

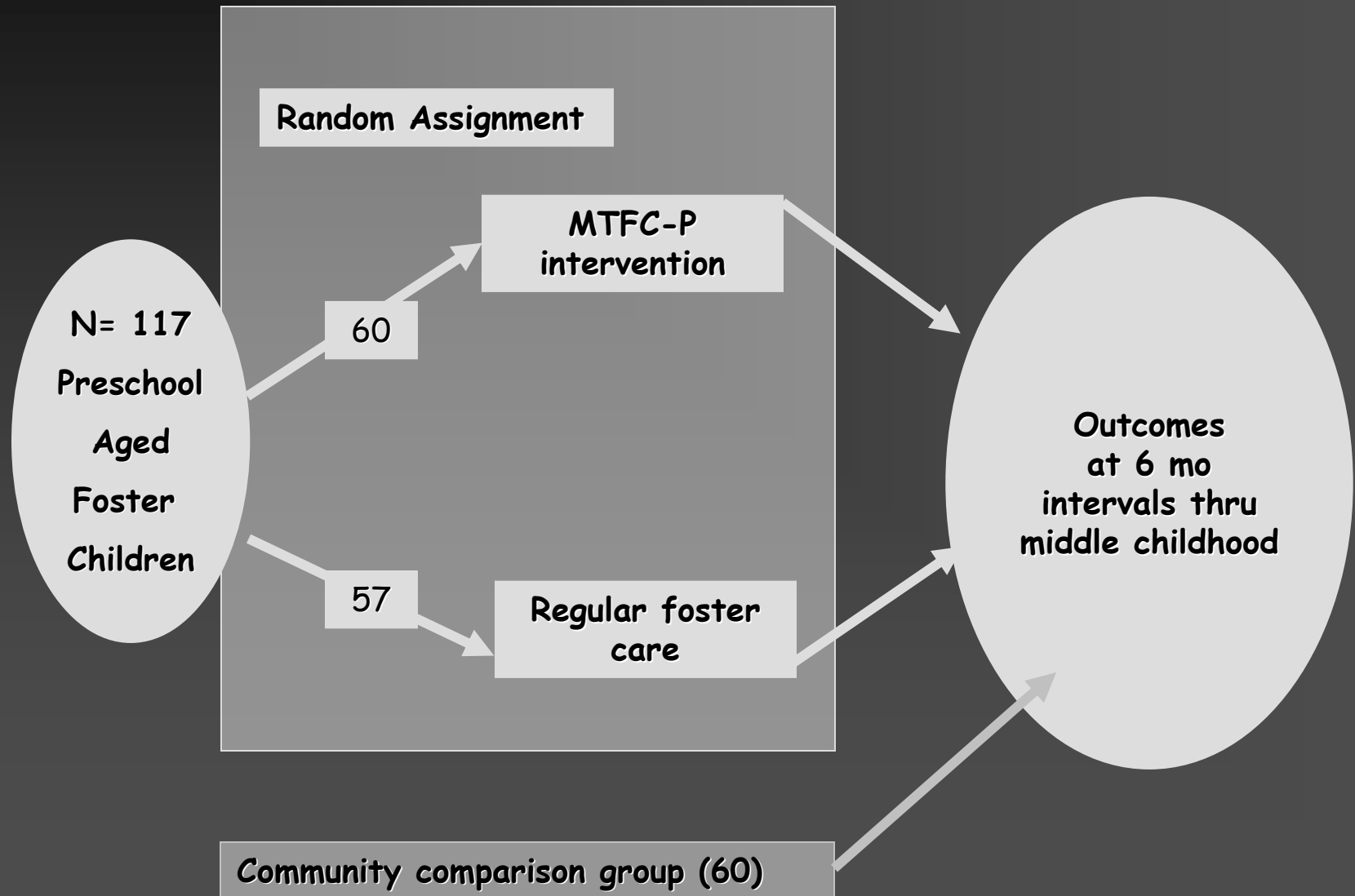


Early Intervention for Foster Children

Philip A. Fisher, Ph.D.
Oregon Social Learning Center



The Early Intervention Foster Care Study, 1999-



Adrift in the foster care system

Overall sample characteristics

Mean age at first foster placement

3.4152

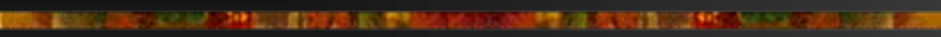
Age at first placement

	Frequency	Percent
Valid birth to 6 mons	3	2.6
6 mons to 12 mons	7	6.0
12 to 24 mons	8	6.8
24 to 36 mons	18	15.4
36 to 48 mons	37	31.6
48 mons or order	44	37.6
Total	117	100.0

Number of living transitions at study start

	Frequency	Percent
Valid 1.00	17	14.5
2.00	27	23.1
3.00	21	17.9
4 or more	52	44.4
Total	117	100.0

When foster care works...



Birth

1yr

2yrs

3yrs

4yrs

5yrs

6yrs

7yrs

Child 4



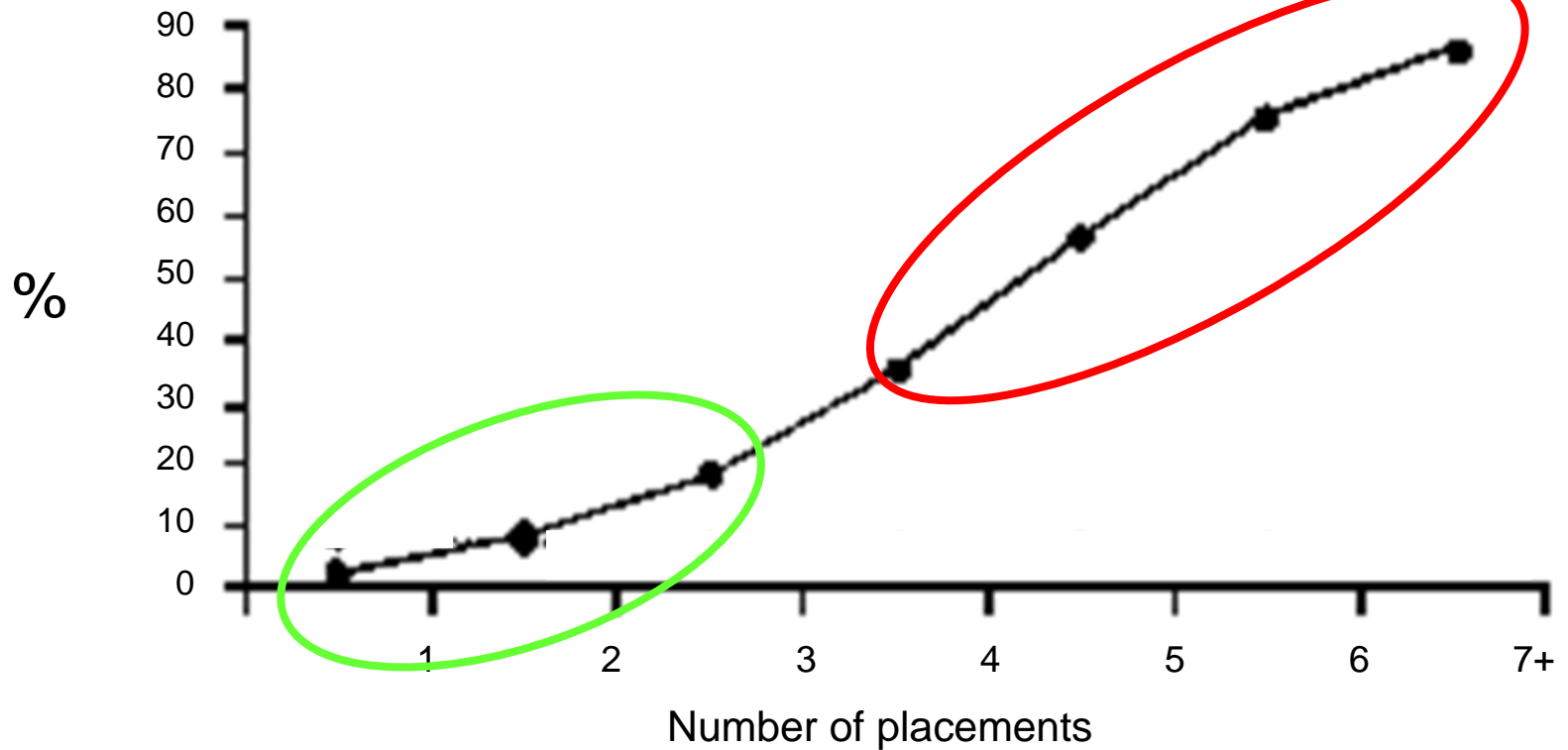
Child 5



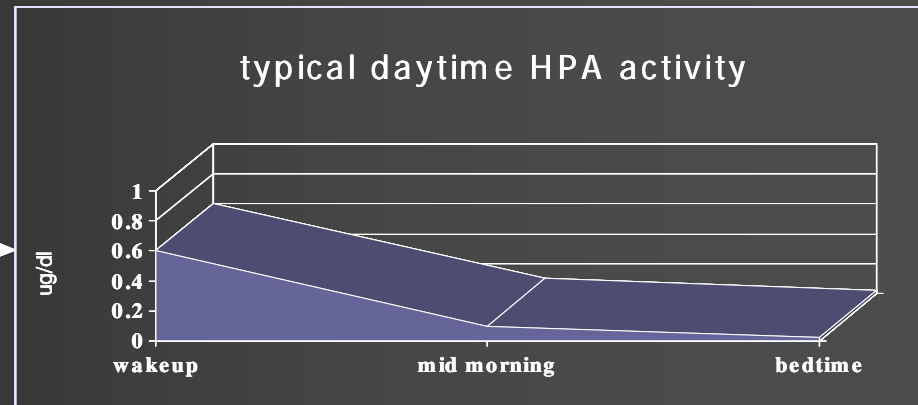
Child 6



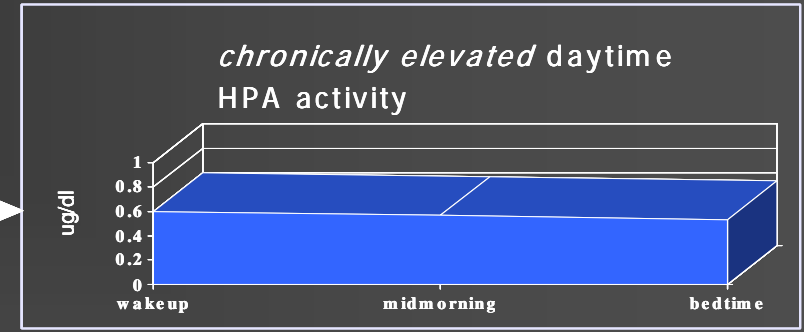
Percent of placement failures based on number of prior placements



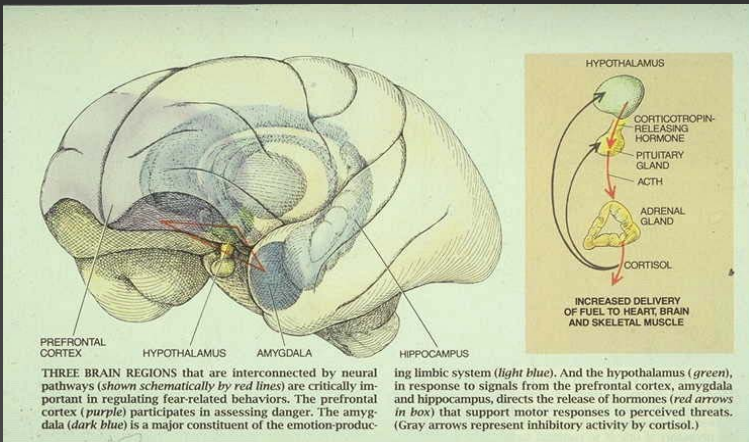
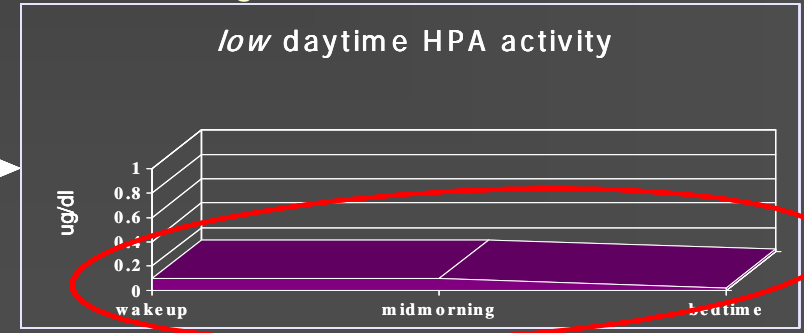
HPA axis dysregulation associated with early life stress



typical



(downregulation via chronic stress)

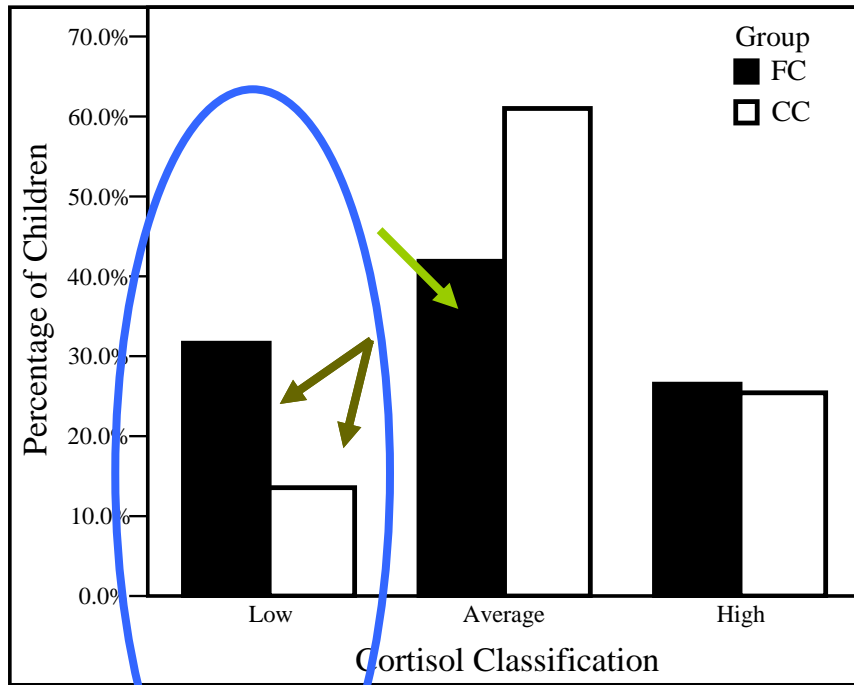


stress-induced 'blunted' patterns

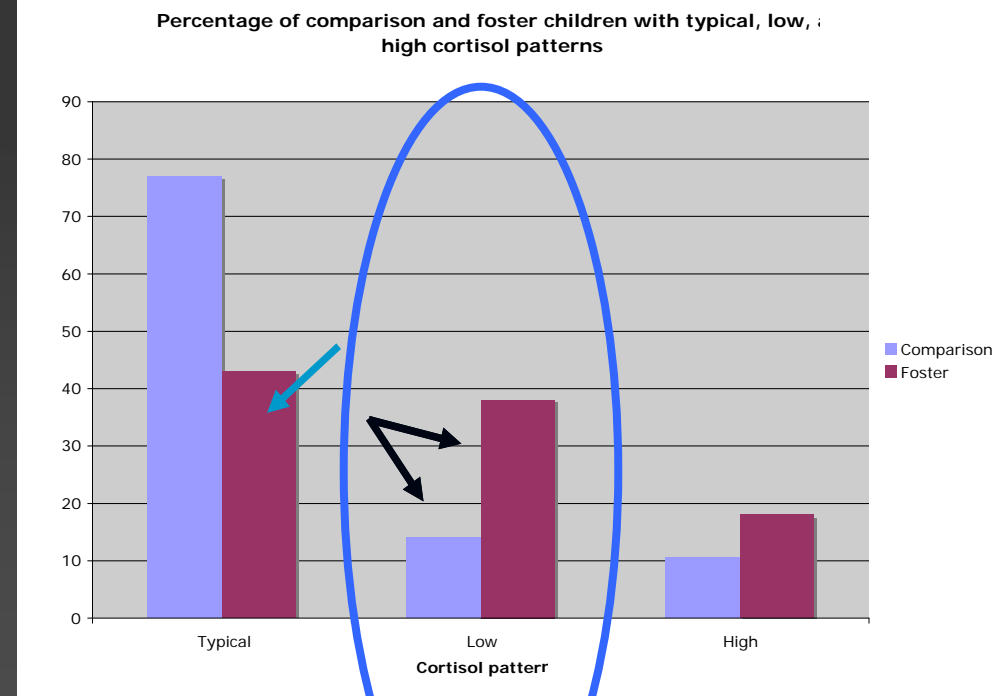
Anxiety and affective disorders

Some, but not all, foster children show altered HPA axis function

Oregon



Delaware

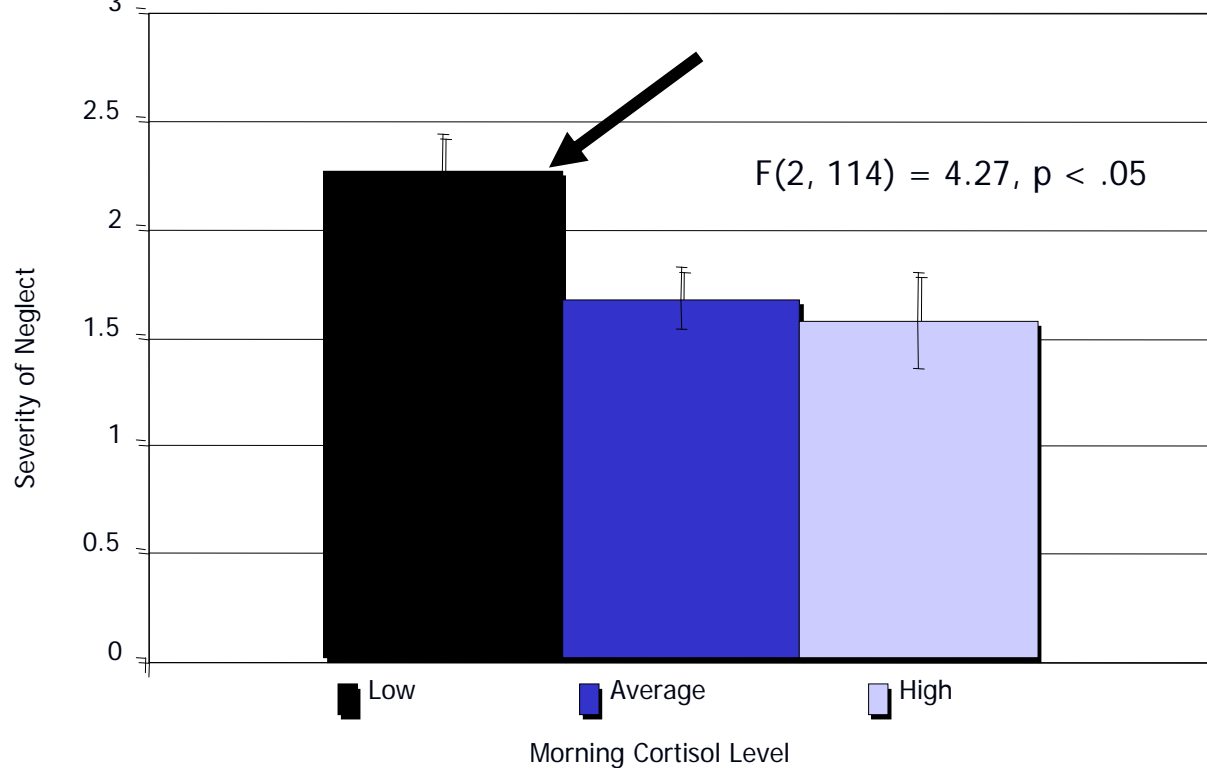


Bruce, Fisher, Pears, & Levine (*submitted*)

Dozier et al. (2007)

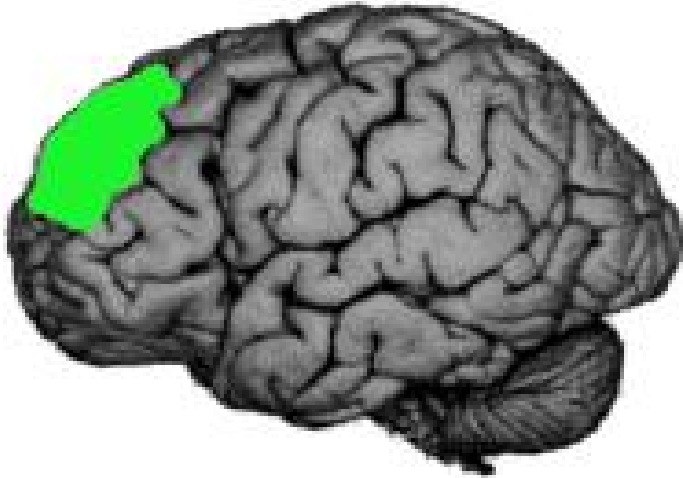
Neglect is the primary form of maltreatment associated with HPA dysregulation

Severity neglect in low, average,
and high morning cortisol groups



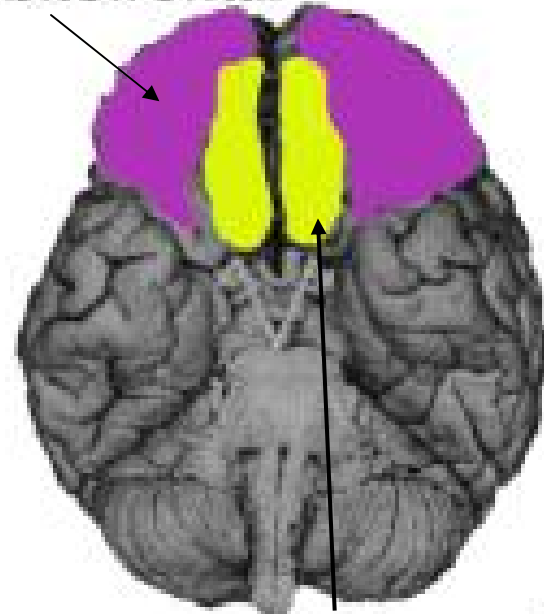
Prefrontal Cortex Regions

Dorsolateral



- Inhibitory control
- Working memory
- Planning

Orbitofrontal

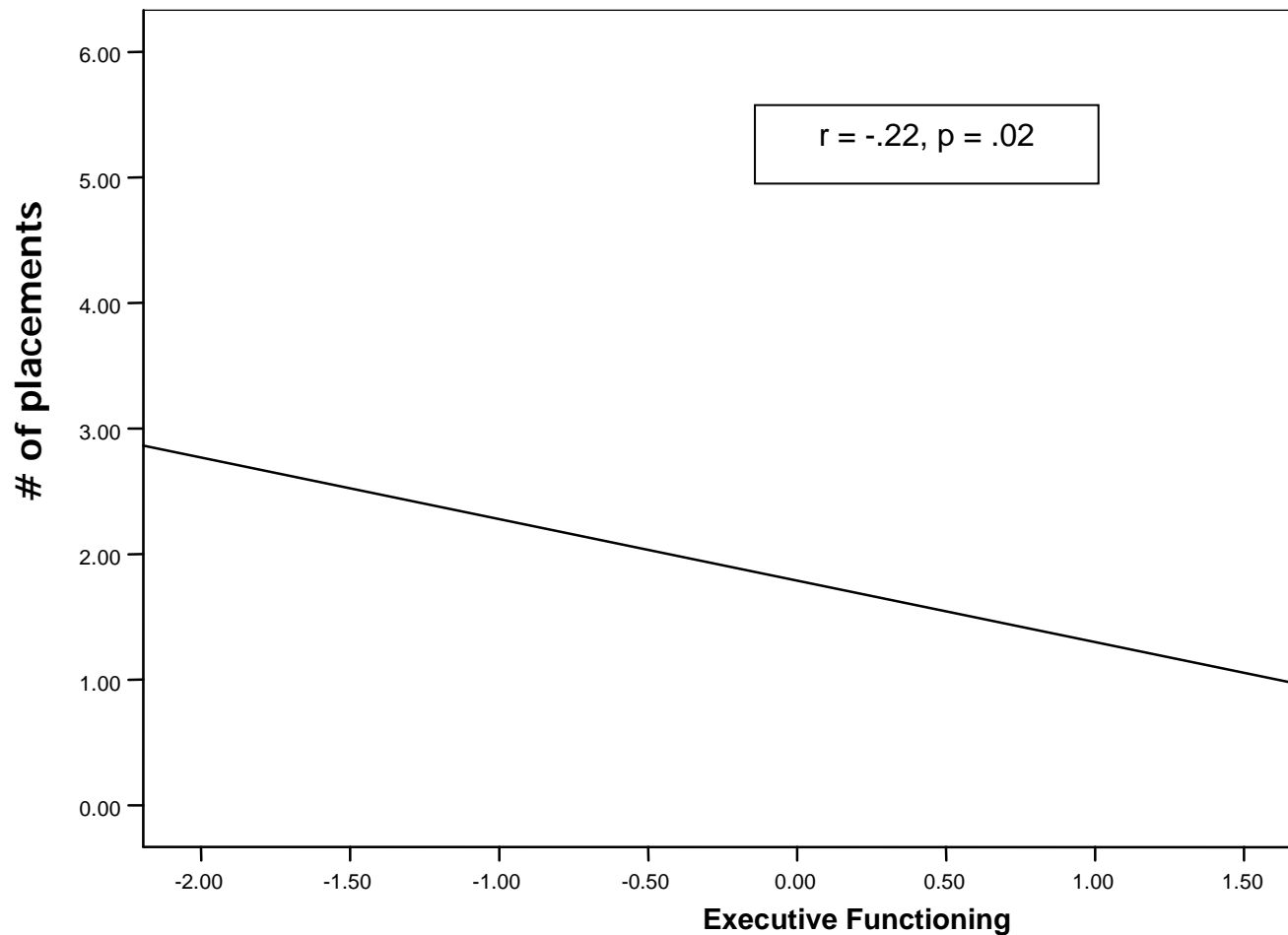


Ventromedial

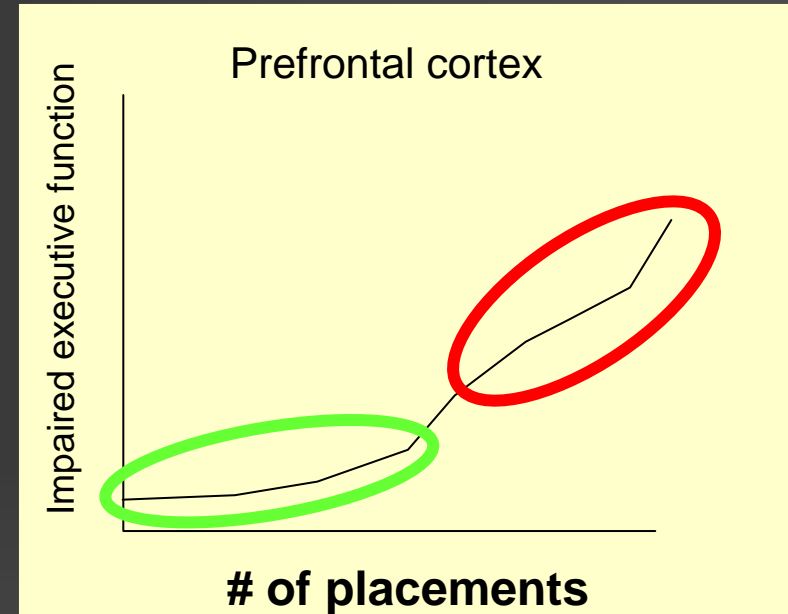
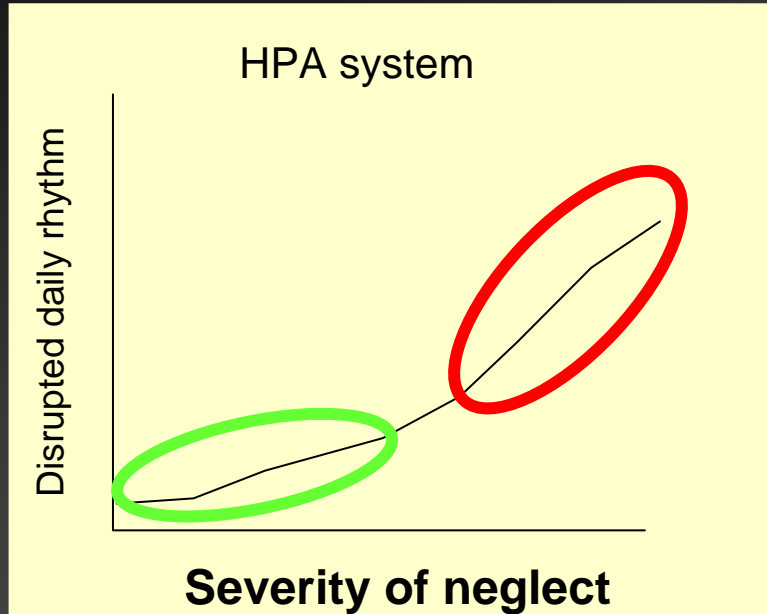
- Decision-making in context of rewards and consequences

ADHD
Substance abuse

Association Between # of Prior Placements and Executive Functioning



Neurobiological vulnerabilities from early stress for foster children



- Neurobiologically informed interventions
- Interventions with neurobiological targets



Early intervention in foster care works



MTFC-P emphasizes 3 domains:

Foster Parent Consultant

Family Therapist

'Daily Report' Caller

STAFF

Case Manager

Child Therapist
Behavioral Skills Trainer

Child Psychiatrist

Caregiver-Child
Relationship

Case Management

Child Needs

Contexts

Home

Community

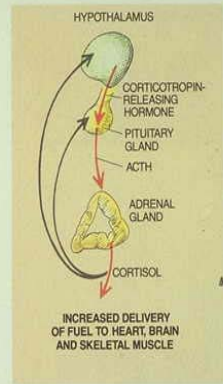
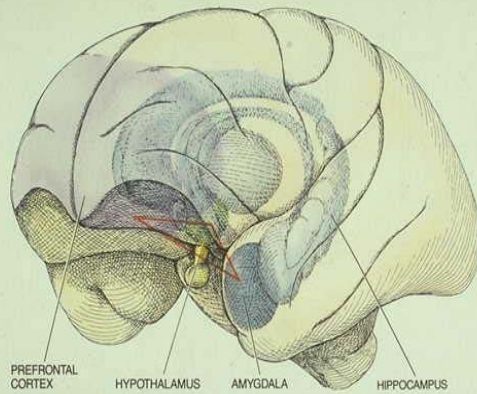
Preschool/school

5 Key Program Components

- Foster parent support & consultation services
 - Pre-placement training
 - Weekly group meeting
 - 24/7 on call support
- Child treatment services
- Parenting support for birth/adoptive families

- Daily Report telephone check-in w/caregiver
- Clearly specified staff roles & responsibilities

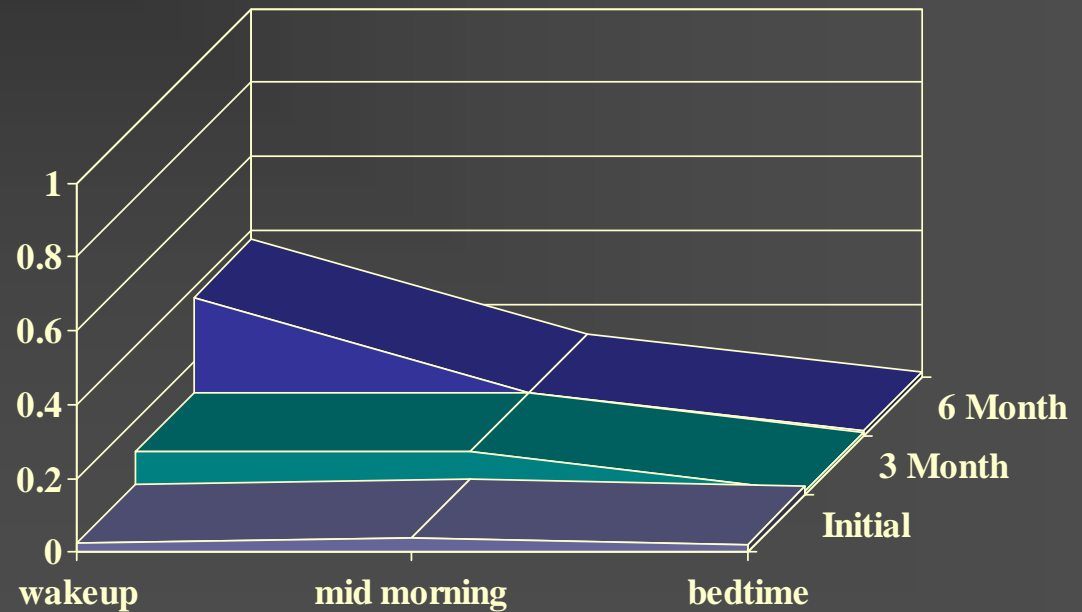
HPA Plasticity



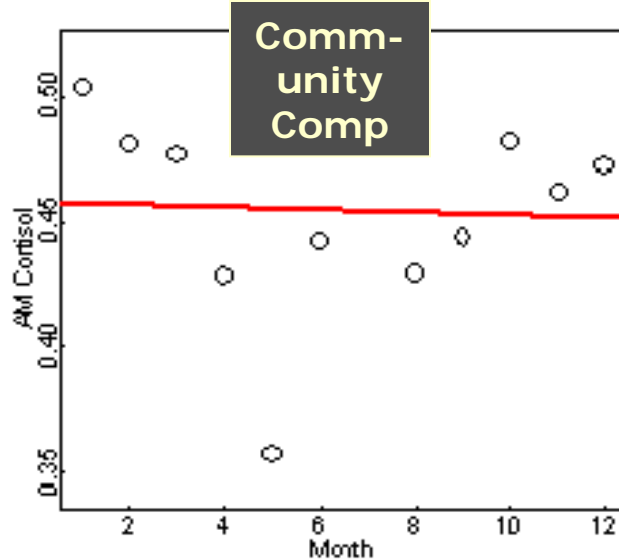
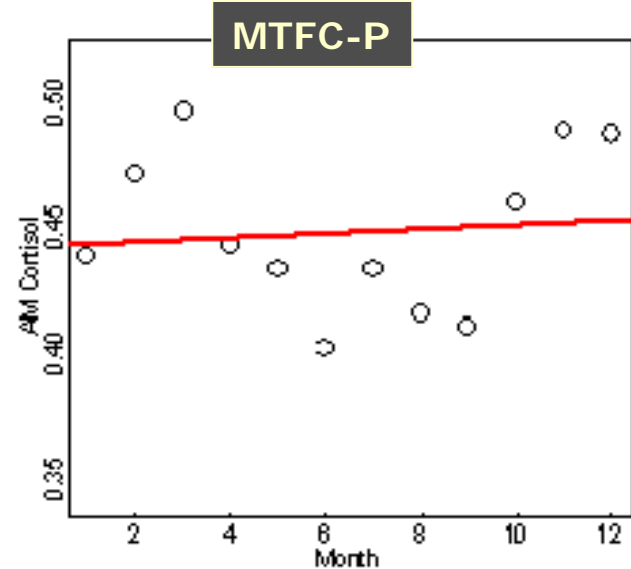
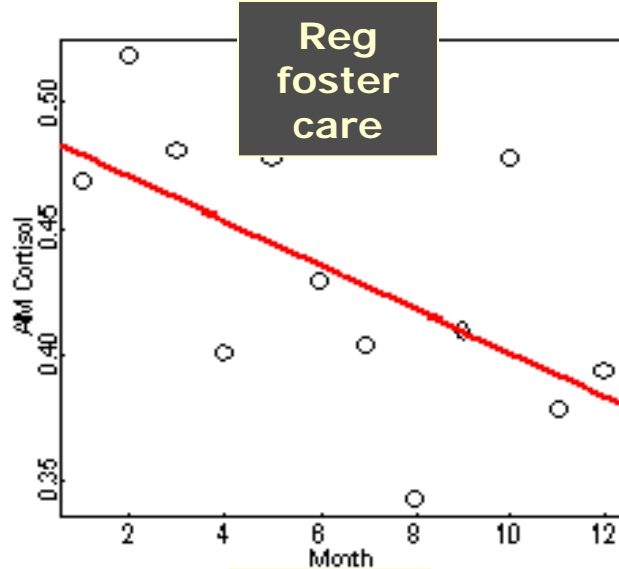
THREE BRAIN REGIONS that are interconnected by neural pathways (shown schematically by red lines) are critically important in regulating fear-related behaviors. The prefrontal cortex (purple) participates in assessing danger. The amygdala (dark blue) is a major constituent of the emotion-producing limbic system (light blue). And the hypothalamus (green), in response to signals from the prefrontal cortex, amygdala and hippocampus, directs the release of hormones (red arrows in box) that support motor responses to perceived threats. (Gray arrows represent inhibitory activity by cortisol.)

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Therapeutic intervention



Group effects on morning cortisol levels across time *for all children*

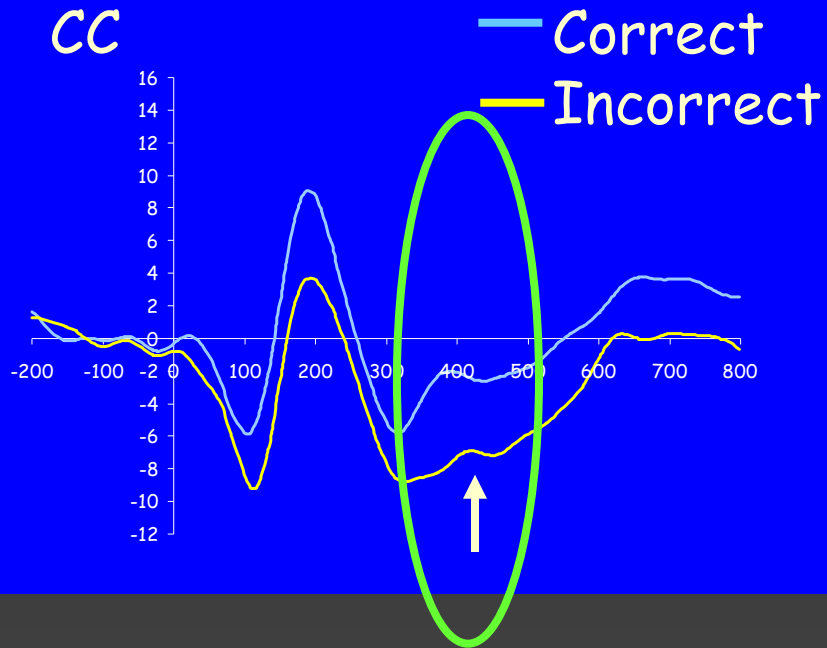


Fisher, Gunnar, Dozier, Bruce, & Pears (2007), *Annals NYAS*

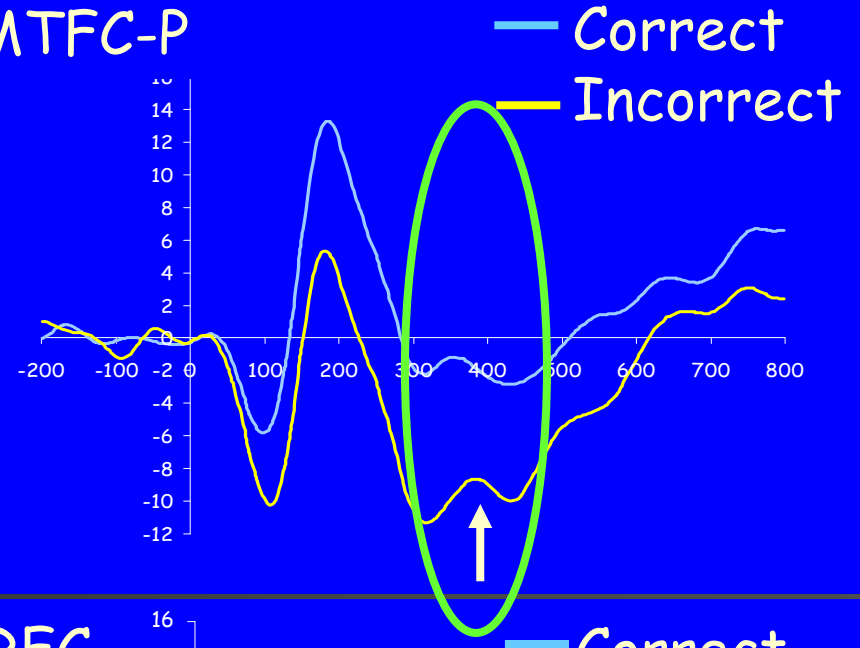
Intervention effects on executive functioning:

Feedback negativity at Fz (prefrontal center electrode site)

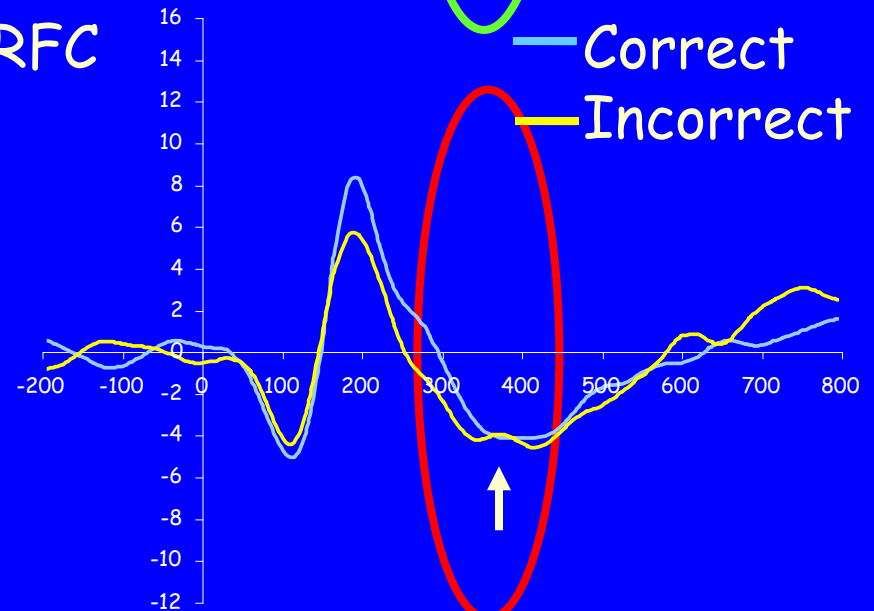
CC



MTFC-P



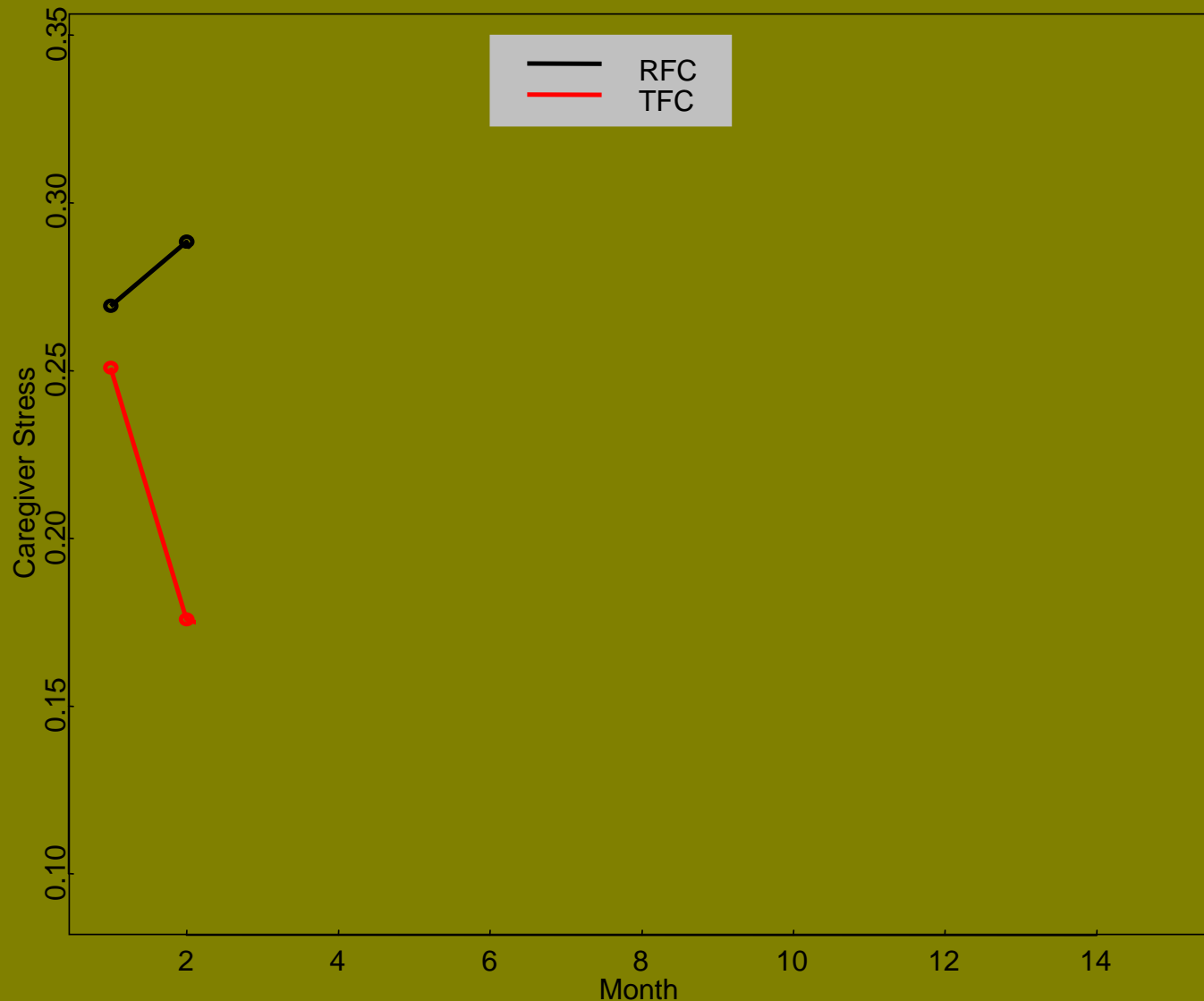
RFC



Group:
 $F(2, 31) = 1.80, ns$
Interaction:
 $F(2, 31) = 5.11, p < .05$

Bruce, Martin-McDermott, Fisher, & Fox (*under review*)

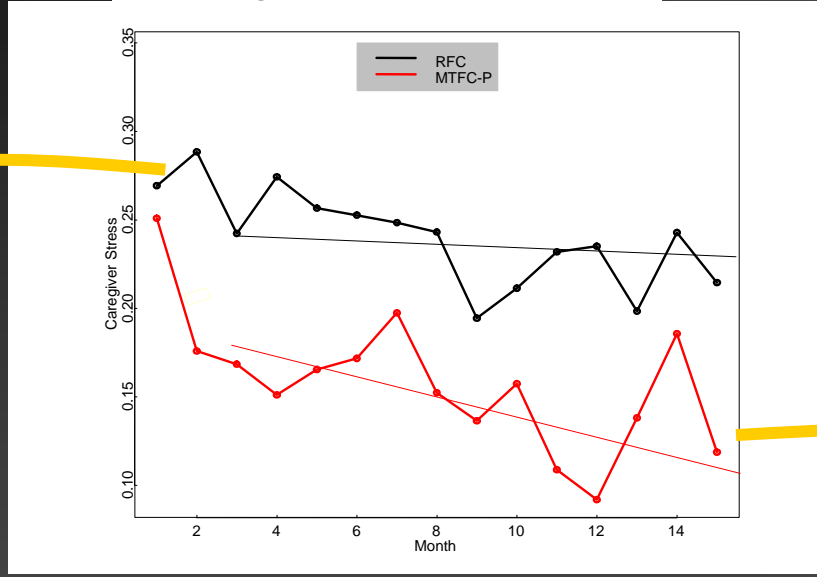
Conditional probability of caregiver stress given child behavior problems



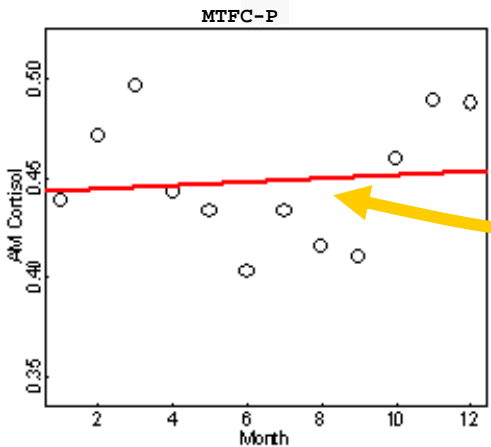
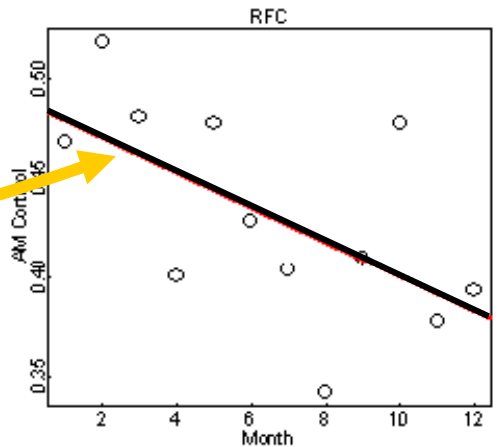
Caregiver stress levels are directly related to children's cortisol levels

Fisher & Stoolmiller (2007)

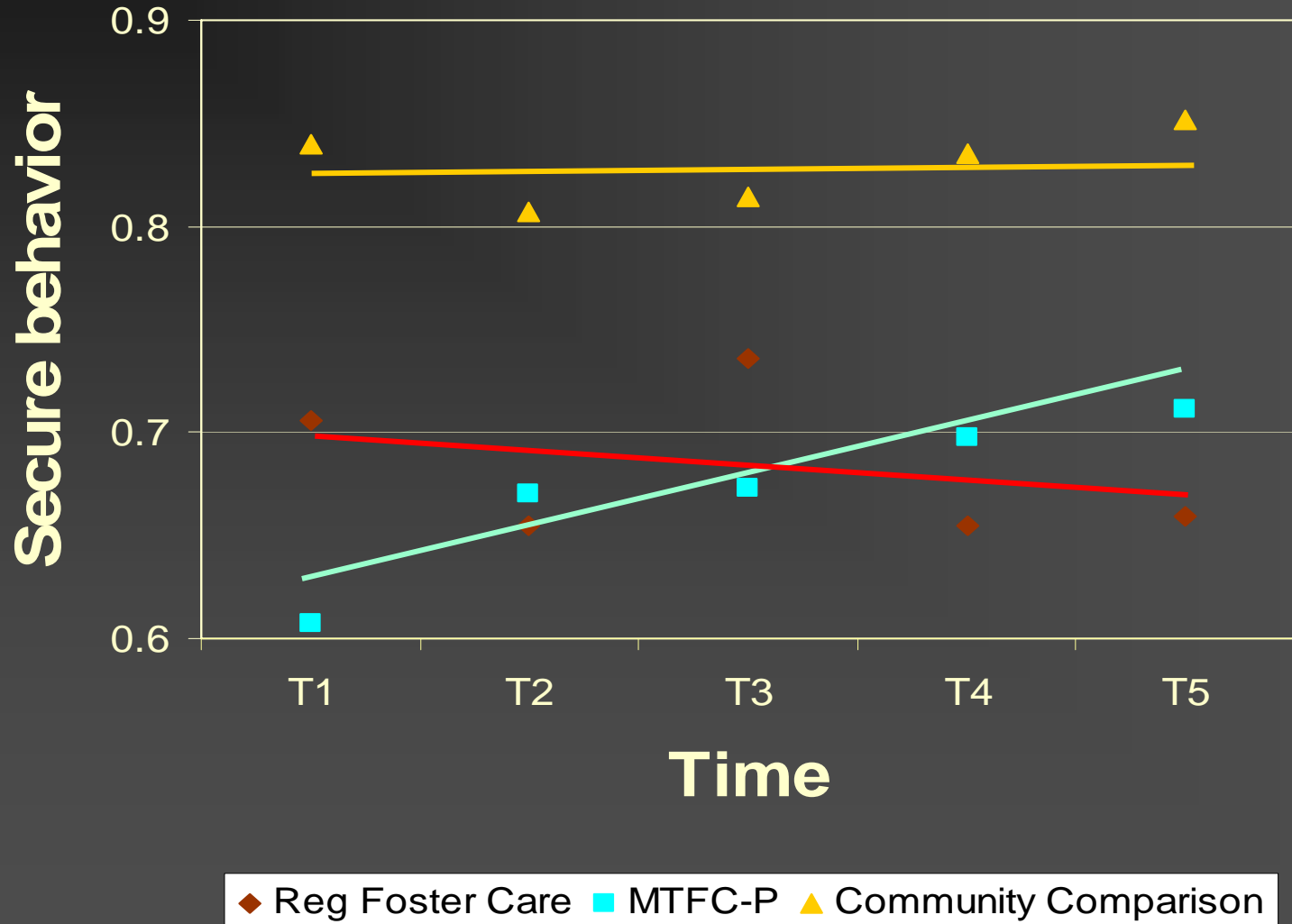
Caregiver stress



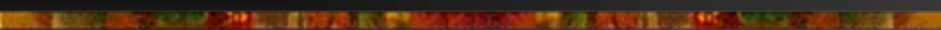
Morning Cortisol



Change in attachment (% secure behavior)



Early intervention improves permanency outcomes



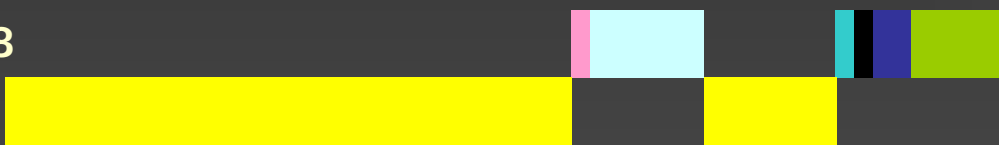
Intervention begins 5yrs

Birth 1yr 2yrs 3yrs 4yrs 5yrs 6yrs 7yrs

Child 7



Child 8

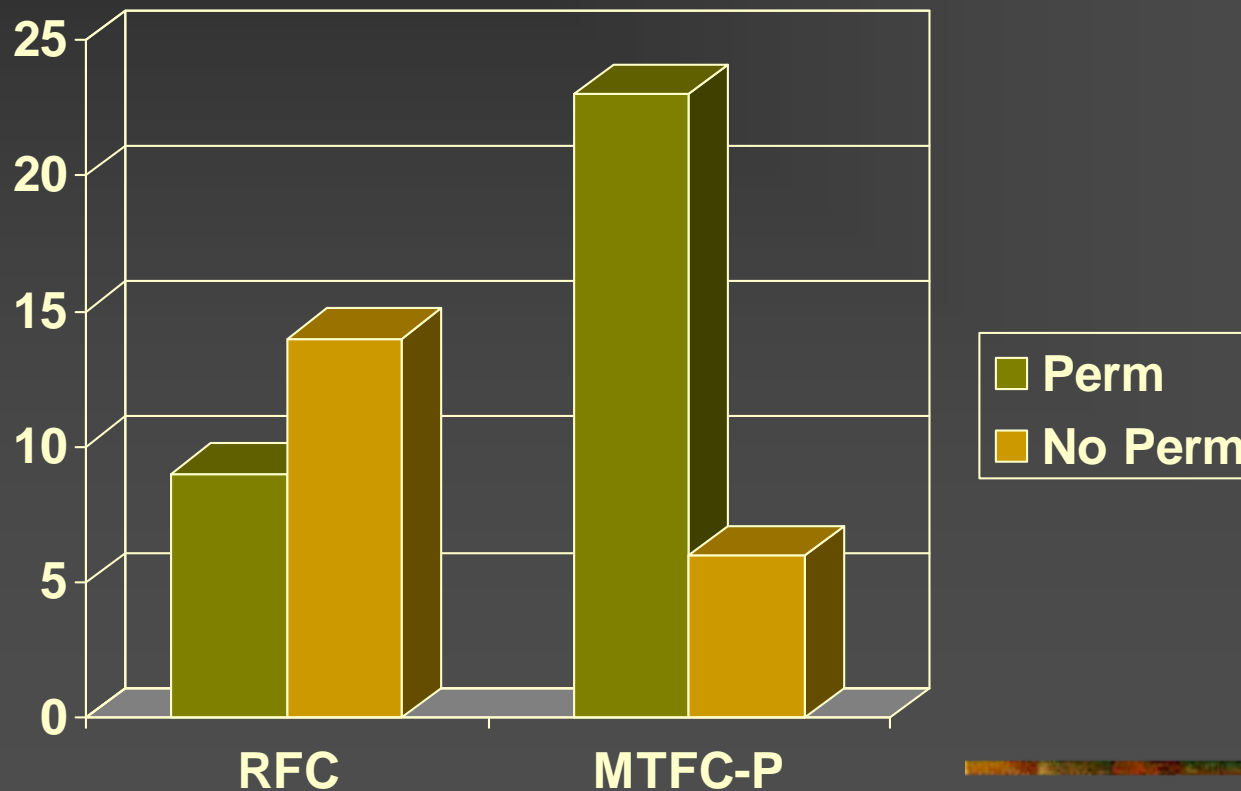


Child 9



Successful permanent placements for children with 4 or more prior placements at study start

- Regular foster care 9 of 23 (39%)
- MTFC-P 23 of 29 (79%)





Acknowledgements

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