

An Ecological Approach to Family Intervention in Early Childhood: Embedding Services in WIC

Thomas J. Dishion

University of Oregon

&

Child and Family Center



Presented at:

Intervening Early Conference, Sept 18-19, 2007

Acknowledgments



Thanks to:

NIDA Support

Research Colleagues

Daniel Shaw

Melvin Wilson

Frances Gardner

Early Steps Project Staff

Early Steps Families

Challenges in Providing Child and Family Mental Health Services to the Poor.



- 1-Many services are paid by personal insurance and cover only DSM disorders.
- 2-State funded services are often poorly supported, ineffective, not research based, and in some cases possibly iatrogenic.
- 3-Solution: Embed affordable and effective interventions in agencies that have wide access and repeated exposure to children and families (Hoagwood & Koretz, 1996)

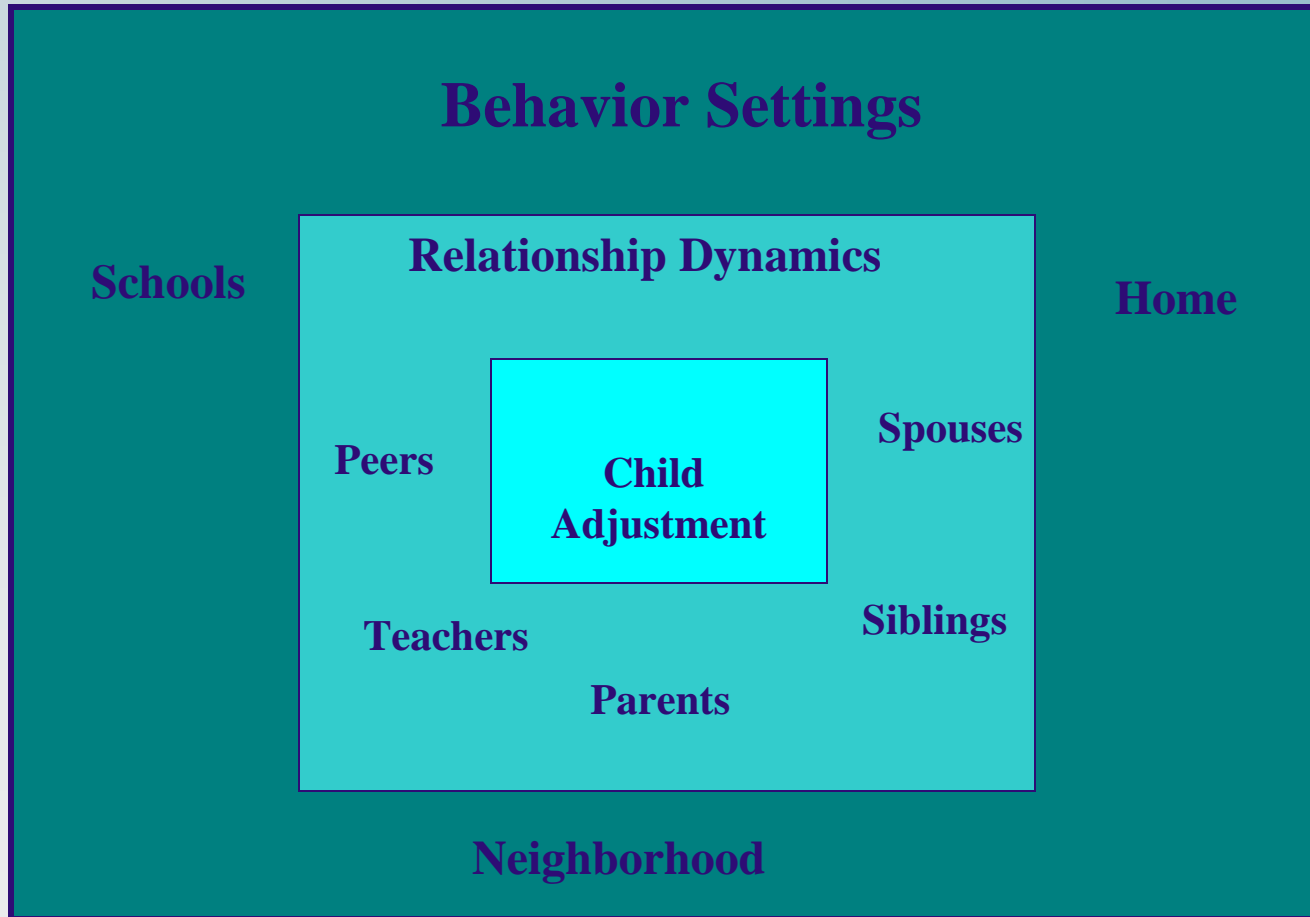
Three Goals of this Talk.



- 1-Provide an overview of the ecological approach to family intervention and treatment (ecoFIT).
- 2-Review findings from a pilot study applying the ecoFIT to high risk young families participating in WIC services.
- 3 - Review initial findings from a multi site outcome study applying the ecoFIT to high risk young families participating in WIC services.

What is an ecological approach to child and family therapy?

The Ecology of Self Regulation



Six Features of An Ecological Approach to Child and Family Interventions (EcoFIT)

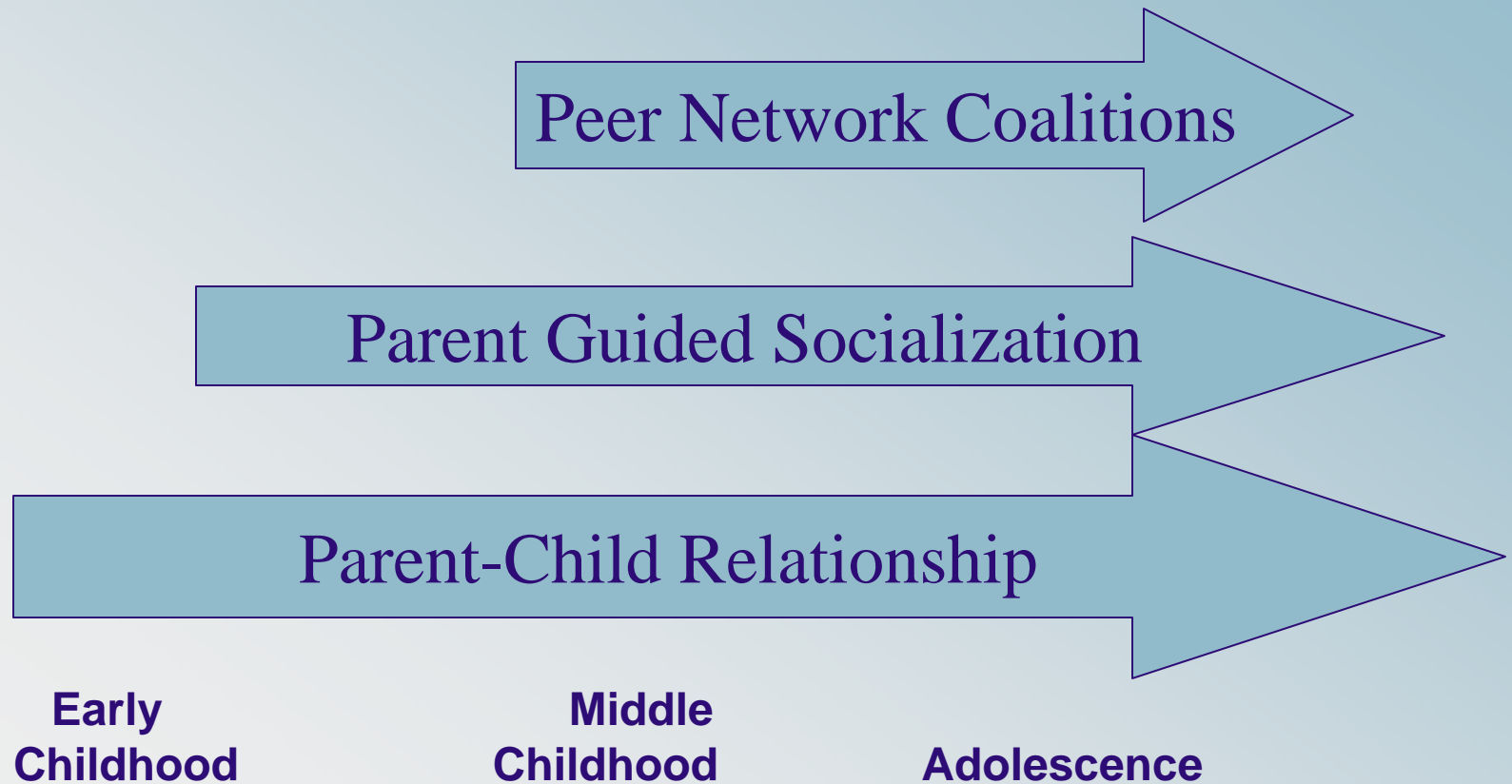
(From Dishion & Stormshak, 2006)

An ecological approach...

- ✓ is based on an *empirically based model* of child and adolescent problem behavior;
- ✓ is *family-centered*, addressing adult leadership and support in the change process;
- ✓ is *assessment driven*, with decisions regarding intervention needs following careful assessments;
- ✓ targets *social interactions* with parents and peers to make long lasting change;
- ✓ addresses *client motivation to change* as a core component;
- ✓ utilizes a *health maintenance model* delivered in service settings that involve children and families;

A Developmental Model for the Influence of Family and Peers on Child Adjustment

(from Dishion & Patterson, 2006)

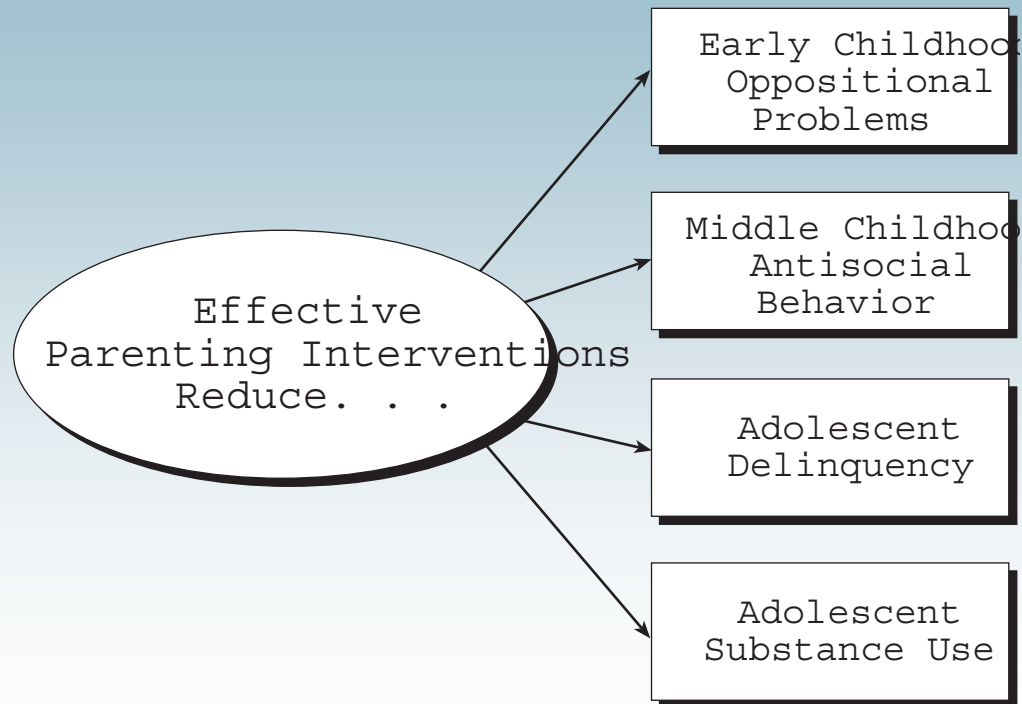


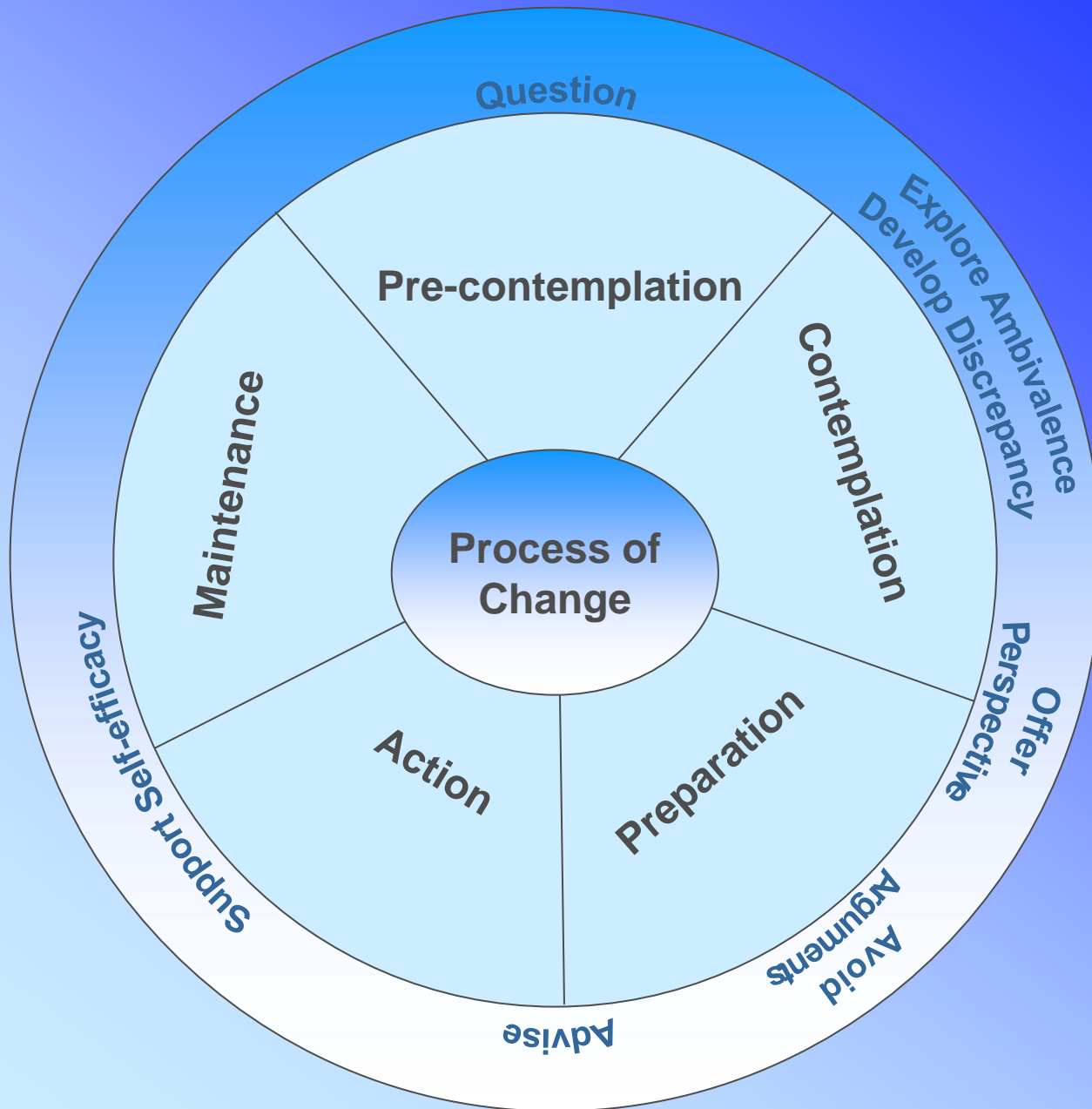
A Broad Overview of Intervention Outcome Literature

(Dishion & Stormshak, 2007)

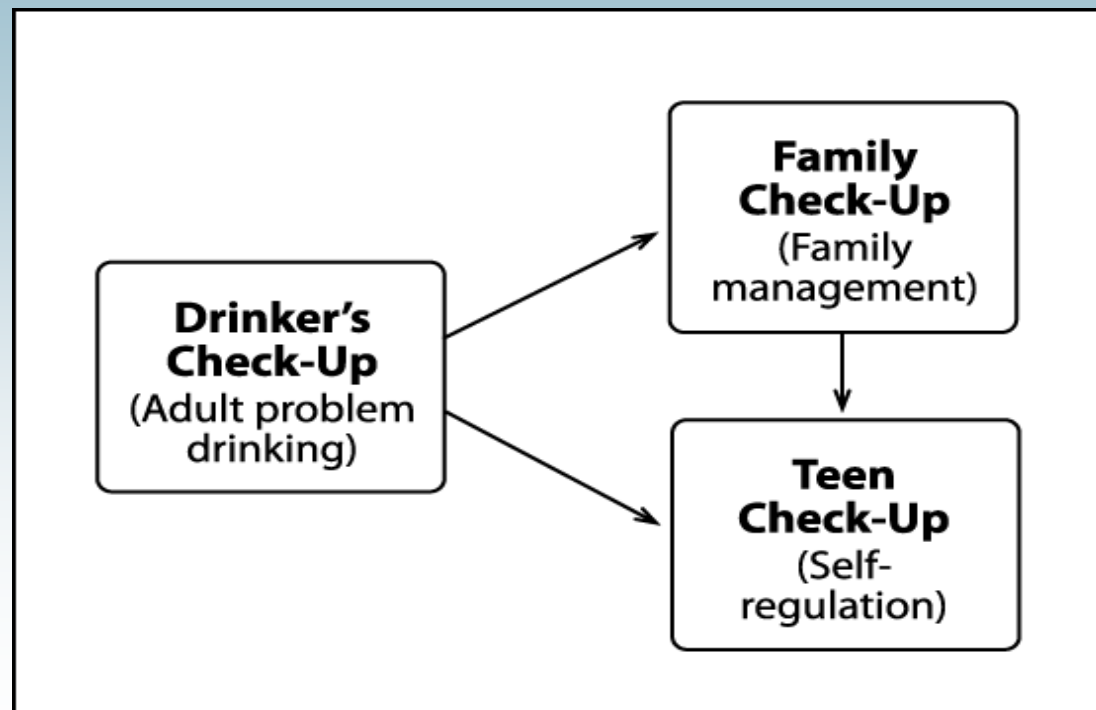


Research on the Effectiveness Interventions that Target Parenting

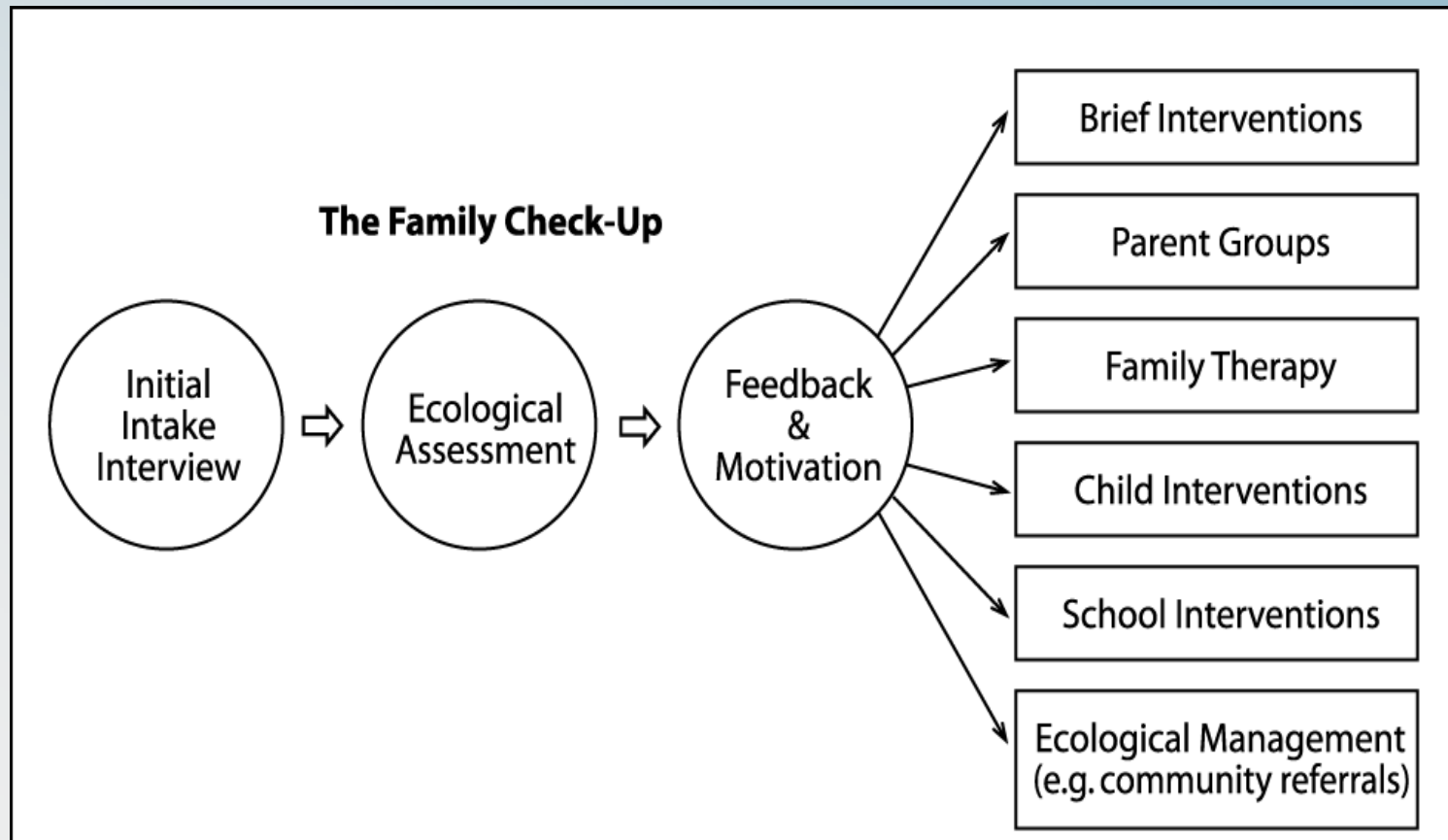




Interventions that Address Motivation to Change



An Overview of the ecoFIT Strategy (Dishion & Stormshak, 2007)



Service Systems Affecting Mental Health of Children and Adolescents

Developmental Stage

Early Childhood



**WIC,
Preschools**

Childhood



Public School
Setting

Early
Adolescence

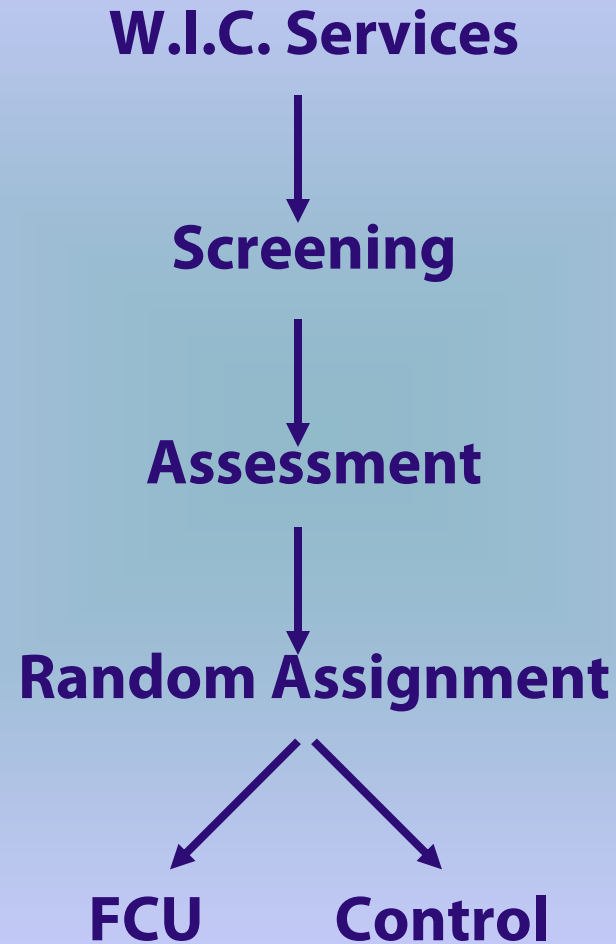


Adolescence



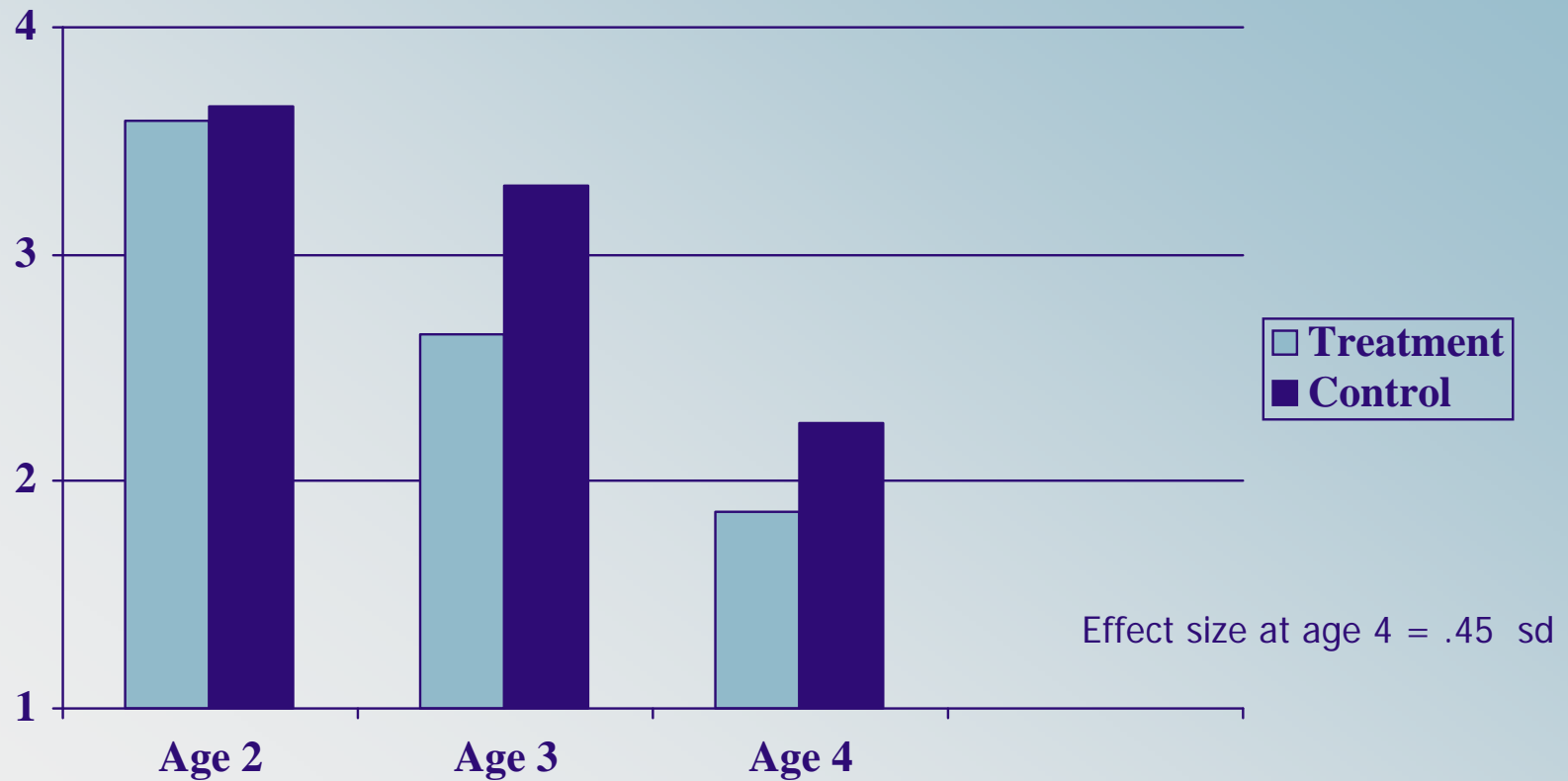
Community
Programs:
Treatment and
Rehabilitation

Early Steps Pilot Project Research Design (N=120)



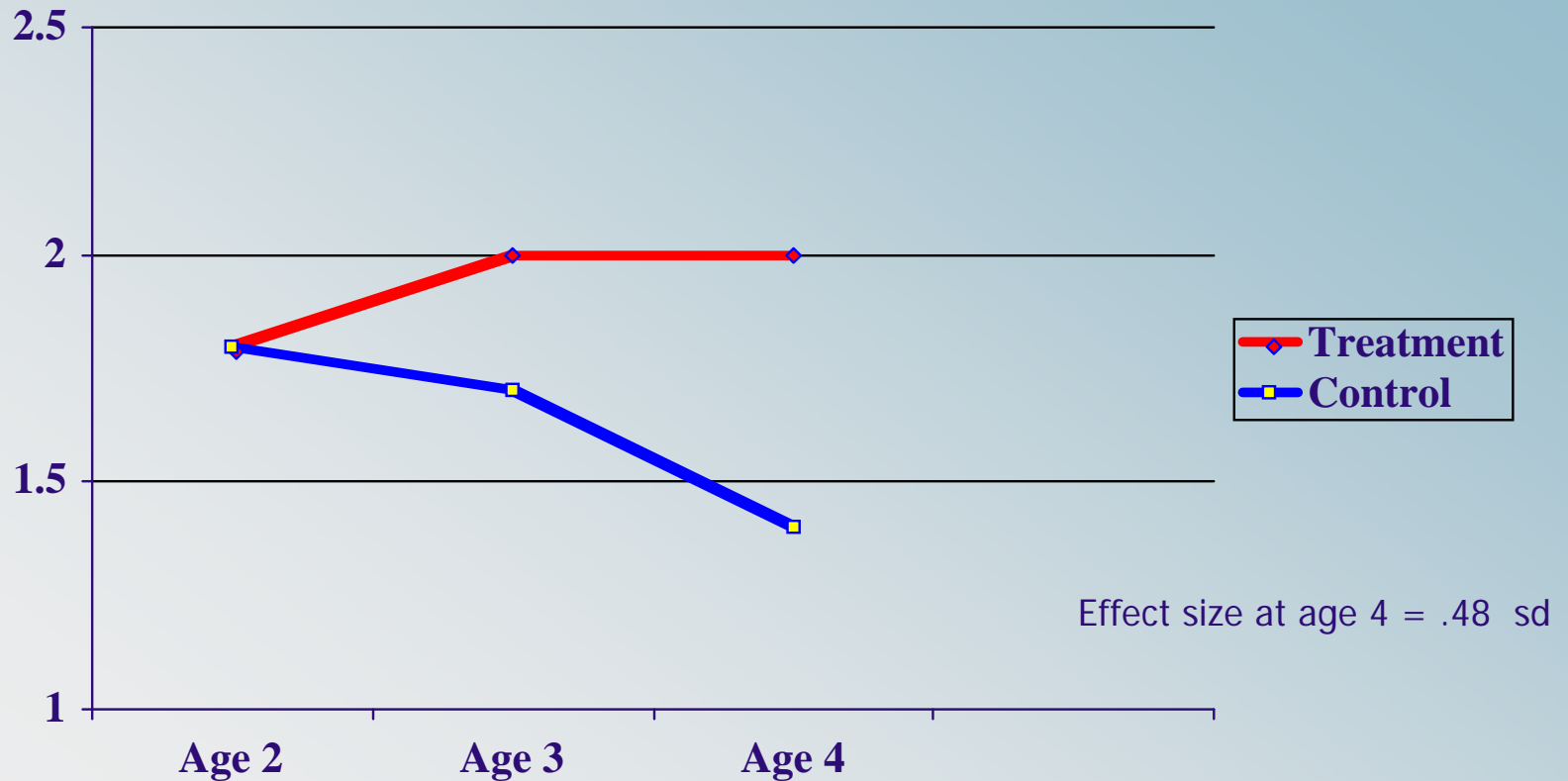
Three Year Effects on Parent Report Problem Behavior in Early Childhood.

(Shaw, Dishion, Supplee & Gardner 2006)



Three Year Effects on Observations of Parent Monitoring in Early Childhood

(Shaw, Dishion et al, 2006)



Early Steps Multi-site Research Design

(N=731: Eugene, Pittsburgh & Charlottesville)

W.I.C. Services



Screening



Assessment



Random Assignment



FCU

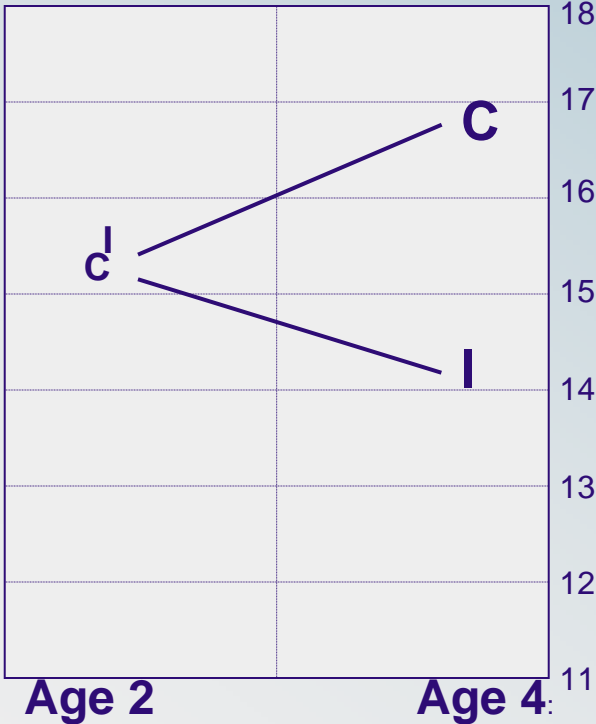
Control

Design of the Early Steps Multi Site Project (Dishion, Gardner, Shaw & Wilson)

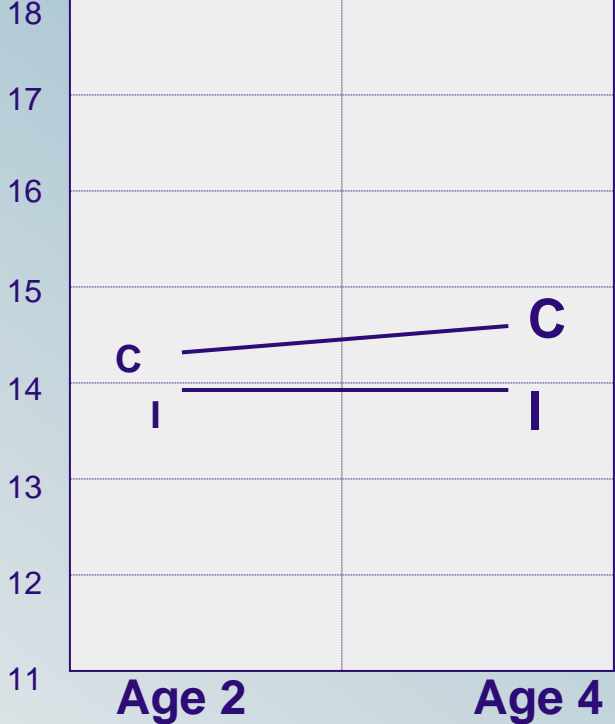
- **Study Sample**: 731 WIC Families with Toddlers
- **Design**: Longitudinal follow-up age 2 to 5
- **Retention**: 89% from ages 2 to 3
- **Ethnicity**: 50.1% European American (n=366)
27.9% African American (n=204)
13.4% Hispanic/Latino (n=98)
8.6% Other (n=63)
- **Gender**: 50.5% Male (n=369)
49.5% Female (n=362)

Primary Caregiver ratings on Problem Behavior (Dishion, Shaw et al, under review)

High Risk



Typically Developing

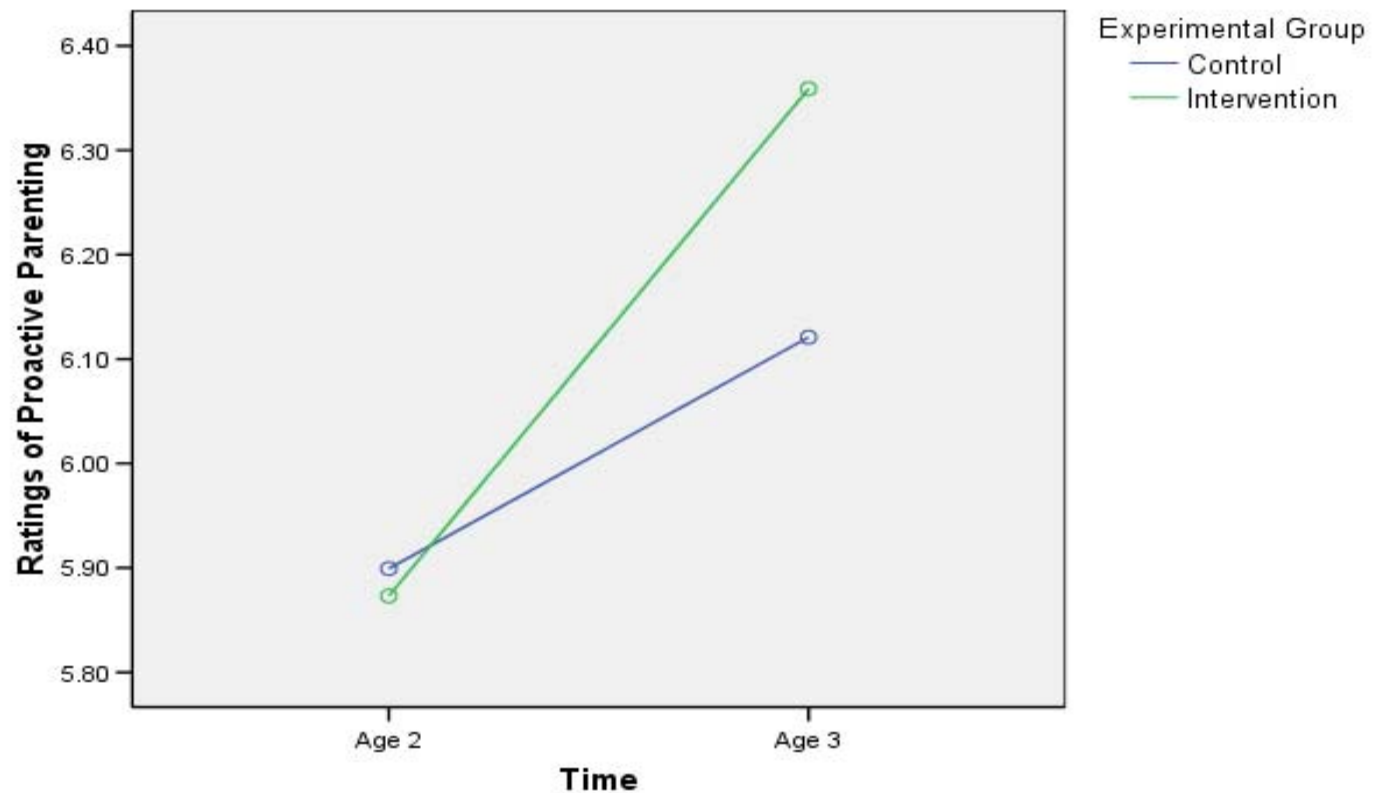


Intervention Effect (.16)

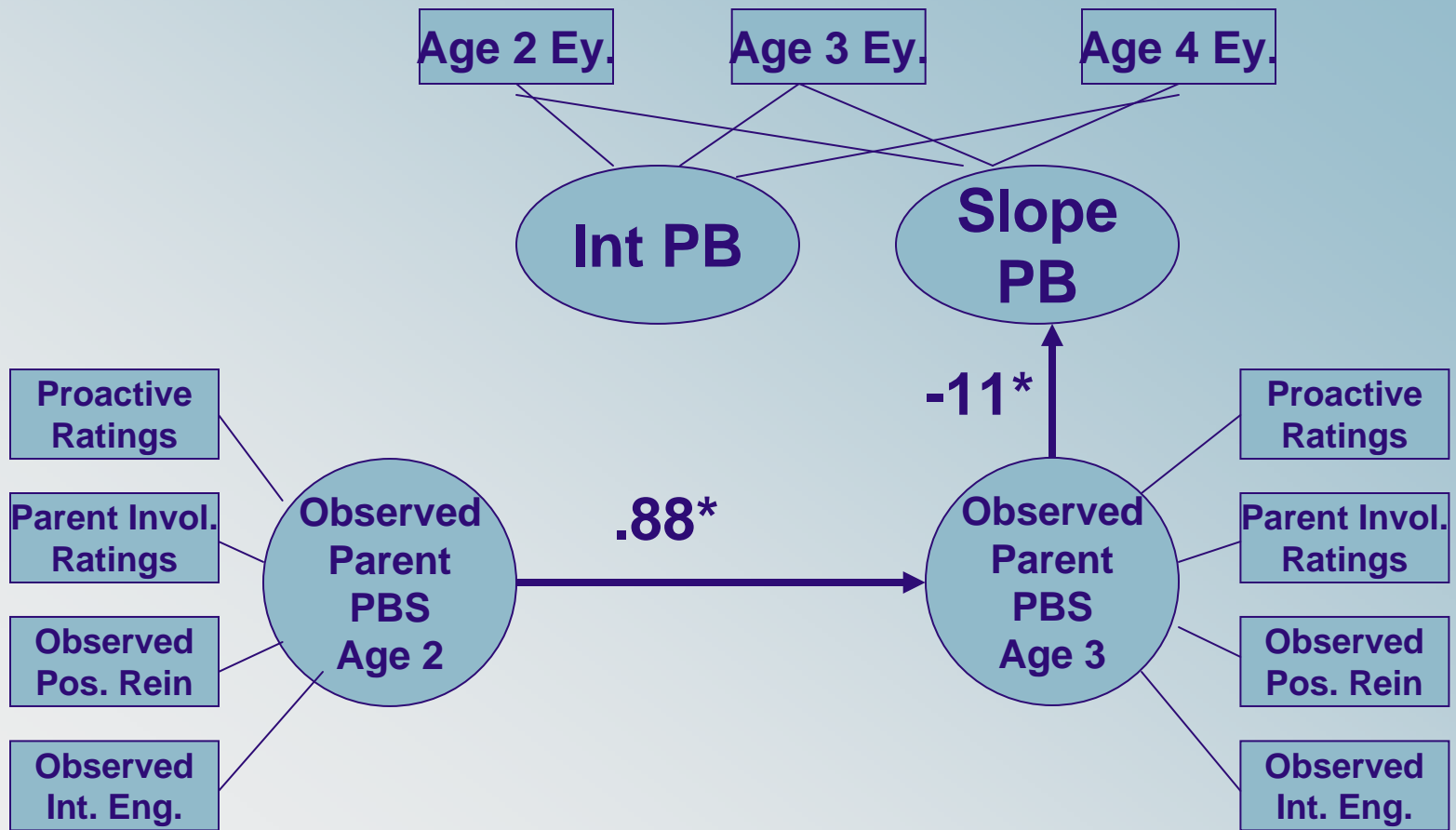
I = Intervention
C = Control

Intervention Outcomes on Direct Observations of Parent Positive Reinforcement

Videotaped Home Observations at age 2 and 3 Years



Changes in Observed Parenting Mediates Reductions in Children's Problem Behavior.



(from Dishion, Shaw, Connell et al, under review)

Concluding Comments.

- 1 Embedding family interventions within agencies such as WIC is feasible and cost effective (average # hours=3 for toddlers);
- 2 The families that are the most at risk are the most likely to engage in the FCU (single parents, teen mothers, low education, low income)
- 3 Although effect sizes are small, they are enduring overtime
- 4 Future work on the ecoFIT model will focus on improving engagement in skill-building interventions that focus on parents 'positive behavior support'.

For more information:

tomd@uoregon.edu

<http://cfc.uoregon.edu>



Also See: Dishion, T. & Stormshak, E. (2007). Intervening in Children's Lives: An Ecological, Family-centered Approach. APA: Washington DC