



Center for Early Learning
+ Public Health

TMW: A Public Health Approach to Early Learning



@TMWCenter
@DrDanaSuskind

Dana Suskind, MD

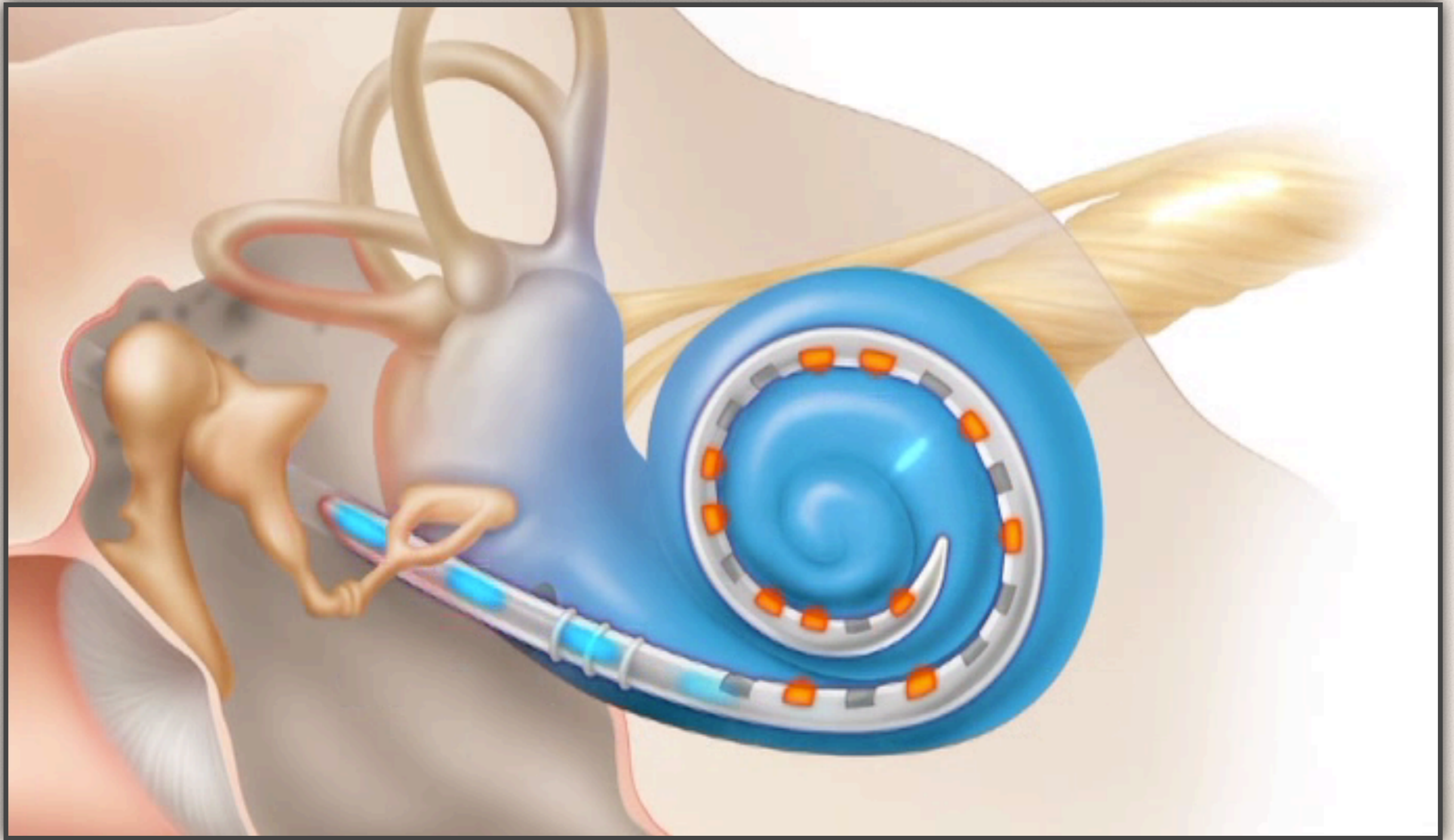


Overview

- The case for a *parent*-centered public health approach to early learning
 - Landscape of our young children
 - Background science
 - Early disparities
 - Parents: An untapped resource
- TMW Overview
- *Parent*-Centered Public Health Model: TMW & our learnings
- TMW community-wide demonstration project

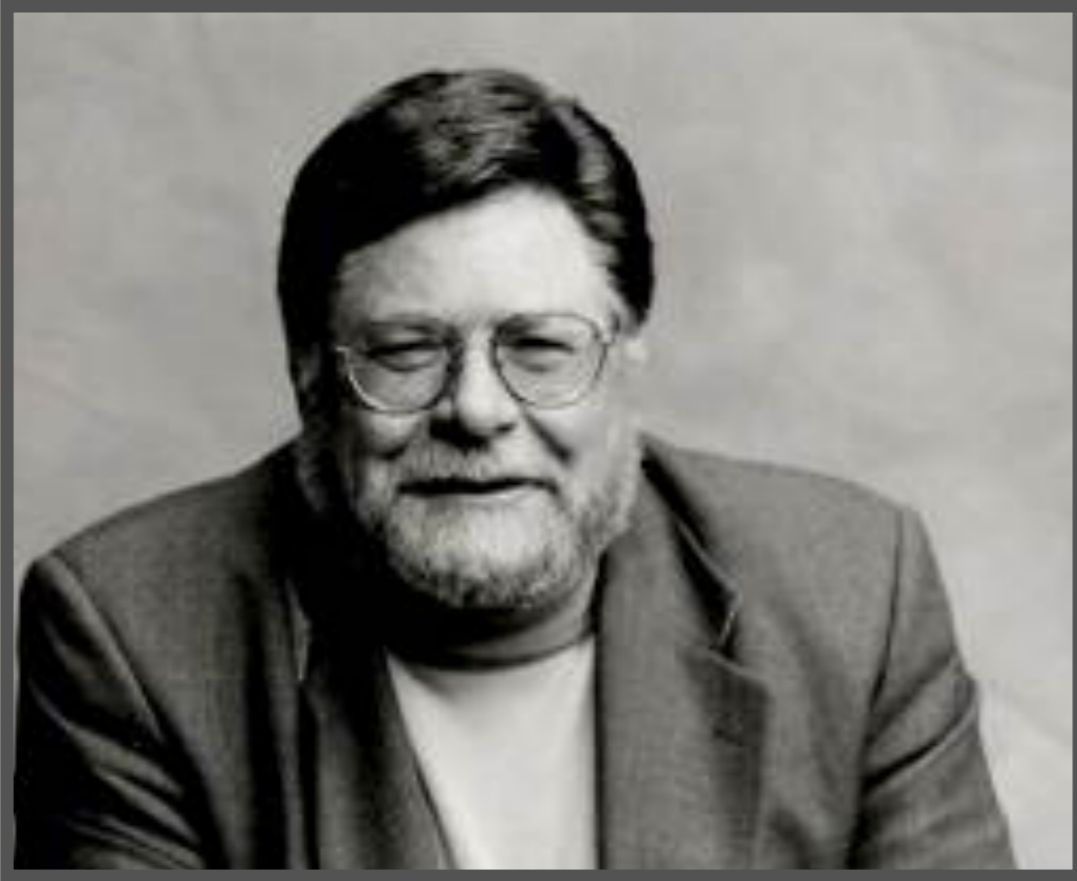








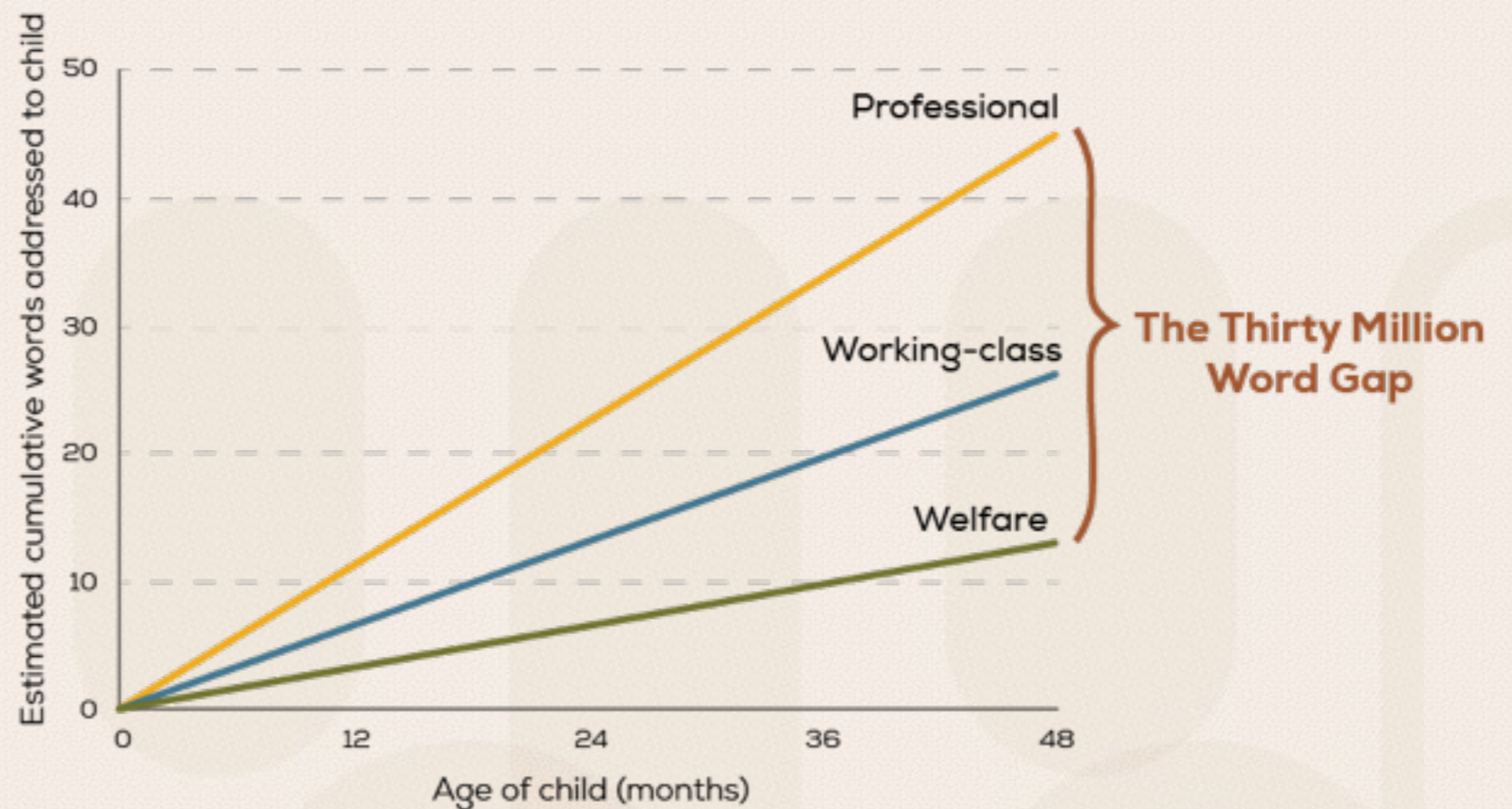
Hart & Risley



Meaningful Differences: Hart and Risley

Variation among families regarding the early language environment provided to infants results in huge and consequential differences in “learning opportunities” over the first years of life.

Number of Words Heard by Children Differs Across Income Groups



(Hart and Risley, 1995)

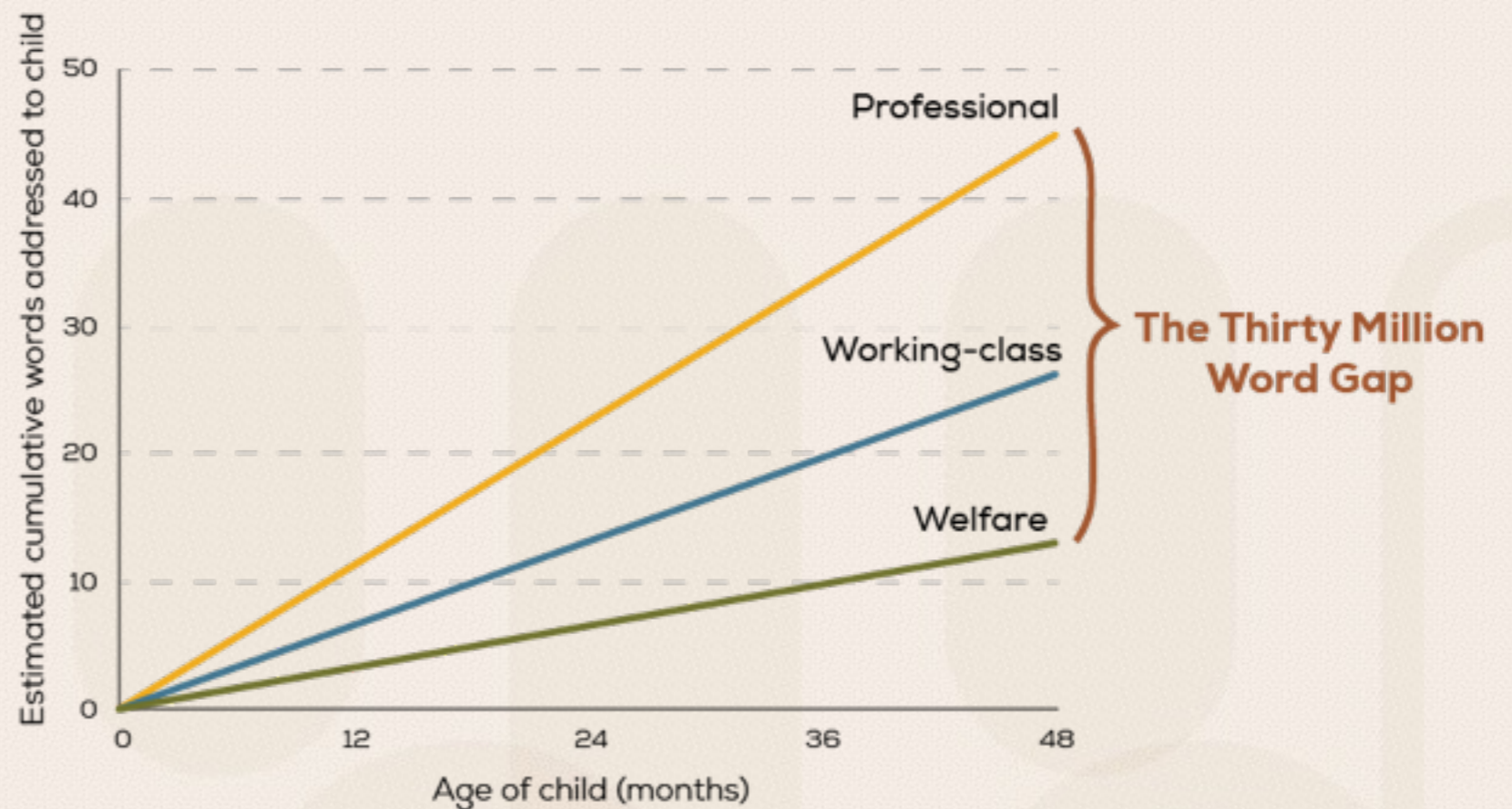


Four Million Word Gap

Thirty Million Word Gap

Variation among families regarding the early language environment provided to infants results in huge and consequential differences in “learning opportunities” over the first years of life.

Number of Words Heard by Children Differs Across Income Groups



(Hart and Risley, 1995)



~~Four Million Word Gap~~ Power of Parent Talk & Interaction



(Hart and Risley, 1995)



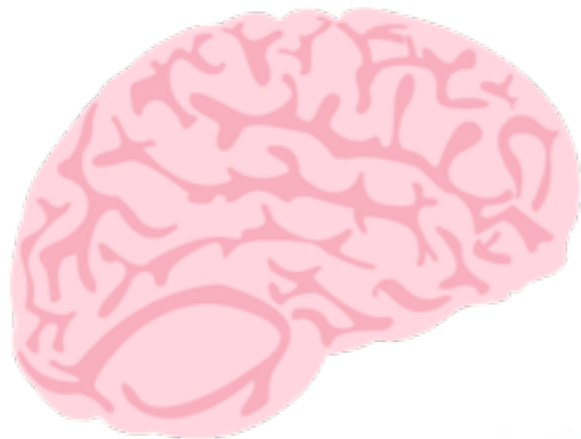
Early Language Environments

- Critical for building children's ability to communicate and learn
- Parent talk fosters children's language, cognitive and executive function skills such as:
 - Language
 - Literacy
 - Math and spatial reasoning
 - Executive function and self-regulation
 - Socio-emotional
 - Attachment

(Connell & Prinz, 2002; Forget-Dubois et. al., 2009;
Walker, Greenwood, Hart and Carta, 1994)

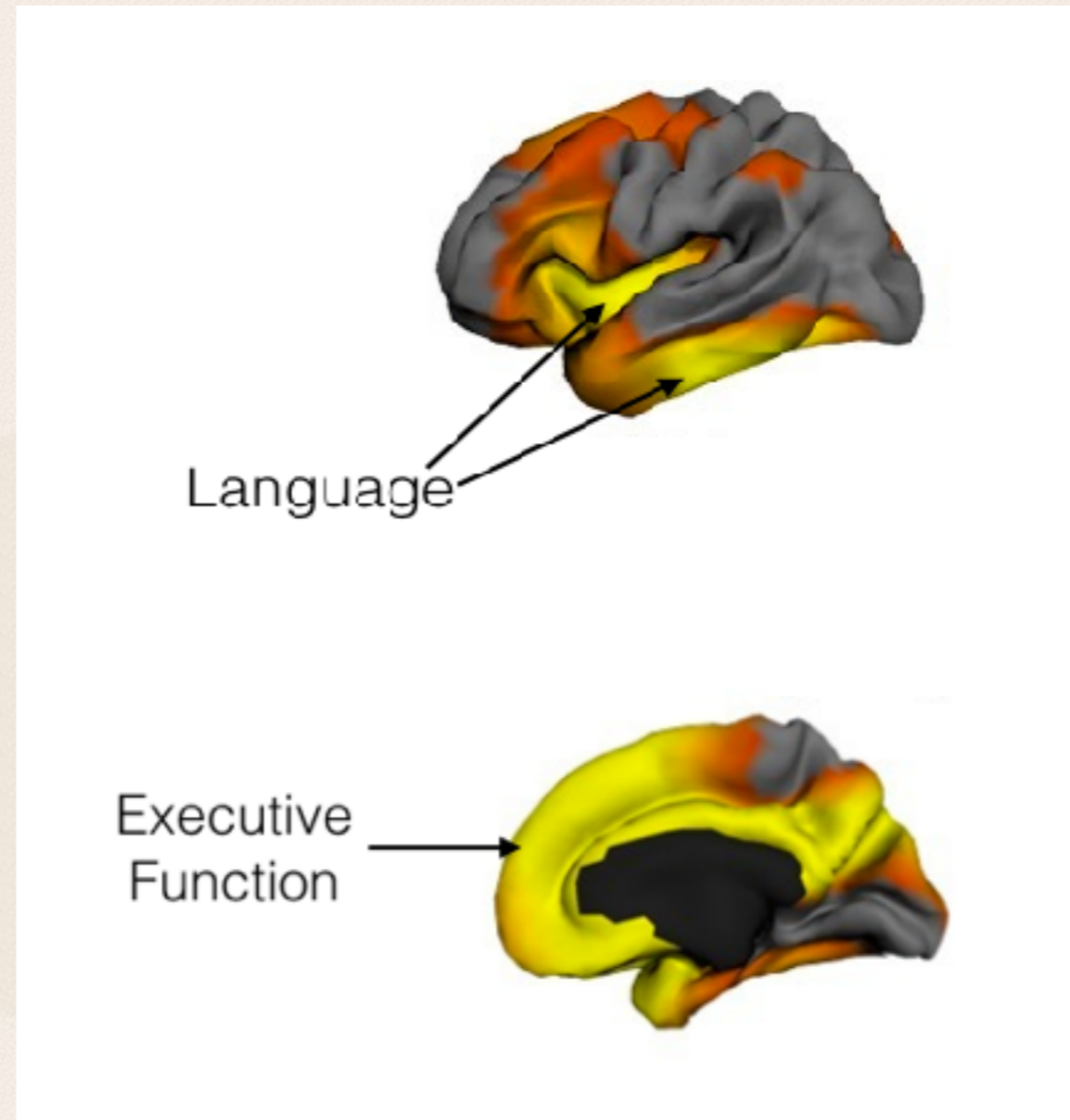


It All Comes Down to the Brain



Impacts of Poverty on Brain Structure: Key Areas of Academic Interest

- The areas most impacted by poverty happen to be those that are most critical to educational attainment
- Language: Left Hemisphere Language Cortex
- Executive Functioning: Prefrontal Cortex



Parent Input - Brain - Child Skills Connection

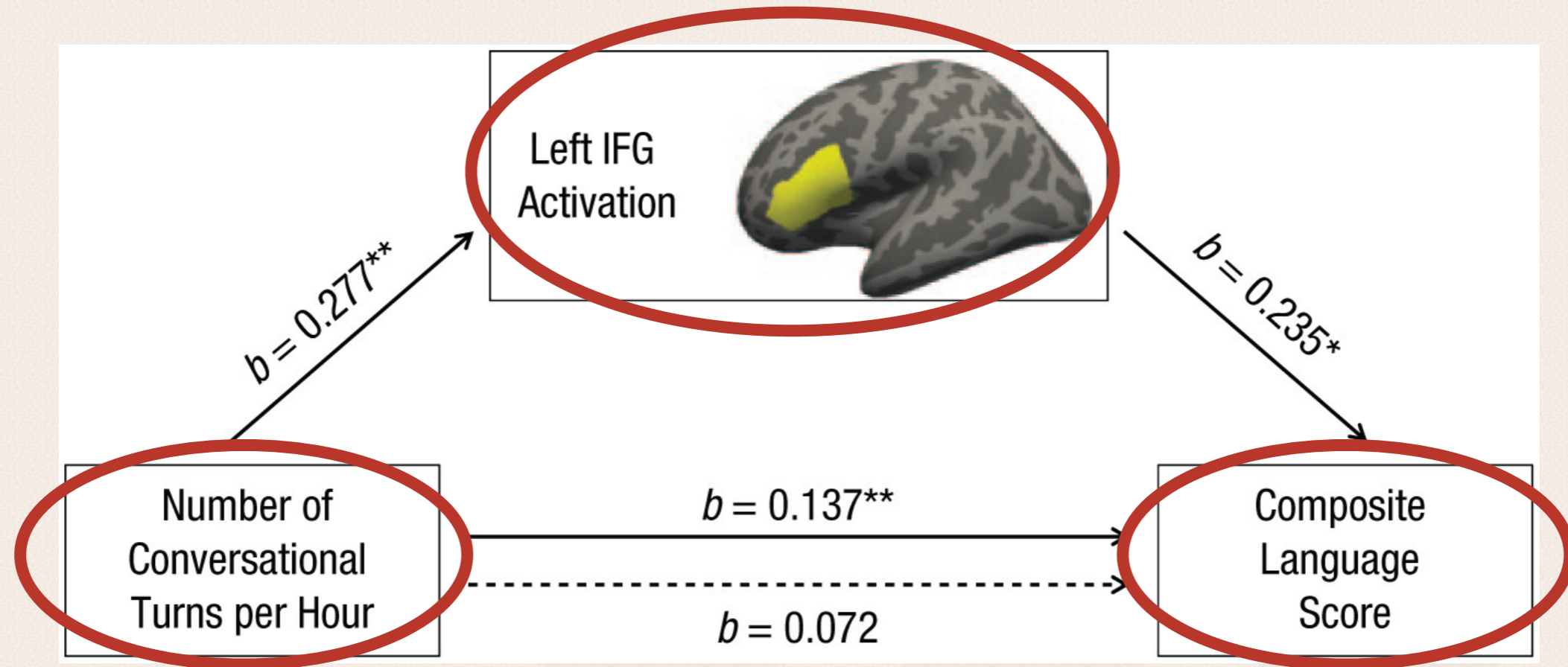
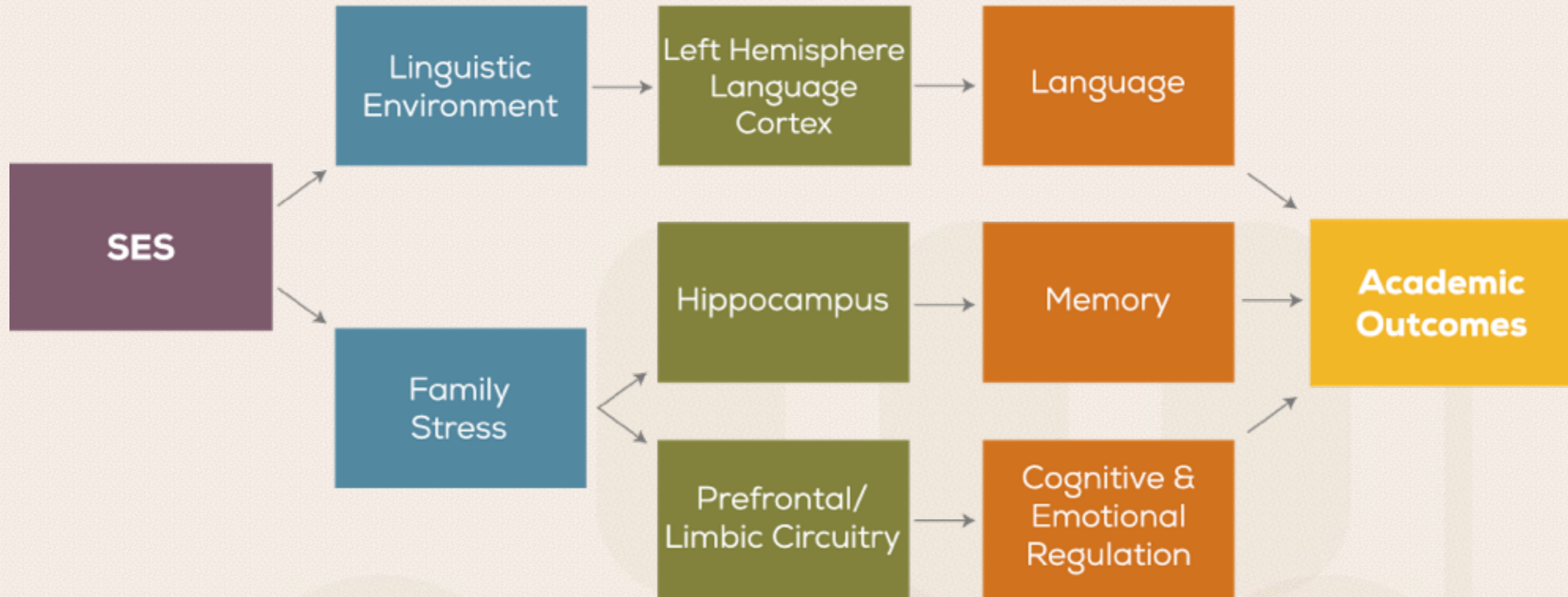


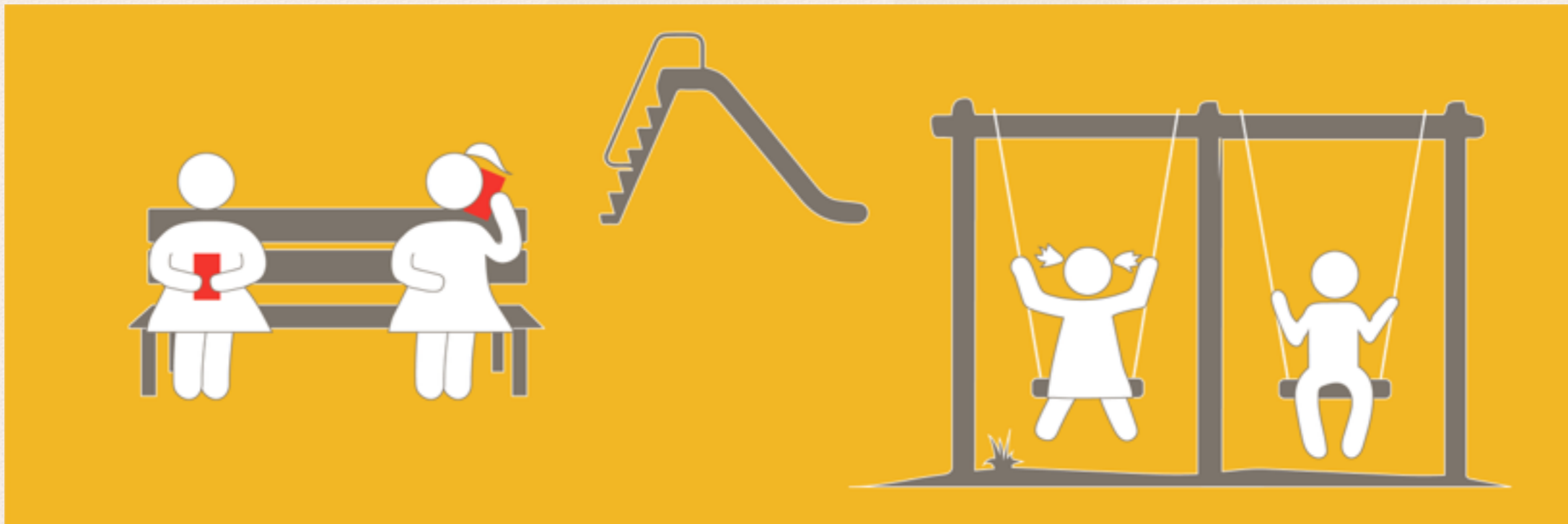
Fig. 6. Mediation model showing the effect of conversational turns on language assessment scores as mediated by activation in the left inferior frontal gyrus (IFG), shaded in yellow. Activation significantly mediated the relation between the number of conversational turns children experience and their language scores. Solid arrows represent direct paths, whereas the dotted arrow represents the indirect (mediated) path. Asterisks indicate significant paths ($*p < .01$, $**p < .001$).



Neural Correlates of SES in the Developing Human Brain



Technology's Impact on Parent-Child Interaction: We're All at Risk



Inequalities at the Starting Gate

Differences in cognitive skills on the first day of kindergarten



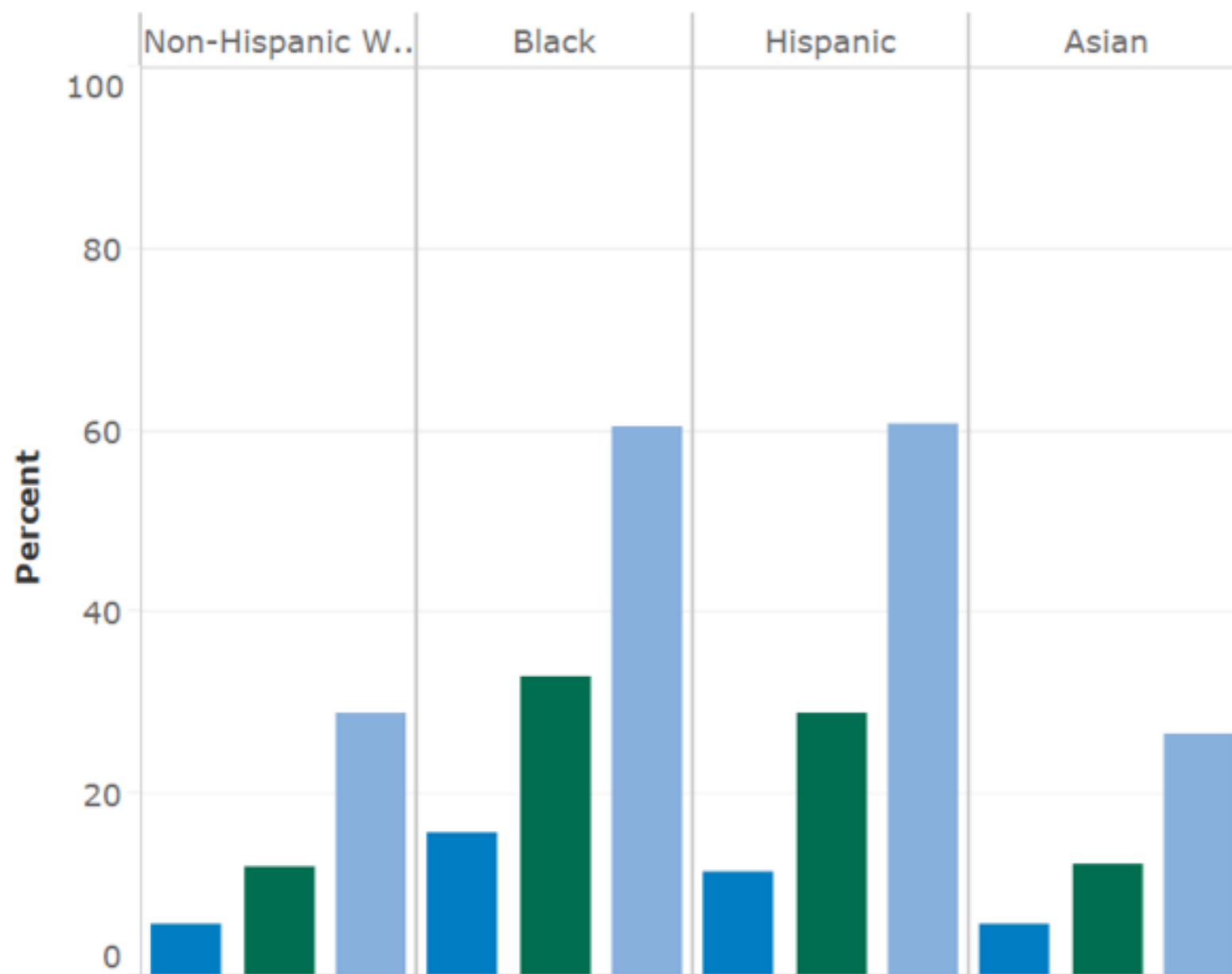
Source: EPI analysis of the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 2010–2011 (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics), reflecting standard deviation differences in scores. For more details see *Inequalities at the Starting Gate* at go.epi.org/startinggate.



Percentage of Children who are Poor or Low-Income, by Race and Hispanic Origin: 2015

Poverty Status

- Deep Poverty (below 50% of FPL*)
- Poor (below FPL)
- Low-Income (Below 200% of FPL)



Child Trends
DATA BANK

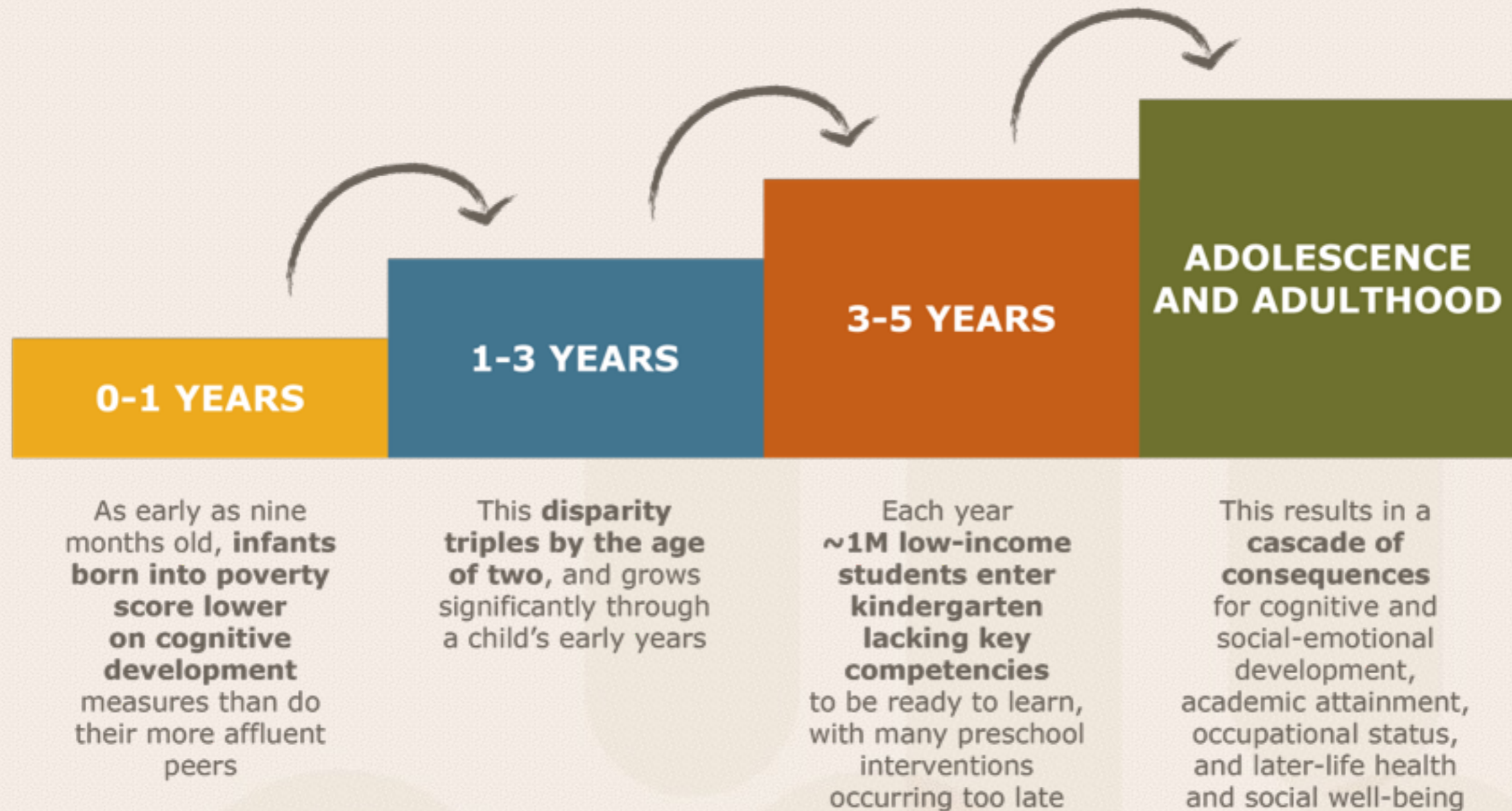
*Federal poverty level.

Note: Estimates reflect the new OMB race definitions, and include only those who are identified with a single race. Hispanics may be of any race.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. CPS Table Creator (online tool), available at: <http://www.census.gov/cps/data/cpstablecreator.html>



Differences in foundational brain development start early and accrue over time



Sources: Halle, T., Forry, N., Hair, E., & Perper, K. (2009). Disparities in Early Learning and Development: Lessons from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study - Birth Cohort (ECLS-B) Executive Summary, (June). Forget-Dubois, N., Dionne, G., Lemelin, J.P., Perusse, D., Tremblay, R.E., Boivin, M. Early child language mediates the relation between home environment and school readiness. *Child Dev.* May-Jun 2009;80(3):736-749. Schoon, I., Parsons, S., Rush, R., & Law, J. (2010). Childhood Language Skills and Adult Literacy: A 29-Year Follow-up Study. *Pediatrics*, 125(3), 459-e466. <http://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2008-2111>.



TMW's North Star

"Because the brain is the organ from which all cognition and emotion originates, healthy human brain development represents the foundation of our civilization. Accordingly, there is perhaps nothing more important that a society must do than foster and protect the brain development of our children."

Poverty's Most
Insidious
Damage: The
Developing
Brain
JAMA

Joan L. Luby, MD



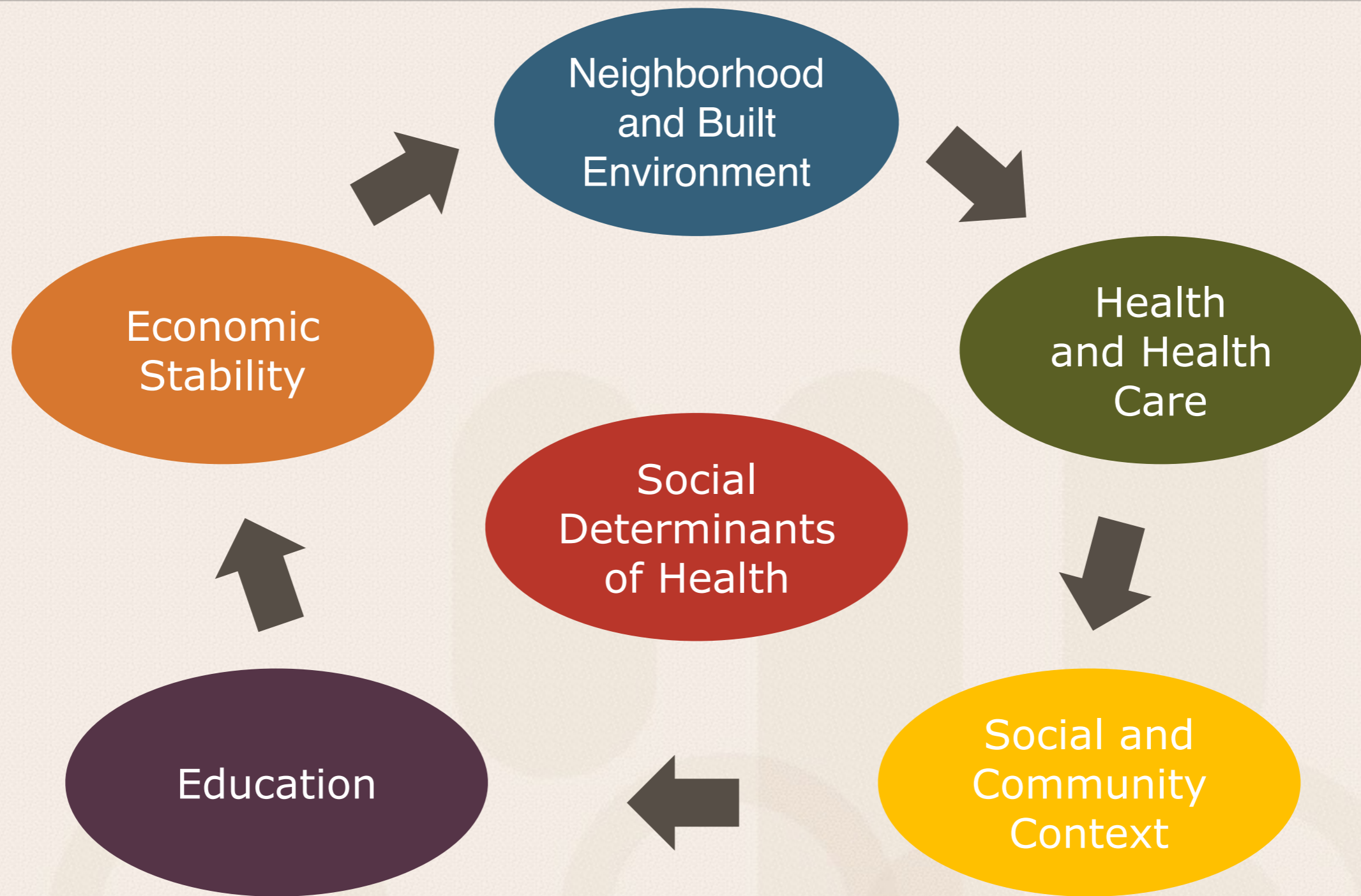
Early Language Exposure: An Overlooked SDOH

Social Determinant of Health

“the conditions in the environments in which people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning and quality-of-life outcomes, and risks.”



Early Language Exposure: An Overlooked SDOH



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2018) Social Determinants of Health. Washington DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/social-determinants-of-health>



Thirty Million Words

- Translational research program
- Aspires to a population-level shift in knowledge and beliefs
- Focuses on prevention rather than remediation
- Develops and tests parent- and provider-directed interventions
- Targets birth to 3 years of age



What is a Public Health Approach?

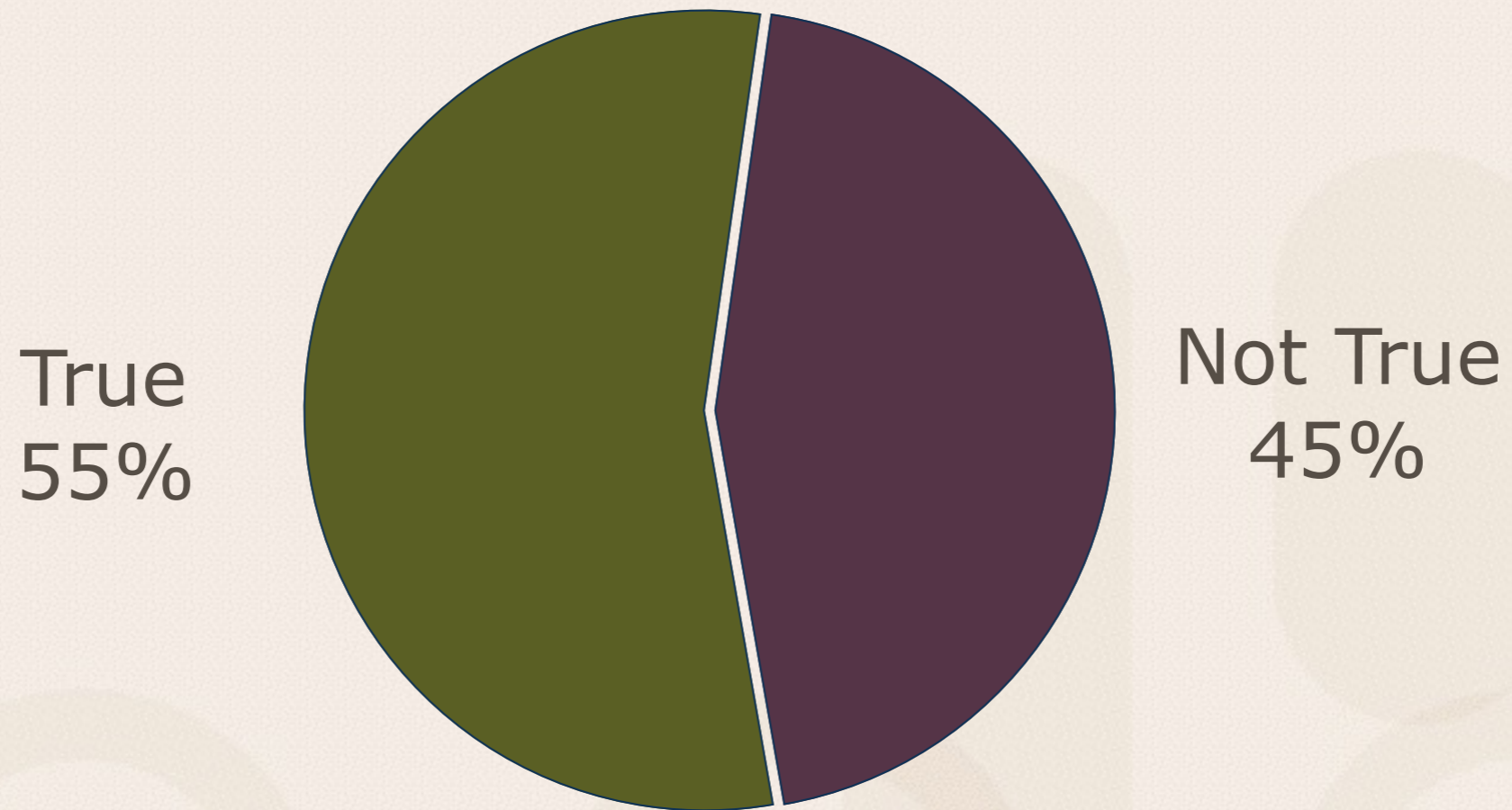


- Population level health & Impacts at Scale
- Focuses on prevention, rather than remediation
- Embeds science-based practices in multiple touch points in existing early learning and public health systems
- Employs a data-driven methodology
- Optimizes feedback-driven solutions at community and population levels



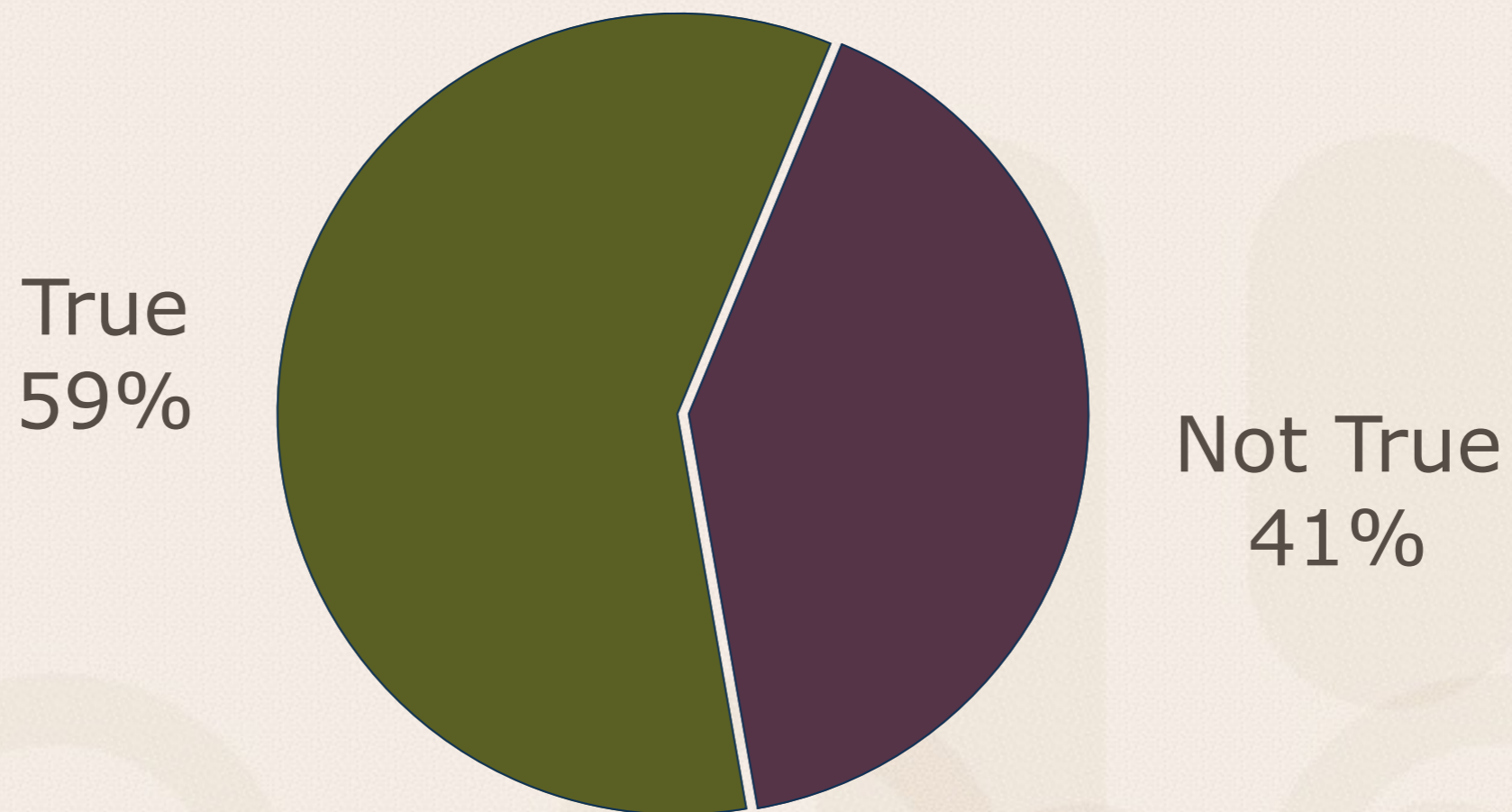
Parent Beliefs

Basic care, such as feeding, changing, and bathing, is the only thing an infant really needs for healthy development



Parent Beliefs

Leaving the TV on in the background is a great way to give 0 to 2 year olds extra chances to learn words

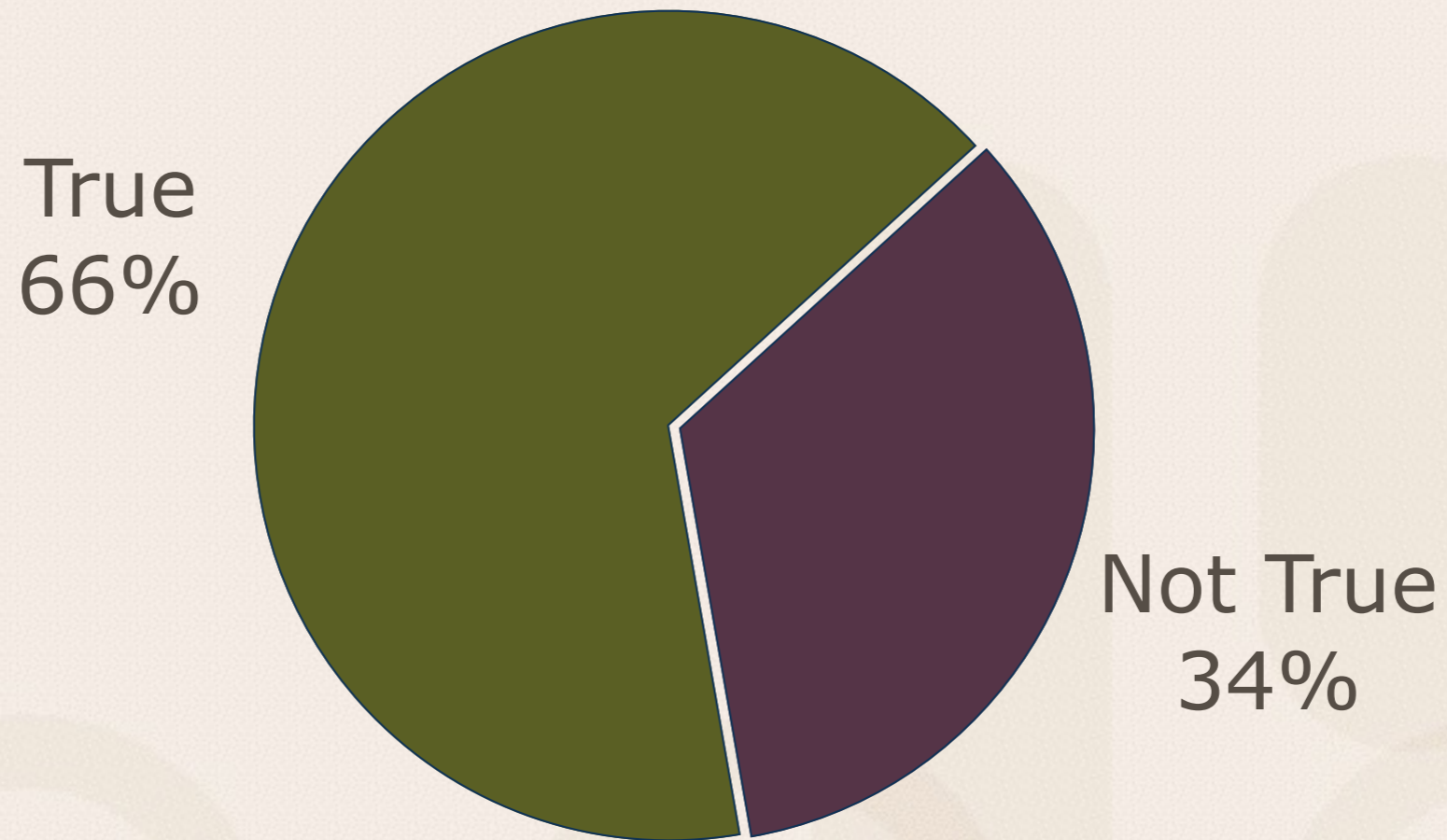


(TMW-WB Study, 2018)

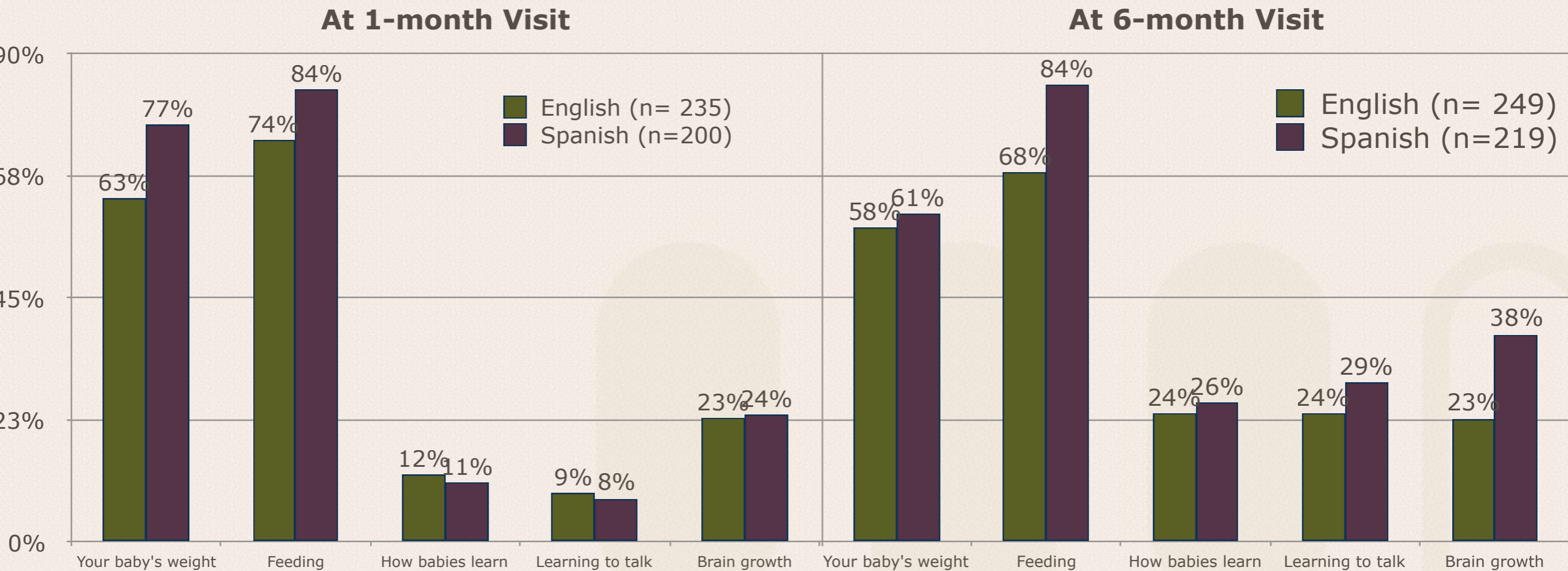


Parent Beliefs

Infants learn little about language in the first six months of their life



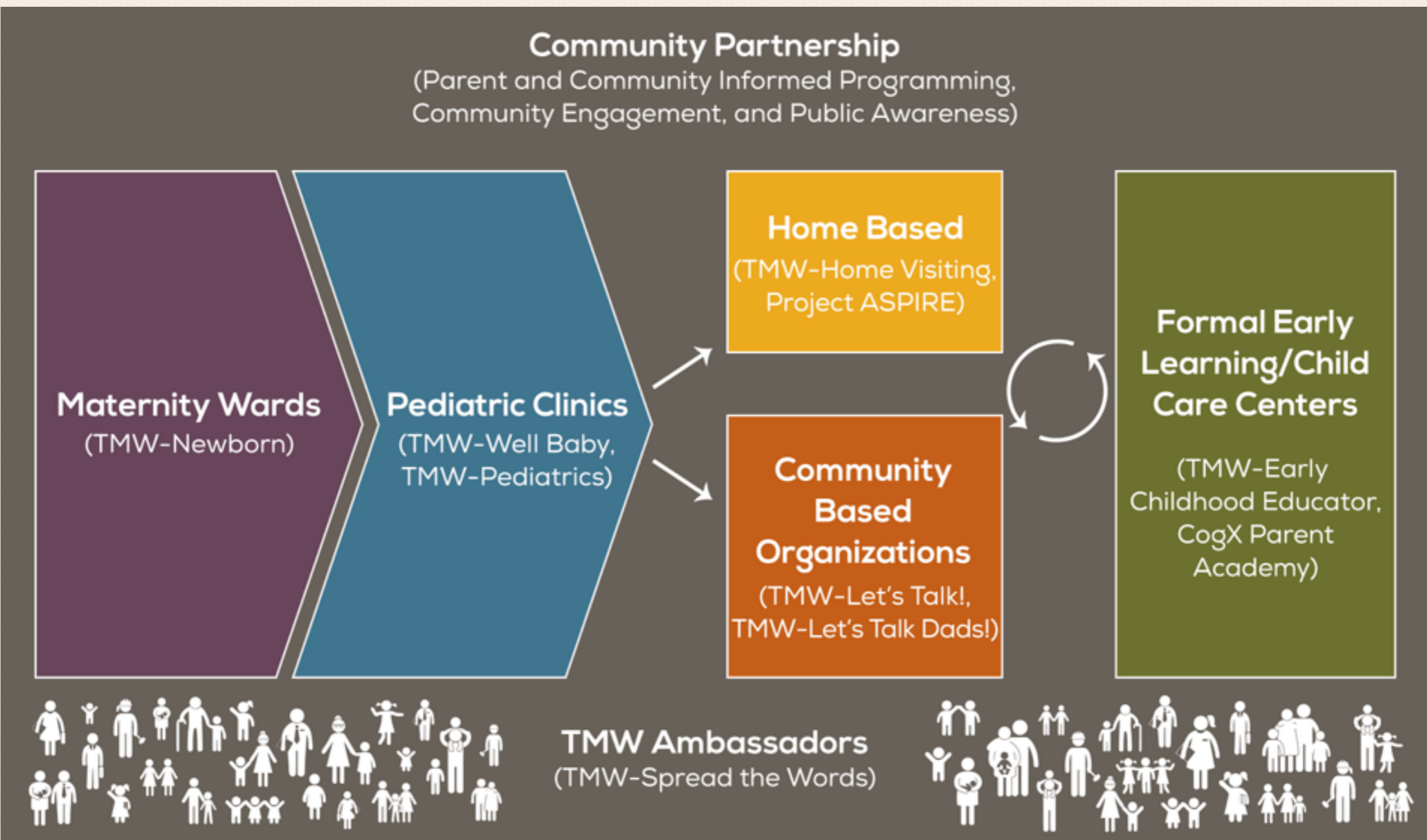
What Pediatricians Talk about at Well-Child Visits



(TMW-WB Study, 2018)



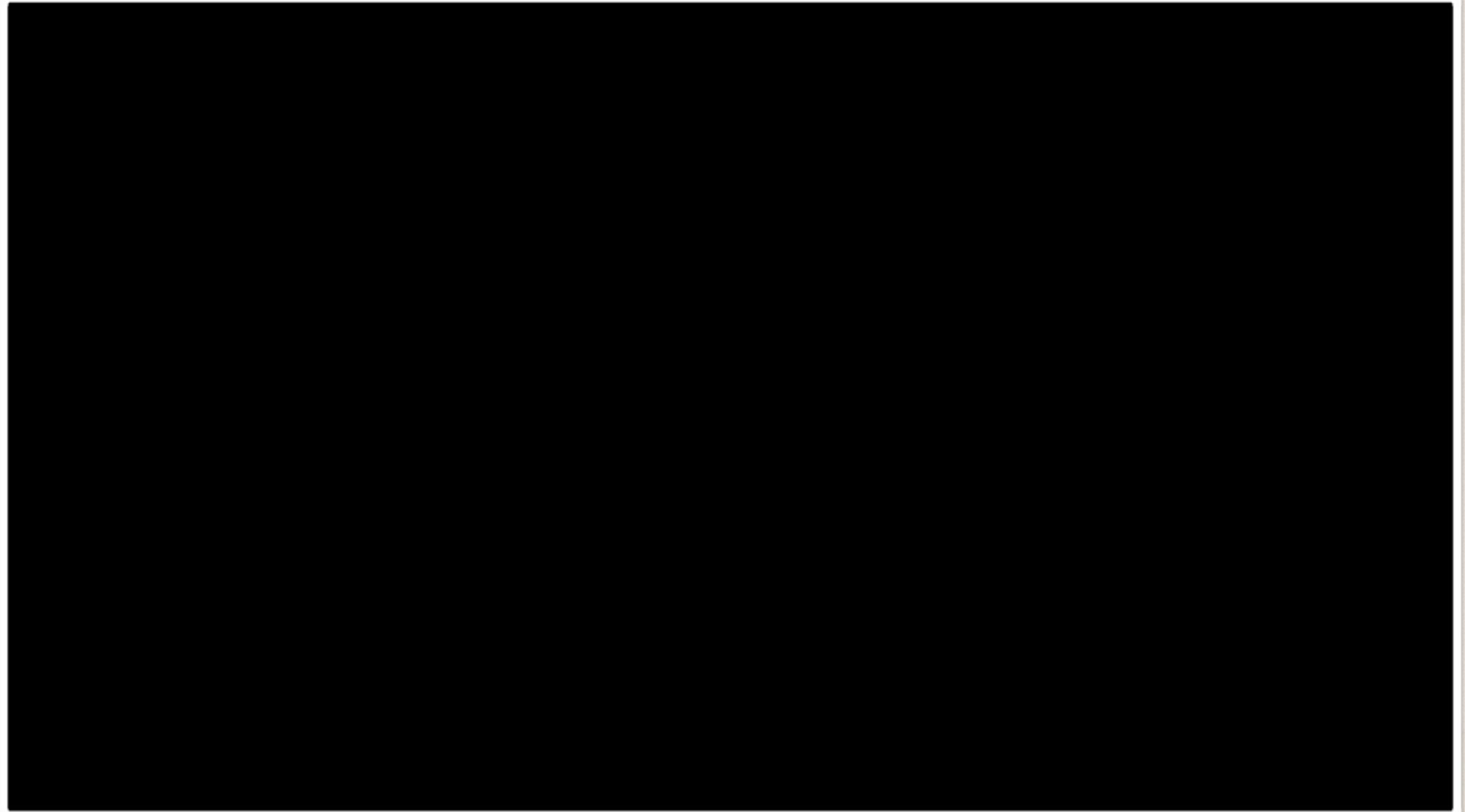
TMW's Model for a *Parent-Centered* Public Health Approach to Early Learning



Overlaying onto Public Health Infrastructure



Growth-Mindset Parenting



the
3 T's

TUNE
IN

TALK
MORE

TAKE
TURNS



Behavioral Nudges

Quantitative Linguistic Feedback



Video Modeling



Goal Setting



Personalized Text Messages

Remember to follow your child's lead as you read him a bedtime story tonight.

1



Science as the Basis for Real Social Change

Translate the research base on foundational brain development into actionable interventions

Test and iterate interventions, with adaptations for differing contexts and delivery sites (e.g. home visiting vs group classes)

Evaluate results of interventions with goal of identifying areas for continuous improvement



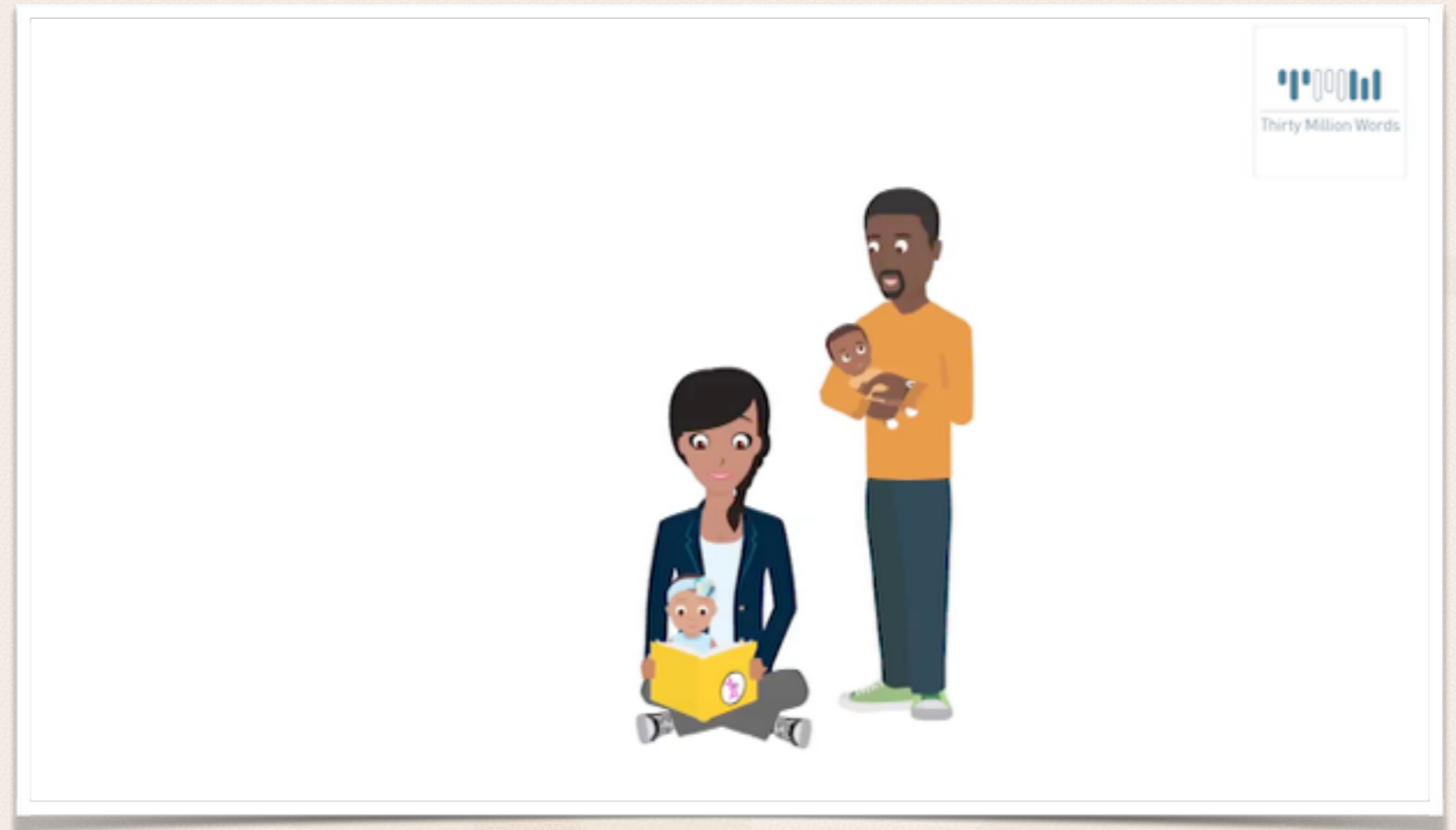
TMW-Newborn

- 10-minute, bilingual video with multimedia content
- Administered postpartum, mapped onto the UNHS
- RCT with 500 families
- Aims to impact parents' knowledge and beliefs about child language development




TMW-Well Baby

- Series of 4, 10-minute videos
- Bilingual, multimedia content
- Mapped onto Well Child Checks at 1-, 2-, 4-, and 6-month pediatric visits
- Designed to reach parents from the start
- RCT with 500 families



TMW-Home Visiting: English

- Series of 12, 60 minute modules
- Delivered in the home biweekly for 6 months
- Integrates behavioral nudges, video modeling, and multimedia content
- RCT with 200 families



Talking about **shapes** helps build your child's math foundation.

There are shapes everywhere!

Tune In to what your child is focused on and **Talk More** and **Take Turns** about its shape.

1

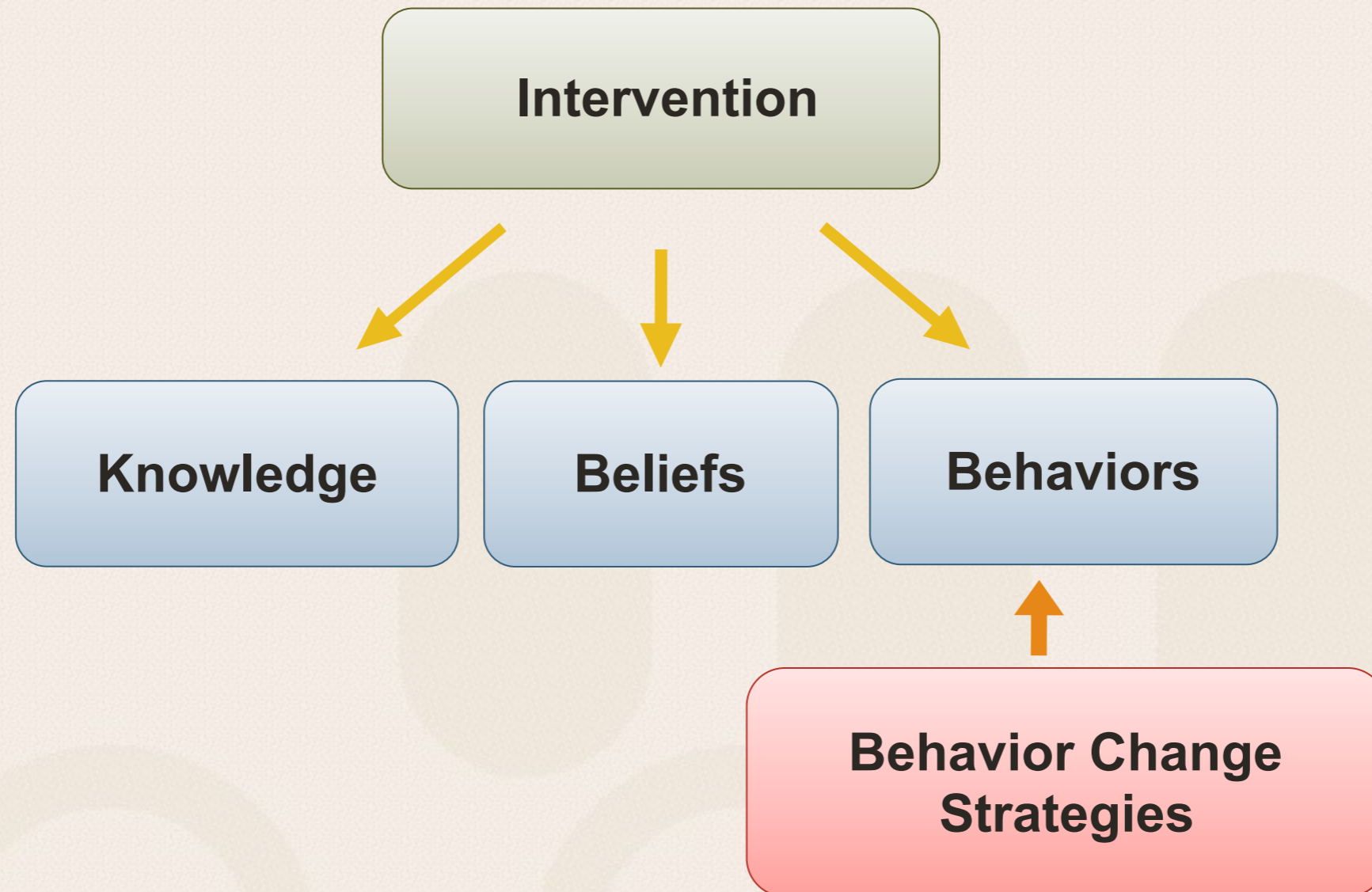


Home Visiting Curriculum Iteration

Modules	Description
1. Introduction	Brain development, emphasis of parent as key player
2. Talk More	Increasing parent talk
3. Tune In	Joint attention, responsiveness, child-directed speech
4. Take Turns	Conversational turn taking
5. Spread the Words	Spreading key messaging through social networks
6. Behavior Stoplight	Supporting self-regulation (executive functioning)
7. Directives	Avoiding directives and supporting critical thinking skills
8. Encouragements	Person vs. process-based praise
9. Book Sharing	Dialogic book reading
10. Storytelling	Building vocabulary and pre-literacy skills
11. Math Talk	Using language to develop math and spatial reasoning skills
12. Technology Diet	Limiting media exposure to foster more talk and interaction



Intervention Approach



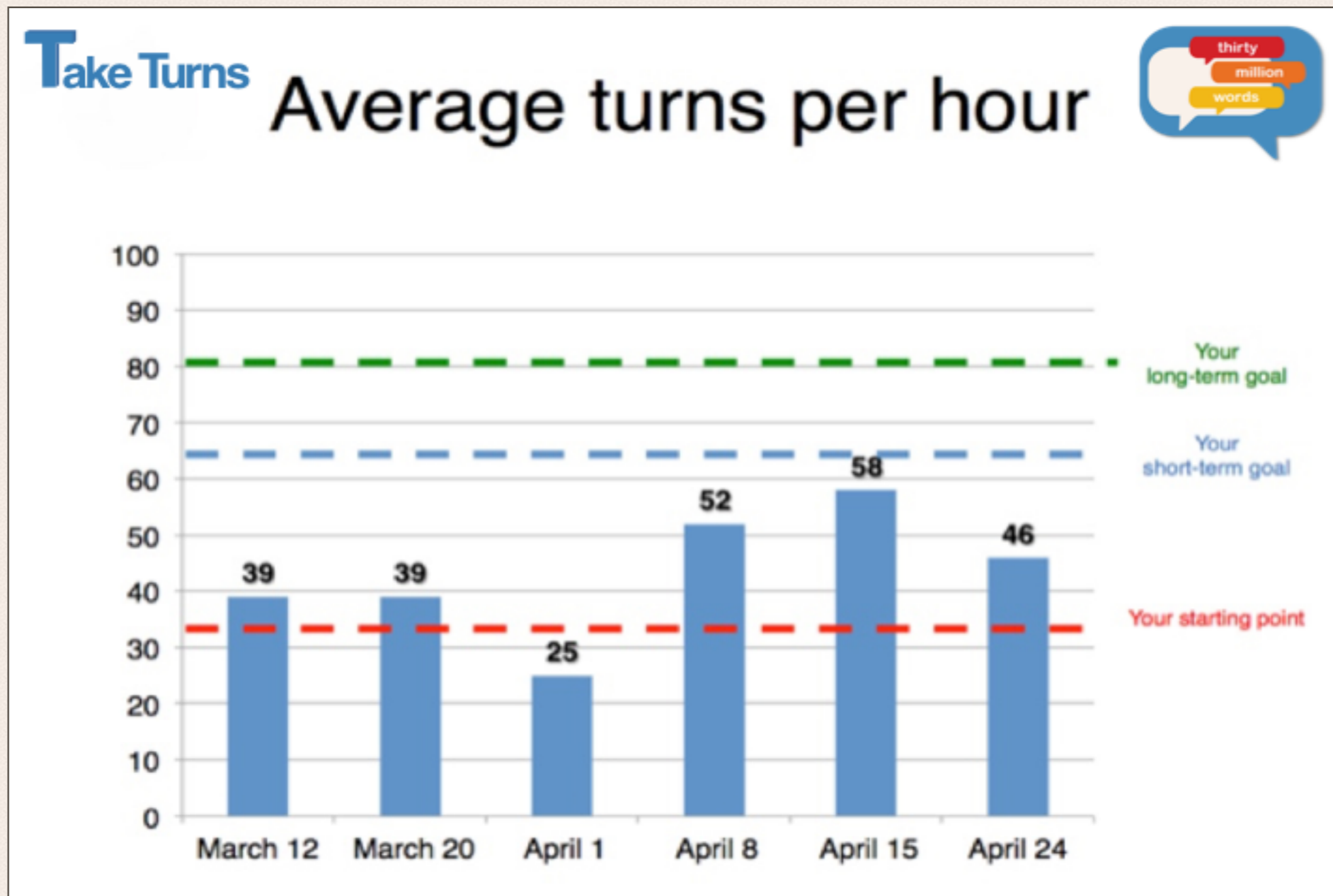
LENA – Language ENvironment Analysis

Digital audio-recording devices and a specialized processing software

- Adult word count
- Child vocalization count
- Conversational turn count



Quantitative Linguistic Feedback



TMW-Home Visiting: Spanish

- A cultural and linguistic adaptation of the TMW-HV program
- Addresses concerns vital to mono- and multilingual Spanish-speaking families
- RCT with 90 families



Science as the Basis for Real Social Change

Translate the research base on foundational brain development into actionable interventions

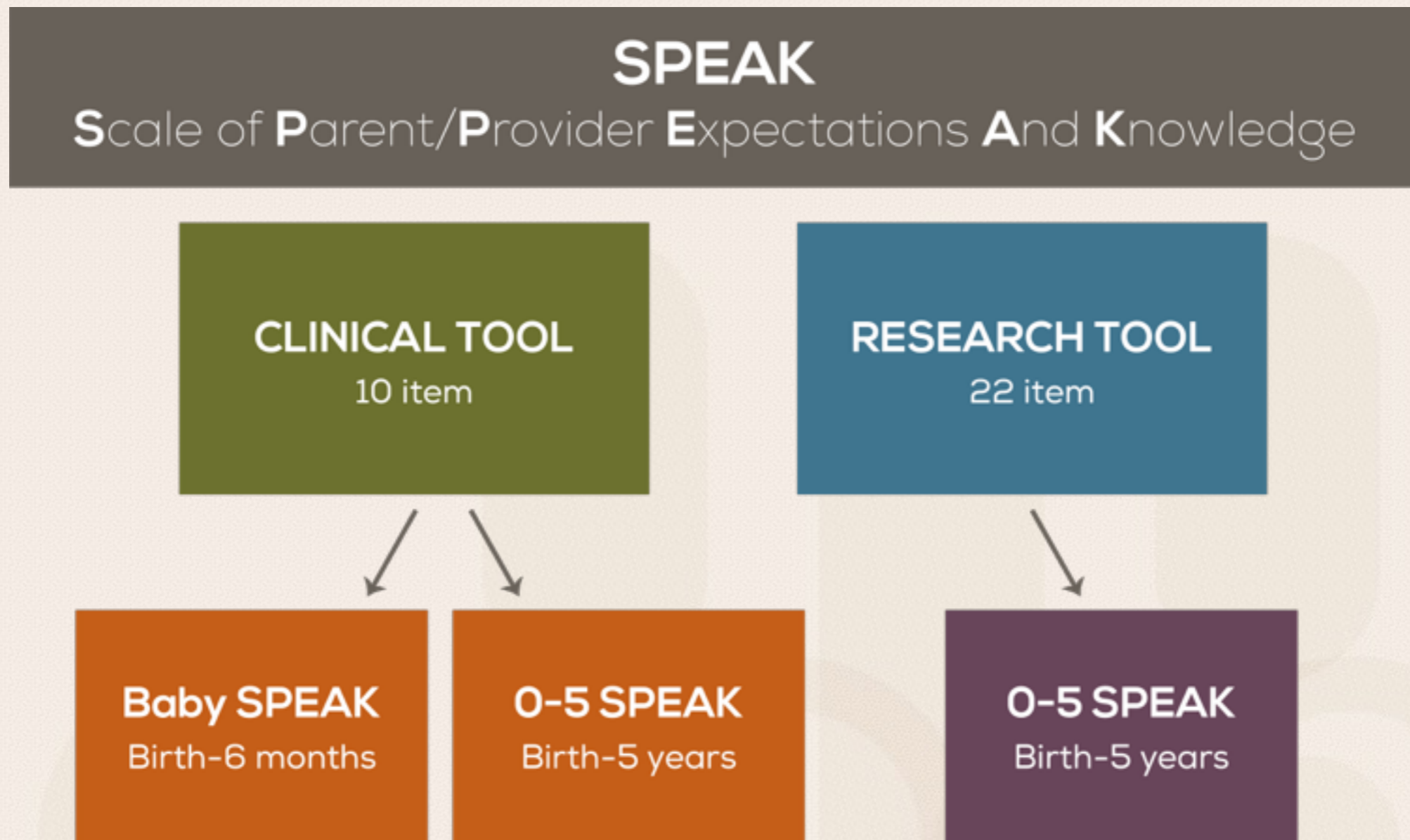
Test and iterate interventions, with adaptations for differing contexts and delivery sites (e.g. home visiting vs group classes)

Evaluate results of interventions with goal of identifying areas for continuous improvement



SPEAK: Our Public Health Indicator

"What gets measured, gets done"



(Suskind et. al, 2017)



Subdomains	Sample Item, Response Scale, and Correct Response			
Early Exposure	When do you think a child is ready to be exposed to numbers and counting?			
	<input checked="" type="radio"/> As an infant (0 to 6 months)	<input type="radio"/> As a toddler (1 to 3 years)	<input type="radio"/> In preschool (3 to 5 years)	<input type="radio"/> In Kindergarten (5 to 6 years)
Bilingualism	When toddlers learn multiple languages at home, it will slow down their learning in all other subjects at school.			
	<input type="radio"/> Definitely True	<input type="radio"/> Probably True	<input type="radio"/> Probably Not True	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Definitely Not True
Media Use for Child Learning	Children 0 to 2 years old can learn just as many words from educational TV as they can from their parents.			
	<input type="radio"/> Definitely True	<input type="radio"/> Probably True	<input type="radio"/> Probably Not True	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Definitely Not True
Nature vs. Nurture	How smart a baby will become depends mostly on genetics.			
	<input type="radio"/> Definitely True	<input type="radio"/> Probably True	<input type="radio"/> Probably Not True	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Definitely Not True
Sensitivity and Responsiveness	When infants babble, parents should respond as if the infant is saying real words.			
	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Definitely True	<input type="radio"/> Probably True	<input type="radio"/> Probably Not True	<input type="radio"/> Definitely Not True
Talking and Reading	Answering only if a toddler uses words instead of just pointing better helps the toddler learn how to talk.			
	<input type="radio"/> Definitely True	<input type="radio"/> Probably True	<input type="radio"/> Probably Not True	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Definitely Not True



TMW-Well Baby Initiative

Bilingual, video-based
intervention built into pediatric
visit at 1, 2, 4, & 6 months

Integrates into existing
infrastructure to reach parents
from the start

RCT with 450 families



Participant Demographics

Group	English		Spanish	
	TMW-Well Baby (N = 125)	Control (N = 125)	TMW-Well Baby (N = 112)	Control (N = 107)
Age (M, SD)	25.35 yr (5.39)	24.46 yr (4.78)	28.89 yr (6.01)	27.57 yr (6.12)
Non-Hispanic, African American	103 (82%)	99 (79%)	2 (2%)	0 (0%)
Hispanic, any race	15 (12%)	21 (17%)	109 (97%)	104 (97%)
Married	9 (7%)	10 (8%)	43 (38%)	45 (42%)
Living with partner	18 (14%)	27 (22%)	36 (32%)	37 (35%)
Single	94 (75%)	86 (69%)	26 (23%)	24 (22%)
HS/GED or some college	92 (74%)	79 (63%)	60 (54%)	55 (51%)
Employed	36 (29%)	49 (39%)	31 (28%)	28 (26%)
Family Size (M, SD)	4.30 (1.50)	4.13 (1.50)	4.50 (1.42)	4.88 (1.34)
Link/WIC	108 (86%)	107 (86%)	85 (76%)	78 (73%)



Adverse Life Events in the First 6 Months

- 26% English-speaking and 27% Spanish-speaking experienced at least 1 event
 - Have you or a family member been the victim of a violent crime?
 - Has your child been a witness to a violent crime, domestic violence or abuse?
 - Have you or a family member had significant depression, mental illness, or attempted suicide?
 - Have you or a family member been jailed or in prison?
 - Has your child lived with someone who had a problem with alcohol or used drugs?



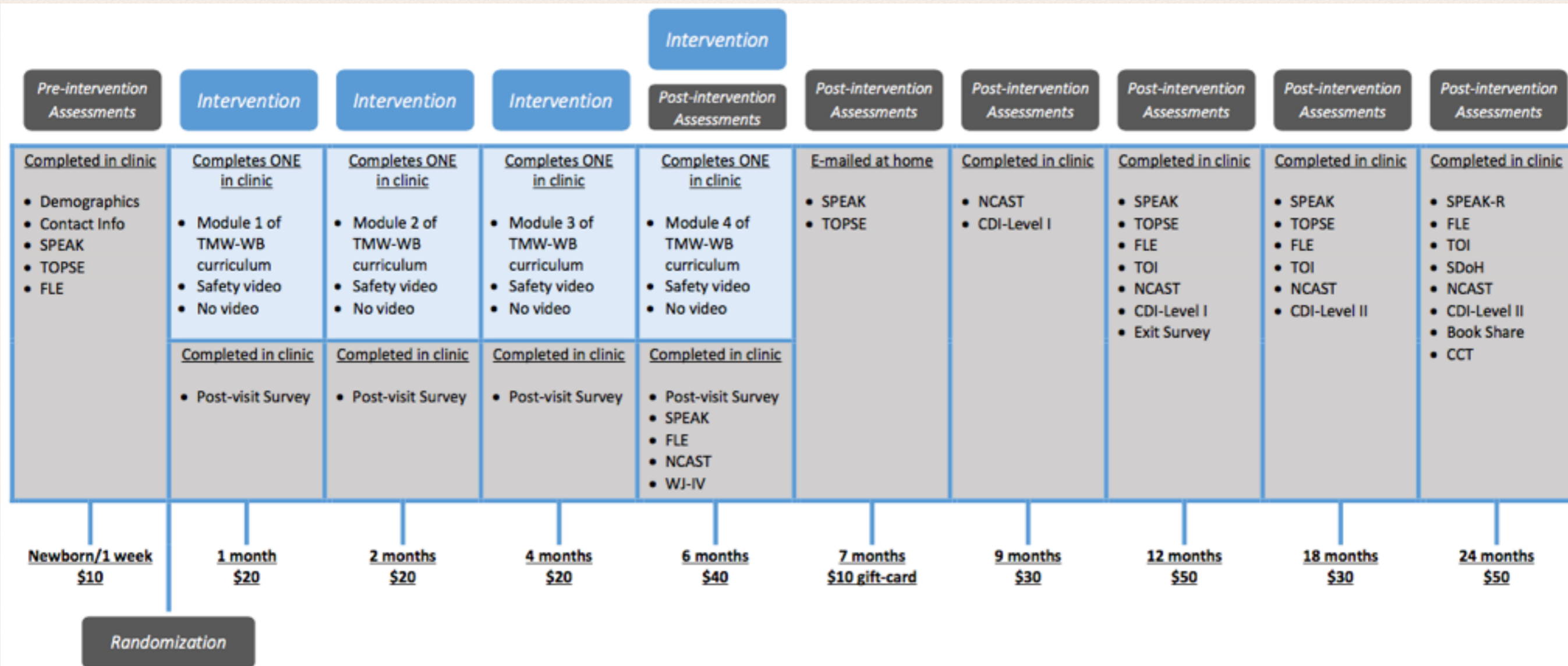
Support for Childcare

Who will care for your child the majority of the time?

	1-Month WC Visit				6-Month WC Visit			
	English		Spanish		English		Spanish	
Myself	199	94.3%	190	86.8%	178	91.3	149	89.2
Child's Other Parent	8	3.8%	6	2.7%	6	3.1	4	2.4
Other Family Member	2	0.9%	0	0.0%	7	3.6	3	1.8
Home Daycare/ Daycare Center	2	0.9%	4	1.8%	4	2.1	11	6.6



Well Baby Study Overview



Sample: Low-SES Caregivers

TMW- WB

N = 225

Control (safety video or usual care)

N = 225



Knowledge (Baby SPEAK 10-item) by Group over Time among English-Speaking Parent

ANCOVA

Controlling for Education Level

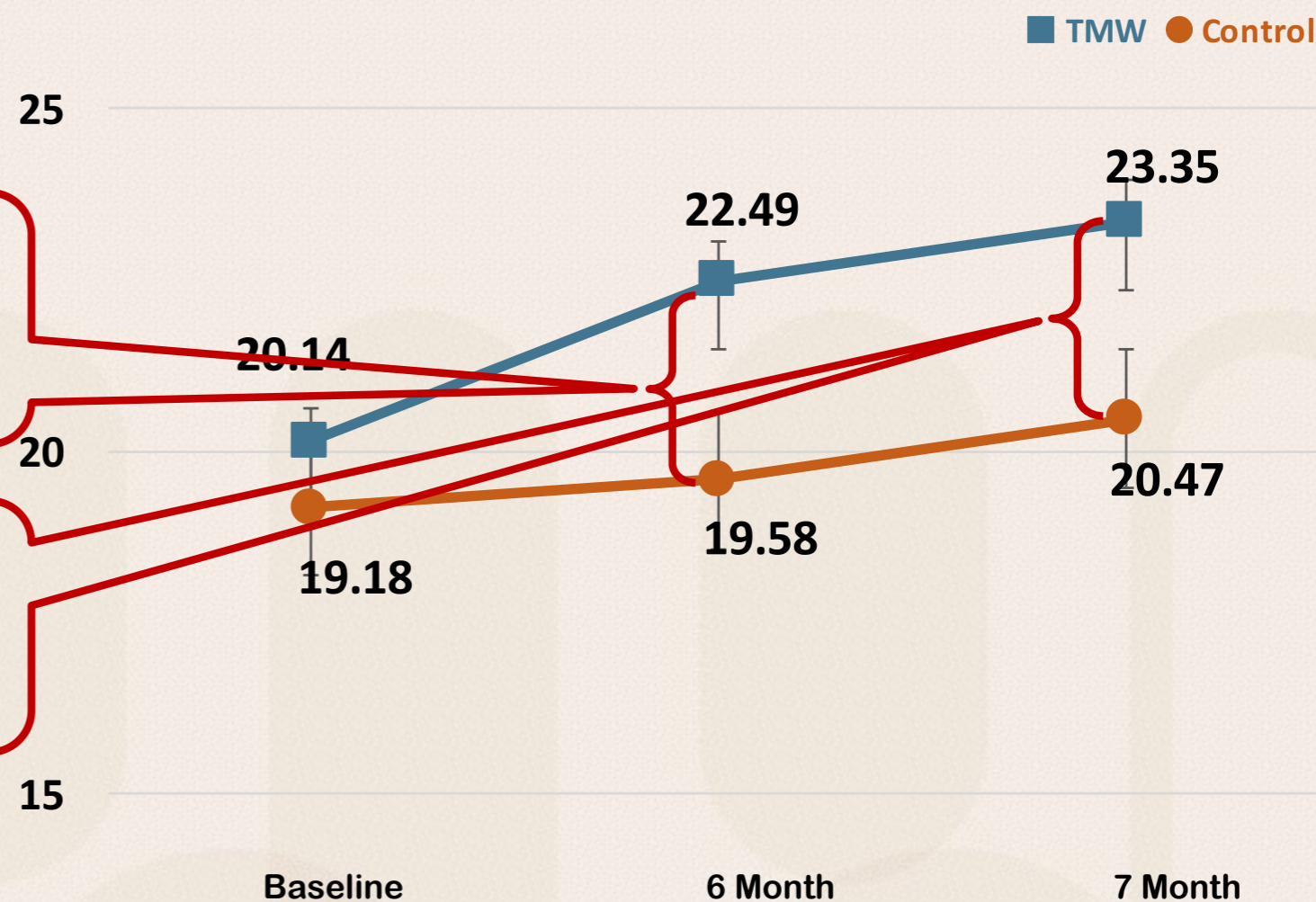
TMW > Control (6-month post)

$F(1, 200) = 13.80^{***}$, $\eta^2 = 0.07$

TMW > Control (7-month post)

$F(1, 151) = 11.13^{**}$, $\eta^2 = 0.07$

** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$



Knowledge (Baby SPEAK 10-item) by Group over Time among Spanish-Speaking Parents

ANCOVA

Controlling for Education Level

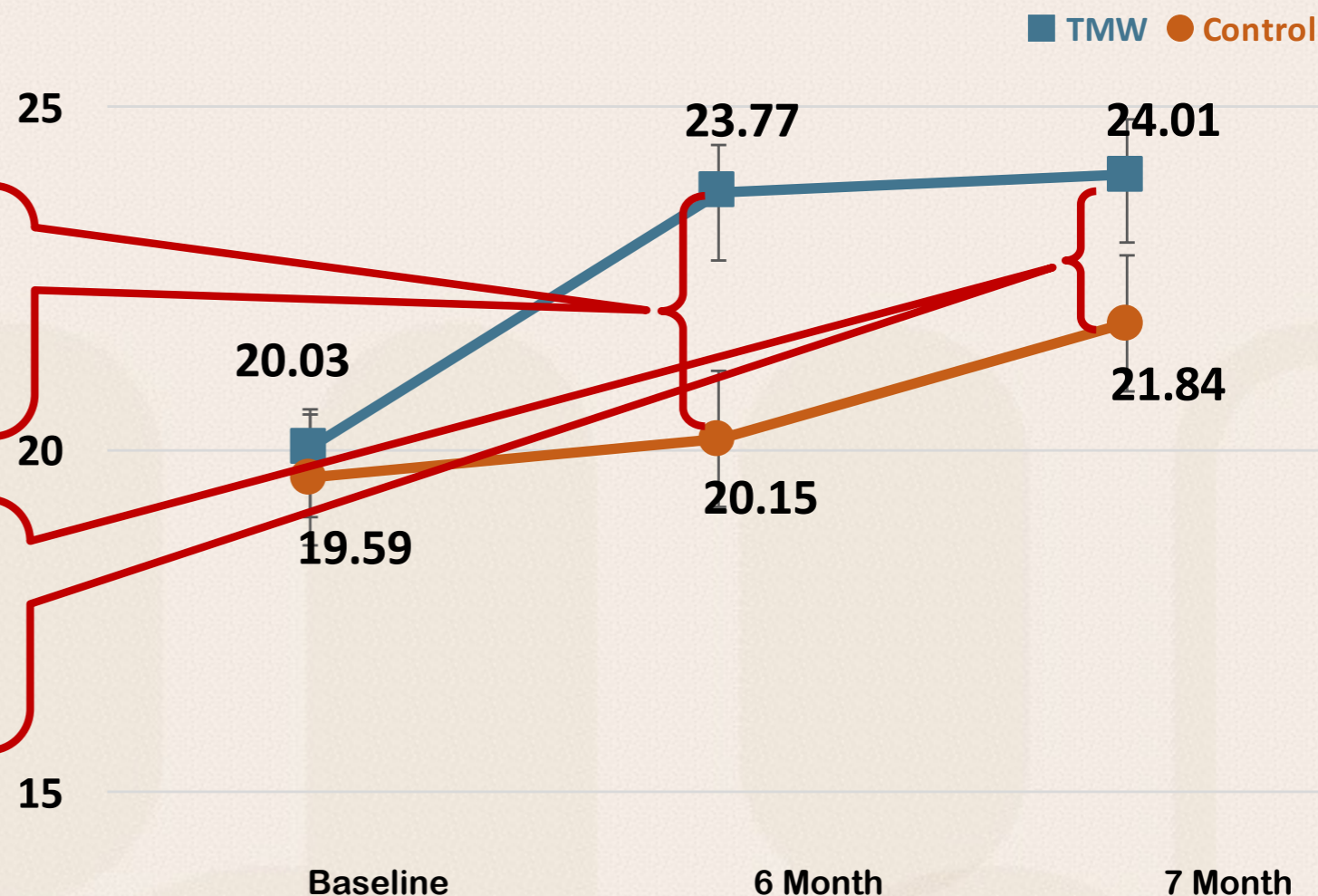
TMW > Control (6-month post)

$F(1, 148) = 16.79^{***}$, $\eta^2 = 0.10$

TMW > Control (7-month post)

$F(1, 147) = 7.06^{**}$, $\eta^2 = 0.05$

**** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$**



NCAST

Nursing Child Assessment Satellite Training

- Assessing behaviors of the parent and the child during a teaching task
- 13 items focusing on maternal behaviors that are explicitly discussed in the Well Baby module videos



Maternal Linguistic Behavior Scale

ANOVA on all 13 items

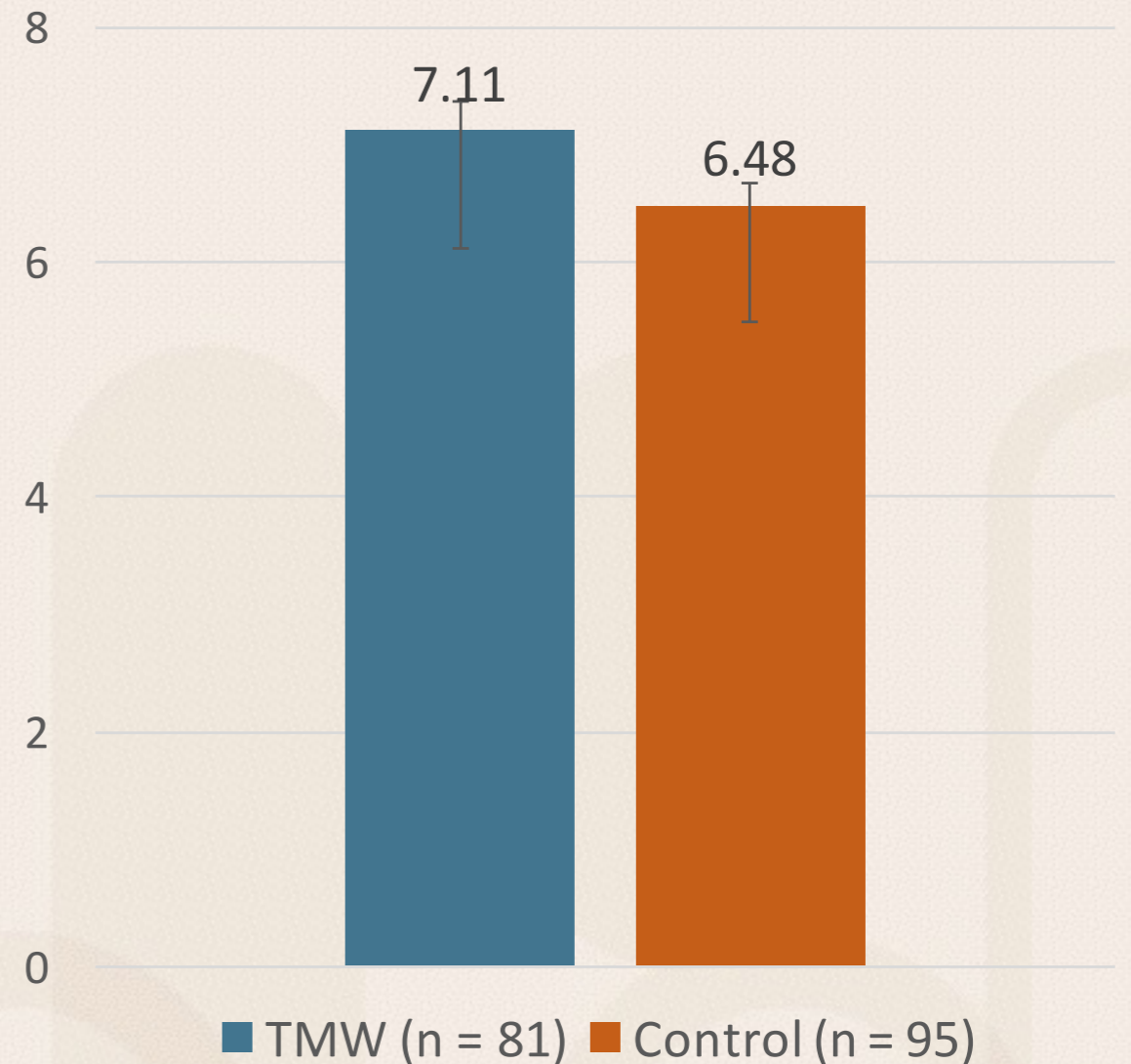
TMW > Control (6-month post)

$F(1, 174) = 3.87^*$, $\eta^2 = 0.02$

* $p = .05$.

Sample Items

- Caregiver praises child's successes or partial successes
- Caregiver makes a positive, sympathetic, or soothing verbalization



Maternal Linguistic Behaviors: Praise & Encouragement

ANOVA on 7 items

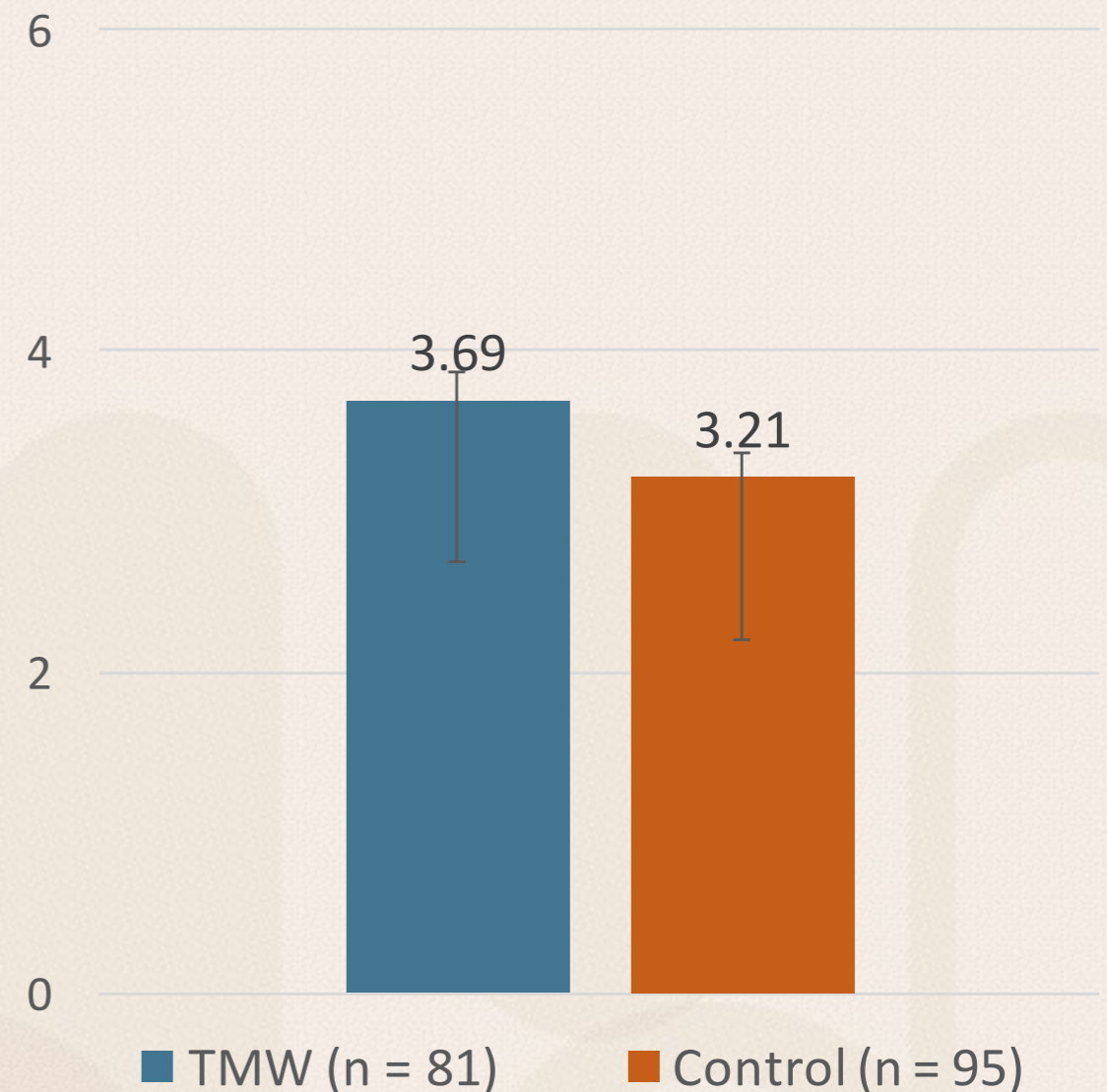
TMW > Control (6-month post)

$F(1, 174) = 4.26^*$, $\eta^2 = 0.02$

* $p < .05$.

Sample Items

- Caregiver uses both verbal and non-verbal instruction in teaching the child
- Caregivers makes cheerleading type statements to the child during the teaching interaction



Maternal Use of Complex Language

ANOVA on 4 items

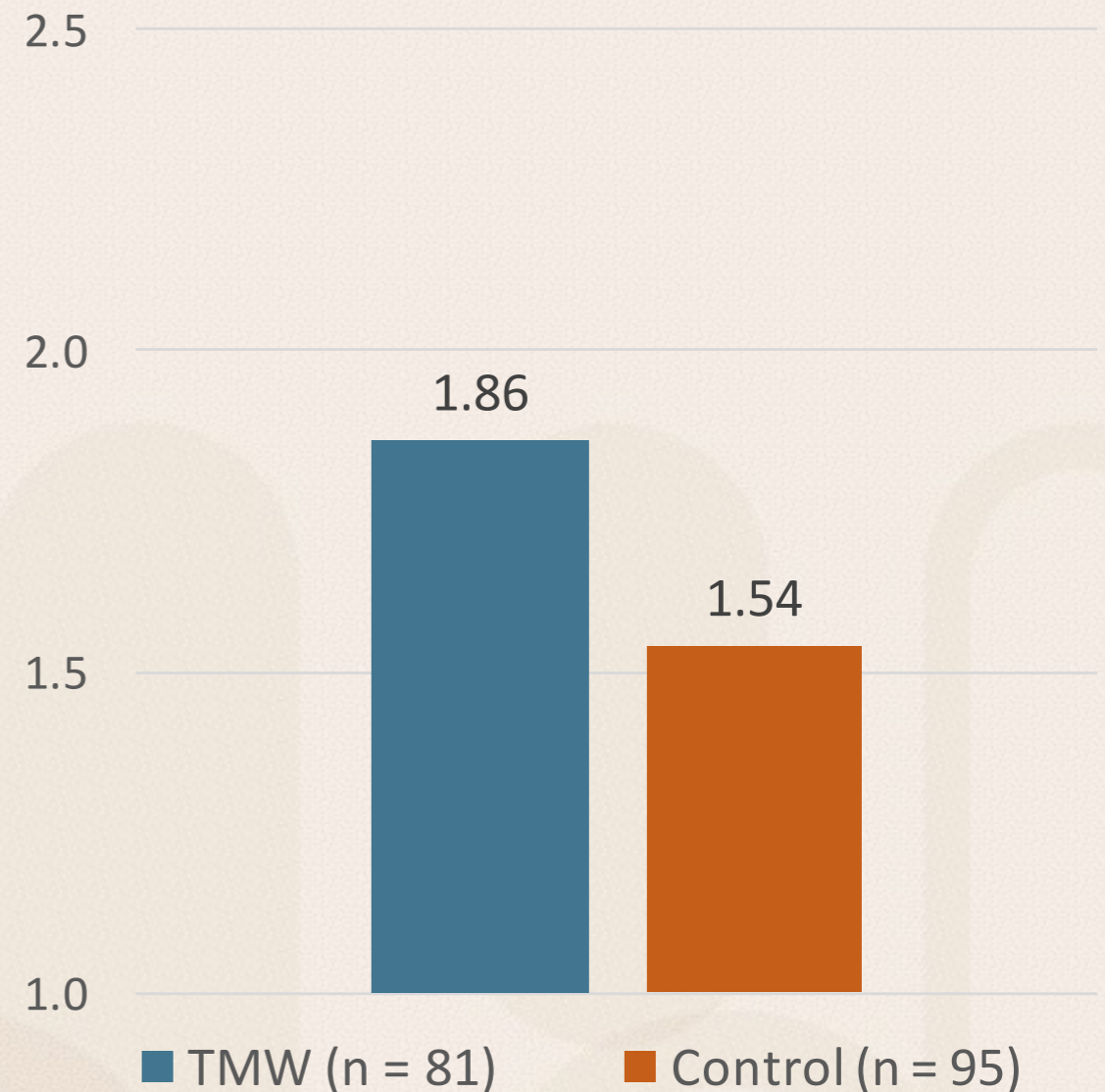
TMW > Control (6-month post)

$$F(1, 174) = 4.50^*, \eta^2 = 0.03$$

* $p < .05$.

Sample Items

- Caregiver uses at least two different sentences or phrases to describe the task to the child
- Caregiver uses explanatory verbal style more than imperative style in teaching the child



MacArthur-Bates Communicative Development Inventories

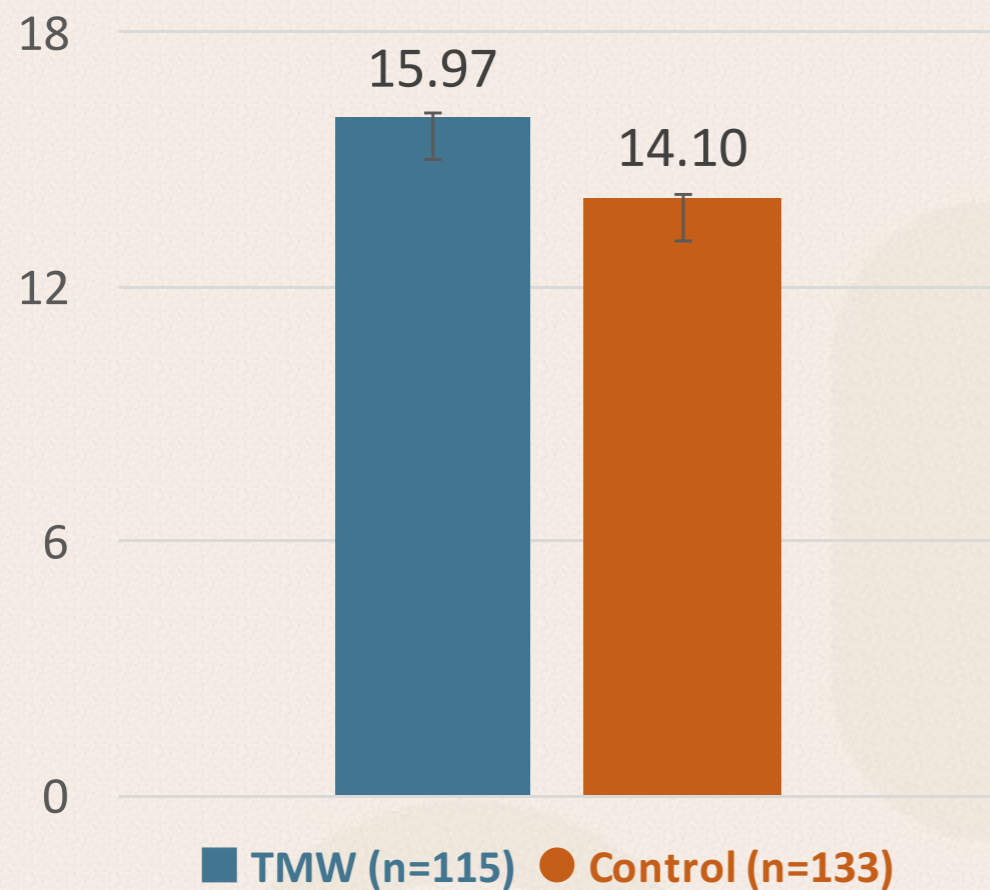
- Caregiver-report of a child's language skills
 - either English or Spanish
- Receptive: being able to understand the words
- Expressive: being able to understand and say the words
- 9-Month and 12-Month Well-Baby visit



English Language Skills (MacArthur-Bates) at 9-Month

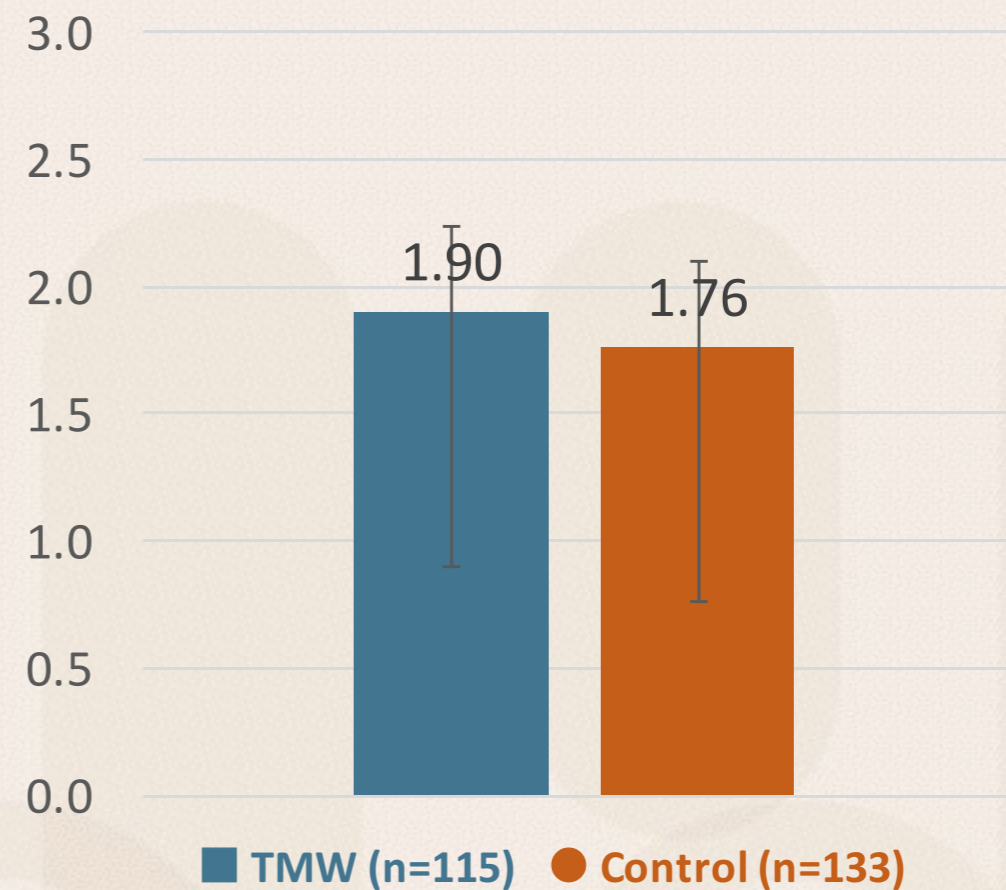
T-Test: Receptive

TMW \approx Control $t(246) = 1.12, p > .05$



T-Test: Expressive

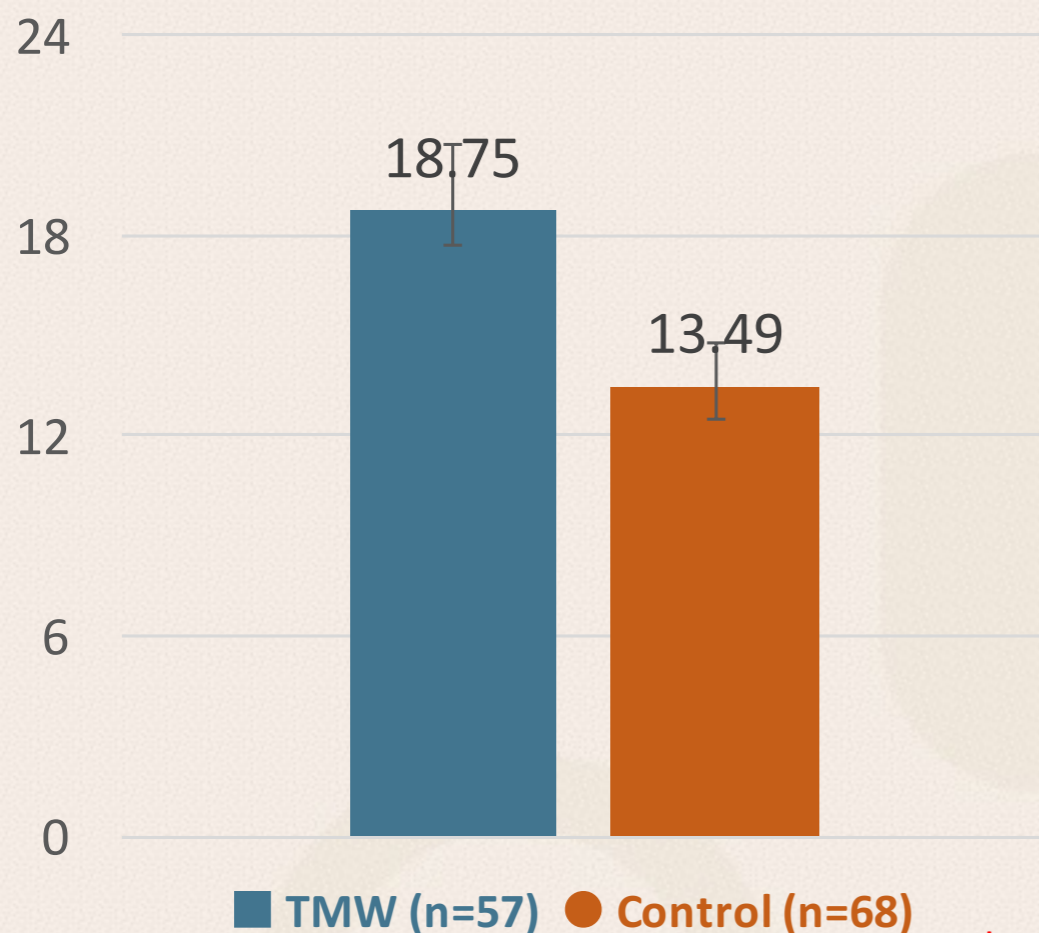
TMW \approx Control $t(246) = 0.35, p > .05$



Spanish Language Skills (MacArthur-Bates) at 9-Month

T-Test: Receptive

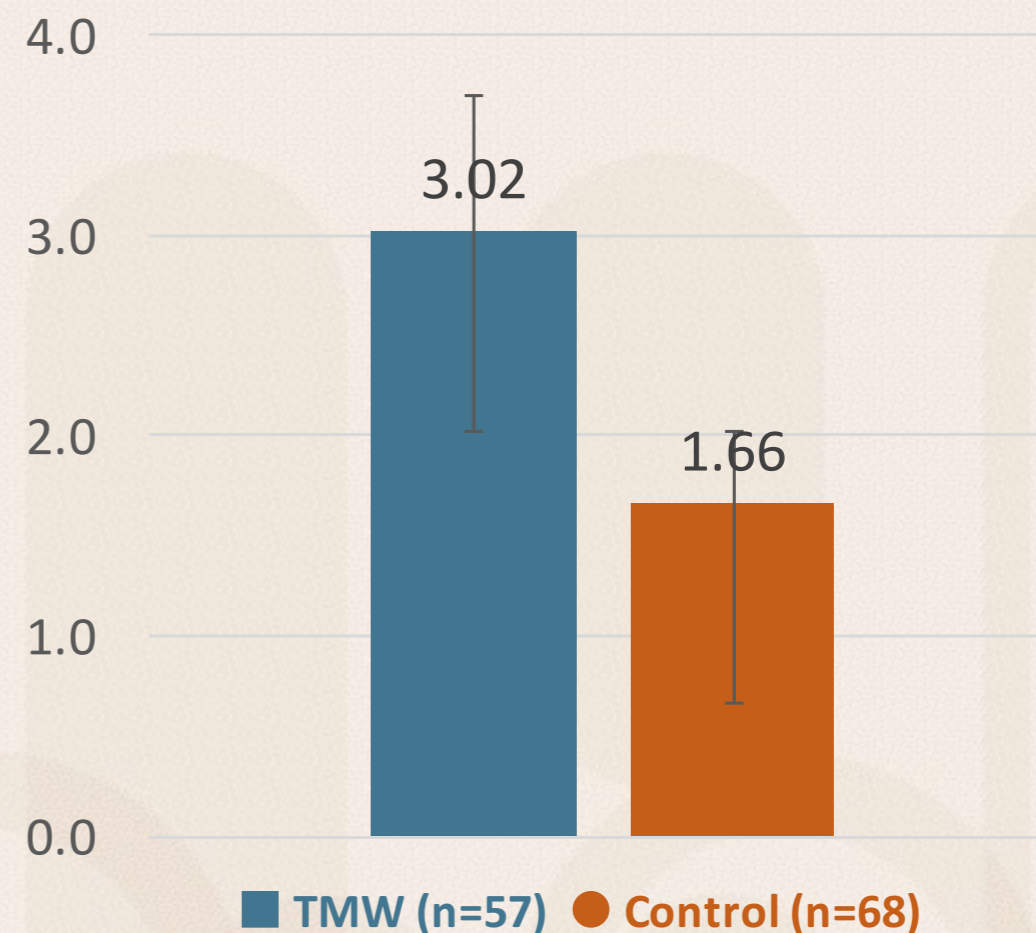
TMW > Control $t(123) = 2.28^*$



* $p < .05$. † $p < .05$.

T-Test: Expressive

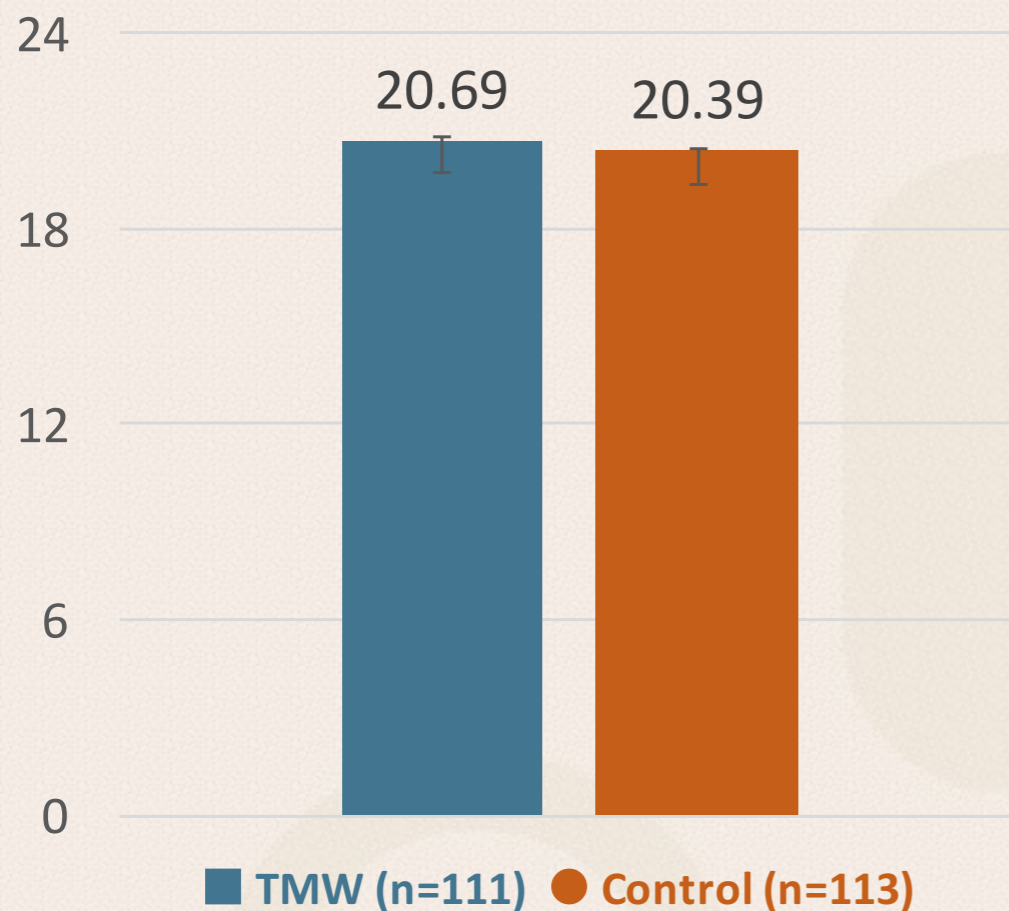
TMW > Control $t(123) = 1.84^\dagger$



English Language Skills (MacArthur-Bates) at 12-Month

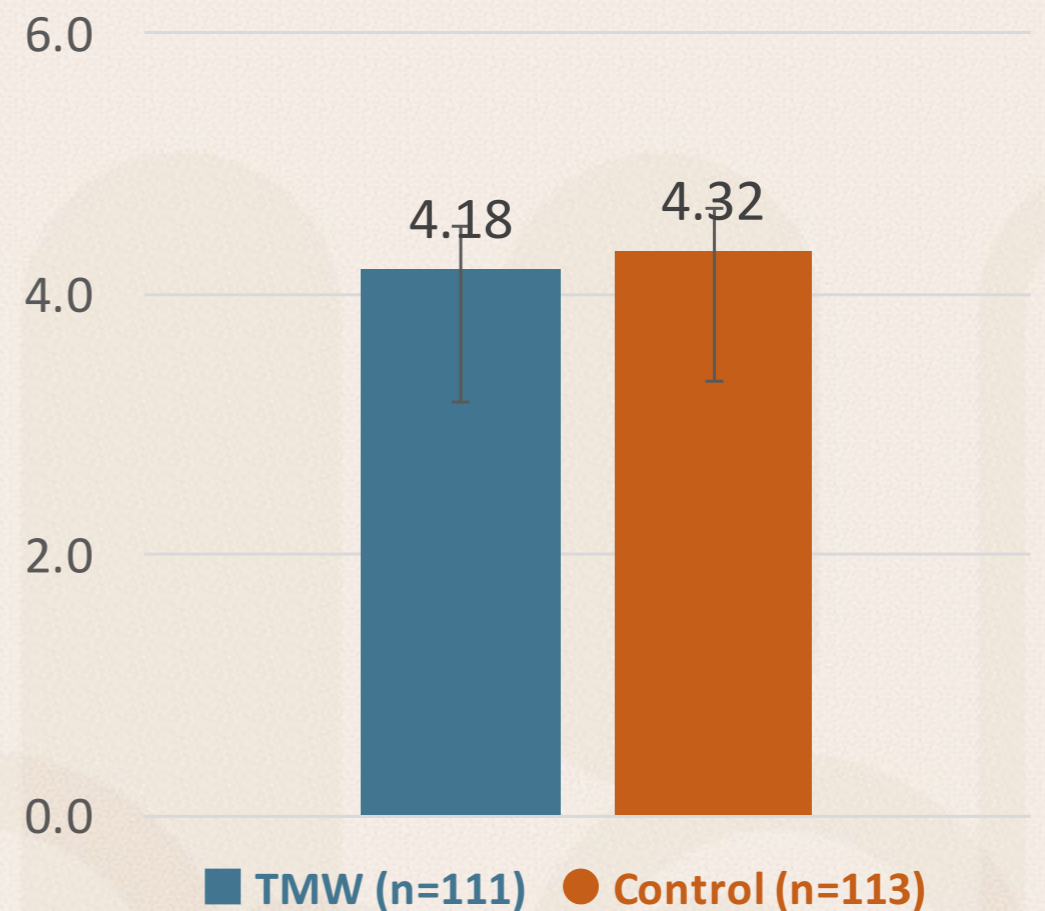
T-Test: Receptive

TMW \approx Control $t(222) = 0.14, p > .05$



T-Test: Expressive

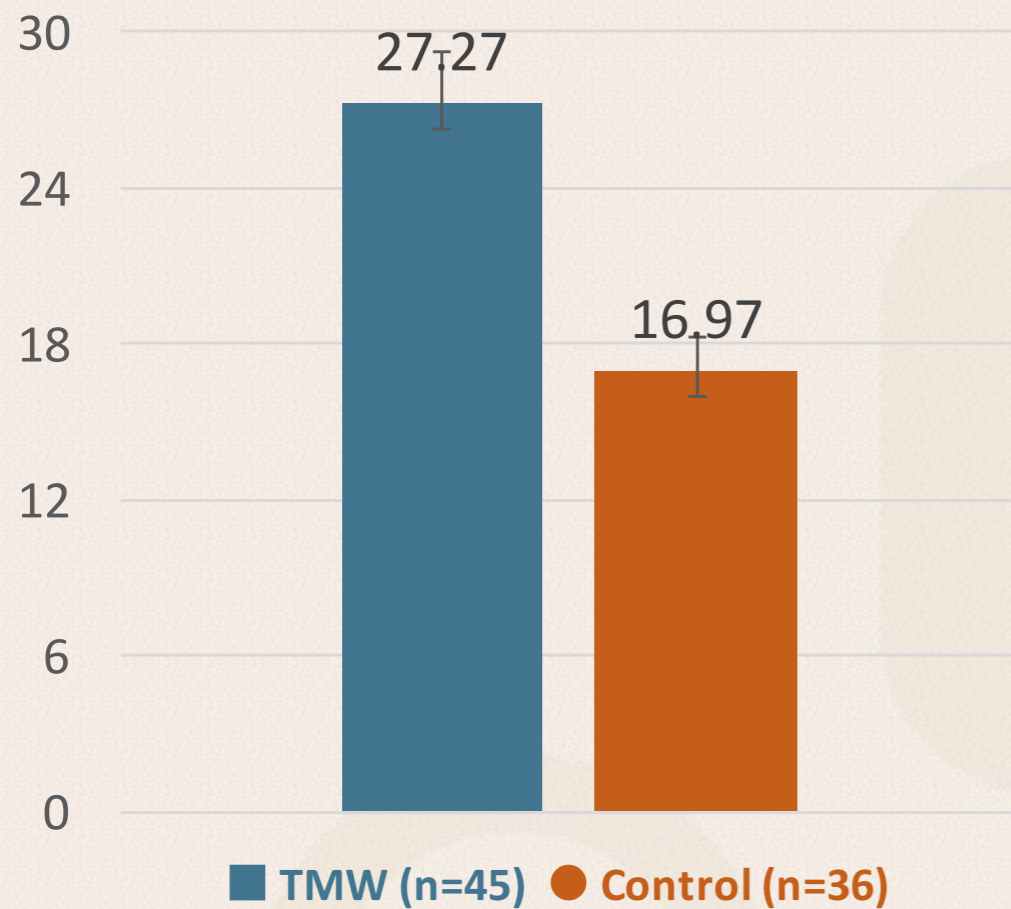
TMW \approx Control $t(222) = -0.19, p > .05$



Spanish Language Skills (MacArthur-Bates) at 12-Month

T-Test: Receptive

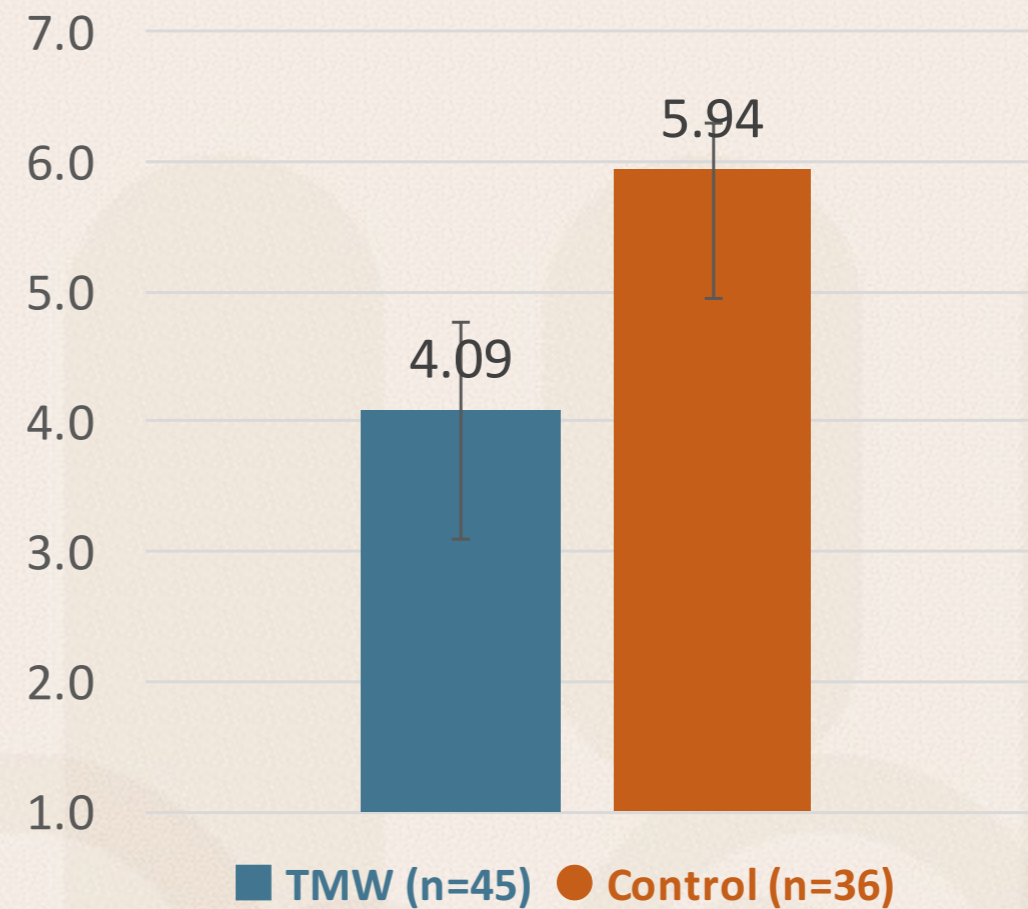
TMW > Control $t(79) = 2.53^*$



* $p < .05.$

T-Test: Expressive

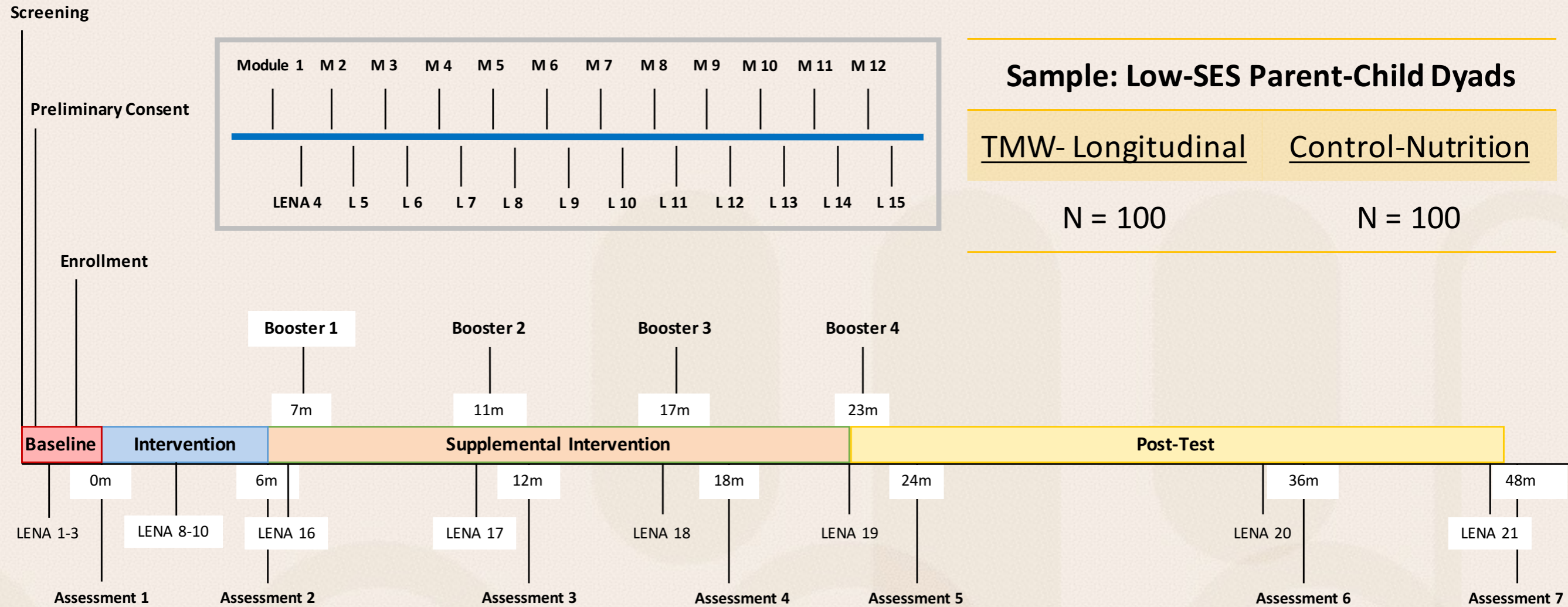
TMW > Control $t(79) = -1.51, p > .05$



TMW Home Visiting



TMW-Longitudinal Home Visiting Curriculum



Sample: Low-SES Parent-Child Dyads

TMW- Longitudinal

Control-Nutrition

N = 100

N = 100



TMW Home-Visiting: A Longitudinal RCT

<u>Experimental: TMW</u>	<u>Control: Nutrition</u>
N = 100	N = 100
12 biweekly 60-min home visits	12 biweekly 30-minute home visits
Four 30-minute boosters	Four 10-minute booster

- All participants are at or below 200% the Federal Poverty Line
- Assesses children age 13-16 months to kindergarten entry



Participant Demographics

	<u>TMW</u> (n = 99)	<u>Control</u> (n = 95)
Caregiver Characteristics		
Age (<i>M, SD</i>)	29.41 yr (6.68)	28.66 yr (7.06)
African American	80%	82%
Married or Civil Union	16%	16%
HS/GED or some college	64%	64%
Employed	47%	52%
WIC and/or LINK	76%	84%
Child Characteristics		
Age (<i>M, SD</i>)	1.18 yr (0.10)	1.19 yr (0.11)
Male	57%	50%



SPEAK – Survey of Parent/Provider Expectations And Knowledge

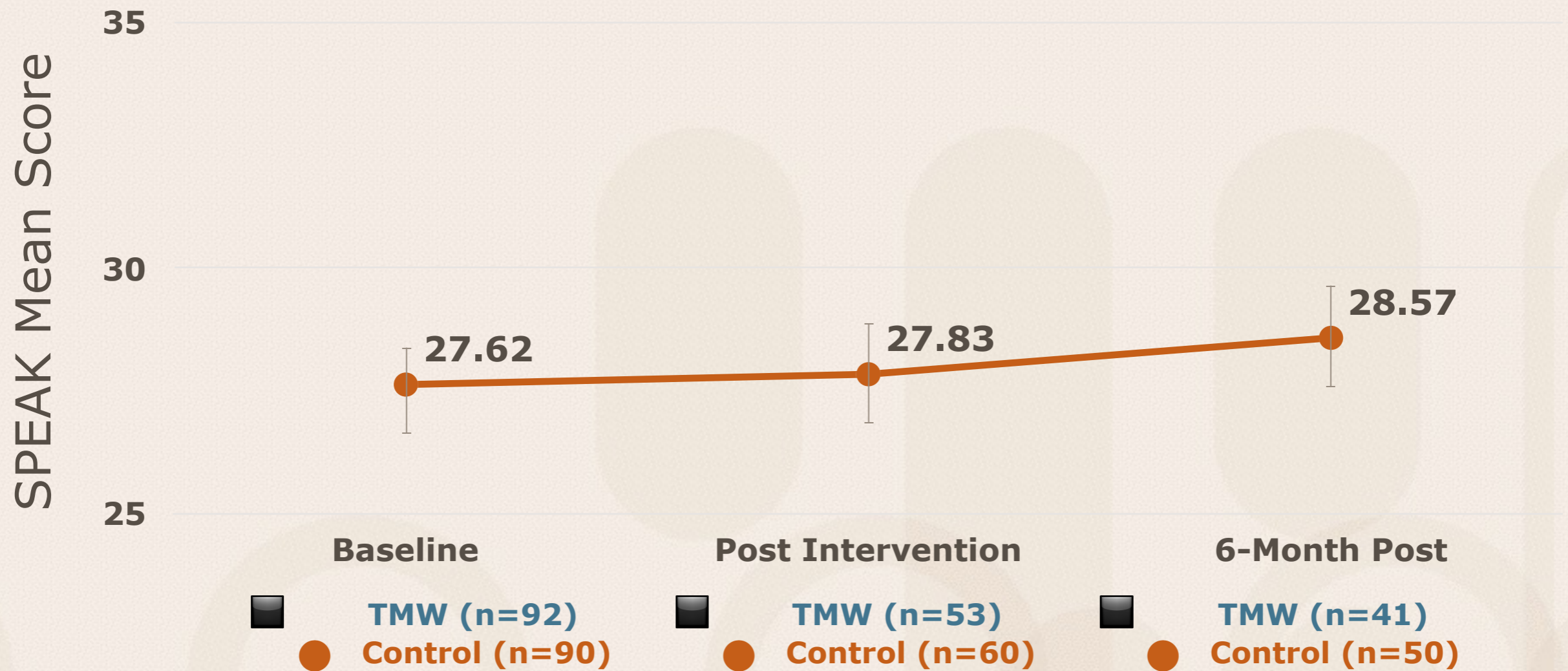
- Parents' knowledge and beliefs about young children's cognitive and language development
- Response scale: 0 (strongly agree) to 4 (strongly disagree)
- Sample items:

"Infants learn little about language in the first six months of their life."

"Responding to infants every time they cry will only end up spoiling them."



Parent Knowledge (SPEAK) by Group over Time



Parent Knowledge (SPEAK) by Group over Time

ANCOVA

controlling for Baseline Knowledge

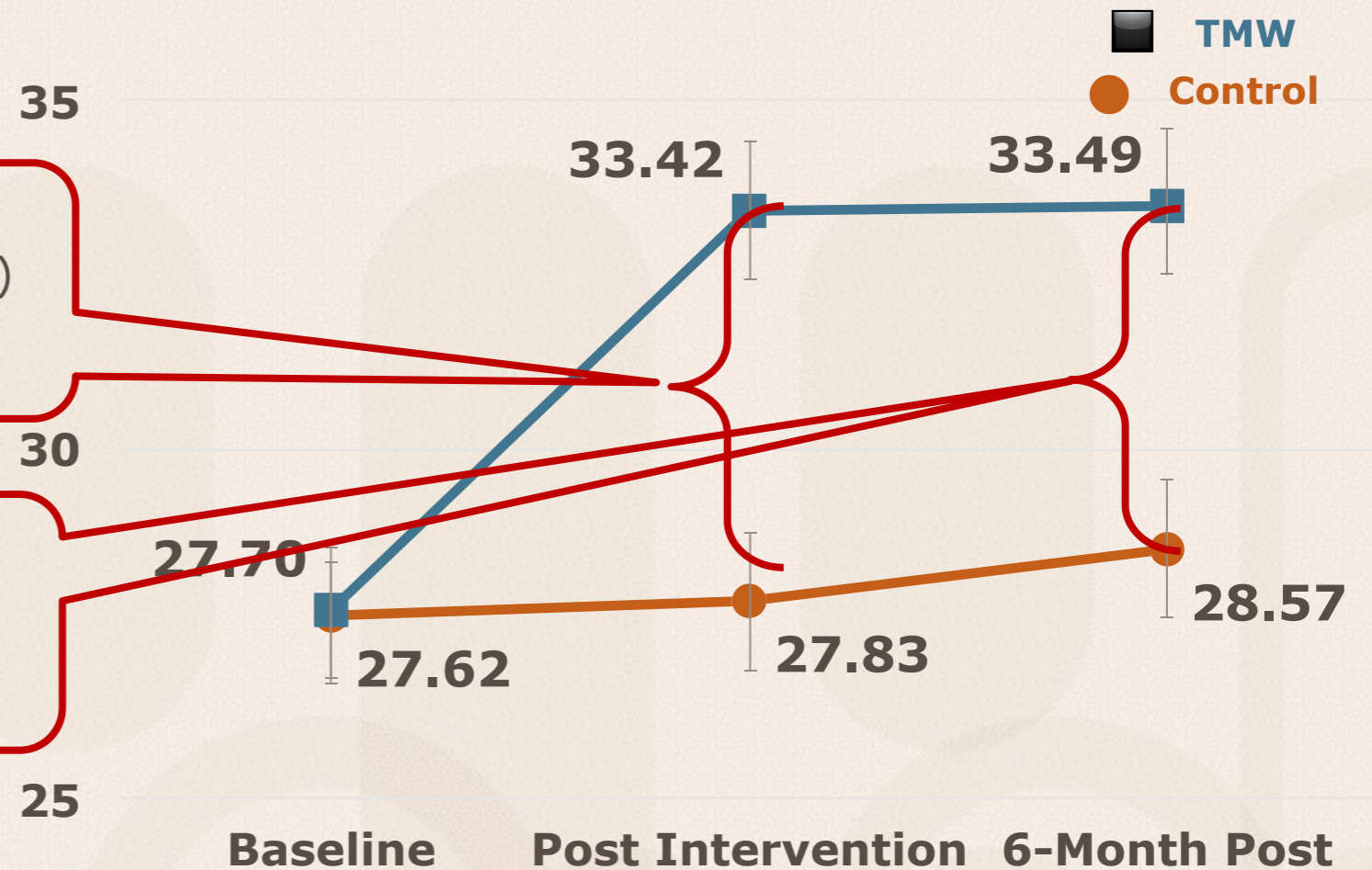
TMW > **Control** (post intervention)

$$F(2, 110) = 24.86^{***}, \eta^2 = 0.18$$

TMW > **Control** (6-month post)

$$F(2, 88) = 21.00^{***}, \eta^2 = 0.19$$

*** $p < .001$

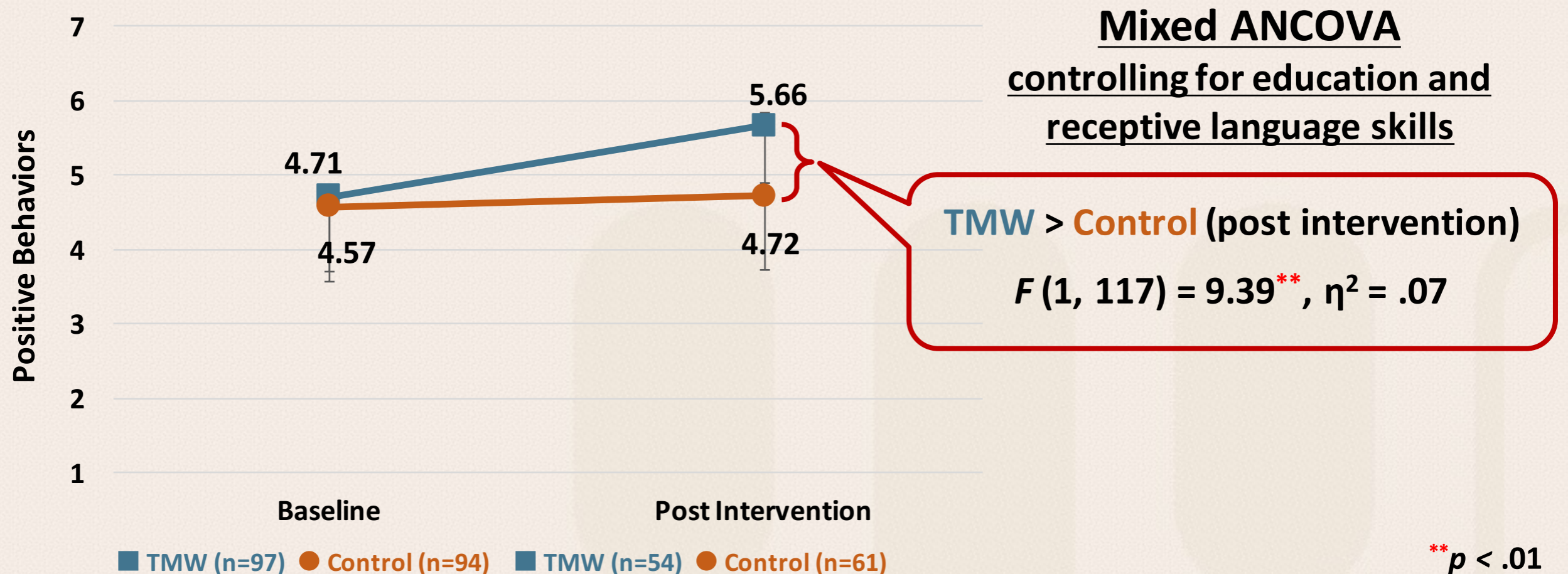


Parent-Child Interaction System (PARCHISY)

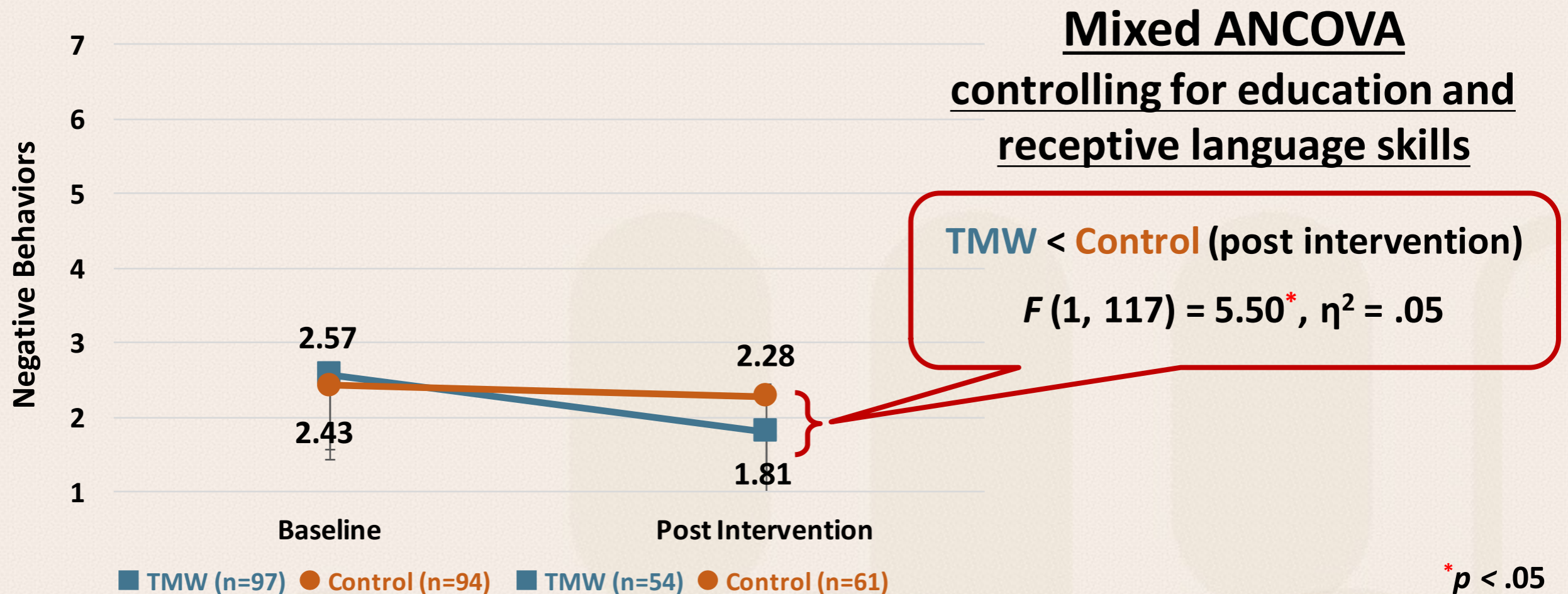
- Caregiver behaviors towards child at free-play
- Positive Behaviors
 - Praise, Explanation, and Open-Ended Questions
- Negative Behaviors
 - Physical Control, Criticism, and Intrusiveness
- Rating : 1 (*none shown*) to 7 (*consistently shown/exclusive use*)



Positive Behaviors by Group over Time



Negative Behaviors by Group over Time

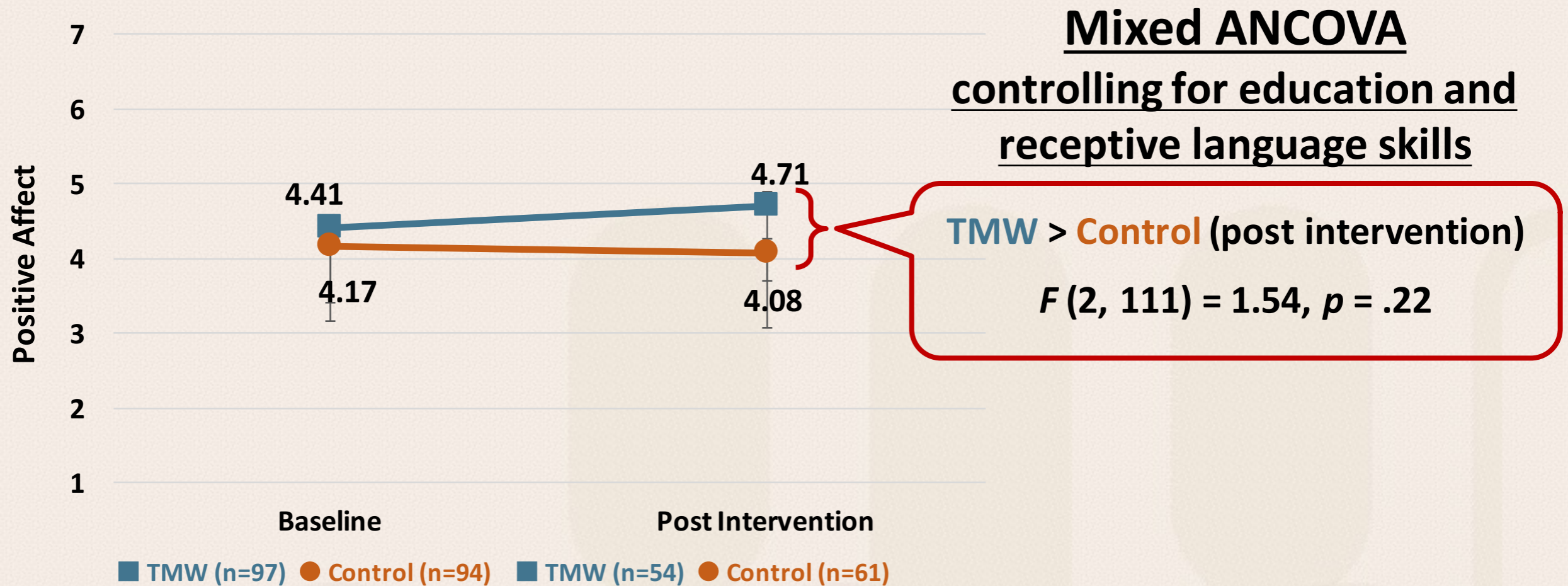


Parent-Child Interaction System (PARCHISY)

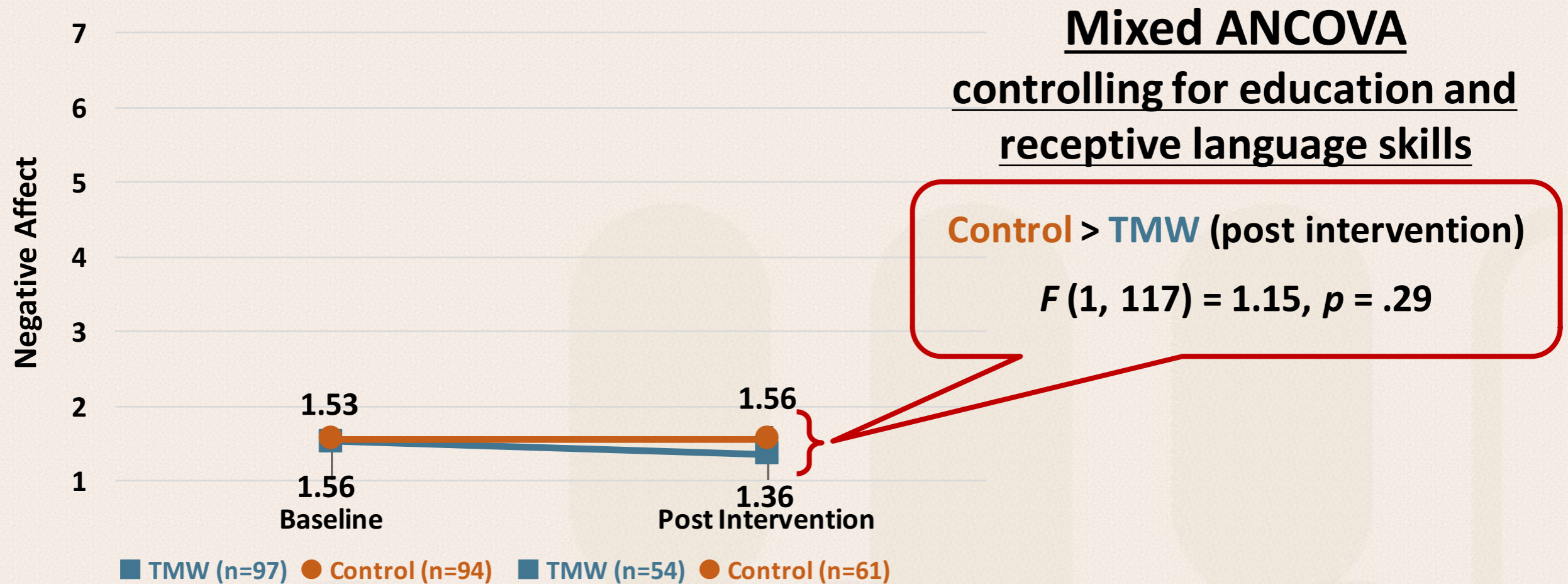
- Parent affect towards child at free-play
- Positive Affect
 - Warmth, Smiling, and Laughing
- Negative Affect
 - Rejection, Frowning, and Cold or Harsh Tone
- Rating : 1 (*none shown*) to 7 (*consistently shown/exclusive use*)



Positive Affect by Group over Time



Negative Affect by Group over Time

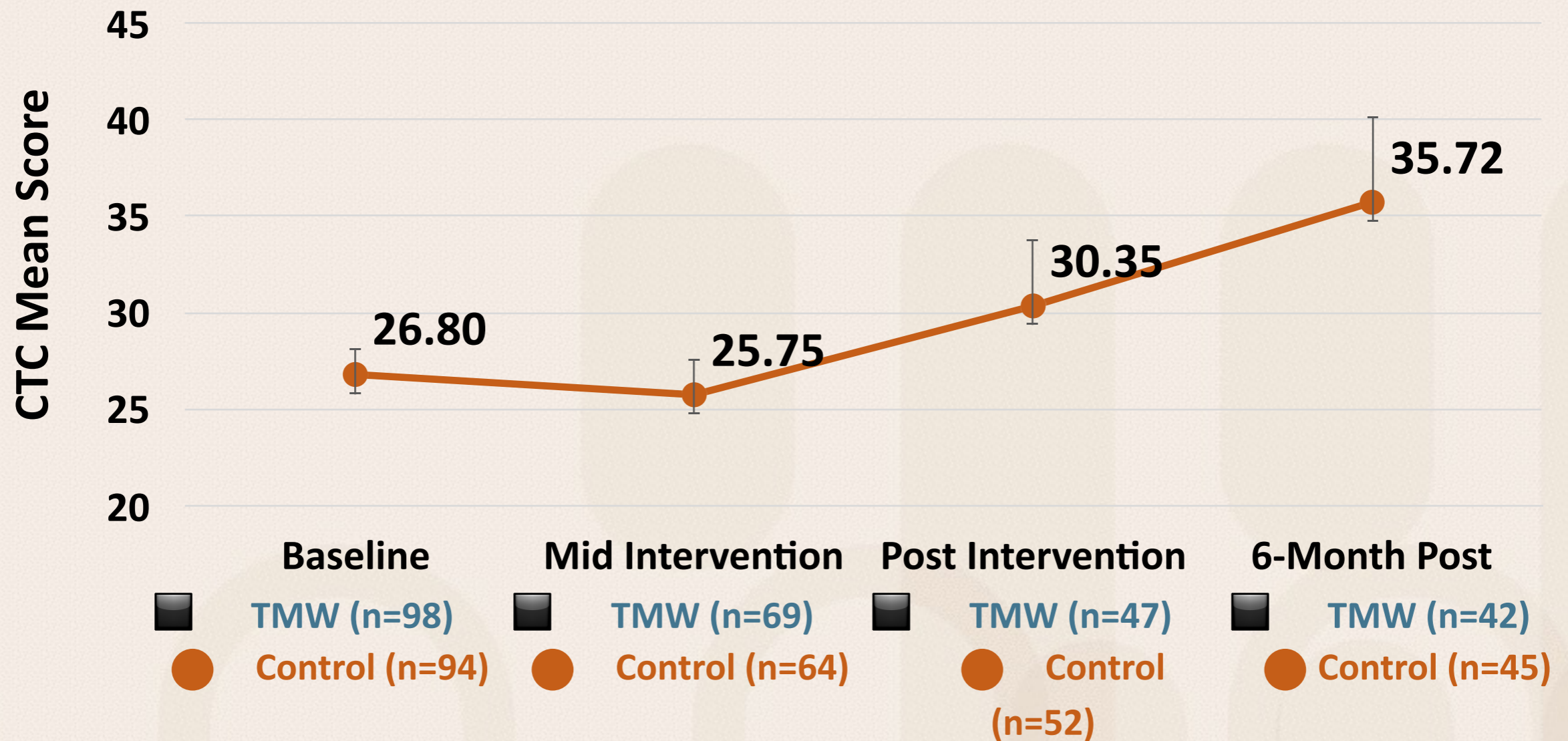


Conversational Turn Count

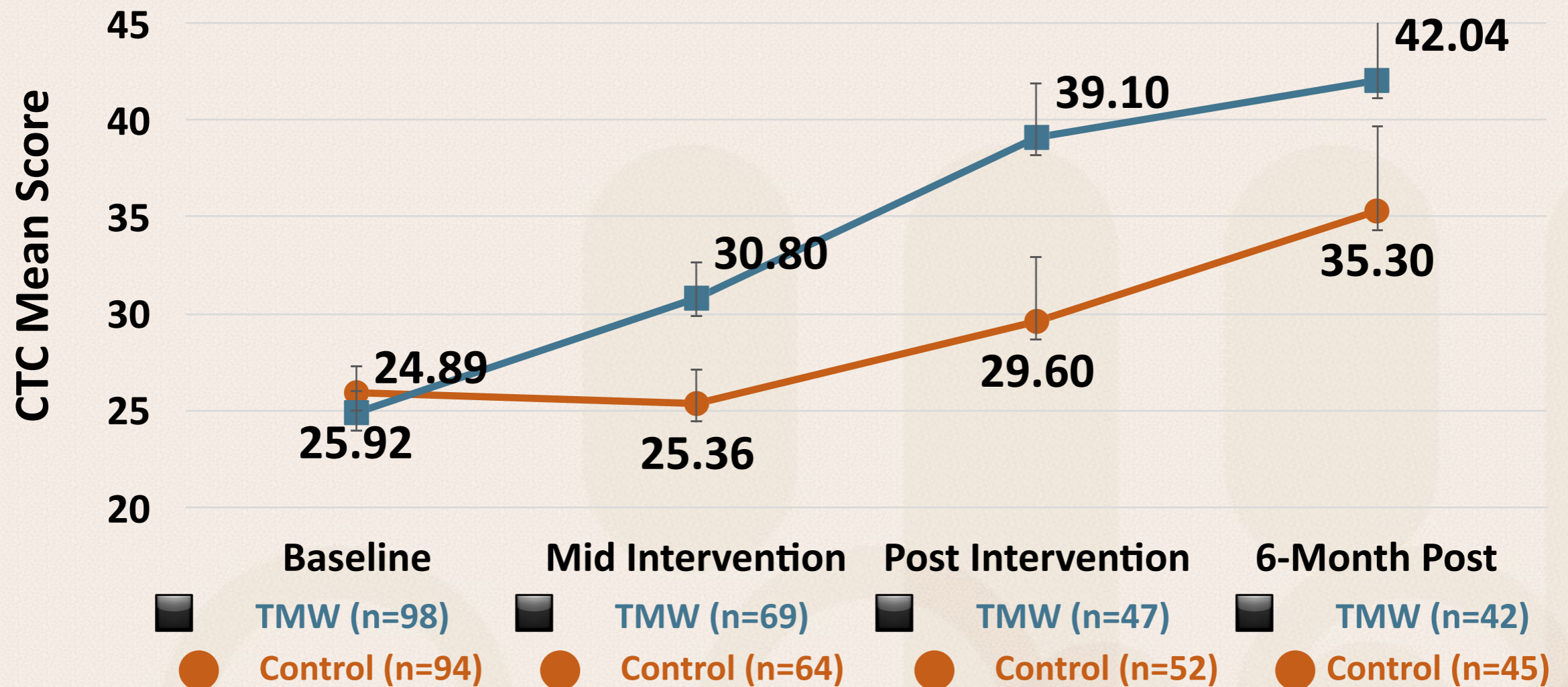
- Hourly estimate of the frequency of adult communicative interactions with the child
- Measure of the home language environments



Conversational Turn Count (CTC) by Group over Time



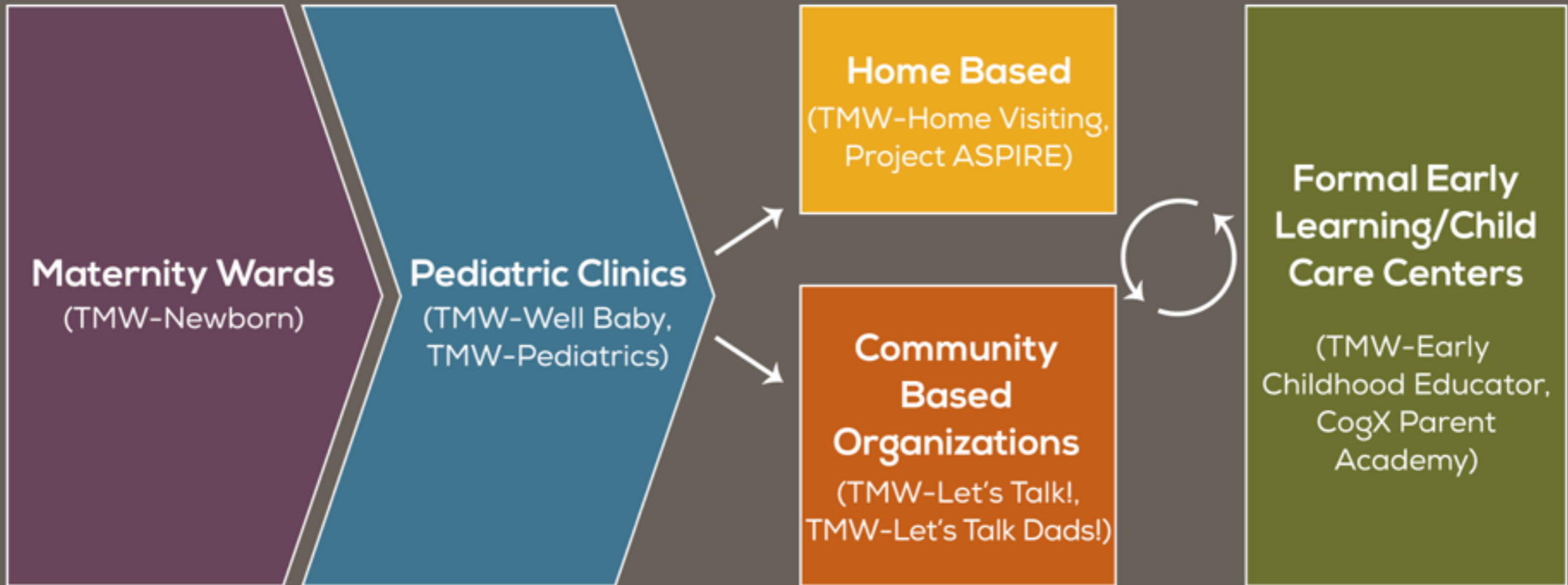
Conversational Turn Count (CTC) by Group over Time



TMW's Model for a *Parent-Centered* Public Health Approach to Early Learning

Community Partnership

(Parent and Community Informed Programming, Community Engagement, and Public Awareness)



TMW Ambassadors
(TMW-Spread the Words)



TMW's *Parent-Centered* Public Health Approach to Early Learning

- **Asset** based
- Places parents and caregivers at the center
- Connect with families at **multiple touch points** across systems throughout first three years of a child's life
- Developed in **partnership** with parents, providers and communities
- Technology driven, human-assisted
- Designed to work in conjunction with other programs (e.g. Reach out and Read, VROOM, Healthy Steps)



TMW Center for Early Learning + Public Health

- Joint venture - Biological Sciences and Social Sciences Divisions
Co-Directors: Dana Suskind, MD
John List, PhD
- Advances public health approach for early learning informed by behavioral economics
- Leverages technology platform to facilitate intervention at scale and drive innovation
- Develops city- and community-wide implementation and evaluation models



TMW's Strategic Priorities



Develop evidence-based interventions and tools in early childhood – Refine and build out a broader suite of TMW Initiative interventions, leveraging the feedback-driven innovation cycle to continue to iterate on design and application of interventions



Demonstrate community-wide proof points – Collaborate with 1-2 pilot communities and local partners to embed the integrated suite of TMW interventions at scale within existing health, education, and community social service systems, reaching a significant portion of the target population



Advance the science of scaling – Develop a robust research base on interventions that impact educational outcomes and drive greater uptake of evidence-based interventions by public health and education systems by leveraging a network of interdisciplinary research sites to test and validate science-based interventions – advance the science of science



Catalyze the field – Advance the awareness and capability of health, education, and social services leaders in the application of the public health approach in the early childhood space



Community-Wide Proof Points

Collaborate with 1-2 pilot communities and local partners to **embed the integrated suite of TMW interventions at scale** within existing health, education, and social service systems reaching a significant portion of the target population





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