



***Mindfulness in Parenting to Promote Self-Regulation
and Social-emotional Competence in
Parents and Children in Low-income Contexts***

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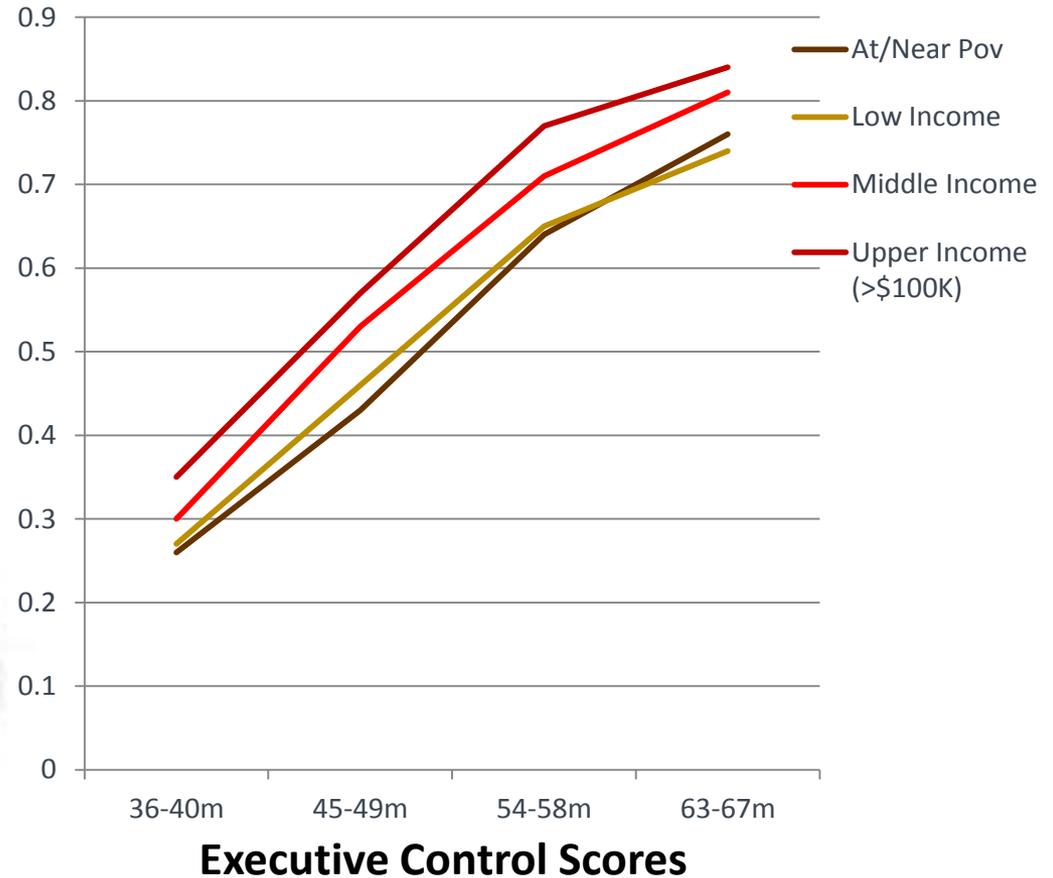
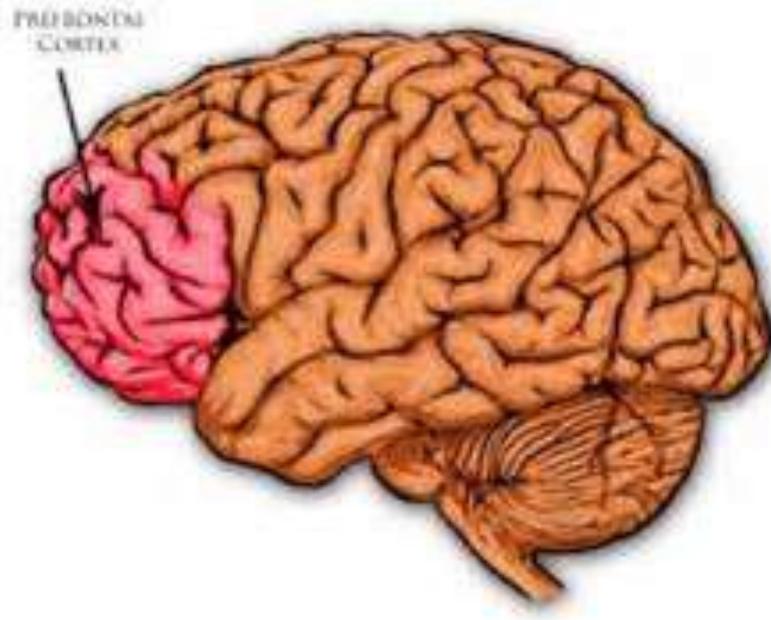
Exposure to Economic Disadvantage and Adversity in Childhood

Exposure to economic **disadvantage and adversity** during childhood disrupts the development of key neurobiological systems underlying **self-regulation** during a sensitive developmental period with potentially **lasting and pervasive detrimental effects**.

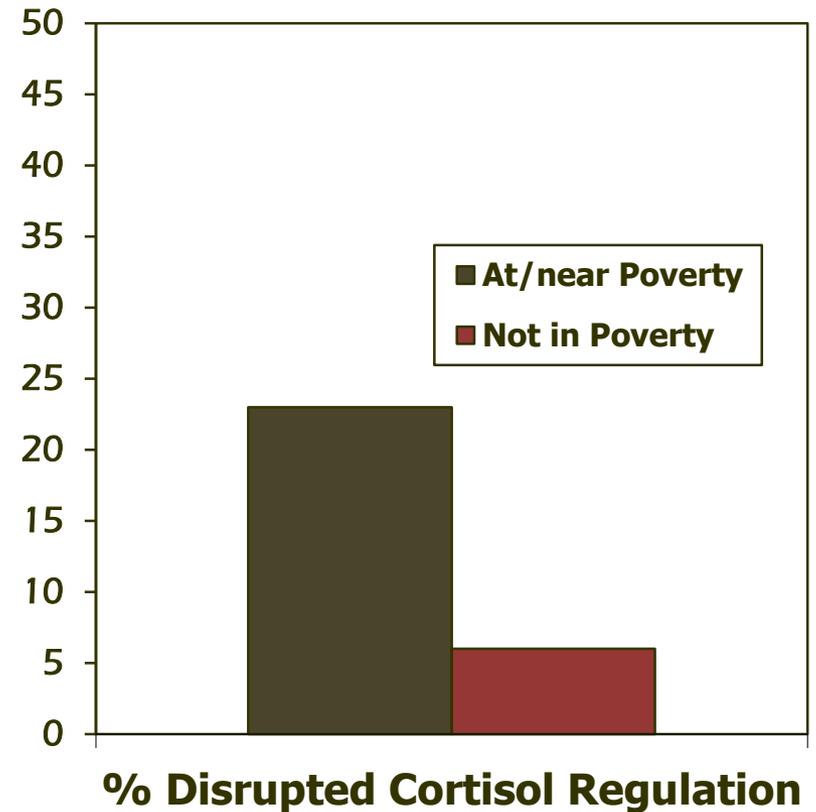
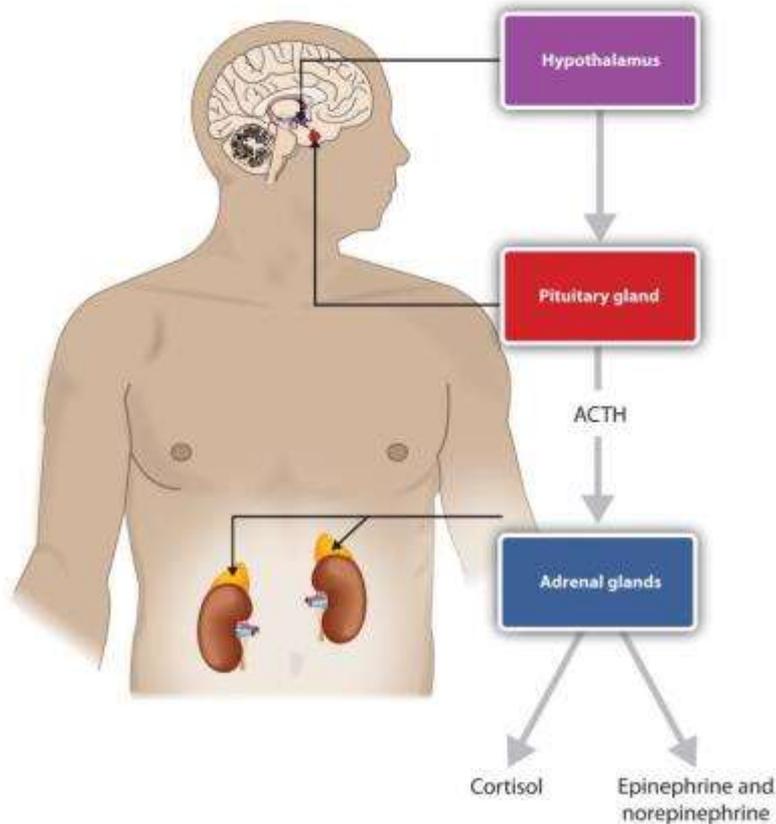
Parenting in early childhood may be a key mediator of these effects, and may be a critical protective factor.

Executive Control

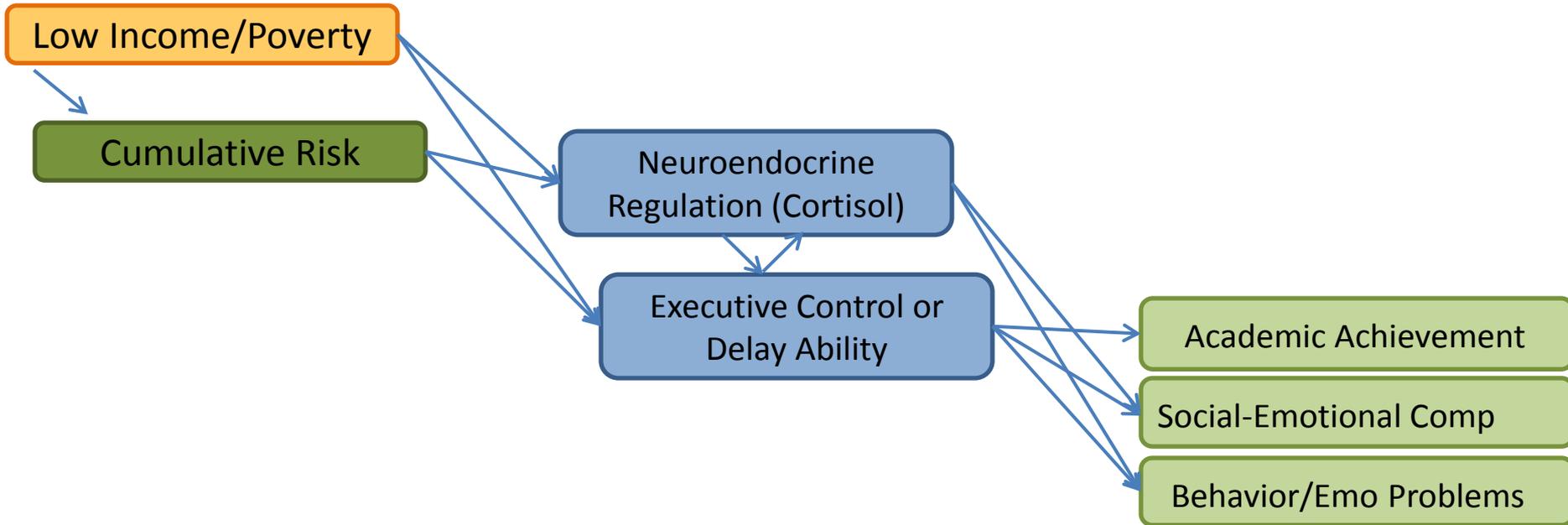
- Attention regulation
- Inhibitory control
- Flexibility



HPA Axis: Diurnal Cortisol



Cascade effects of economic disadvantage on child well-being

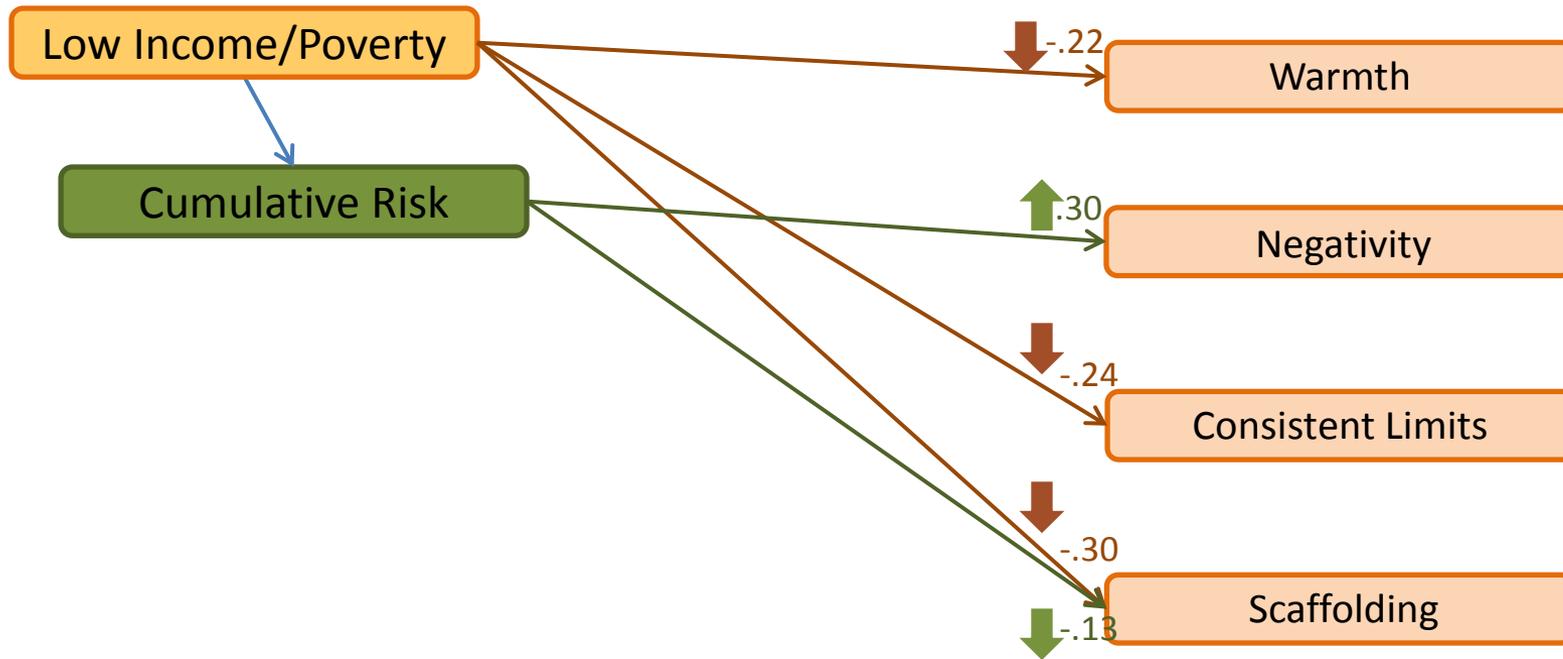


3 years old

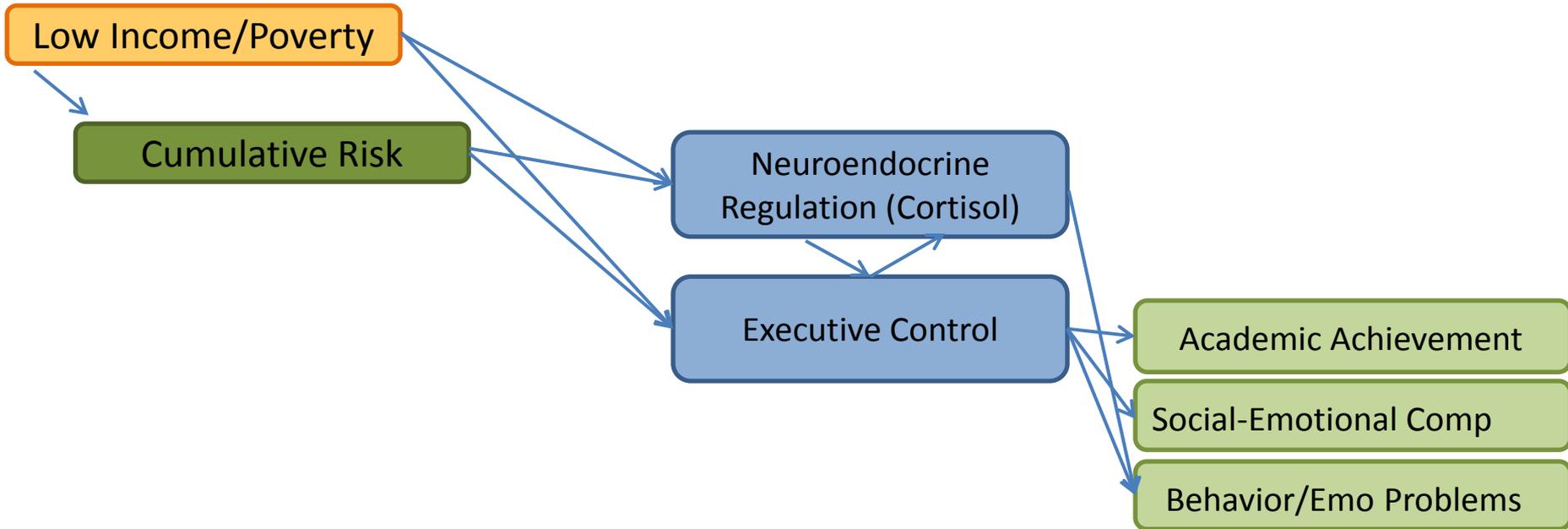
3 to 5.5 years old

5.5 years old

Low income and CR predict less effective parenting



Cascade effects of economic disadvantage on child well-being

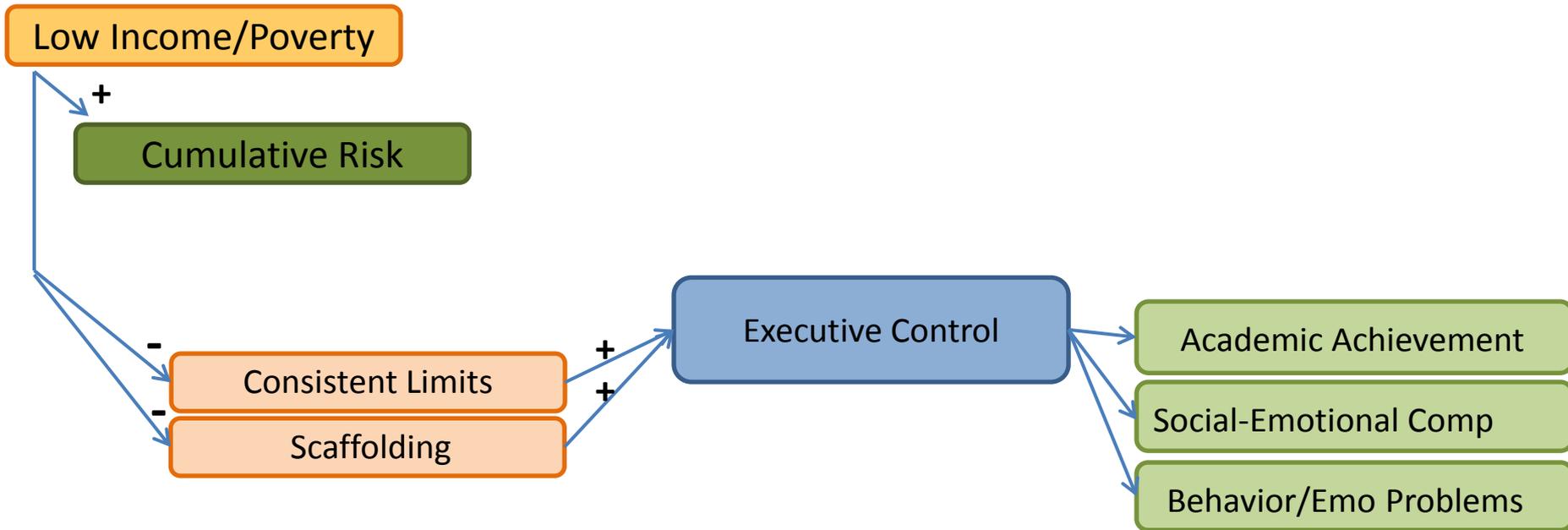


3 years old

3 to 5.5 years old

5.5 years old

Cascade effects of economic disadvantage on child well-being



3 years old ————— 3 to 5.5 years old ————— 5.5 years old

Cascade effects of economic disadvantage on child well-being

Low Income/Poverty

Cumulative Risk

Warmth

Negativity

Consistent Limits

Scaffolding

Neuroendocrine Regulation (Cortisol)

Executive Control

Academic Achievement

Social-Emotional Comp

Behavior/Emo Problems

Cultivate Mindfulness & Emotion Regulation

Promote Warmth, Scaffolding & Consistency

3 years old

3 to 5.5 years old

5.5 years old

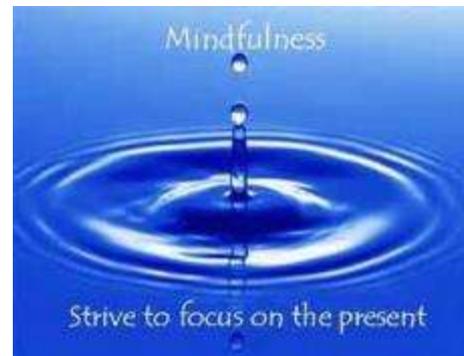
Two Generation Approach

- Parent self-regulation → parenting → child self-regulation
- **Mindfulness** and **emotion regulation** practices to:
 - decrease stress
 - increase awareness
 - respond flexibly
 - model regulation for children

Mindfulness has been shown to...

- Improve adult executive function
- Improve emotion regulation and stress responses
- Reduced symptoms of depression, anxiety and PTS

“...paying attention
in a particular way:
on purpose,
in the present moment,
nonjudgmentally.”
(Kabat-Zinn, 1994)



Mindfulness in Parenting

- Listening with full attention
- Nonjudgmental acceptance of self and child
- Emotional awareness of self and child
- Self-regulation in the parenting relationship
- Compassion for self and child

(Duncan, Coatsworth & Greenberg, 2009)



SEACAP

Social, Emotional, and Academic Competence for Children and Parents

- Program Targets:
 - Parent Mindfulness & Emotion Regulation
 - Warmth, Scaffolding & Consistency
 - Mindfulness/ER integrated into parenting practices
- Outcome:
 - Child SR → social, emotional, and academic competence
- 6 group (+ 2-4 individual video-based coaching) sessions:
 - Brief, easily integrated into early learning programs
 - “Tiered” with more intensive work in home coaching sessions



Mindfulness practices support parenting:

Parenting that Promotes Executive Control:

Increase

- Warmth (Child Led Time, Validation)
- Consistency (Expectations, Contingencies)
- Scaffolding (Balancing Structuring with Autonomy)

Reduce Negativity (Emotion Regulation)

Informal Mindfulness Practices:

Noticing and Participating in the Moment

Active listening

Practice of observing and participating during child-led time

Wise-Mind - Balancing rational and emotional mind

Dropping in the pauses

Breathe in “wise” and out “mind”

Stress and Emotion Regulation:

- Paced Breathing
- **STOP** (Stop, Take a breath, Observe, Proceed wisely)
- Soothing Hands
- Parent Time-Out (mindfulness and emotion regulation practices)



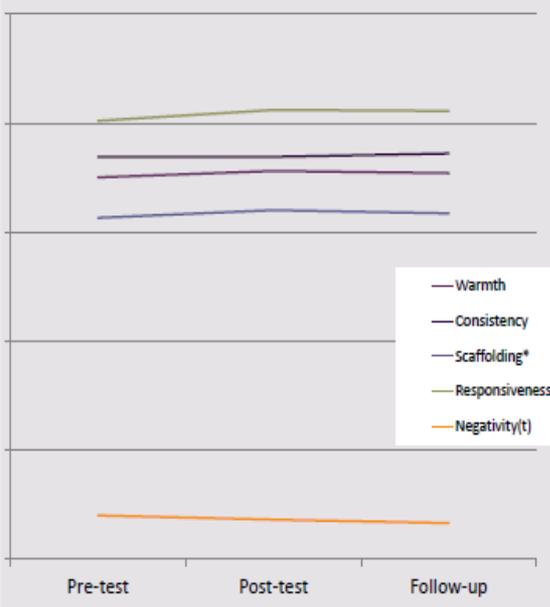
Demographic Information about the SEACAP Pilot Samples

Demographics	(N = 50)
Child Age	44.97 (12.26) mos.
Income	5.03 (3.98), ≈\$29,500
Public assistance	66%
Single Parent	44%
Mother's Education	5.26 (1.51) ≈some college, tech/ professional school
# of Moves in 3 years	1.33 (1.69)
Ethnic or Racial Minority	54%

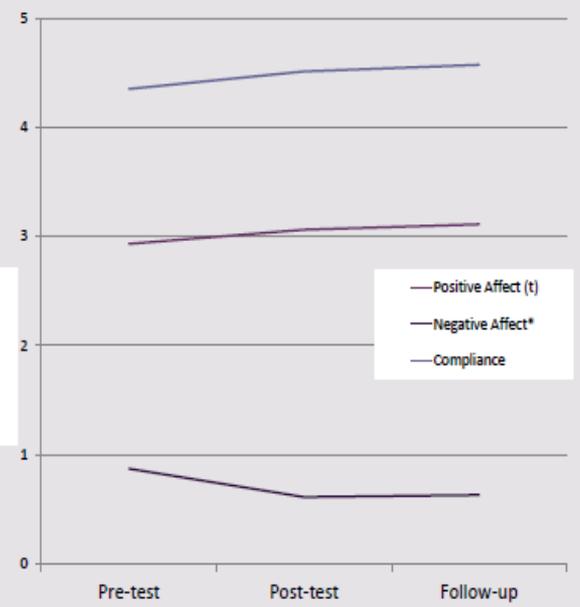
None of these variables predicted whether parents improved in EF, mindfulness or parenting.

Evaluation of Impact

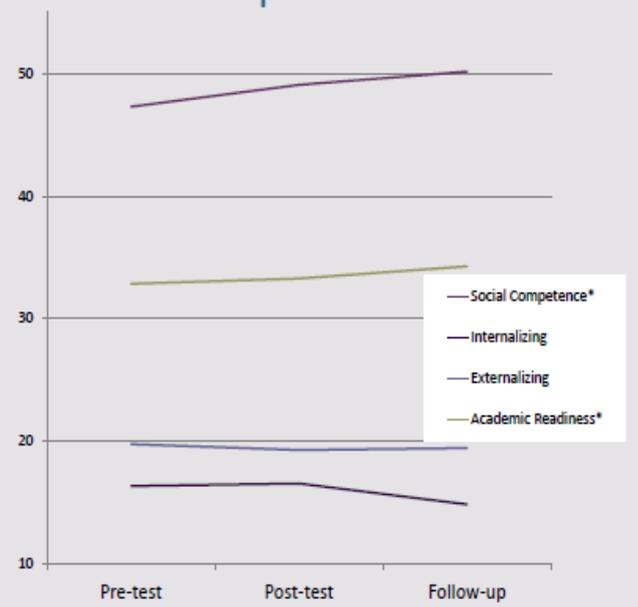
Observed Parenting



Observed Child Behaviors



Parent Report Child Behaviors



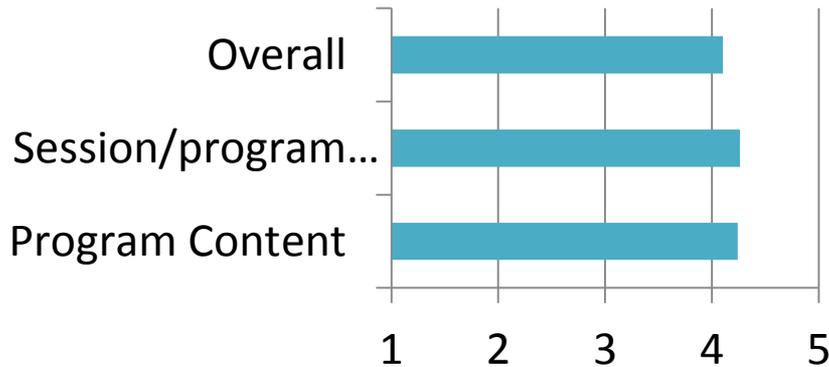
Parents increased in EF, scaffolding and trend towards decrease in negativity. Parents reported decreased rejection, increased consistency. Children demonstrated decreased negativity, and parents reported increased social competence and academic readiness. No change in FFMQ – pre- to post-program $r = .9$

Changes in Parenting → Changes in Child Adjustment

	Parent-Report				Observed		
	Social Comp.	Int. Prob.	Ext. Prob.	Academic Readiness	Positive Affect	Negative Affect	Compliance
Observed Parenting							
Warmth	-.09	.07	.10	.25*	.53*	.09	.13
Negativity	-.09	-.03	-.05	-.03	.06	.18	.03
Scaffolding	-.03	.09	-.30*	.24*	-.03	.14	.21
Limit Setting	.002	-.25 [†]	-.09	.20	-.10	-.39*	.08
Responsiveness	-.03	.09	-.29*	.04	-.03	.14	.21
Self-Report Parenting							
Acceptance	.26*	-.12	.07	-.01	.01	-.01	.36*
Rejection	-.05	.14	.11	.10	.11	-.08	-.34*
Consistency	.26*	-.10	.10	.07	-.08	-.14	-.16
Autonomy	.12	-.18	-.04	.14	-.002	.20	-.13
Self-regulation (BRIEF)	.09	.01	.15	-.27*	-.19	.08	-.15

Evaluation of Impact and Feasibility

Parent Satisfaction



The parts of the SEA CAP program that were most helpful were:

- Calm body! I love the class
- All of it was helpful; every mtg I learned as least one thing that has helped me effectively parent
- The part about being more present with the child and active listening
- Understanding stress before resolving problem. Having options for child
- Acknowledging that I need to pay more attention to my children
- **Being present**

Summary

- Parents increased their scaffolding and limit-setting, and decreased rejection
- Parents reported increase in their self-regulation
- Improvements in parenting → improvements in child adjustment
- Parents reported high satisfaction with the program
- Program was delivered by early learning staff, suggesting that it can be feasibly implemented in early learning settings.

- Next steps:
 - Conduct RCT
 - Examine effects on child self-regulation
 - SEACAP for Infants, Grade School
- Enhance the effectiveness of parenting programs by promoting parent self-regulation by including mindfulness and emotion regulation practices.
- Brief programs like SEACAP may be an effective way to support families experiencing adversity.
- Explore training models that increase feasibility of implementation.





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