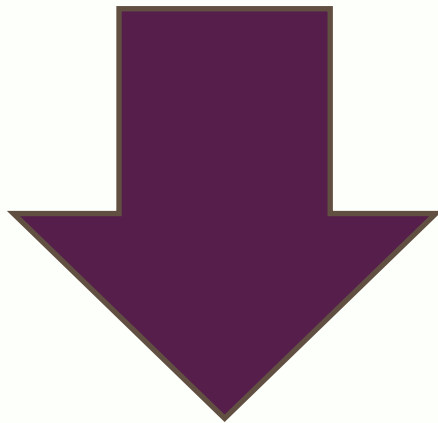
- High maternal cortisol levels
 - Higher depression anxiety
 - Lower quality of parenting
(Essex et al., 2002; Feldman et al., 2009; Gotlib et al., 2007; Gunnar & Donzella, 2002; Kiel & Buss, 2013).
- Higher mother's cortisol reactivity linked to harsh parenting
 - More so when child has fewer self-regulatory skills
(Martorell & Bugental; 2006)



What do Parenting Education Classes Do?



Positive
Parenting



Negative
Health
Behaviors

(Arkan et al, 2013; Gardner et al, 2006; Hutchings et al., 2007; Marcynyszyn et al., 2010; Reed et al., 2002;)

Oregon Parenting Education Collaborative 2010-present

... believe that parents are their children's first and most important teachers, and that investment in strong parenting is a critical strategy for ensuring that all children are ready to learn.

GOALS (selected)

- Increase the capacity of parents to play a positive, primary role in the care, nurturing and development of their children in their first years
- Strengthen families while reducing the potential for child abuse and neglect

As of spring 2015...

- 5,297 parents attended 607 evidence-based class series funded by OPEC.
- Over 11,500 family programs included workshops, family activities and parent support events.
- Grantees leveraged more than \$10 million in new funding or in-kind contributions.

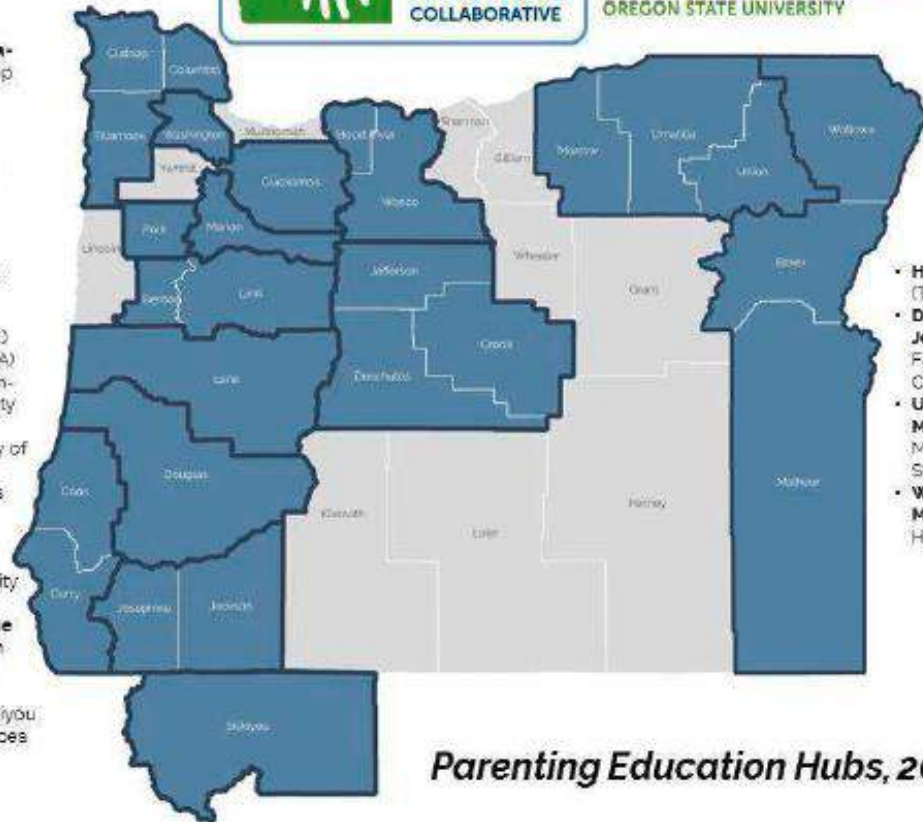


<http://www.cisbrunswick.org/communities-in-schools-brunswick-county-programs/parenting-education/>



THE COLLINS FOUNDATION
THE FORD FAMILY FOUNDATION
MEYER MEMORIAL TRUST
THE OREGON COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY

- **Clatsop-Columbia-Tillamook** (Clatsop Co. Juvenile Department)
- **Washington** (Washington Co. Health & Human Services)
- **Clackamas** (Clackamas Co. Children, Youth & Families)
- **Marion** (Early Learning Hub, Inc)
- **Polk** (Polk Co. HSA)
- **Linn-Benton** (Linn-Benton Community College)
- **Lane** (United Way of Lane County)
- **Douglas** (Douglas ESD)
- **Coos-Curry** (Southwestern Oregon Community College)
- **Jackson-Josephine** (Southern Oregon Child and Family Council)
- **Siskiyou, CA** (Siskiyou Community Services Council)



- **Hood River-Wasco** (The Next Door, Inc.)
- **Deschutes-Crook-Jefferson** (Central OR Family Resource Center)
- **Union-Umatilla-Morrow** (Umatilla-Morrow County Head Start)
- **Wallowa-Baker-Malheur** (Building Healthy Families)

Parenting Education Hubs, 2015-16

2013-2014 outcomes for OPEC parenting series

Parent Report

- Improvements in **Parenting Skills**
 - Knowing normal behavior for child's age level
 - Finding positive ways to guide and discipline my child
 - Dealing with the day-to-day stresses of parenting
 - Showing my child love and affection frequently
- Improvements in **Child Behavior**
 - Willing to follow limits and rules
 - Shows concern for others
 - Gets along with others

Research Aims

Are there changes in...

- a. ...Maternal Stress (biomarker: cortisol)
- b. ...Maternal Play Behaviors (observed)
- c. ...Child Play Behaviors (*coming soon*)

....related to participation in OPEC Parenting Series



<http://nearpictures.com/pages/s/stressed-parent-clipart/>

Methods

- 5 participating hubs
- Recruited from first class in series ($n = 20_{\text{dyads}}$)
- 2nd week of parenting series & final week of parenting series
 - Standardized Play Task
 - Mother saliva samples and mother-child play (clean-up and free play)
 - Mother Questionnaires



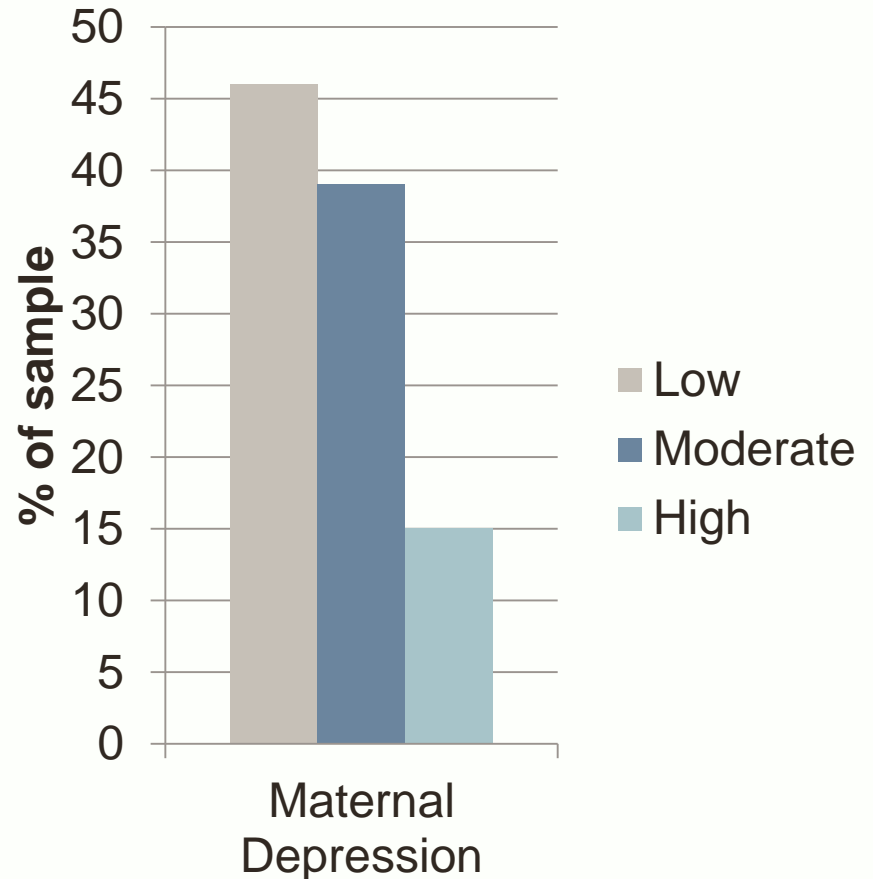
Mother Characteristics

Mother age

Mother race/ethnicity	11% AIAN 16% Latino 73% Caucasian
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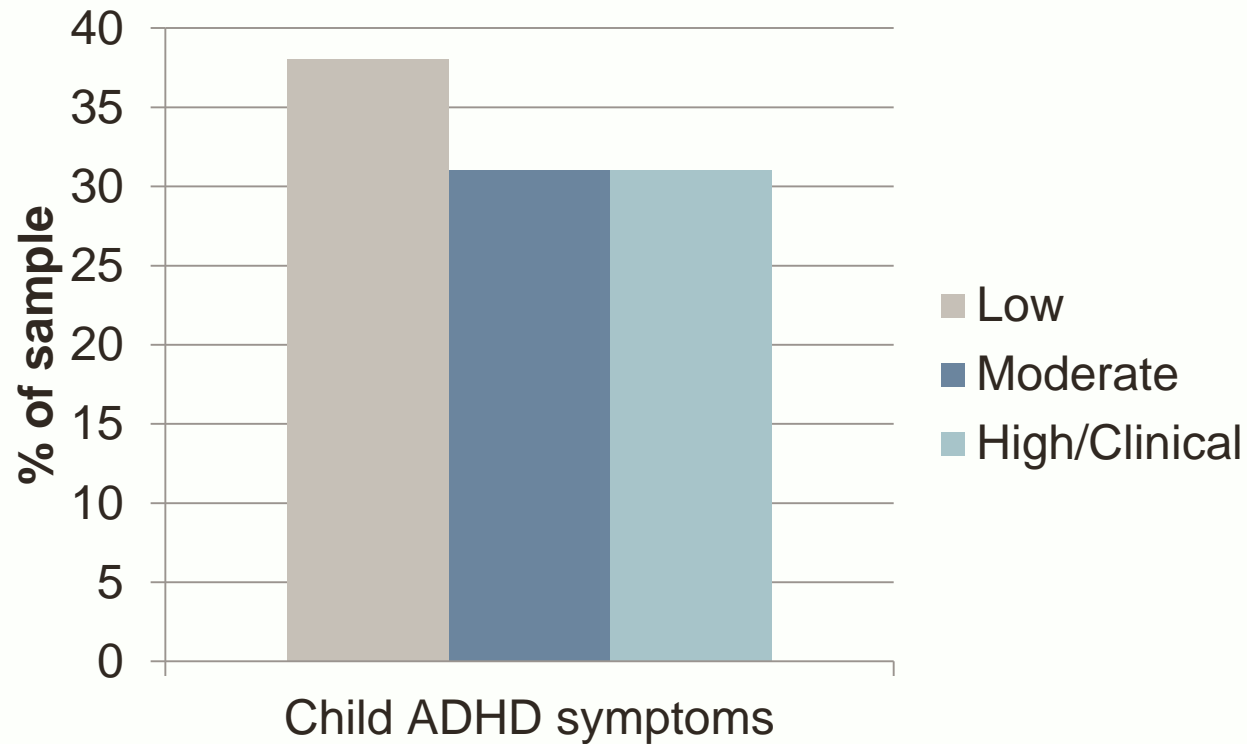
Mother education	21% some high school 42% some college/ 2 year deg.
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Mother marital status	61% married 22% cohabitating
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Child Characteristics

Child Age	50 months
Child Gender	42% male
Child race/ethnicity	21% AIAN; 15% Latino



Household/Family Characteristics

Receives Public Assistance 74%

WIC 86%

Food Stamps 86%

Health Insurance 57%

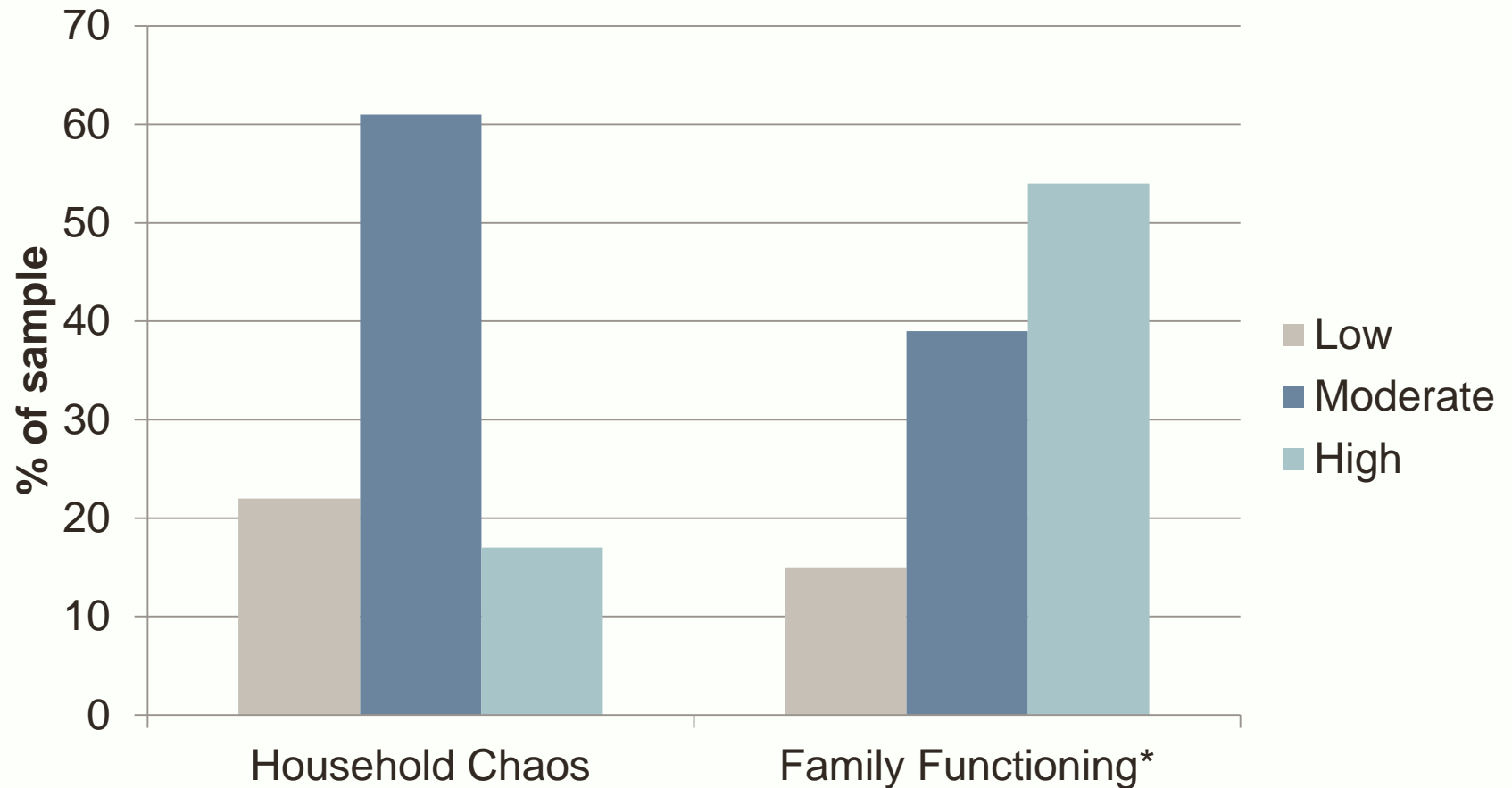
Child eats 3 meals a day Sometimes

Child gets read to Sometimes

Income

- 16% <\$500/month
- 21% \$500 - \$999/month
- 21% \$1,000 - \$1,999/month
- 32% \$2,000 - \$3,999/month
- 10% \$4,000 - \$5,999/month

Household/Family Characteristics



* High score indicates good family functioning

Are there changes in...

- a. Maternal Stress *or*
- b. Maternal Play Behaviors



<http://nearpictures.com/pages/s/stressed-parent-clipart/>



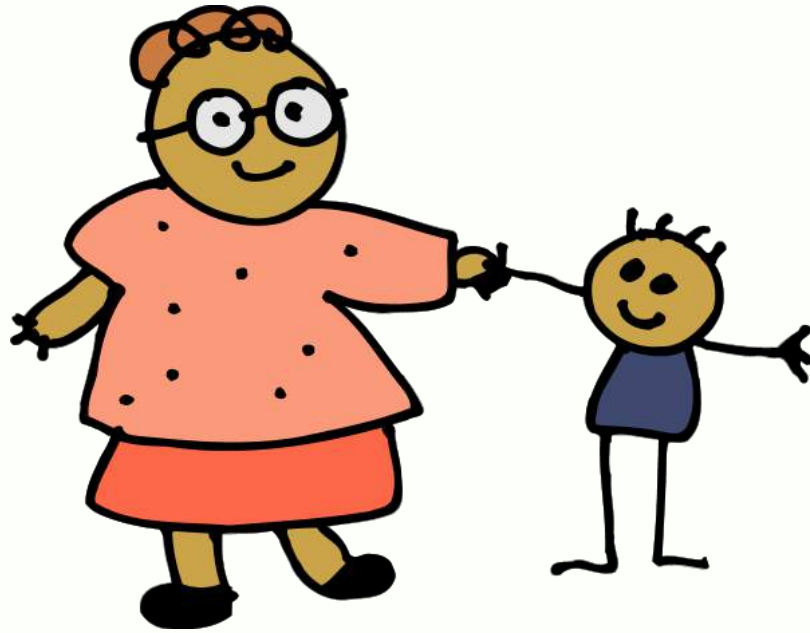
<http://www.mom-psych.com/Articles/Family-Relationships/Singles-Issues/Reducing-Stress-for-Single-Mothers-PR0001.html>

...related to participation

Child Play Behaviors
(coming soon)

Oregon State
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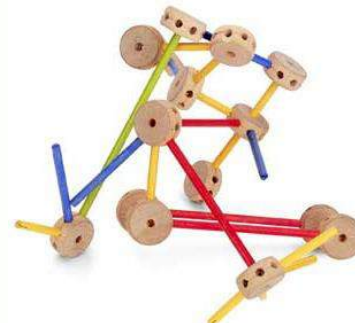
Standardized Play Task



<http://www.kaboodlestore.com/toycategory/cars-trucks/>



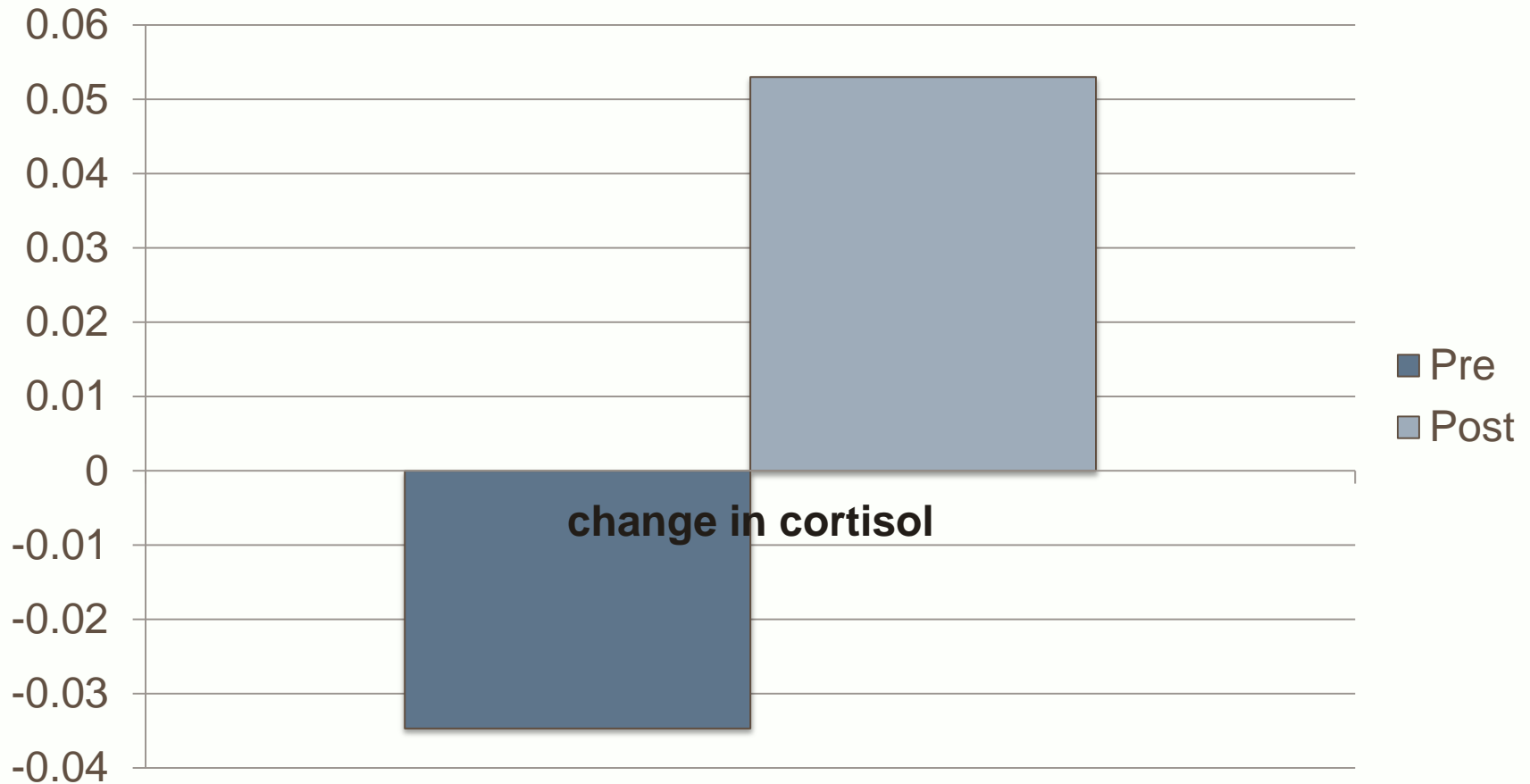
<http://brown-architecture.com/frank-logs-hats-not-right/>



http://www.retroland.com/tinkertoys/tinker_toys_650x300_a01_101/

Maternal Stress

Stress (cortisol) reactivity **increased**



$r = .27; t(8) = -1.227, p = .25; n = 9$

Mother Behaviors in Play

Stimulating Environment

- Facilitate learning,
- engagement
- development,
- & success.

Parent Sensitivity

- Child centered
- Awareness
- Flexible
- responsive

Parent Detachment

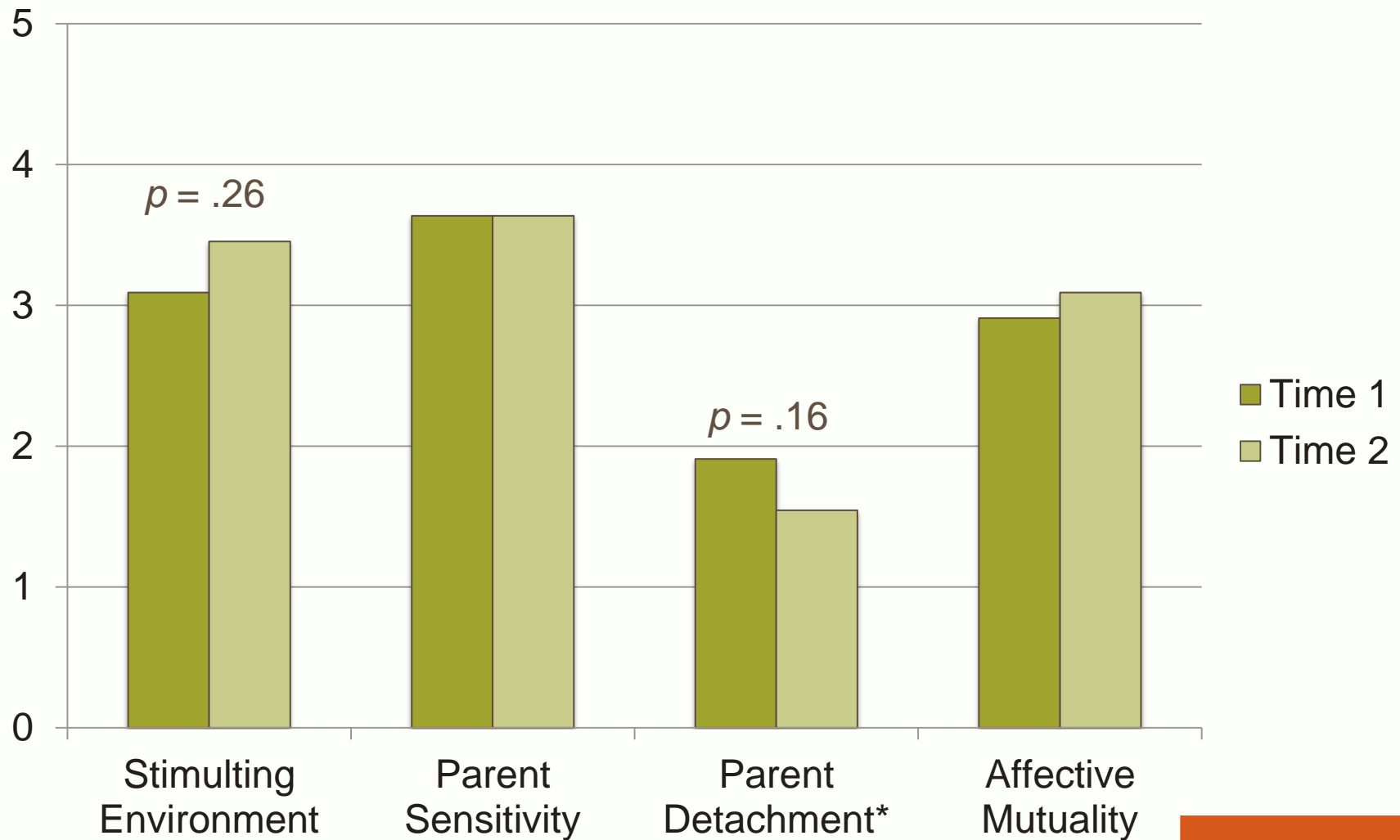
- Inattentive
- perfunctory
- Flat affect
- Uninterested

Dyad Behaviors in Play

Affective mutuality/felt security

- Open Communication
- Warmth
- Mutual positive affect and enjoyment
- Engagement
- Warm, close relationship

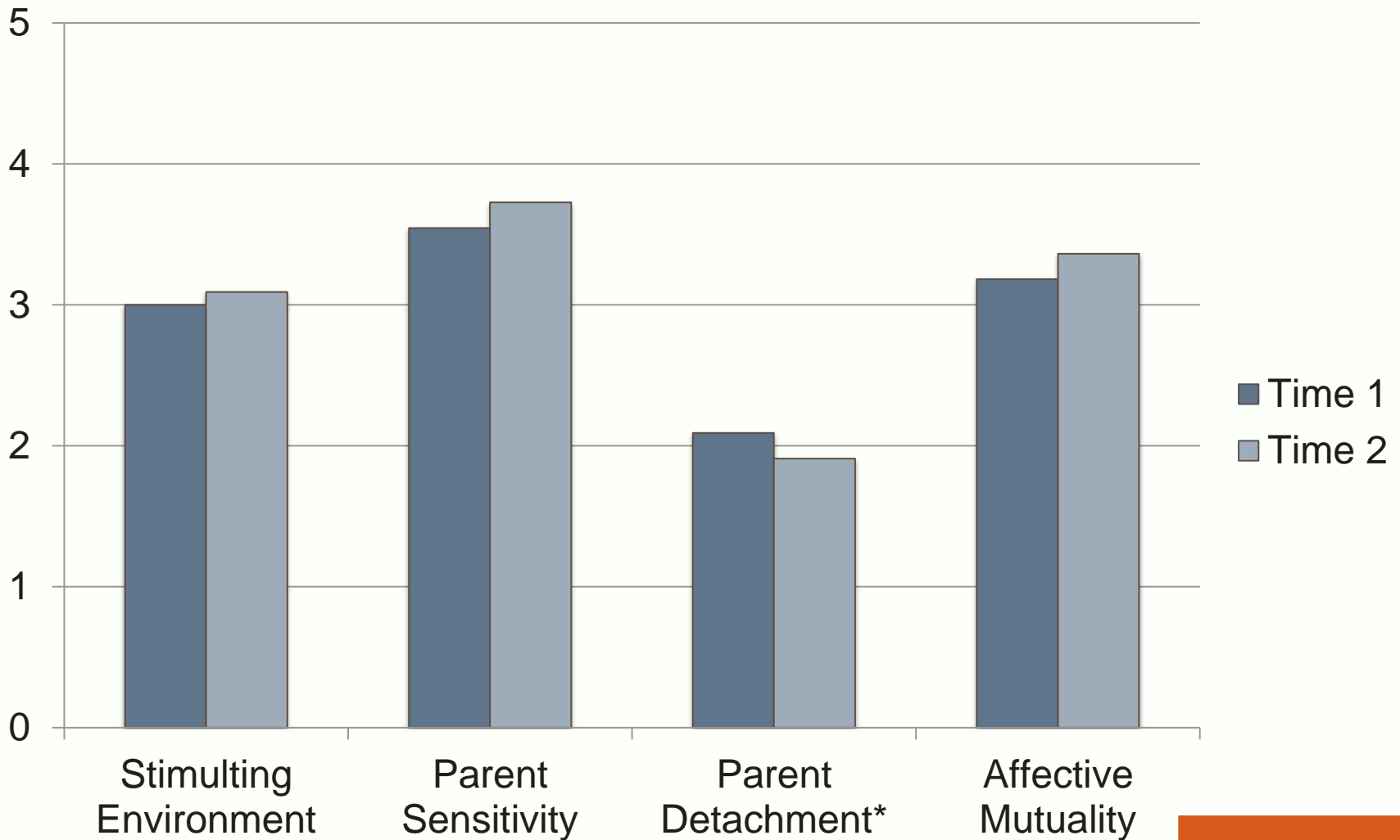
Maternal Play Behaviors: Challenging Task



n = 10

*High score indicates lower parental detachment

Maternal Play Behaviors: Free Play



$n = 10$

**High score indicates lower parental detachment*

Summary

- Reaching a broad audience
 - Varying types of families
 - Child behavioral challenges
- Maternal stress *increases* during play task at end of series



Summary: Parenting Behaviors

- Some alignment between parent report (OPEC) and observed parent behavior in **Challenging Task**
 - OPEC report: *Showing my child love and affection frequently*
→ Current study: **Mother Detachment**
 - OPEC report: *Finding positive ways to guide and discipline my child* → Current study: **Stimulating Environment**
 - No changes in mother sensitivity or dyad behavior.
- No behavioral changes in **Free Play**

Limitations

- Very small sample size—interpret with caution.
- Findings are *trends* in data
- Data analyses in progress—results not final

Next Steps

- Further investigation as to how family characteristics may explain differences in effect of parenting series
 - Moderating effects?
 - Parenting curriculum
 - Length of program
- Replication
 - Increase sample size

Thank you!



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Questions:

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www.searchresearchlab.com

References available upon request

Oregon State
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