
Media-Based Approaches to Improving Parenting: How Do Parents Respond?

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Overview

- The importance of reach for getting parenting programs out to the people
 - The value of media-based parenting programs in improving reach
 - An example of a media-based approach to supporting parents
 - How American parents are responding to it
 - Lessons learned
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The need for effective parenting interventions

- The importance of supporting parents in raising healthy and successful children
- Prevalence of children's behavior disorders: 18%
- Dysfunctional parenting practices & family relationships
- Poor prognosis for long-term trajectory



The need for effective parenting interventions

- Evidence-based parenting programs make a difference
 - ❑ More skillful parents
 - ❑ Healthier family relationships
 - ❑ Decreased behavior problems in children
 - ❑ Improved social skills and academic outcomes
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The challenge of reaching parents with effective parenting interventions

- Most parents struggle from time to time with difficult child behaviors
 - Despite effectiveness, few parents participate in evidence-based parenting programs (Sanders et al., 2007)
 - Limited availability outside of major metropolitan areas (Connell et al., 1998)
 - Poor participation – substantial challenges in recruiting and retaining parents (Spoth & Redmond, 2000)
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Limited reach of evidence-based parenting programs

- Limited availability + poor participation = limited reach
- Thus, most parents who could benefit from parenting assistance never receive it



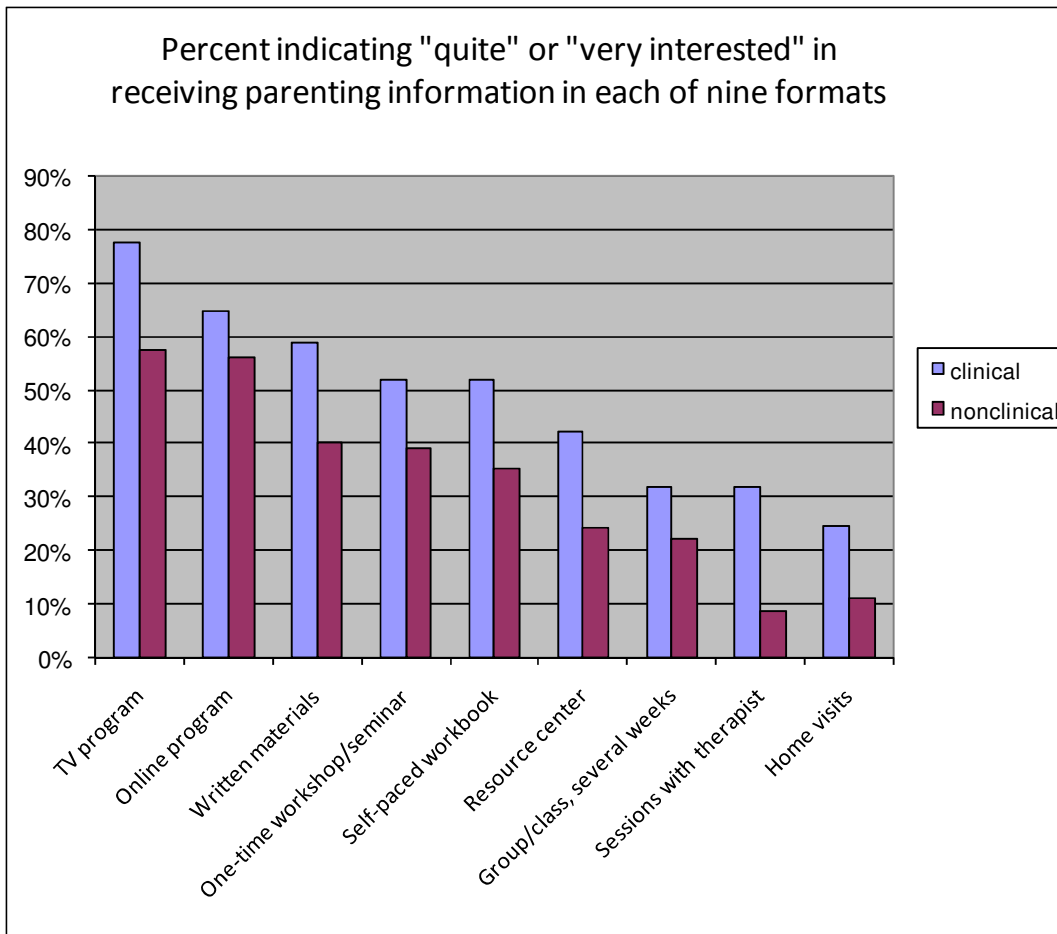
Formats for reaching parents

- Home visiting
 - Face-to-face office visits
 - Parenting groups
 - Workshops/seminars
 - Self-administered workbooks
 - Written materials
 - Videos
 - Online programs
 - TV broadcast
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The potential of the media

- Media-based approaches hold significant promise as part of a population-wide strategy for bringing evidence-based parenting practices to a broad range of parents
 - ❑ Dramatically increased reach
 - ❑ Value of video-based modeling
 - ❑ Decreased stigma and cost
 - ❑ Popularity of infotainment genre and “coach” shows (e.g. *Supernanny*)
 - ❑ Good vehicle for reaching the target audience – parents are interested in receiving parenting information via television and the Internet
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How parents would prefer to receive information about effective parenting



- The highest preference ratings were for TV programs, online programs, written materials
- Lowest ratings were for home visits, therapists, and parenting groups – the most common evidence-based approaches

A public health perspective

- In a public health framework, media-based approaches would...
 - ❑ be part of a larger system of supports
 - ❑ complement more intensive supports
 - ❑ extend the reach of parenting programs to those who might not otherwise be reached
 - ❑ be consistent with the principles of minimal sufficiency and self-regulation
 - Even modest effects of a media-based program on parenting could translate into substantial benefits when multiplied across millions of viewers and would cost far less than parenting groups
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Improving the reach of a media message on parenting

- Little is known about how to maximize the reach of media messages about parenting to appeal to a broad audience
 - Income groups
 - Racial/ethnic groups
 - Varying levels of children's problem behavior
 - Improving the reach of the media intervention to diverse populations increases its overall public health impact
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Triple P Parenting Media Study



- A collaboration between
 - Oregon Research Institute
 - Carol W. Metzler
 - Julie C. Rusby
 - Parenting and Family Support Centre at the University of Queensland
 - Matthew R. Sanders
 - Karen M.T. Turner
 - Triple P International
 - Des McWilliam
 - Grant Dowling
- NIDA Grant # R01 DA021307



Parenting Media Project

The Triple P Parenting Media Study

- The Triple P Parenting Media Study is testing the efficacy of two versions of a 10-episode media series on parenting
- Content is derived from the *Triple P Positive Parenting Program*
- Research sites: Eugene and Portland, Oregon, USA
- Sample: 300 parents having difficulty handling their 3-6 year old children's behavior problems and not otherwise receiving parenting support services



Parenting Media Project

Program topics



- Overview of positive parenting
- Encouraging behavior you like
- Teaching new skills and behaviors
- Managing misbehavior
- Dealing with disobedience
- Handling fighting and aggression
- Planning for and dealing with high-risk situations
- Establishing good bedtime routines
- Shopping successfully with children
- Raising confident and competent children



Parenting Media Project

The Triple P Parenting Media Series

- 10 episodes
- Each episode about 12 – 15 minutes
- Infotainment-style, broadcast quality
- Designed to be embedded within infotainment programming
 - Breakfast television
 - News magazine shows
 - Current affairs shows
 - Lifestyle-type channel on cable TV



Parenting Media Project

Improving the reach

- Goal was to create a media series that has broad reach and broad appeal
 - Engaging, entertaining, watchable
 - Realistic
 - Appealing to a diverse audience
 - Mothers and fathers
 - Income levels
 - Ethnic and racial groups
 - Different levels of challenge with children
- So that everybody can see themselves in it



The Parenting Media study

- Parents randomly assigned to view DVDs, at home:
 - ❑ Standard Information-Only version
 - ❑ Enhanced Behavior Activation version
 - ❑ Waitlist Control
- Assessed at baseline, 1 mo. post, 6 mos. follow-up
- Outcomes measured
 - ❑ Children's behavior (disobedience, aggression, positive)
 - ❑ Parents' parenting practices (negative and positive)
 - ❑ Parents' knowledge, confidence
 - ❑ Parental functioning (depression, stress, anger)
 - ❑ Parents' social support



Analysis of parents' reactions

- Episodes on DVD mailed twice per week to those randomized to receive intervention
- Weekly phone call to assess exposure and appraisal
- N = 104
- Goal of analysis was to examine:
 - Exposure
 - Appraisals
 - Viewing patterns
 - Parent and family characteristics that predict engagement and viewing patterns. That is, who is more likely to be engaged?



Are parents watching?

- Watched at least 8 of 10 episodes: 77%
- Watched at least 4 (min. dosage): 84%
- Watched less than minimum: 16%



What do parents think of the episodes?

- 98% found the episodes somewhat, quite or very **interesting & entertaining**
- 95% found them somewhat, quite, or very **useful**
- 95% said the situations seemed somewhat, quite, or very **familiar**
- 98% said they somewhat, quite, or very much feel they could put the **strategies into action**
- 99% said they are somewhat, quite, or very **likely to use** at least one strategy in the next week



Understanding parent and family characteristics that predict appraisals

- Parent age, Child age
- Minority
- Marital status
- Household income
- Mother educational level
- Mother working
- Level of child problem behaviors
- Dysfunctional parenting practices (overreactivity, laxness)
- Parenting self-efficacy
- Expectations that Media Series will be useful



Who is most engaged?

- The episodes were equally **interesting and entertaining** across groups
- Those who found the episodes more **useful**
 - ...Had a child with more behavior problems
 - ...Were not working
- Minority status, marital status, educational level, and income were not predictive of engagement



Understanding patterns of viewing

- Most (53%) watched all episodes on schedule, but some “crammed” (27%) and some did not complete the series (21%)
- Those with lower education and lower self-efficacy were more likely to watch all episodes on schedule
- Those with higher education were likely to view fewer
- Those with higher self-efficacy more likely to put off viewing and then cram to catch up
- Minority status, marital status, income, and child behavior problems were not predictive of viewing patterns



Summary of parents' reactions

- High rates of watching the *Triple P Parenting Media Series*
- High satisfaction ratings: interesting, entertaining, useful, familiar situations, relevant to daily life
- Broad appeal across racial/ethnic, income, and educational groups, and other family characteristics
- Non-working moms and those most challenged by children's behavior problems found it most useful
- Those with lower education and lower self-efficacy were more likely to watch all episodes on schedule

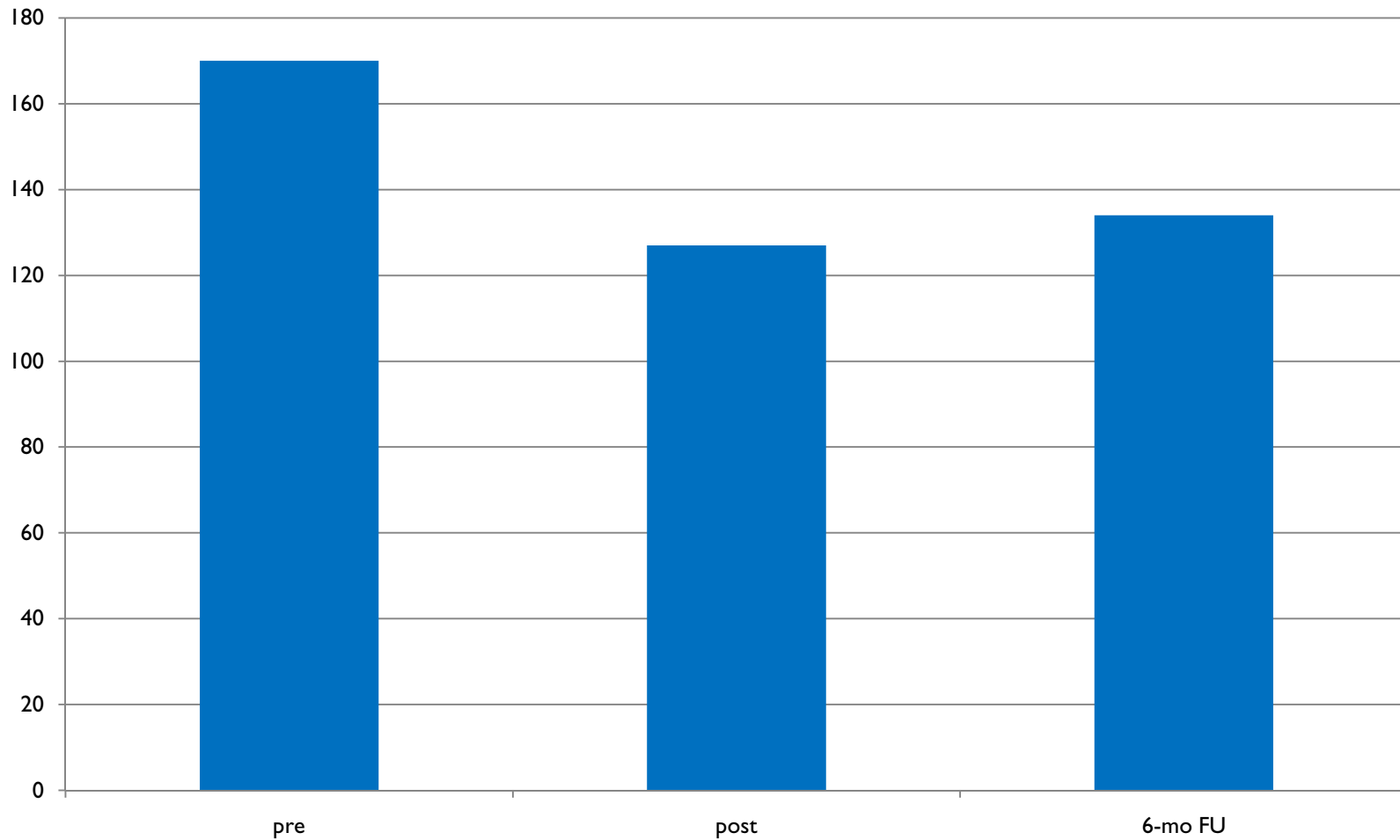


A case example

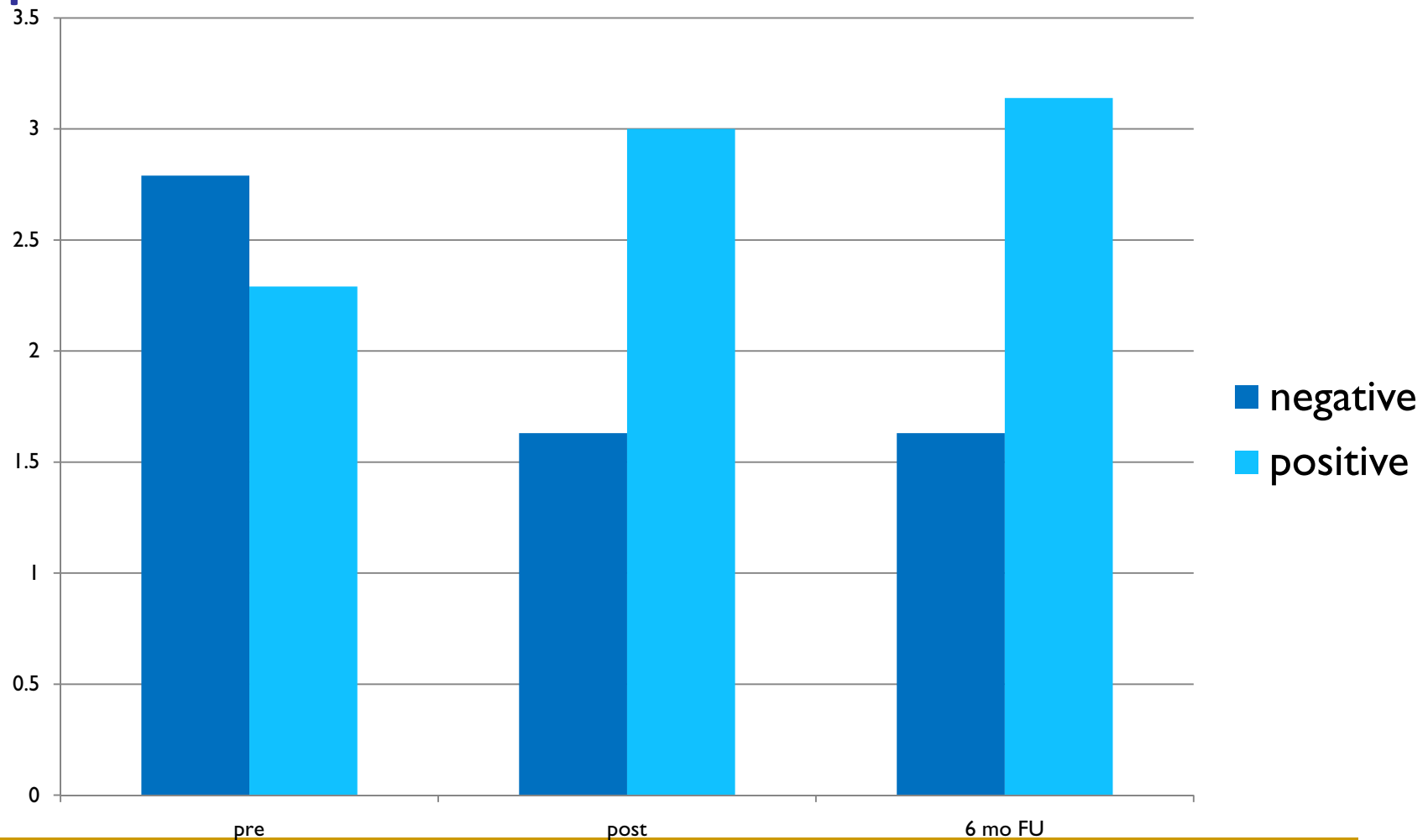
- 5 year-old boy
- 33 year-old mother
- Dual-parent household, she is not working
- Described problems with child tantrums, irritability, whining and complaining, disobedience, destructiveness, “willfullness”
- Initial score on measure of child behavior problems: 170 (132 is clinical cut off)
- Mom watched all 10 episodes on schedule



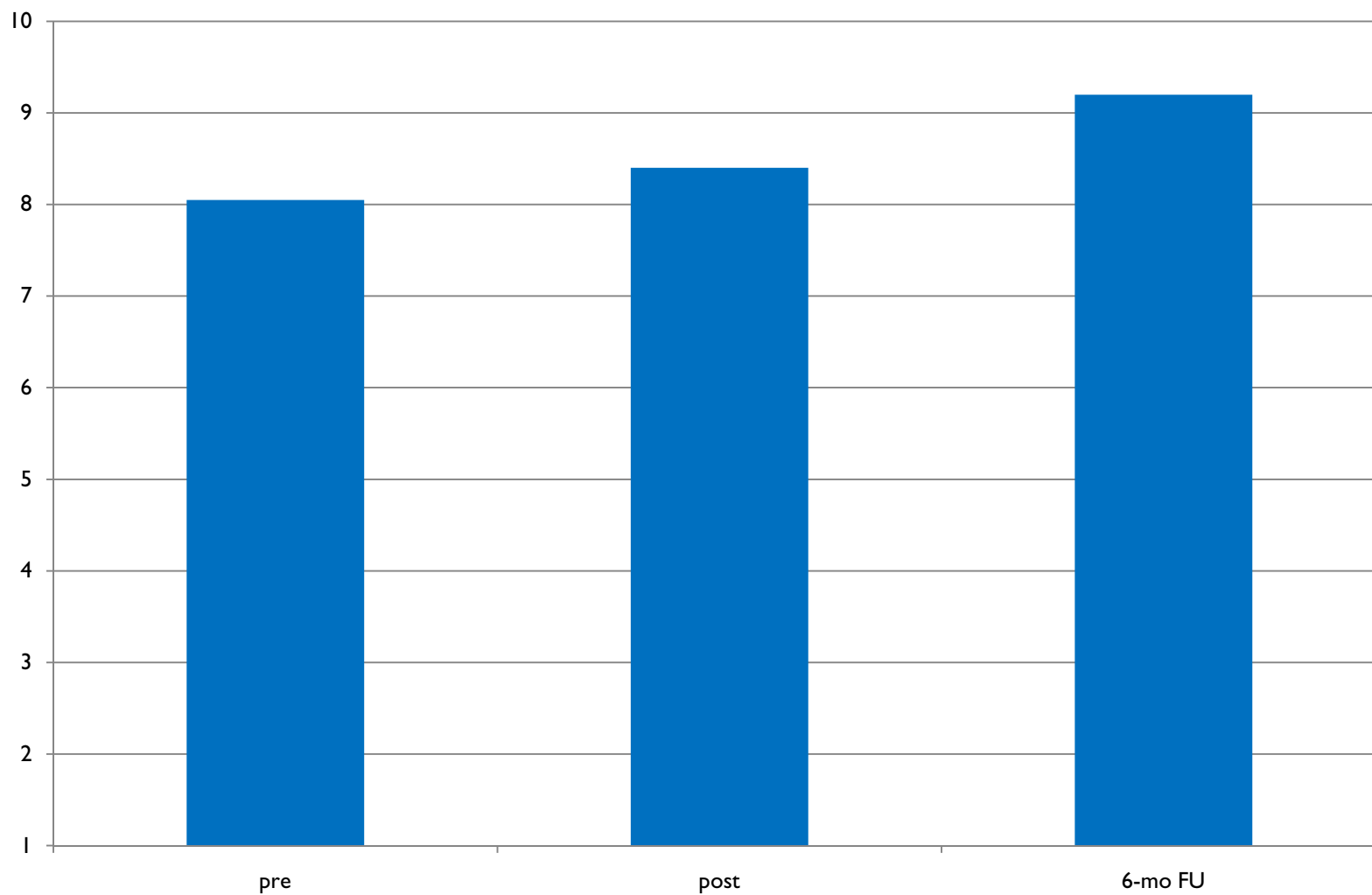
Child behavior outcome – “ECBI”



Frequency of child's negative and positive behaviors



Mother's parenting self-confidence



Lessons learned



- Media-based approaches to improving parenting have the potential to
 - ❑ Reach a large number and broad range of parents
 - ❑ Engage them in the message and the material
 - ❑ Encourage them to try out new strategies and skills
- The challenge before us is to provide parenting supports in formats with broad reach, broad appeal, AND good efficacy



Thank you



Parenting Media Project