

Conjoint Behavioral Consultation:

The Efficacy of a Family-School Partnership Model on Behavioral and Relational Outcomes

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Why Family-School Partnerships?

“The evidence is consistent, positive, and convincing: families have a major influence on their children’s achievement in school and through life... The research continues to grow and build an ever-strengthening case. When schools, families, and community groups work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and like school more.”

(Henderson & Mapp, 2002)

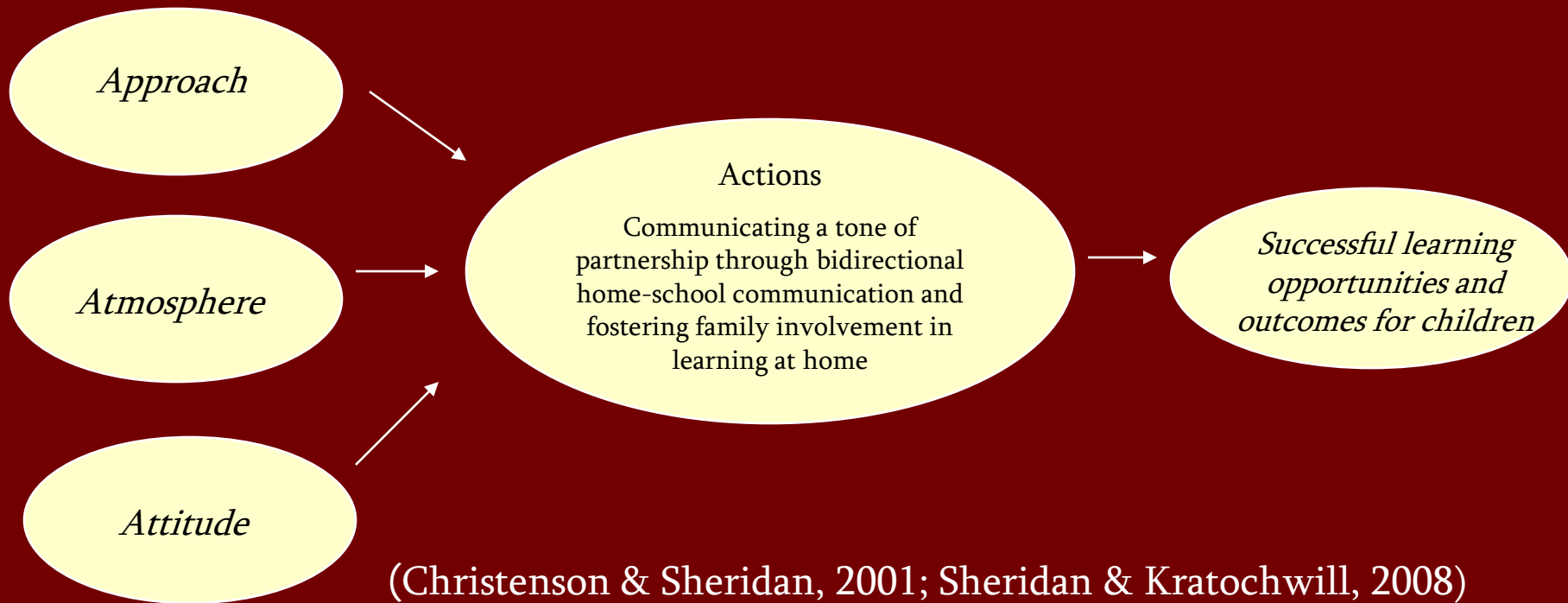
Why Partner with Families?

- Learning occurs across many settings and contexts
- There are several systems that interact to support a child's development
- Children spend more time out of school than they do in school
- Maximizing the extent to which these systems work together on behalf of the child can *close the achievement gap* for students who are not succeeding in school

Developing Pathways to Partnerships

Prerequisite Conditions:

These “3 A’s” must be in place for Actions to be accepted and effective



Conjoint Behavioral Consultation

- Promotes and supports *home-school partnerships* in the context of cooperative and collegial problem-solving
- Emphasizes meaningful parental/family engagement in education
- A vehicle by which to foster constructive, goal directed, solution-oriented services for children
- An extension of traditional (teacher) consultation that goes beyond the school setting and brings parents into the decision making process

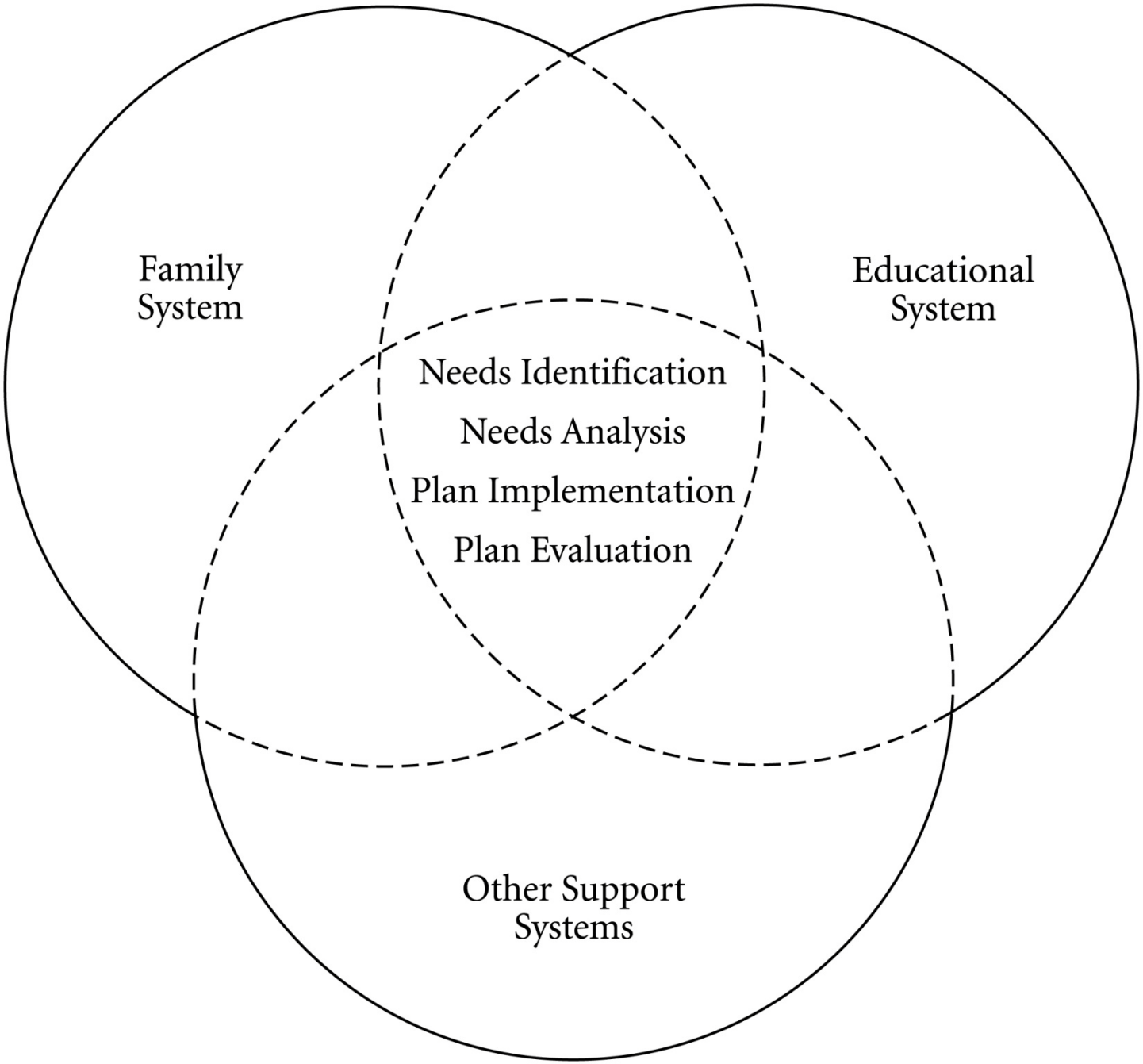
Conjoint Behavioral Consultation

Based on the assumptions that:

- Consistency and congruency in approaches, attitudes, and actions across home & school systems are important
- Structured, joint problem solving facilitates clear communication, shared goals, and congruent practices

Conjoint Behavioral Consultation: A Definition

- ❖ A strength-based, cross-system problem-solving and decision-making model wherein parents, teachers, and other caregivers or service providers work as partners and share responsibility for promoting positive and consistent outcomes related to a child's academic, behavioral, and social-emotional development (Sheridan & Kratochwill, 2008, p. 25).
- ❖ All stages of consultation (from problem identification to plan evaluation) are conducted with parents and teachers together, in a simultaneous (rather than parallel) manner



Family
System

Educational
System

Needs Identification
Needs Analysis
Plan Implementation
Plan Evaluation

Other Support
Systems

Conceptual Bases: Ecological-Behavioral Theory

- Combines the empirical technology of behavioral analysis with the conceptual advances of ecological theory
- Allows for a comprehensive and functional understanding of a student's needs
- Recognizes the importance of cross-setting intervention and data-based decision making
- Stresses the importance of looking at the entire system surrounding clients, as well as coordinating these systems

CBC Outcome Goals

- Address the needs that consultees have for students
- Obtain comprehensive data over extended time (temporal) and place (context)
- Improve skills and knowledge of all parties
- Establish consistent programming across settings
- Monitor effects (and side effects) of interventions systematically across settings
- Enhance generalization and maintenance of treatment effects

Video Example



CBC Relational Goals

- Improve communication and knowledge about the child, family, and classroom
- Increase commitments to educational goals
- Use consultee strengths to address needs
- Promote greater conceptualization of a student's needs
- Increase the diversity of expertise and resources available to address concerns

CBC Relational Goals

- Promote shared ownership for solutions
- Establish and strengthen home-school partnerships
- Strengthen the mesosystem – the connections, linkages, and relationships across home and school
- Provide opportunities for parents and teachers to become engaged and empowered
- Encourage parents to establish roles and beliefs in their ability to effectively contribute to their child's learning and development
- Facilitate teachers' perceptions about meaningful roles for and participation of parents

Video Example



Stages of Conjoint Behavioral Consultation

- Problem/Needs Identification
- Problem/Needs Analysis
- Plan Implementation
- Plan Evaluation

See http://fsp.unl.edu/future_module3.html

Problem/Needs Identification

Goals Include to:

- Identify strengths of the child, family, teacher, systems
- Behaviorally define the concern or need as it is represented across home and school settings
- Explore environmental conditions that may be contributing to or motivating problem behaviors (antecedent, consequent, and sequential conditions)
- Determine a shared goal for consultation
- Establish a procedure for the collection of baseline data across settings

Problem/Needs Analysis

Goals Include to:

- evaluate and obtain agreement on the sufficiency and adequacy of baseline data across settings
- identify setting events, ecological conditions, and cross-setting variables that may be impacting the target concerns
- collaboratively design an effective intervention plan across settings that is sensitive to setting-specific variables

Plan Development

- Consultant, parent, and teacher together discuss general strategies and plans to be included in a treatment package across home and school settings
- Strategies should be related to the environmental factors that contribute to the behavior
- The closer the congruity and coordination of plans across settings, the better!
 - Home programs may involve home-school notes, procedures for enhancing learning environments and opportunities outside of school, etc.
- Brainstorming techniques are often useful to generate ideas openly from parents and teachers

Treatment (Plan) Implementation

Goals Include to:

- monitor implementation of the intervention across settings
- provide training to parents and teacher, if necessary
- assess behavioral side effects and contrast effects; is the treatment causing any unforeseen problems or effects?
- determine the need for immediate revisions in the plan
- continue data collection procedures across settings

Treatment (Plan) Evaluation

Goals Include to:

- determine if the shared goals of consultation have been attained
- evaluate the effectiveness of the plan across settings
- discuss strategies and tactics regarding the continuation, modification, or termination of the treatment plan across settings
- schedule additional interviews if necessary
- discuss ways to continue conjoint problem solving or shared decision making

Early Research Findings: Outcomes

(see Sheridan, Clarke, & Burt, 2008)

- CBC provides an effective mechanism for addressing the needs of children with behavioral, academic, and social-emotional concerns (Guli, 2005; Sheridan, Eagle, Cowan, & Mickelson, 2001)
 - Behavior: Kratochwill, Elliott, Loitz, Sladeczek, & Carlson (2003); Wilkinson (2003)
 - Academic: Galloway & Sheridan (1994); Weiner, Sheridan, & Jenson (1998)
 - Social-emotional: Colton & Sheridan (1998); Sheridan, Kratochwill, & Elliott (1990)
 - Developmental disabilities: Ray, Watson, & Skinner (1999); Wilkinson (2005)

Early Research Findings: Outcomes

(see Sheridan, Clarke, & Burt, 2008)

- CBC has been shown to be effective across unique practice contexts, including Head Start classrooms (Sheridan, Clarke, Knoche, & Edwards, 2006) and pediatric/medical settings (Lasecki et al., 2008; Sheridan et al., in press).
- CBC has been demonstrated to be efficacious with culturally diverse clients (Sheridan, Eagle, & Doll, 2006).
- Outcome research to date has utilized small-n experimental studies and replication designs, consistently resulting in convincing results.

Early Research Findings

(see Sheridan, Clarke, & Burt, 2008)

■ Process Research:

- CBC establishes a collaborative context for joint planning, decision making, problem solving (e.g., Erchul et al., 1999; Sheridan et al., 2002).
- Relational communication studies demonstrate bidirectional communication and reciprocal relationships in CBC (Grissom, Erchul, & Sheridan, 2003).

■ Social Validity Research:

- CBC is acceptable to parents, teachers, school psychologists (including relative to other approaches; e.g., Freer & Watson, 1999).
- Perceptions of goal attainment within CBC are high (Sladeczek et al., 2001)

Current Research

- A 3-cohort randomized trial testing the efficacy of CBC was funded by IES in 2005
- Aims of the study were to determine the efficacy of CBC, immediately and at one year follow up on:
 - child externalizing behaviors;
 - parent engagement, self-efficacy, and involvement;
 - teacher beliefs and attitudes about parent involvement; and
 - parent-teacher relationships immediately and at one-year follow up

Participants & Design

- 203 K-3 students and their parents and teachers from 26 schools participated over 3 years
- Classrooms were randomly assigned to treatment or control conditions
- Students with disruptive classroom behaviors (e.g., non-compliance, aggression) were selected based on teacher nomination, ratings on a short behavioral inventory, and the *Systematic Screening for Behavior Disorders (SSBD; Walker & Seversen, 1990)*
- Assessments conducted at baseline and post-CBC; follow up assessments conducted in the following academic year

Select Measures

- Behavioral Assessment Scale for Children (Reynolds & Kamphaus, 2004)
- Social Skills Rating Scale (Gresham & Elliott, 1990)
- Direct classroom observations using PDA-based INTMAN technology
- Family Involvement Questionnaire-Elementary (Manz, Fantuzzo, & Power, 2004)
- Parent Participation in Problem Solving (Author)
- Parent-Teacher Rating Scale (Vickers & Minke, 1995)
- Hoover-Dempsey et al. (1992, 2002) scales measuring teacher beliefs about parent involvement, efficacy for helping children, invitations for involvement; also parent role construct, self-efficacy

CBC Implementation

4 to 5 conjoint consultation sessions occurred over 8 to 12 weeks in small groups with parents of 2 to 3 students and the classroom teacher

Identification and frequency of target behaviors:

	Compliance	Engaged Time	Interference	Aggression
Home	45	23	35	3
School	35	85	56	4

Note:

16 different home behaviors collapsed into 4 categories

18 different school behaviors collapsed into 4 categories

Total # behaviors targeted at home: 115

Total # behaviors targeted at school: 180

Cross-Setting Interventions

- Consultation team selected interventions for students' behavioral plans from a *Behavioral Strategies Toolkit* with standardized protocols for evidence-based behavioral strategies, matched to function
- All students' behavioral plans contained a *motivation component* (e.g., token economy, reward menu) and a *home-school communication system*
- Additional training and support for parents and teachers were scheduled as needed
- Fidelity of intervention implementation assessed via self-reports, permanent products, and direct observation (classroom only)

Intervention Implementation

Intervention categories and frequencies across home and school:

	Antecedent/ Environment	Skill Building	Positive Consequence	Reductive Consequence
Home	113	38	194	8
School	106	51	234	13

Note:

All cases included a home-school communication system, such as home-school note

34 different home intervention components collapsed into 4 categories

40 different school intervention components collapsed into 4 categories

Total # intervention components at home: 353

Total # intervention components at school: 404

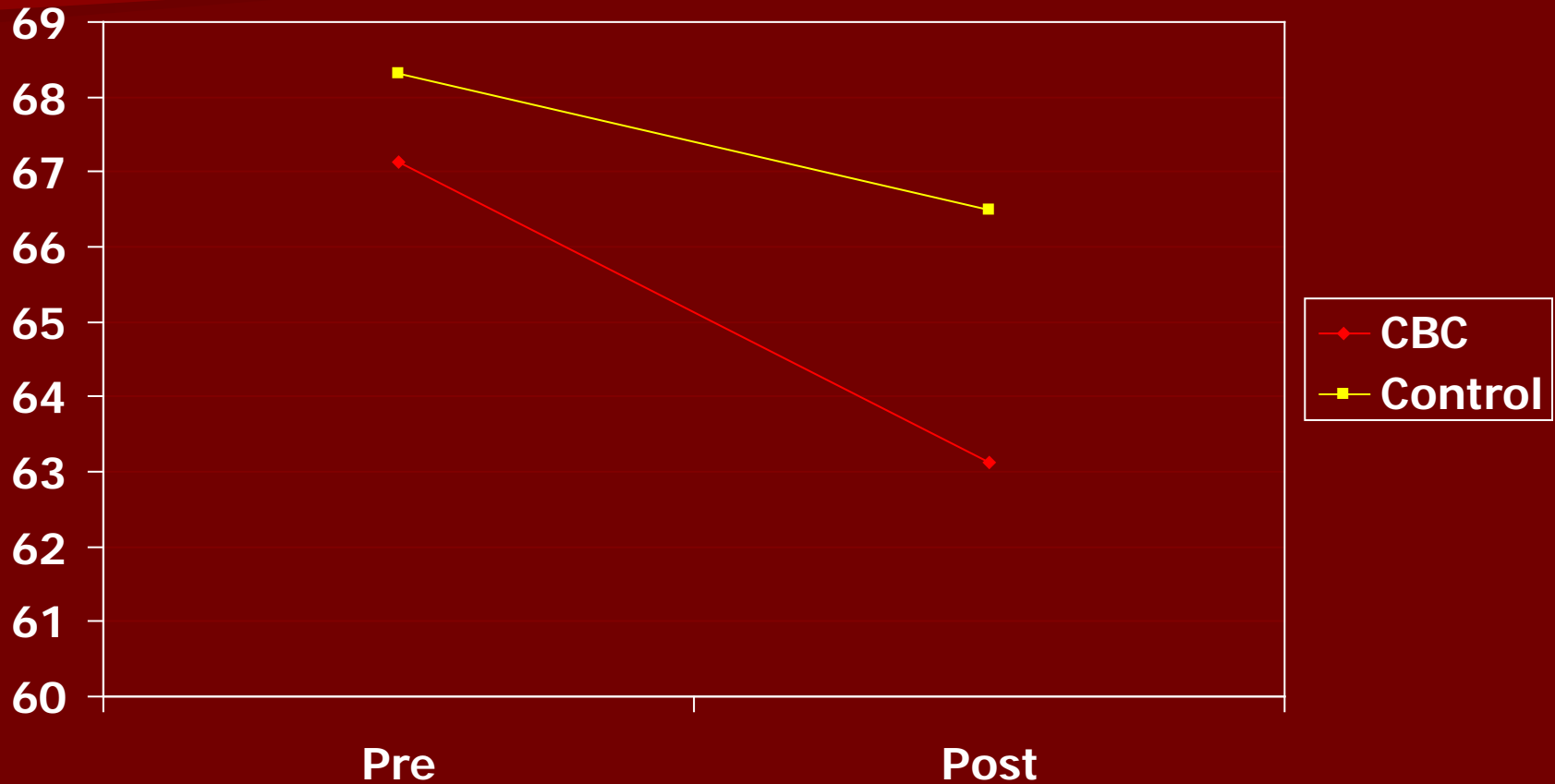
Data Analyses

- Effect of CBC on child outcomes and parent/teacher relationships
 - 3-level multilevel model (time points within individuals within teachers) examining the fixed effect of time by treatment interaction (γ)
- Mediating effect of the parent-teacher relationship was tested
 - Path analysis with a bootstrap method (Shrout & Bolger, 2002)
- Moderating effect of teacher beliefs was tested

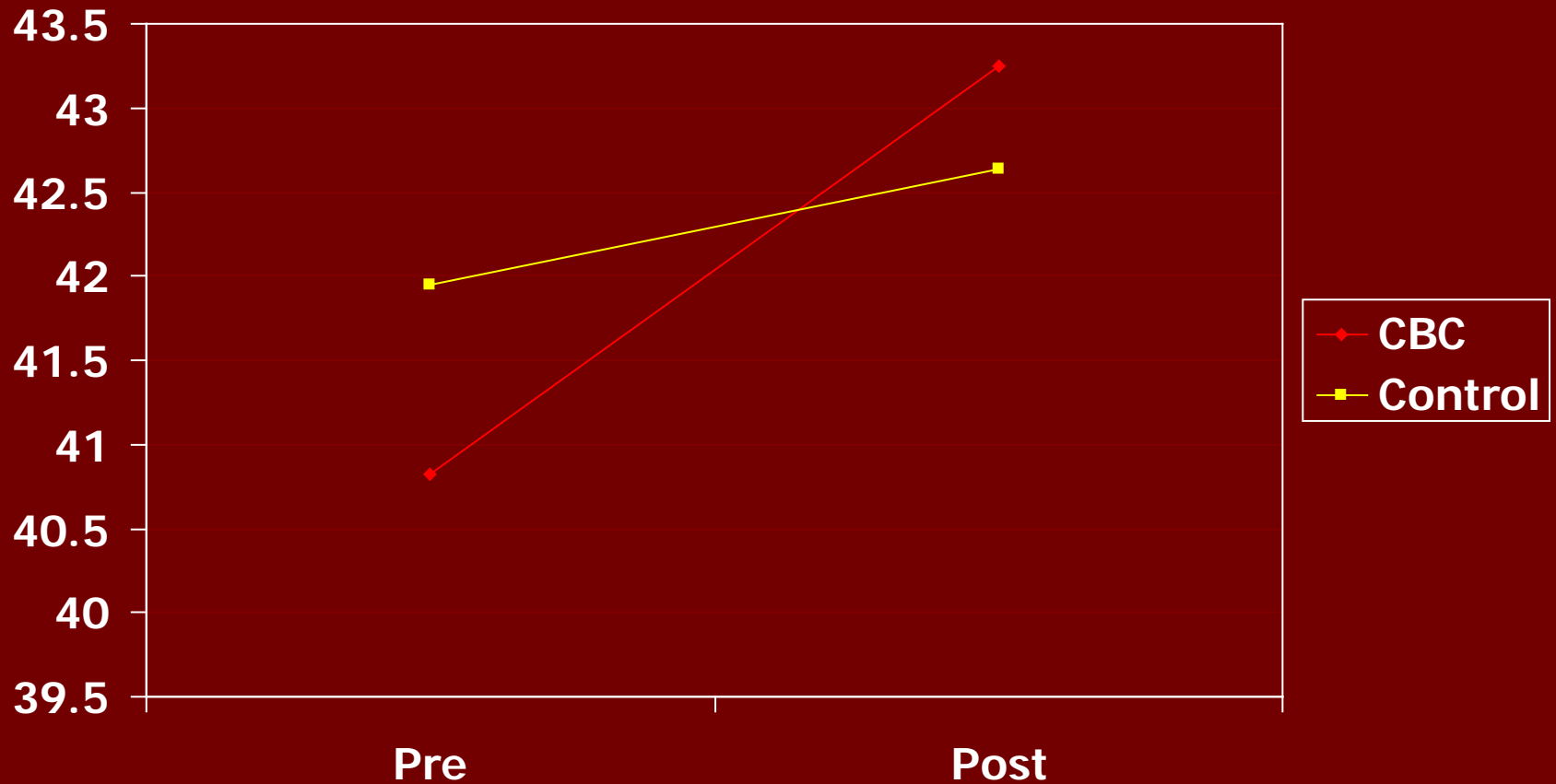
Current Research Findings: Students

- CBC produced *significant improvements in child behaviors* relative to a control group
- After controlling for the severity of behavior problems at baseline, children in the CBC group relative to controls demonstrated statistically significant differences in
 - *externalizing problems* ($\gamma = -2.60$; $t(162) = -1.98$; $p < .05$)
 - *adaptive skills* ($\gamma = 1.99$; $t(158) = 1.99$; $p < .05$)
 - *social skills* ($\gamma = 3.66$; $t(164) = 2.40$; $p < .05$)

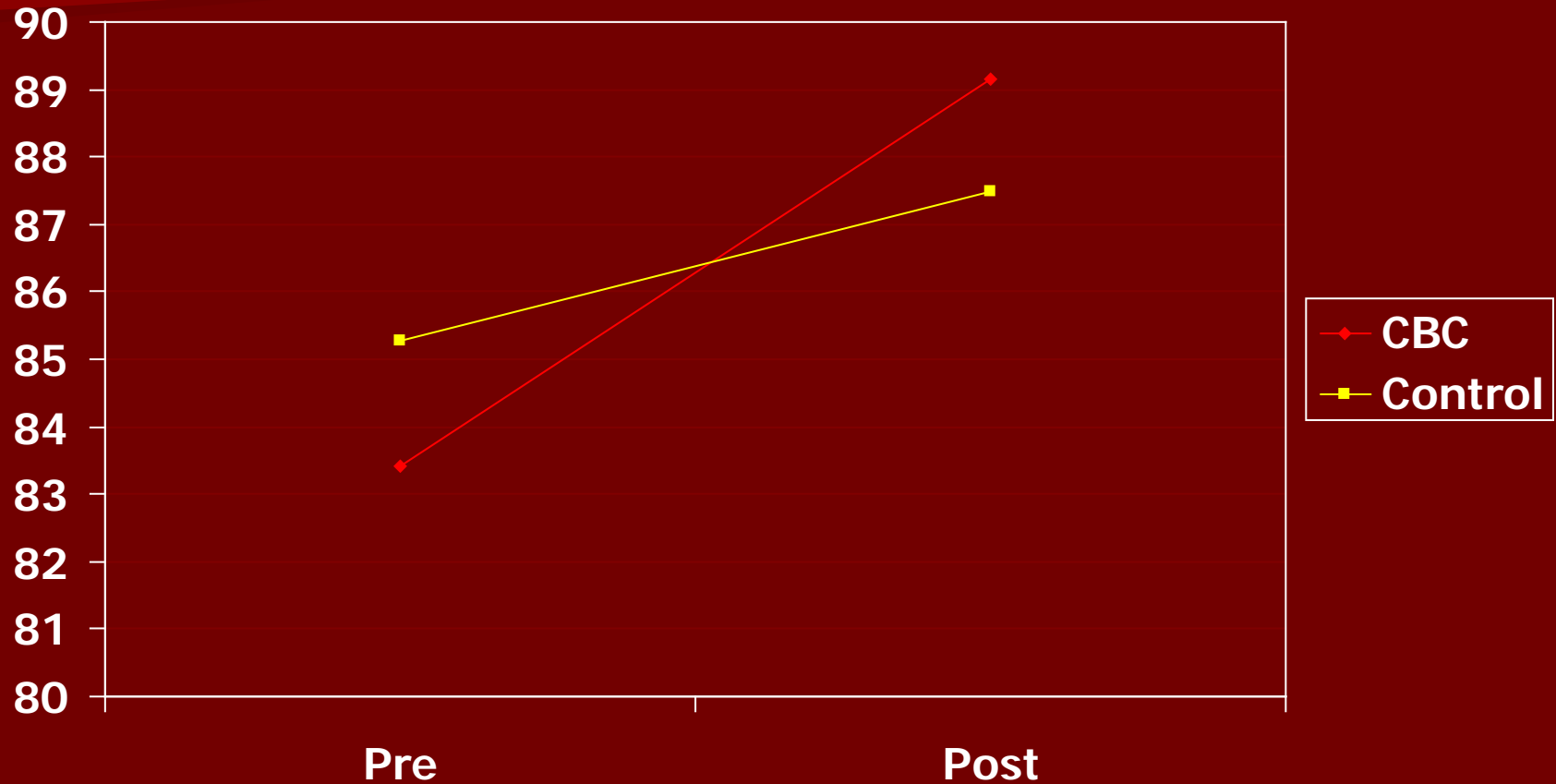
CBC Student Effects: Externalizing Behaviors



CBC Student Effects: Adaptive Skills



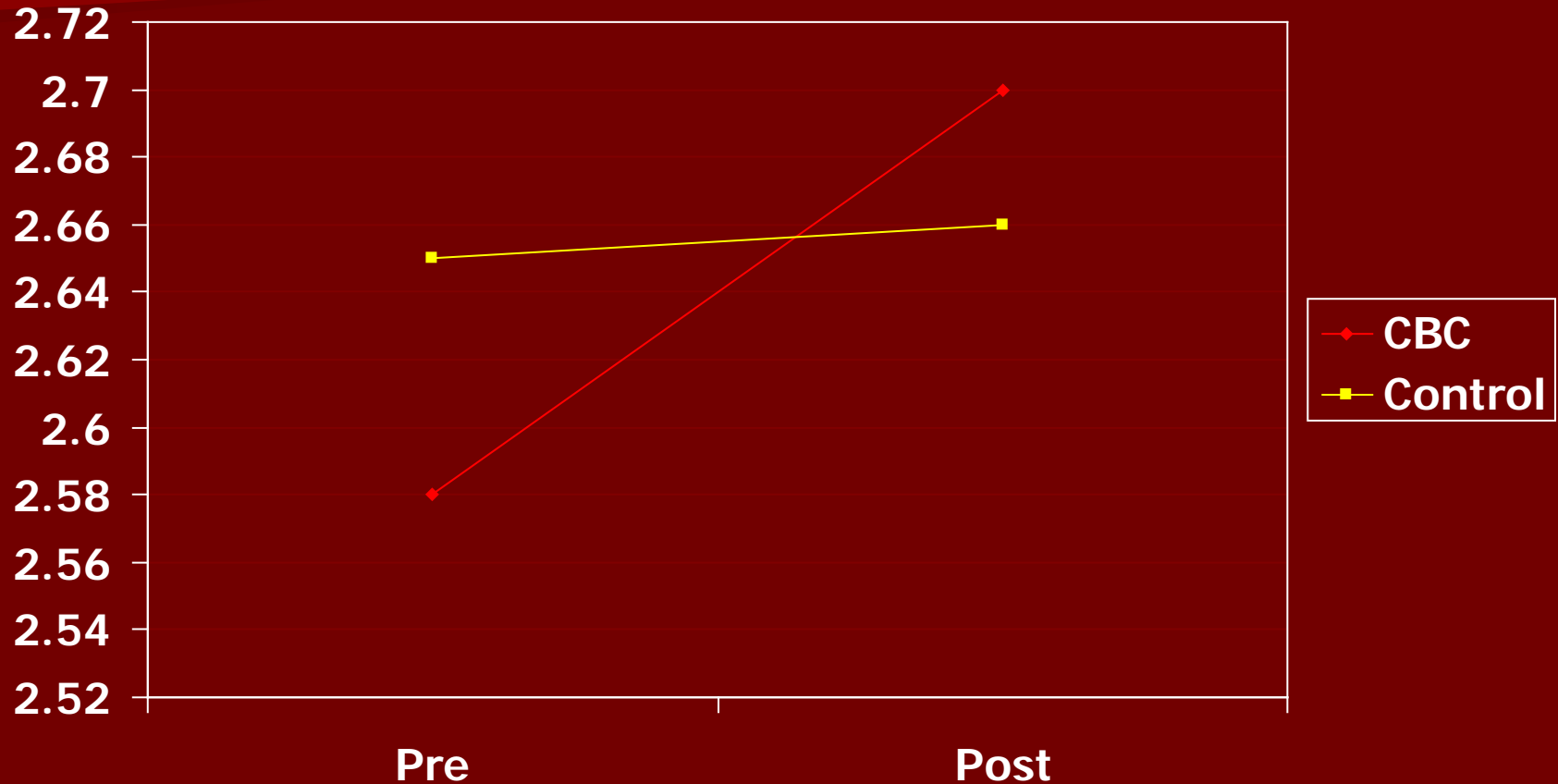
CBC Student Effects: Social Skills



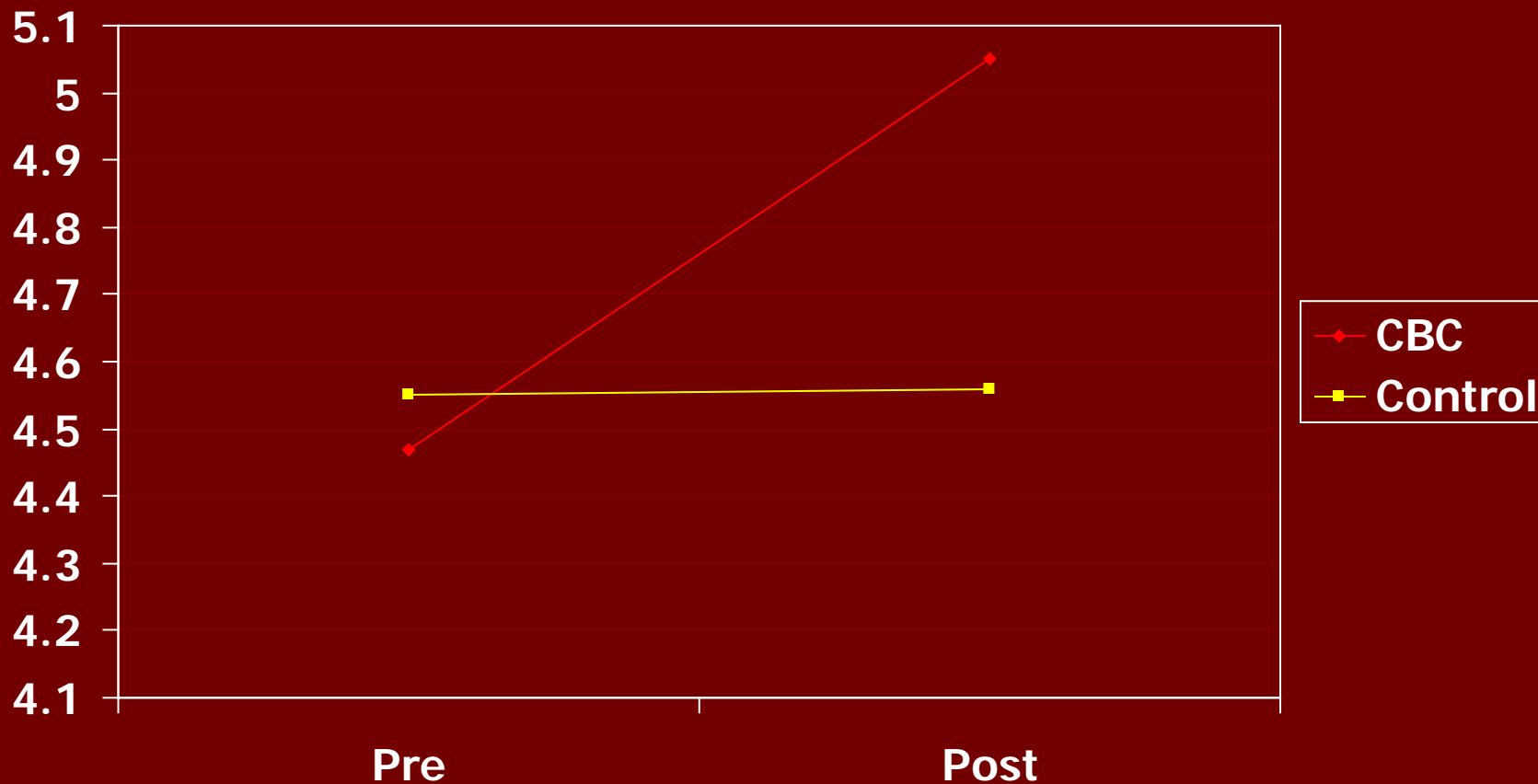
Current Research Findings: Parents

- Relative to control parents, those who participated in CBC reported to increase their:
 - *active participation* in educational problem solving ($\gamma = .556$; $t(87.84) = 3.83$; $p < .001$);
 - *overall family involvement* in their child's education ($p < .05$);
 - *involvement in home-school conferencing* ($p < .01$); and
 - improvements in *parent involvement* appear to *continue for at least one year* follow up.

CBC Parent Effects: Family Involvement in Education



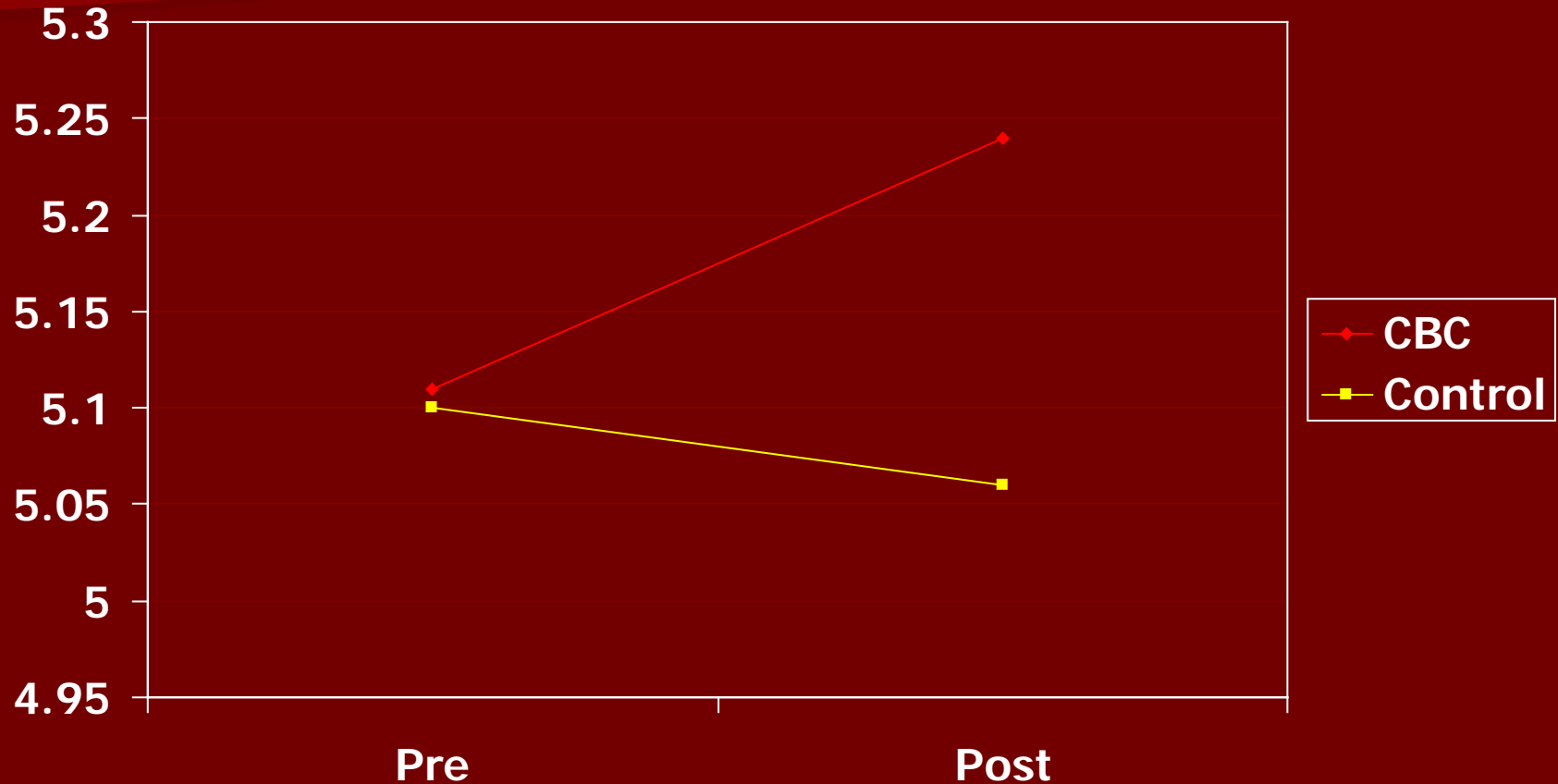
CBC Parent Effects: Participation in Problem Solving



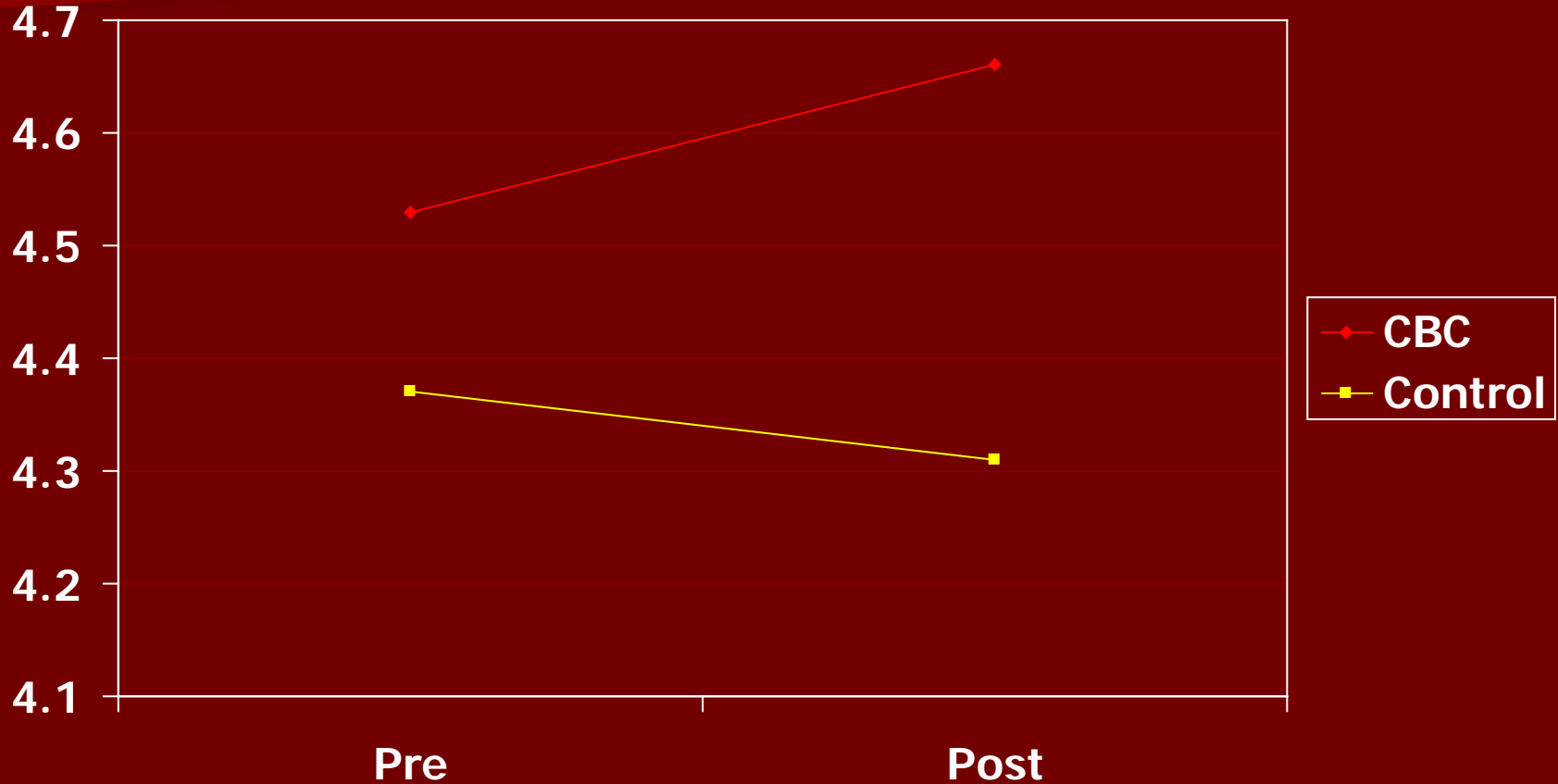
Current Research Findings: Teachers

- Relative to control teachers, positive outcomes for CBC teachers include:
 - more positive *beliefs about parental involvement* ($\gamma = .271$; $t(74.91) = 2.94$; $p < .01$)
 - more *positive beliefs about parents' efficacy for helping children succeed in school* ($\gamma = .191$; $t(75.18) = 2.26$; $p < .05$)
 - *better communication* with parents ($\gamma = .61$; $t(89.93) = 3.6$; $p < .001$)
 - *better overall relationship* with parents ($\gamma = .16$; $t(174) = 2.53$; $p < .01$)

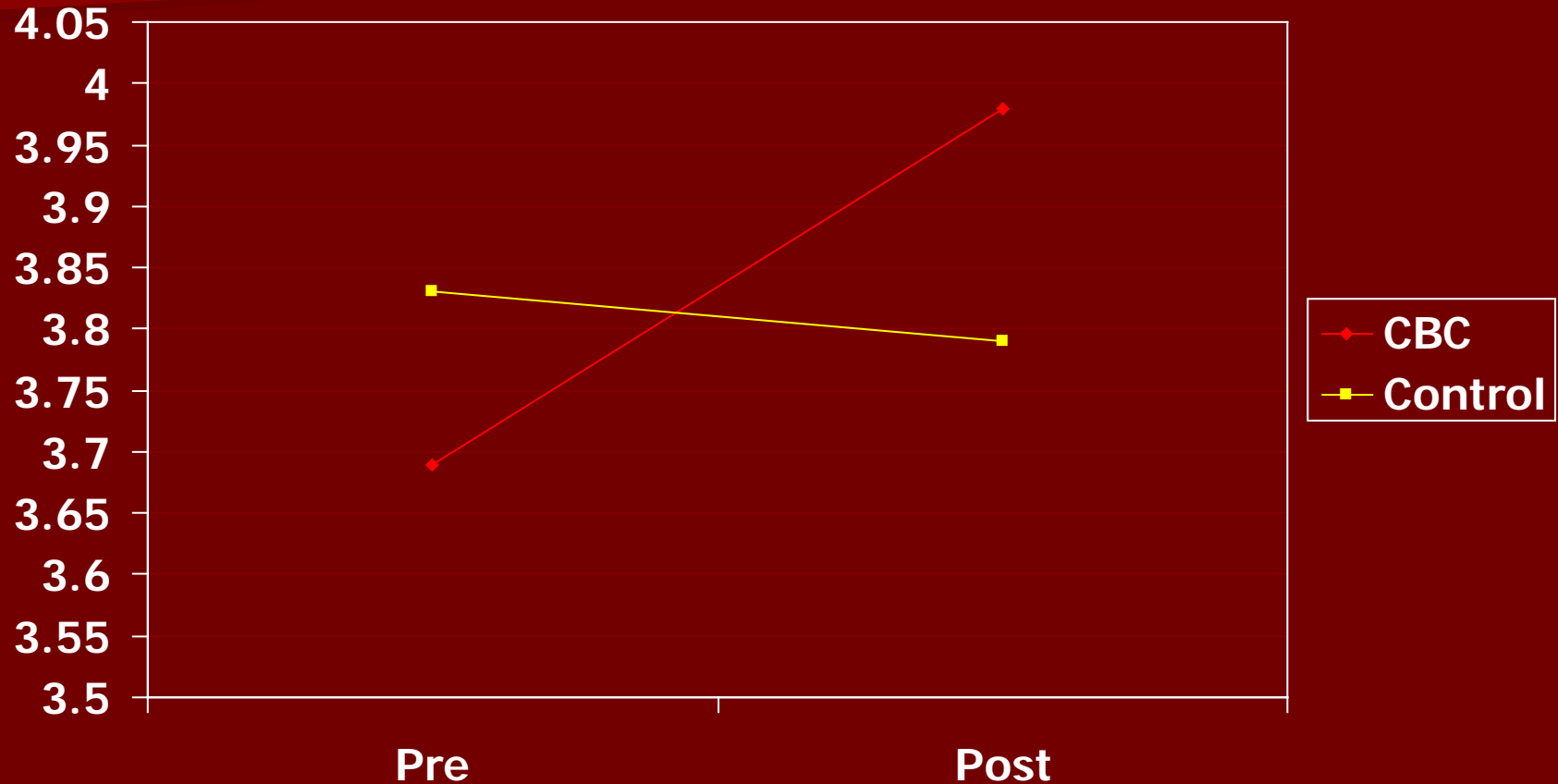
CBC Teacher Effects: Beliefs About Parent Involvement



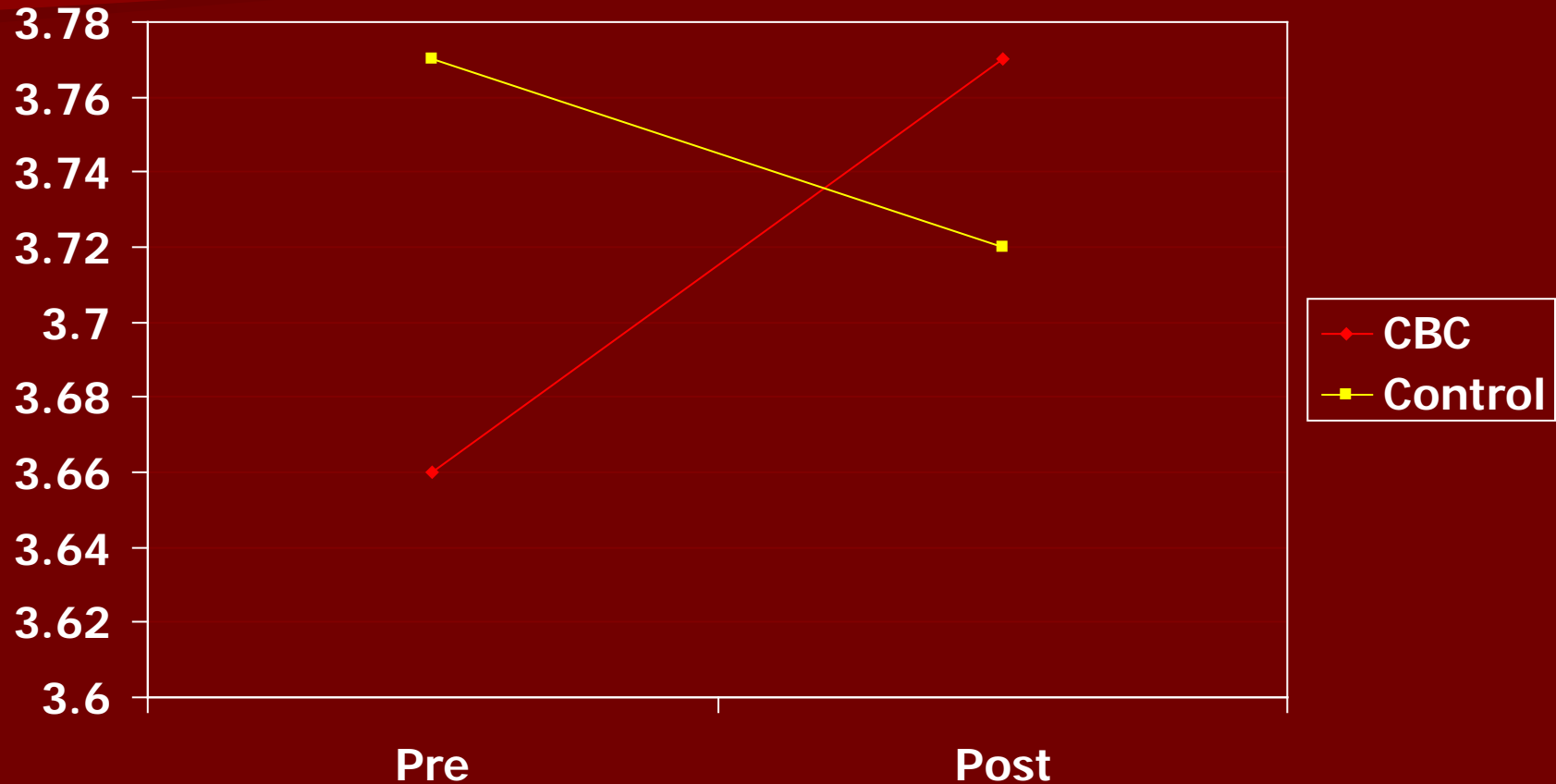
CBC Teacher Effects: Perceptions of Parent Efficacy



CBC Teacher Effects: Communication with Parent



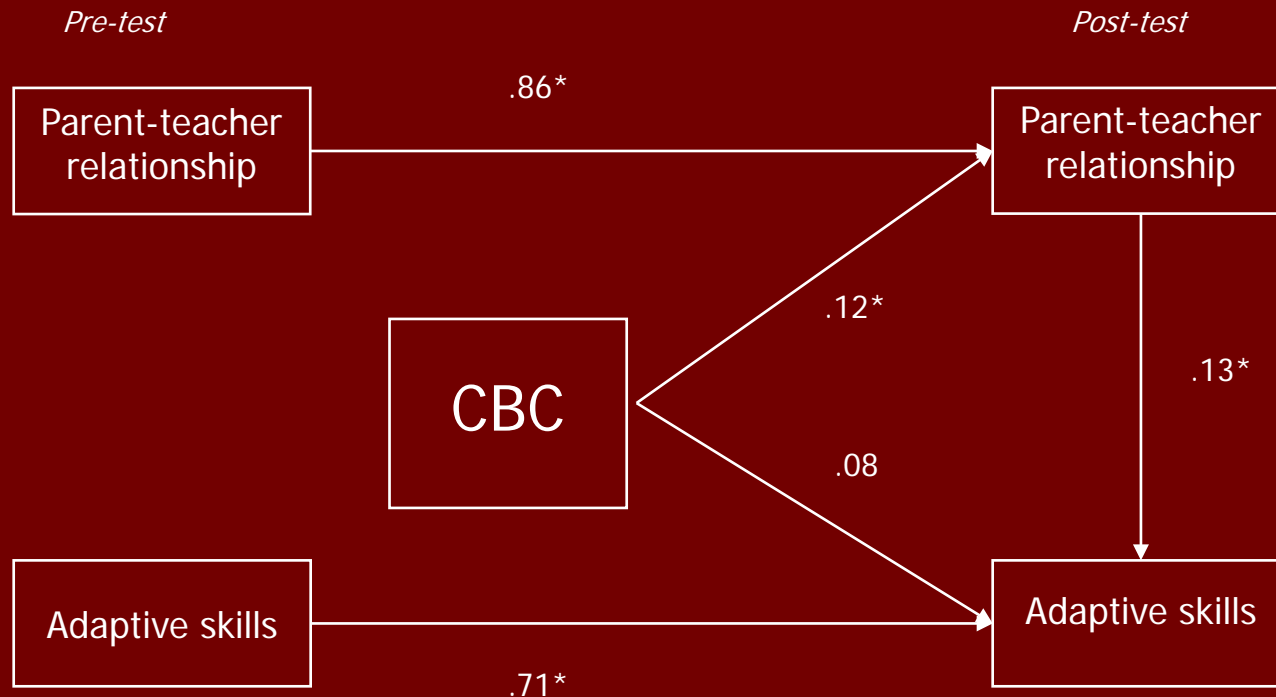
CBC Teacher Effects: Relationship with Parent



Mediation: What Accounts for the Effects?

- Investigated whether the parent-teacher relationship mediates CBC's effects
 - Answers the question: *Does the parent-teacher relationship account for CBC's efficacy?*
- The parent-teacher relationship accounted for the positive CBC effect on children's increased adaptive skills
($\gamma = .16$; $t(174) = 2.53$; $p < .05$)
- Suggests significant implications for how consultation is practiced

Mediation: Parent-Teacher Relationship



$\chi^2(2)=1.65, p=.44$
CFI=1.00
RMSEA=.00

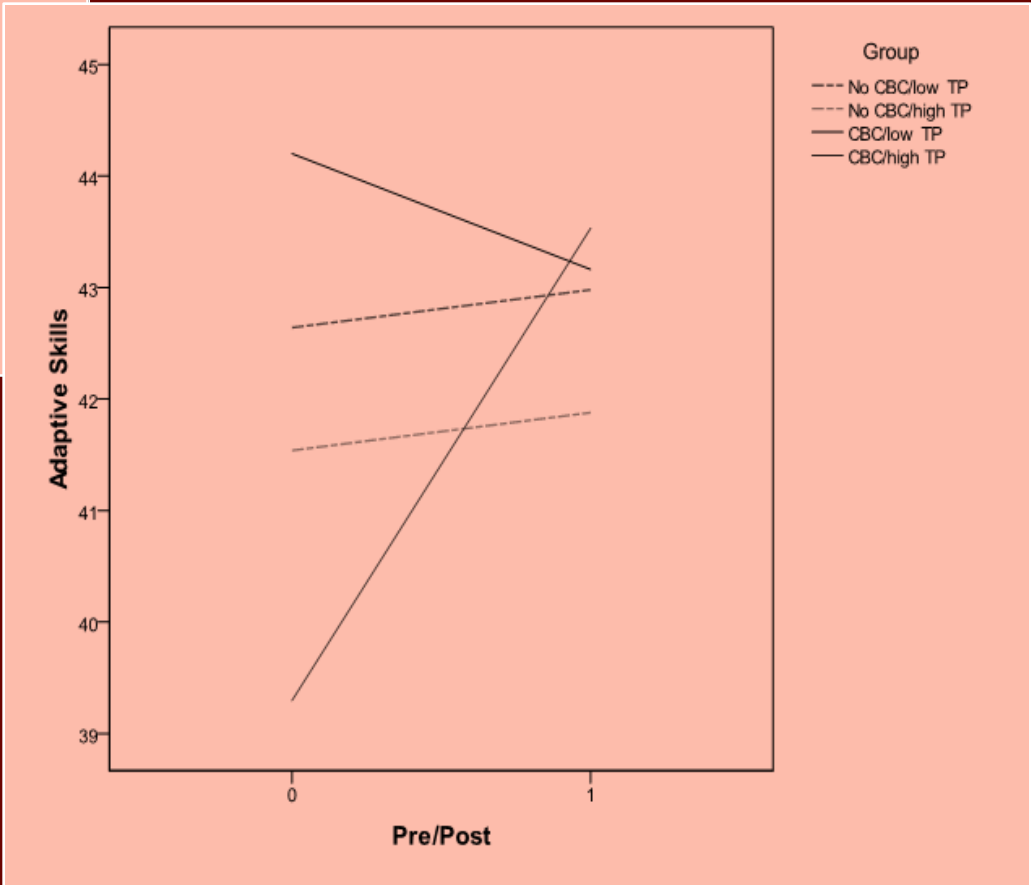
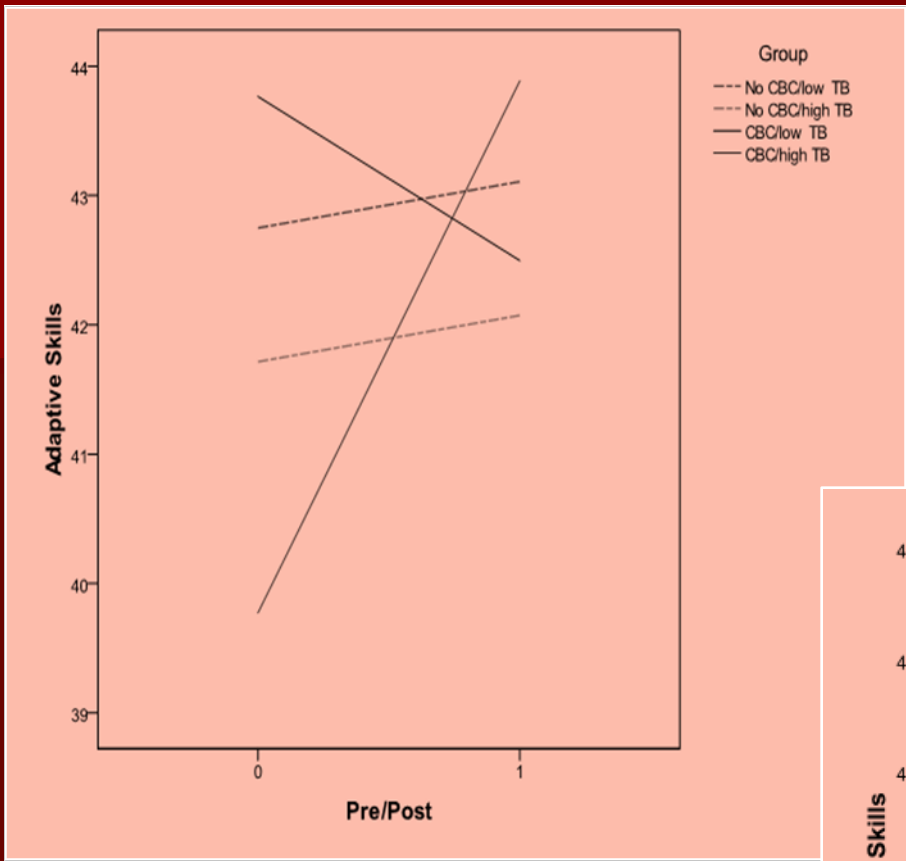
The parent-teacher relationship mediates the effects of CBC on child adaptive behaviors

Moderation: What Influences the Effect?

- Investigated whether teachers cognitive set vis á vis parental involvement and efficacy moderated CBC effects
 - Teacher beliefs about parent involvement
 - Teacher perceptions of parent efficacy
- Answers the question: *Under what conditions can we expect the effects of CBC to be greatest?*

Moderation: Teacher Beliefs and Perceptions

- Slope (pre – post) for adaptive skills in CBC group is significantly greater when teachers at baseline:
 - Express *positive beliefs about parent involvement* ($\gamma=3.59$, $t(131)=2.43$; $p < .01$)
 - Endorse *perceptions that parents can be effective* (parent efficacy) in helping their children succeed in school ($\gamma=2.85$, $t(131)=2.69$; $p < .05$)
- No significant differences between high and low groups for control participants



Initial teacher beliefs about parent involvement moderate the relationship between CBC/control and adaptive skills ($p < .01$).

Initial teacher perceptions about parent efficacy moderate the relationship between CBC/control and adaptive skills ($p < .05$).

Discussion of Findings

- CBC appears to result in important outcomes for all parties:
 - Significant improvements in child behavior
 - Significant improvement in parent participation & involvement
 - Significant improvement in teacher attitudes & teacher-parent communication/relationships

Discussion of Findings

- For some outcomes, effects of CBC are moderated by teacher attitudes
 - The effect of CBC is bolstered when teacher beliefs and perceptions about parents is high
 - Points to the importance of teacher training in parent roles and efficacy, even before CBC practice
- For some behaviors, CBC effects occur through the parent-teacher relationship
 - Points to the importance of attending to the parent-teacher relationship within the context of ongoing CBC practice

Ongoing Research

- Still investigating outcomes as assessed via direct observations and parent daily reports (via HLM)
- Still investigating other mediators, such as implementation fidelity, parent/teacher engagement, and continuity across home and school
 - Exploring measurement issues associated with fidelity
 - Exploring conceptual and empirical issues related to engagement and continuity

Discussion of Findings

- Still investigating other moderators, such as target behavior, student disability status/special education services
- Follow up data collection still underway
 - Will answer questions regarding maintenance of effects
- Need to determine application and efficacy in the context of "authentic" practice
- Need to explore efficacy with other behaviors (e.g., academic) and in other settings (e.g., rural)

Final Thoughts Regarding Best Practice

- Always focus on both outcomes AND process/
relationships
- Use *strengths* of families, teachers, systems to promote
effective problem solving, strengthen relationships
- Effective use of CBC strategies can:
 - Support continued, intentional approaches to joint problem
solving
 - Encourage continuity and consistency in interventions to support
students
 - Strengthen skills in all parties; support implementation fidelity
 - Provide a context for families and teachers to feel *engaged* and
empowered
 - Promote data-based decision making across settings
 - Provide opportunities for *accountability*

General Resources

- Christenson, S. L., & Sheridan, S. M. (2001). *Schools and families: Creating essential connections for learning*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Sheridan, S. M., Clarke, B. L., & Burt, J. D. (2008). Conjoint behavioral consultation: What do we know and what do we need to know? In W. P. Erchul & S. M. Sheridan (Eds.), *Handbook of research in school consultation: Empirical foundations for the field* (pp. 171-202). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Sheridan, S. M., Eagle, J. W., Cowan, R. J., & Mickelson, W. (2001). The effects of conjoint behavioral consultation: Results of a four-year investigation. *Journal of School Psychology, 39*, 361-385.
- Sheridan, S. M., & Kratochwill, T. R. (2008). *Conjoint behavioral consultation: Promoting family-school connections and interventions*. New York: Springer.

Other references available upon request

Thank You!!

Please contact me:

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