

Language Outcomes for Children with Developmental Delays in Early Head Start Programs: A Preliminary Investigation

Christine Marvin, Ph.D., Miriam Kuhn, Ed.S., and Lisa L. Knoche, Ph.D.
Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools

Rationale

Specific parent engagement behaviors have been linked to a number of adaptive outcomes in young children. (Bradley et al., 1989; 2001; 2011; Hart & Risley, 1995; Sheridan, Knoche, Edwards, Bovaird, & Kupzyk, 2010).

Getting Ready is an intervention that aims to strengthen parent-professional collaborative partnerships for the purposes of enhancing parent-child interactions and generating individualized strategies to promote child development (Sheridan, Marvin, Knoche, & Edwards, 2008).

Parent-child engagement behaviors of parents with children enrolled in Early Head Start (EHS) programs have been significantly enhanced as a result of participation in the *Getting Ready* intervention (Knoche, Edwards, Sheridan, Kupzyk, Marvin, Cline, & Clark, 2012).

Language skills have been significantly improved in preschool children enrolled in Head Start augmented with the *Getting Ready* intervention compared to children in “business as usual” Head Start programs (Sheridan, Knoche, Kupzyk, Edwards, & Marvin, 2011).

Greatest benefits from *Getting Ready* intervention for preschool children were noted for those who began the *Getting Ready* intervention with notable developmental delays (Sheridan & Knoche, 2011).

Purpose: To investigate the effects of the *Getting Ready* intervention on the language development of infants/toddlers with developmental delays in EHS and the parent-engagement behaviors of their caregivers.

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Contact Information: Miriam Kuhn miriam.kuhn@huskers.unl.edu

Methods

Subjects

- Subjects drawn from larger sample of EHS children and families participating in study of *Getting Ready* intervention (n= 242)
- 41 children (27 boys, 14 girls)
 - Mean age at baseline: 14.6 months
 - Bayley Scales of Infant Development- II Mental Development Index \leq 85 at baseline
- 39 caregivers (35 mothers, 4 fathers/grandparents)
- 22 EHS professionals
 - Mean early education experience: 4.1 years
- Attrition ranged from 72% of treatment group to 77% of control group participants

Experimental Conditions

- EHS home visits: “Business as Usual” (n = 13)
- EHS + *Getting Ready* Intervention (n = 28)

Measures

- Bayley Scales of Infant Development- II
- Preschool Language Scale- 4
- Parent/Caregiver Involvement Scale

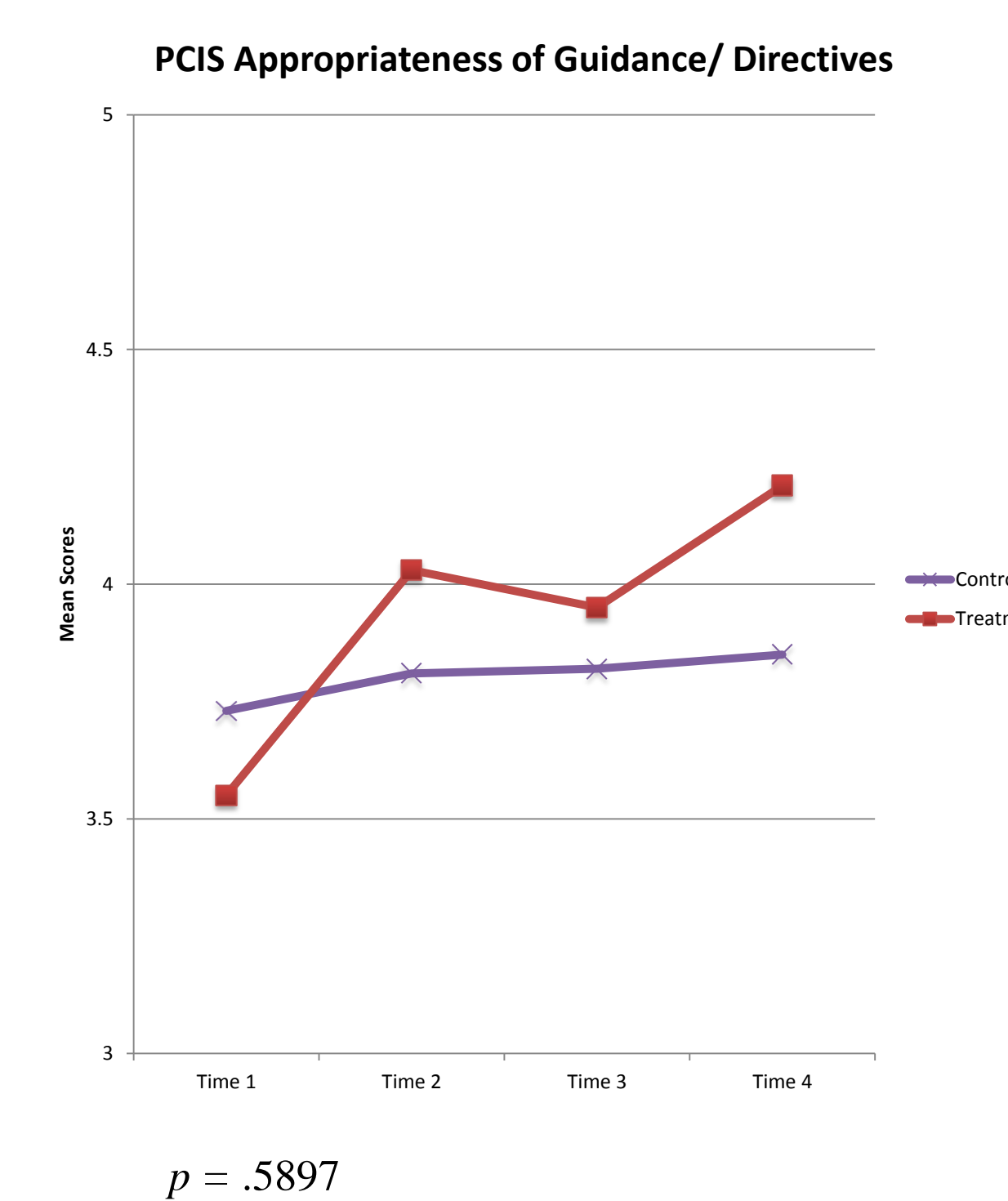
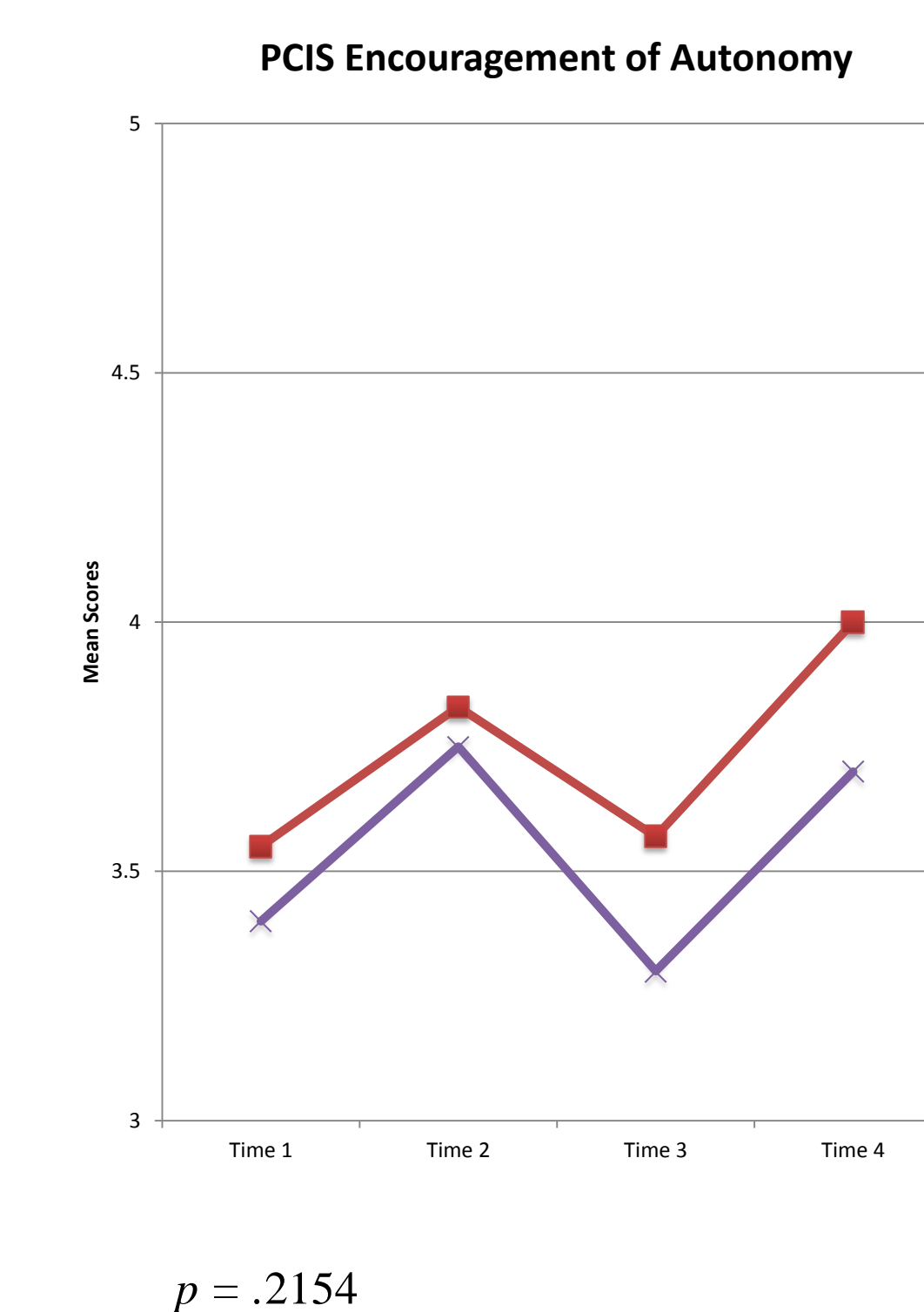
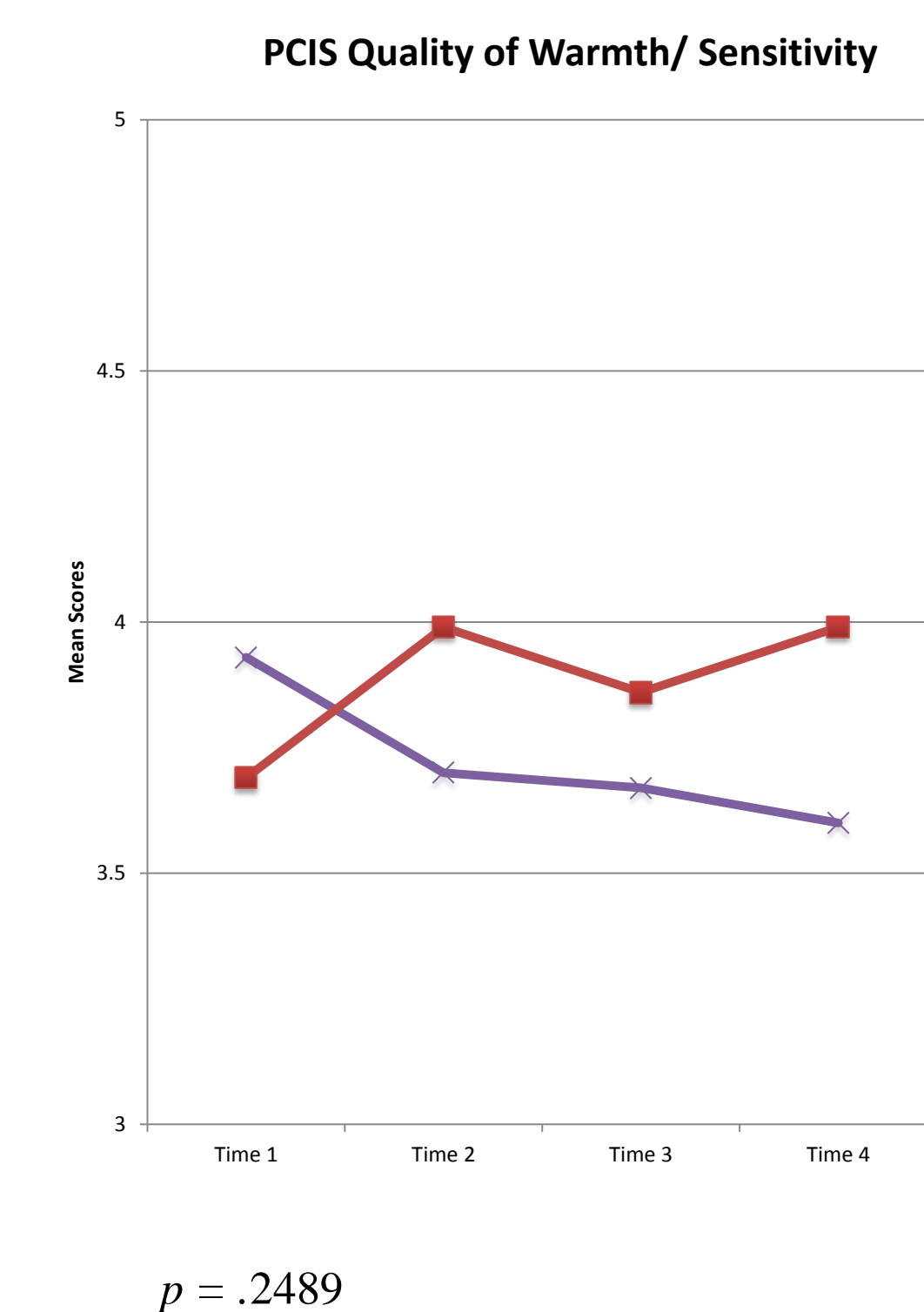
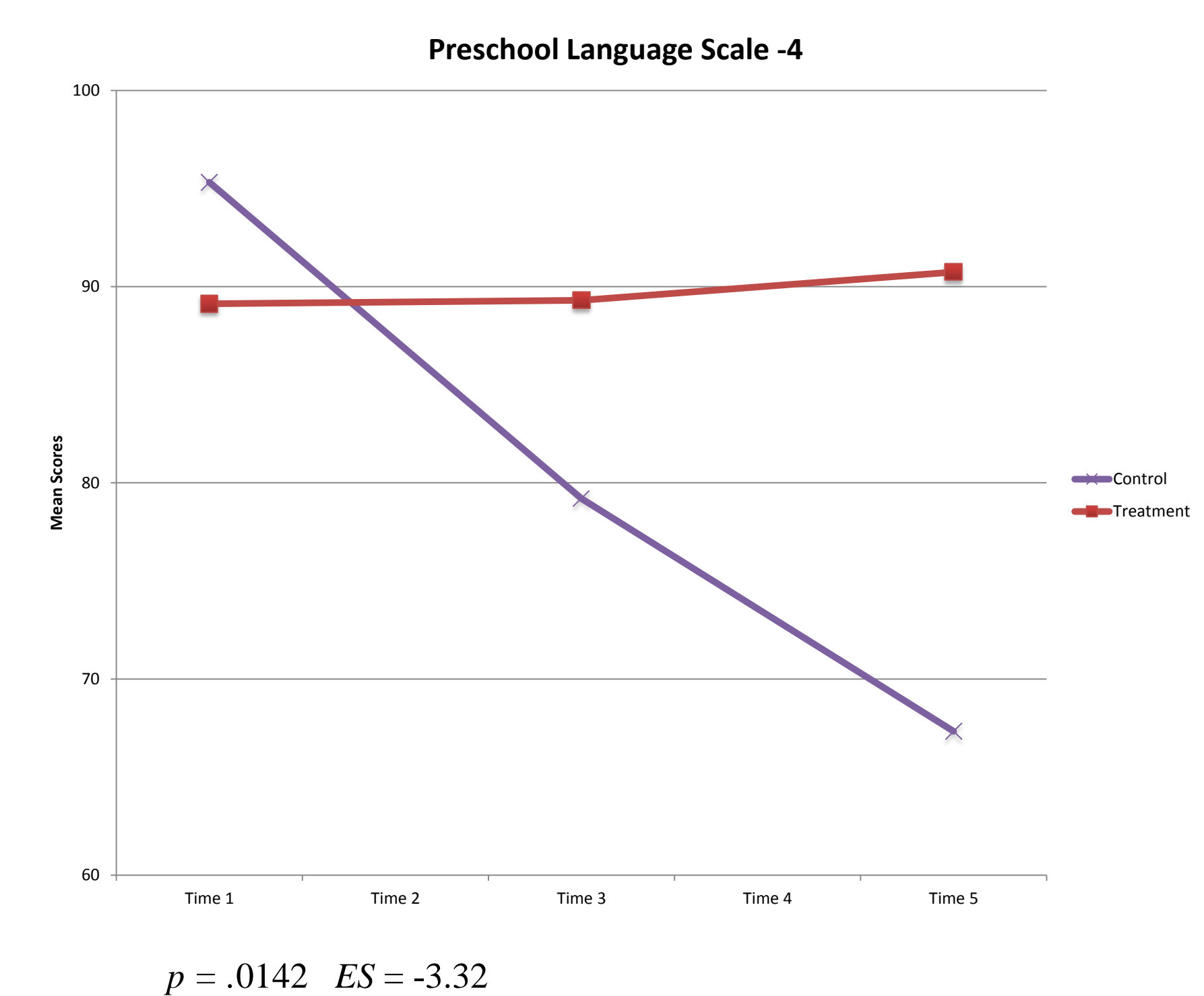
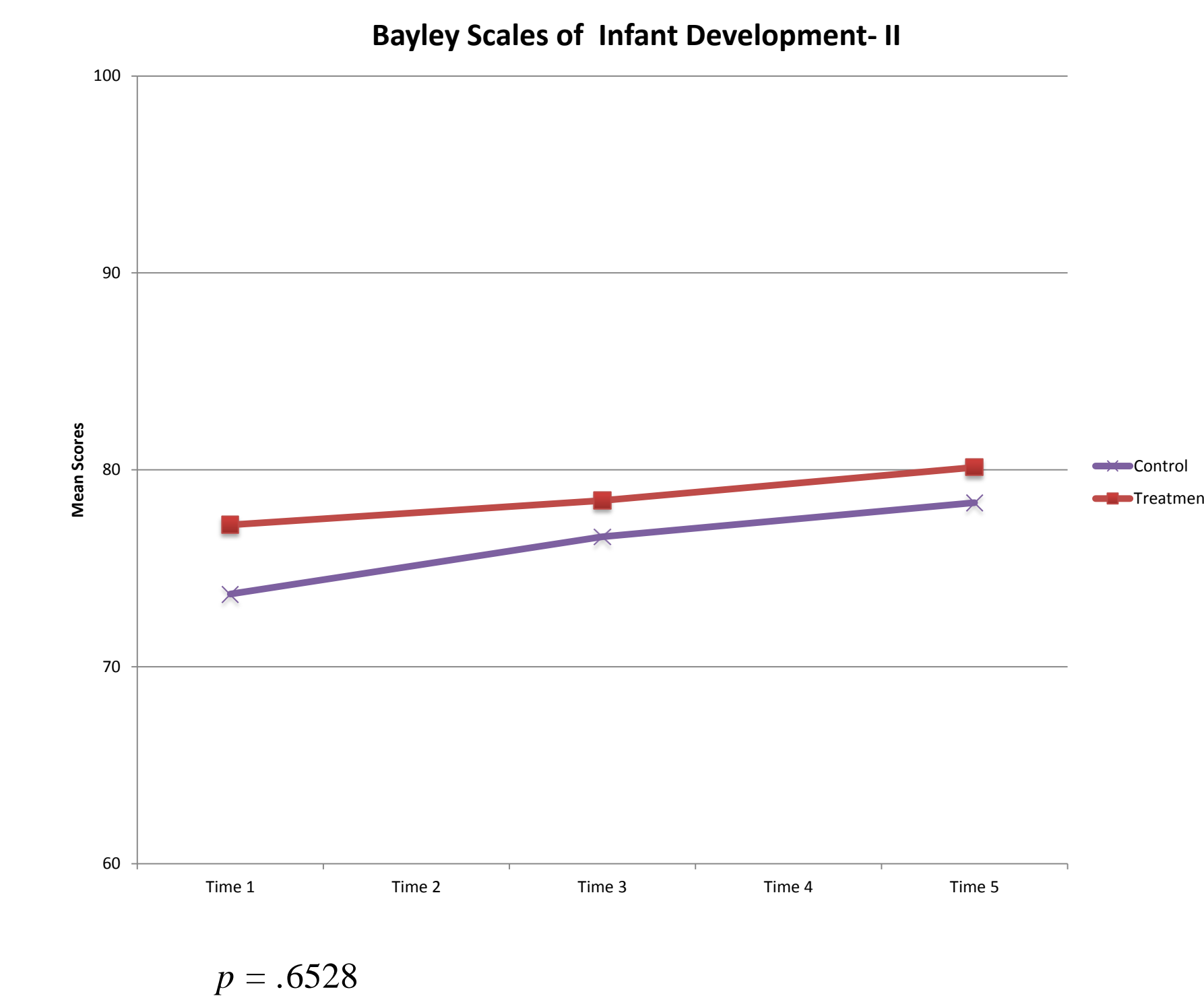
Data Collection

- Scheduled every 4 months over the 18-month study
- Direct child assessments (Bayley-II, PLS-4)
- Video-taped observation of parent-child interactions

Design and Analysis

- Cluster randomized trial with repeated measures
- Multilevel modeling analysis using *SAS PROC GLIMMIX*
- Outcomes predicted by experimental condition by time interaction
- Effect Size (*ES*): ratio of difference in Tx and C slope *Ms* divided by the *SD* of slope growth factor
- Missing data due to attrition– accounted for by use of Full Information Maximum Likelihood. Data from all subjects with at least one measure were retained for analysis

Results



Implications

- *Getting Ready* intervention provides added value to EHS programs’ efforts to stabilize the trajectory for language development in children with developmental delays.
- Since language competencies are foundational for other school-readiness skills (Ex. academic, social-emotional competencies), maintaining growth in language development for young children who have risk factors associated with poverty and developmental delay may be key to later school success.
- While this preliminary investigation did not reveal significant changes in parent-child engagement behaviors for parents of children with evidence of delays participating in the *Getting Ready* intervention, further study of this population is warranted to tease out the relationships among parent-engagement behaviors, other salient features of the *Getting Ready* intervention, and the language development of this vulnerable group of children.