

INTRODUCTION

- Parenting is a learned skill that can be strengthened and improved through experience and education. Moreover, support obtained from group-based parenting education programs has been shown to reduce parenting stress and build a sense of competence in parenting (Kim, 2014; Morris, Robinson, Hays-Grudo, Claussen, Hartwig, & Treat, 2017).
- This poster introduces preliminary findings of an ongoing national evaluation of the parent education program *Active Parenting – First Five Years* (Popkin, Morris, Slocum, & Hubbs-Tait, 2017).
- Active Parenting – First Five Years* is designed for parents of children ages 0 to 4, and is implemented over four weekly 2-hour sessions that use a video-based curriculum focused on positive, responsive parenting, skill building, self-care, and tools for developing a healthy and well-adjusted child.

RESEARCH GOALS

- To evaluate the effectiveness of the *Active Parenting – First Five Years* parenting intervention in terms of parenting outcomes including responsive parenting, developmental knowledge, parenting efficacy, mindfulness, and parenting stress; as well as child outcomes of emotion problems, conduct problems, hyperactivity, and prosocial behavior.

MEASURES

Table 1. Parenting construct with measure, citation, and sample items.

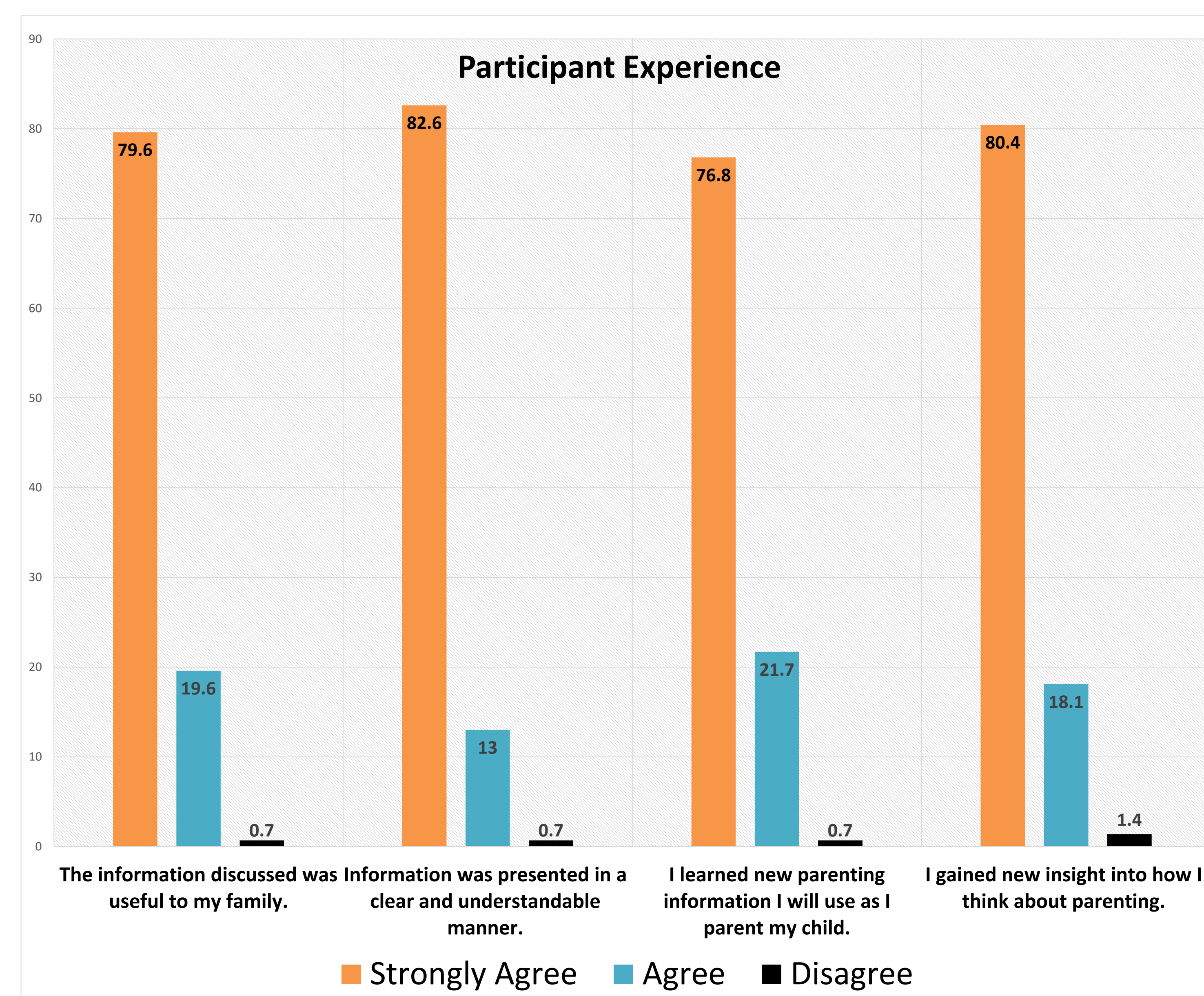
Construct	Measure	Sample Item	Citation
Responsive Parenting	Parenting Young Children	"Speak calmly with your child when you were upset with him or her?"	McEachern, Dishion, Weaver, Shaw, Wilson, & Gardner, 2012
Developmental Knowledge	Oklahoma Infant Mental Health and Development Survey	"Babies often need help from caregivers to calm down"	Huffer,, Williamson, Morris, Hays-Grudo, & Bosler, 2016
Parenting Efficacy	Parenting Self-Agency Measure	"I feel sure of myself as a mother/father"	Dumka, Stoerzinger, Jackson, & Rosa, 1996
Mindfulness	The Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness Scale	"I can accept things I cannot change"	Feldman, Hayes, Kumar, Greeson, & Laurenceau, 2007
Parenting Stress	Parental Stress Scale	"Having child(ren) has been a financial burden"	Berry & Jones, 1995

Table 2. Child constructs with measure, sample item, and citation

Construct	Measure	Sample Item	Citation
Emotion Problems	Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire	"Many fears, easily scared"	Goodman, 1997
Conduct Problems	Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire	"Often lies or cheats"	Goodman, 1997
Hyperactivity	Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire	"Constantly fidgeting or squirming"	Goodman, 1997
Prosocial Behavior	Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire	"Often offers to help others"	Goodman, 1997

PARTICIPANTS

- N:** 153
- Race:** 63% Caucasian, 15% Native American, 10% Black, 3% Asian, 9% Other
- Ethnicity:** 23% Hispanic
- Age:** 18 to 81 years ($M = 28.7$)
- Relationship to Child:** 64% Mother, 16% Father, 12% Grandparent, 8% Other
- Marital Status:** 26% Single, 21% Living Together, 35% Married, 18% Other
- Annual Income:** 64% earned less than \$30,000
- Education:** 50% high school diploma/GED or less education
- Target Child Gender:** 57% Male, 43% Female
- Target Child Age:** 0 to 5 ($M = 2.41$).



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RESULTS

Table 3. T-tests comparing pretest and post-test measures.

Variable	Pretest		Posttest		N	T
	M	SD	M	SD		
Responsive Parenting	5.58	0.89	5.91	0.81	149	4.60***
Developmental Knowledge	4.71	0.53	4.90	0.60	142	4.82***
Parenting Efficacy	3.25	0.53	3.44	0.53	153	4.09***
Parent Mindfulness	3.01	0.54	3.16	0.50	152	3.61***
Parenting Stress	1.97	0.58	1.85	0.54	153	-2.57*
Child Strengths	2.46	0.28	2.53	0.26	99	2.62**
Child Emotion Problems	1.33	0.34	1.30	0.33	99	-1.05
Child Conduct Problems	1.42	0.33	1.35	0.32	99	-1.74
Child Hyperactivity	1.90	0.49	1.83	0.49	99	-1.38
Child Prosocial Behavior	2.50	0.38	2.62	0.35	99	2.85**

Note. ***p < .001, **p < .01, *p < .05, *p < .10; results based on two-tailed test of significance.
*Child outcome items were only completed if parents were reporting on a child between ages 2 and 4.

- Results of the current evaluation are promising. As seen in Table 3, dependent sample t-test comparisons of pre- and post-test measures indicate significant increases in responsive parenting, developmental knowledge, parenting efficacy, mindfulness, child strengths, child prosocial behavior, with significant decreases in parenting stress.
- Nearly all participants rated their overall experience in the program as good (13.0%) or excellent (86.3%). Common themes highlighted by parents have included the group discussions, brain building activities, breathing exercises, positive discipline ideas, and the video curriculum.
- With evaluation findings showing promise to this point, data are now being collected using a novel *Inclusive Randomized Control Trial*. This is accomplished by participants filling out three surveys (Control, Pre, Post), after which they are randomly assigned to the Control Group (Control & Pre) or the treatment group (Pre & Post). This method allows for all participants to receive the benefits of the intervention without a waiting period.

CONCLUSIONS

- This program appears to do well in providing parents with opportunities to enhance mindfulness and reduce stress – two aspects of parent self-care that could prove useful additions to traditional parenting education programs.
- In light of the results obtained from the population sampled for this study, this program appears to be an effective parenting intervention for serving low income, high-risk families.