

Increasing Parent Involvement

FAST As An Engagement Strategy

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Solutions
to the Dropout Crisis

Agenda

- Why Parent Involvement Matters
- Defining Parent Involvement
- Theoretical Framework: Two types of parent involvement strategies employed by schools
- Obstacles to parent involvement
- Strategies for Increasing Parent Involvement



The Evidence Is In!

Parent Involvement Matters

Students with involved parents, no matter what their income or background, are more likely to:

- Earn higher grades and test scores, and enroll in higher-level programs
- Be promoted, pass their classes and earn credits
- Attend school regularly
- Have better social skills, show improved behavior and adapt well to school
- Graduate and go on to post-secondary education



According to the National PTA, when parents are involved, students have:

- Increased motivation
- Better self-esteem
- Lower rates of suspension
- Decreased use of drugs and alcohol
- Fewer instances of violent behavior



Defining Parent Involvement

Six Types of Involvement*

- Parenting: Help all families establish home environments to support children as students
- Communicating: Design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications about school programs and children's progress
- Volunteering: Recruit and organize parent help and support



- Learning at home: Provide information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with homework and other activities, decisions, and planning.
- Decision making: Include parents in school decisions, developing parent leaders and representatives.
- Collaborating with community: Identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning.

*Joyce Epstein, Ph.D. Center on School, Family and Community Partnerships at Johns Hopkins University



National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs According to National PTA

Standard I: Communicating	Communication between home and school is regular, two-way, and meaningful.
Standard II: Parenting	Parenting skills are promoted and supported.
Standard III: Student Learning	Parents play an integral role in assisting student learning.
Standard IV: Volunteering	Parents are welcome in the school, and their support and assistance are sought
Standard V: School Decision Making and Advocacy	Parents are full partners in the decisions that affect children and families
Standard VI: Collaborating with Community	Community resources are used to strengthen schools, families, and student learning.



Theoretical Framework – Two Types of Parent Involvement Strategies With Schools

1. Positive parent outreach from the school
2. Systemic Relationship-Based Parent Involvement partnering with the school



Theoretical Framework - Type One: Positive Parent Outreach

- **School** is the center of the model
- School initiates the activity of engaging the parent with the resources of the school
- Presumes that the work of the school should be supported by the parent
- Outreach is positive and not based on child's problem behavior or performance



Parent Involvement Strategy

1. Positive Parent Outreach



Theoretical Framework - Type Two

Systemic Relationship-Based Parent Involvement

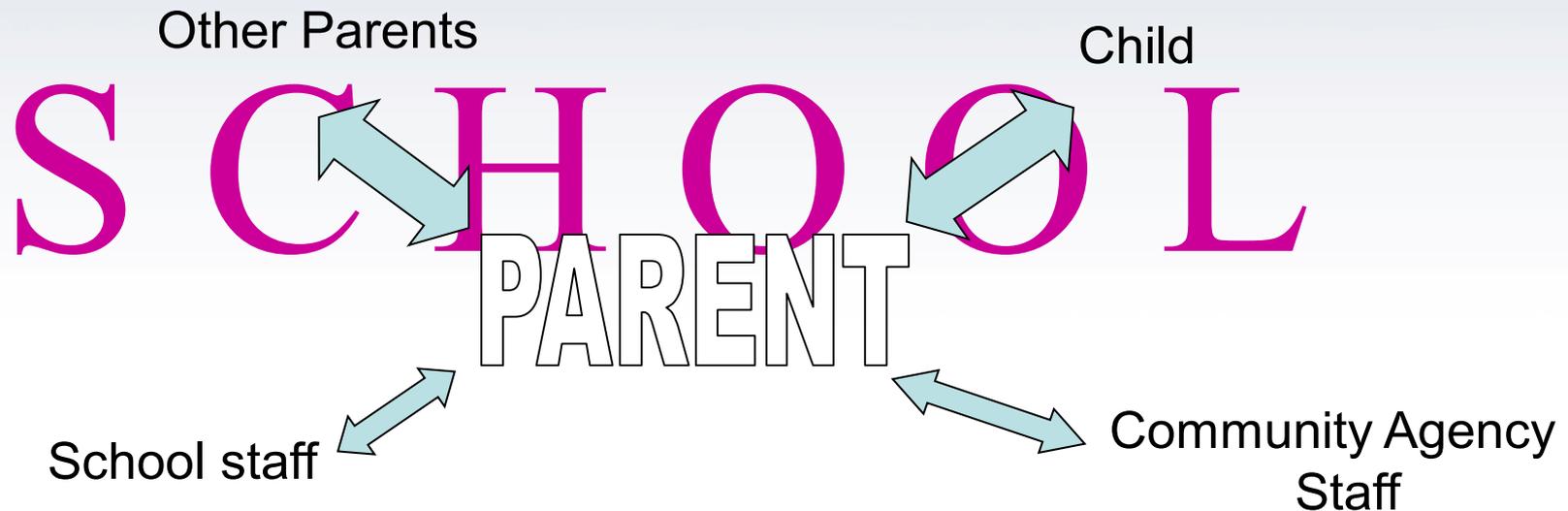
- **Parent** is the center of the model
- Focus is on empowering the parent to support their child
- Presumes that parents need strong relationships to effectively support child, including:
 - 1- Relationships with other parents
 - 2- Strong family relationships
 - 3- Relationships with the resources of the school
 - 4- Relationships with community resources

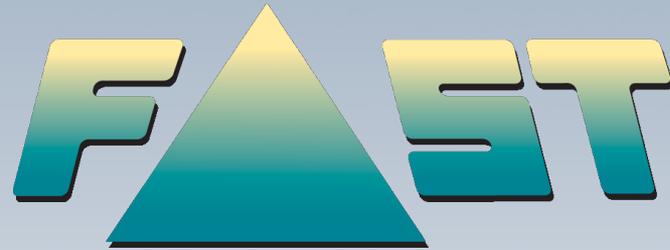


Parent Involvement Strategy

2. Systemic Relationship-Based Engagement

- School as a *site* of parent involvement
- Focus is on systemic relationship-building:





A Systemic,
Relationship-Based
Parent Involvement Strategy



Relationship-Based Process

- Each child needs at least one caring, long-term relationship to learn and be resilient
- Parents need support from other adults to parent effectively and reduce their stress
- Schools need trusting, reciprocal positive relationships with children and parents
- A community needs trusting, respectful, reciprocal relationships: social capital ties



- Collaborative teams work at a systemic level when parents are partners in the process: e.g. FAST



“ The key to parental involvement success has been direct, personal relationships created by parent involvement staff and families of all students.”

--Texas school board member

It Takes A Parent: Transforming Education in the Wake of the No Child Left Behind Act



FAST Gets Parent Involvement

- FAST offers a parent-led structure for the school to offer opportunities to build strong respectful relationships with parents in just 10 weekly, multi-family group meetings
- Relationships are built with repeated, fun activities and participatory encounters
- Six weekly doses needed by parents and school personnel for trusting relationships



Parents Keep Coming Back

- Of those parents who come once to FAST, 80% on average complete six sessions and graduate; 90% in Canada and Australia
- Graduated FAST parents participate in school offered activities, and become parent leaders and attend PTA/PTO
- Graduated FAST parents run the monthly, multi-family groups called FASTWORKS



Program Goals

- Enhance family functioning
- Prevent the focal youth from experiencing school failure
- Prevent substance abuse by the youth and family
- Reduce the stress that parents and youth experience from daily life situations

Overall, to increase the likelihood of the youth being successful in the home, in middle school, and in the community.



Incentives

REMOVE BARRIERS

- Meal
- Transportation
- Child Care
- Elder Care

PROMOTE ATTENDANCE

- Meal
- Social Support
- Lotto
- Partners



How Does Middle School FAST Work?

- 14 Weekly Youth Rap Sessions
- 10 Weekly Multi-Family Group Sessions
- Fun, Interactive Programming

Youth Group – 14 Weekly Meetings

Weeks 1 – 14, Led by Youth Advocate & Youth Partner

Family Group – 10 Weekly Meetings

Weeks 5 – 14, Led by the Whole Team



Week 1

Week 5

Week 14



Family Unit at Family Table
•Flag (1st night only)
•Meal
•FAST Hello
•FAST Song

10 weeks of family meetings

Parents' Time
•Buddy Time
•Parent Self-Help Group

Peer Group Time
Youth Group at FAST

Kids' Time
Children divided by age group for group activities

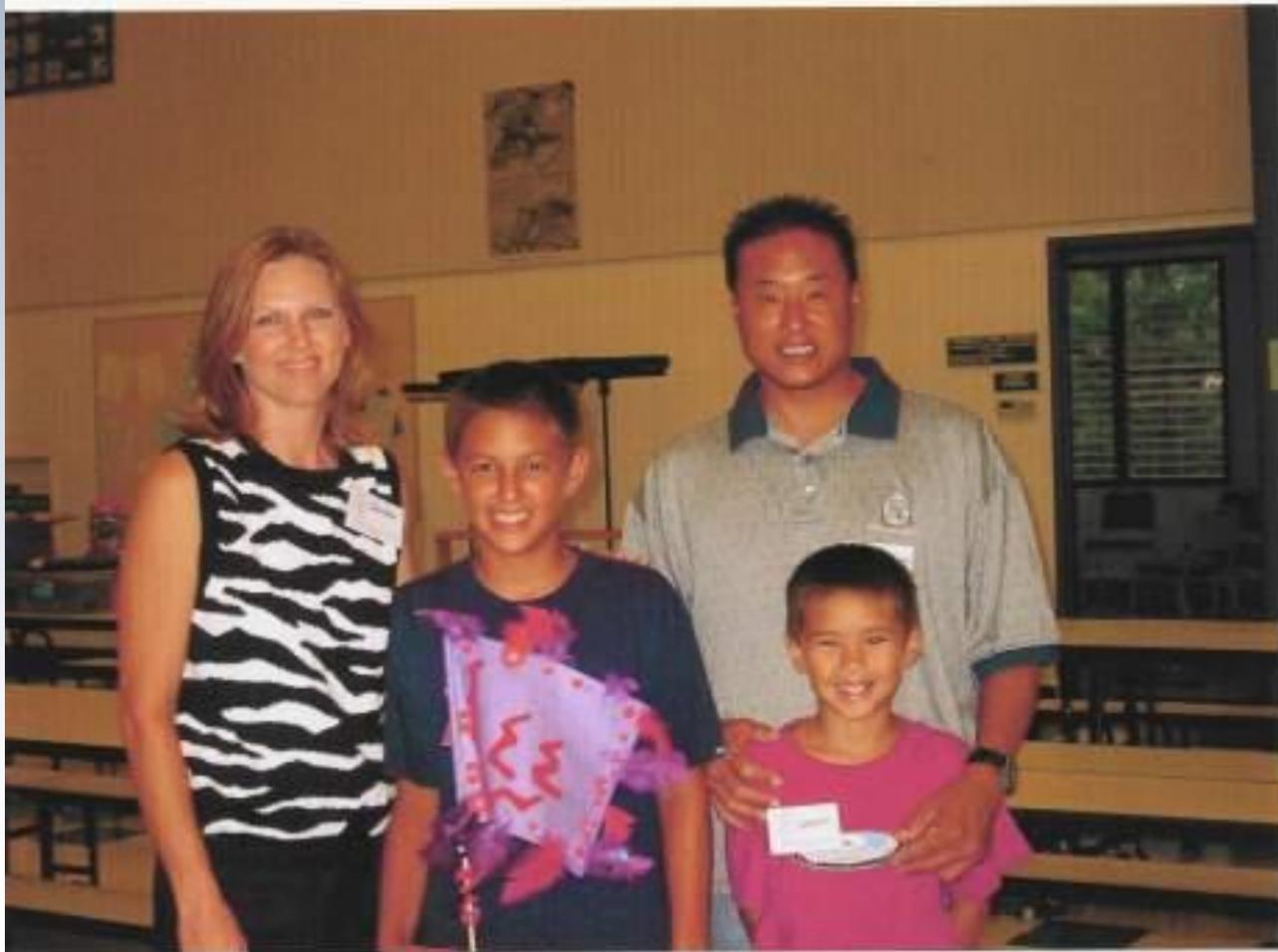
One-to-One Time
Focal Youth & Parent

Siblings continue
Kids' Time

Family Table GAME & Lotto

Closing Circle Announcements & RAIN



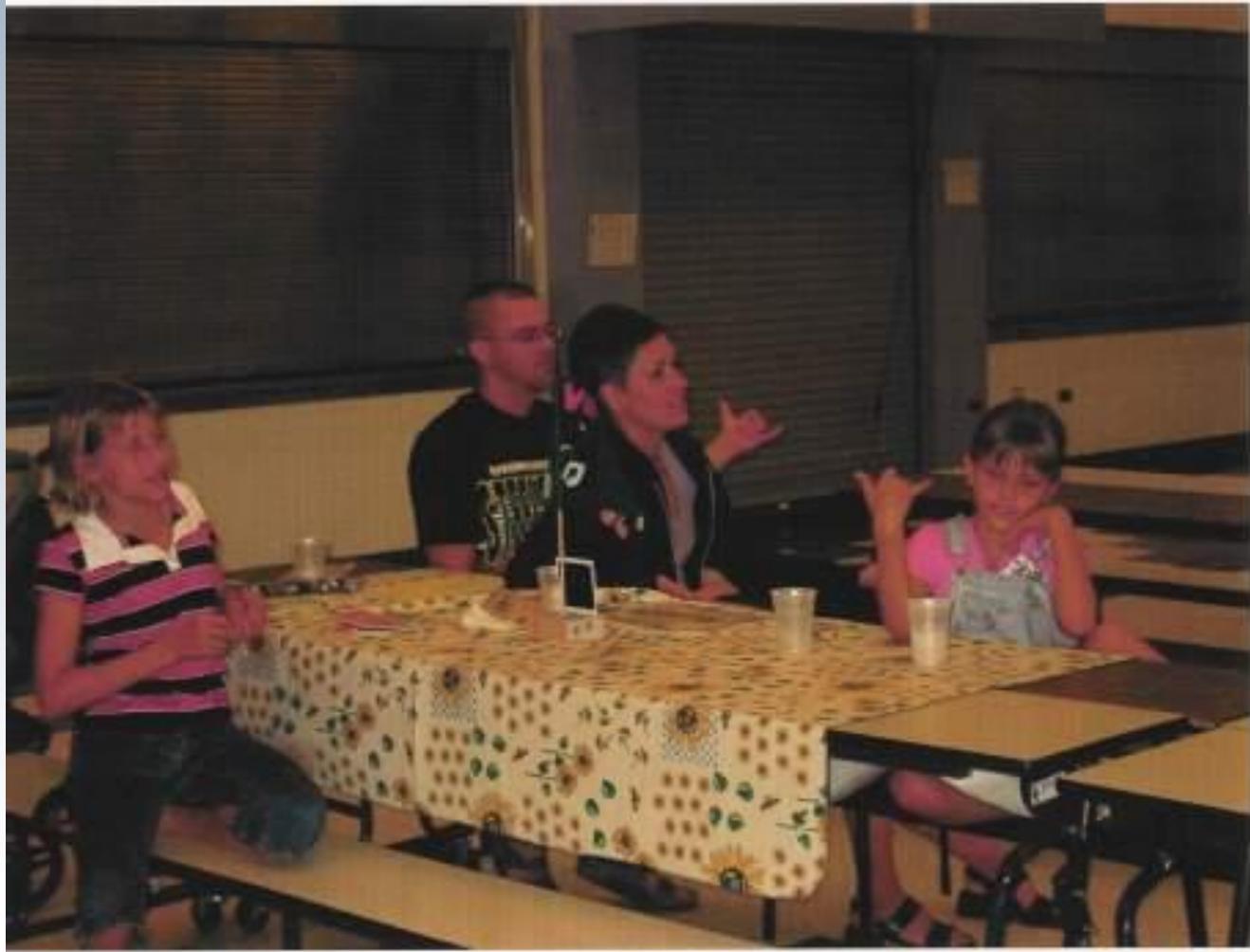


FAMILY FLAG



NATIONAL DROPOUT PREVENTION CENTER/NETWORK AT CLEMSON UNIVERSITY

Solutions
to the Dropout Crisis



FAST ALOHA





MUSIC TIME





BUDDY TIME





Parent's Time





YOUTH GROUP





ONE-TO-ONE TIME





FAMILY GAME





LOTTERY





RAIN



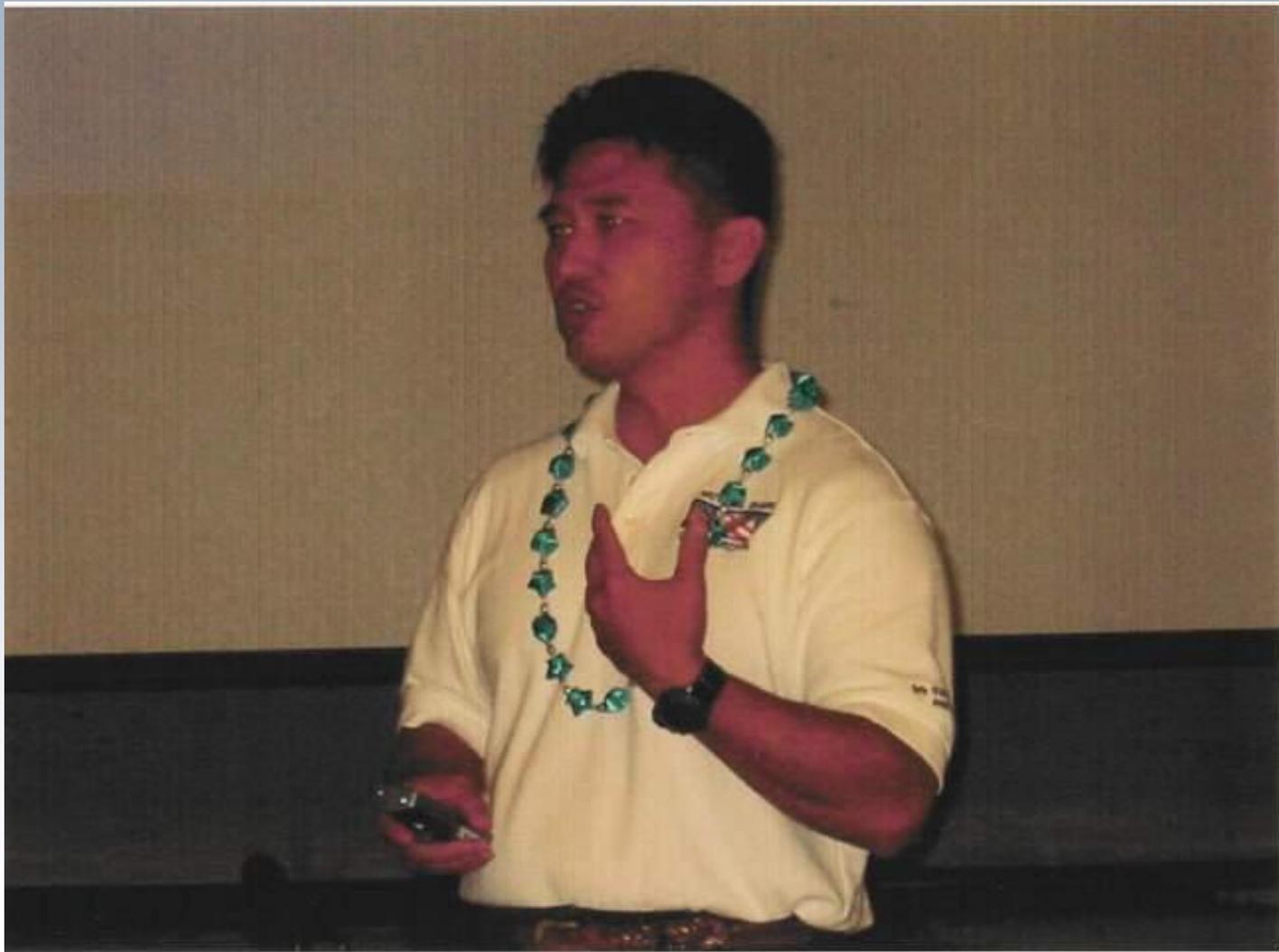
NATIONAL DROPOUT PREVENTION CENTER/NETWORK AT CLEMSON UNIVERSITY

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FAST Special Sessions

- Week 5 – Violence Prevention, Gangs, Substance, etc.
- Week 10 – Graduation Ceremony





SPECIAL PRESENTATION - 5TH NIGHT



NATIONAL DROPOUT PREVENTION CENTER/NETWORK AT CLEMSON UNIVERSITY

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Graduation

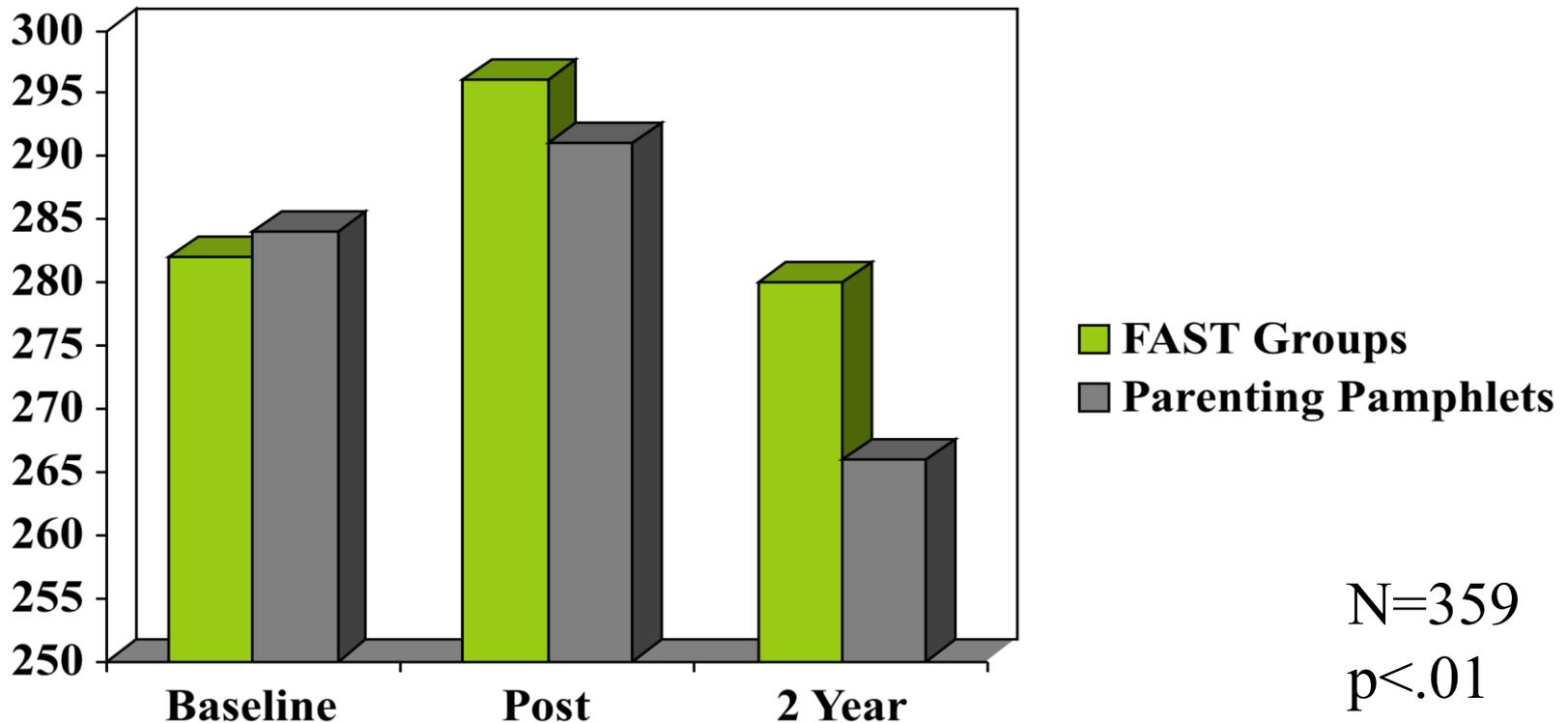


FAST and Academic Outcomes

- Two randomized controlled trials have been completed in which academic outcomes as rated by teachers at follow-up—either one and two years after FAS—showing statistically significant positive effects of systemic parent involvement
- Both had universal recruitment of students
- One compared FAST to mailed parenting pamphlets; one compared FAST to control



Teacher-Reported Academic Performance (CBCL)



N=359

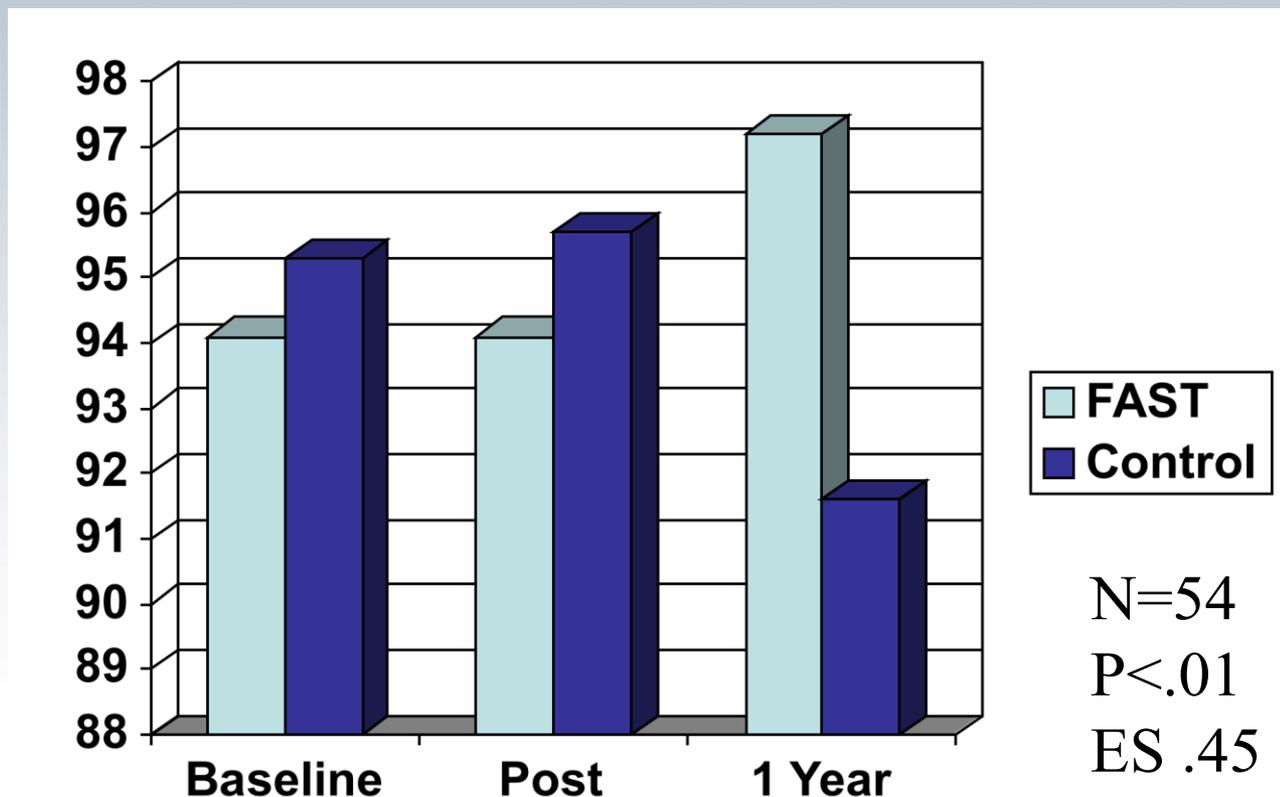
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NIDA study of FAST in 10 Inner City Schools



Teacher Ratings of Academic Competence (SSRS)

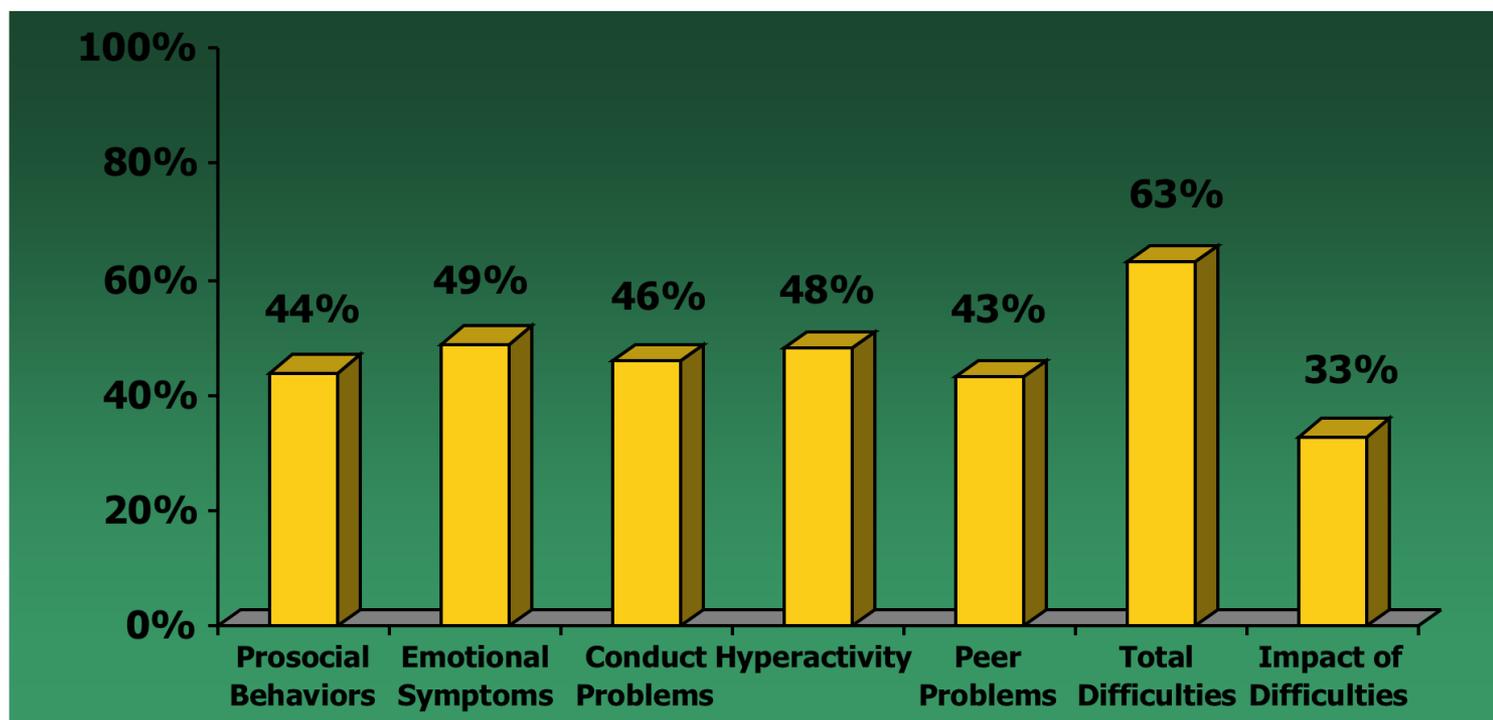


OERI Study of FAST in Rural American Indian Schools



Youth's Strengths and Difficulties

On the Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire, parents reported improvements on the following:

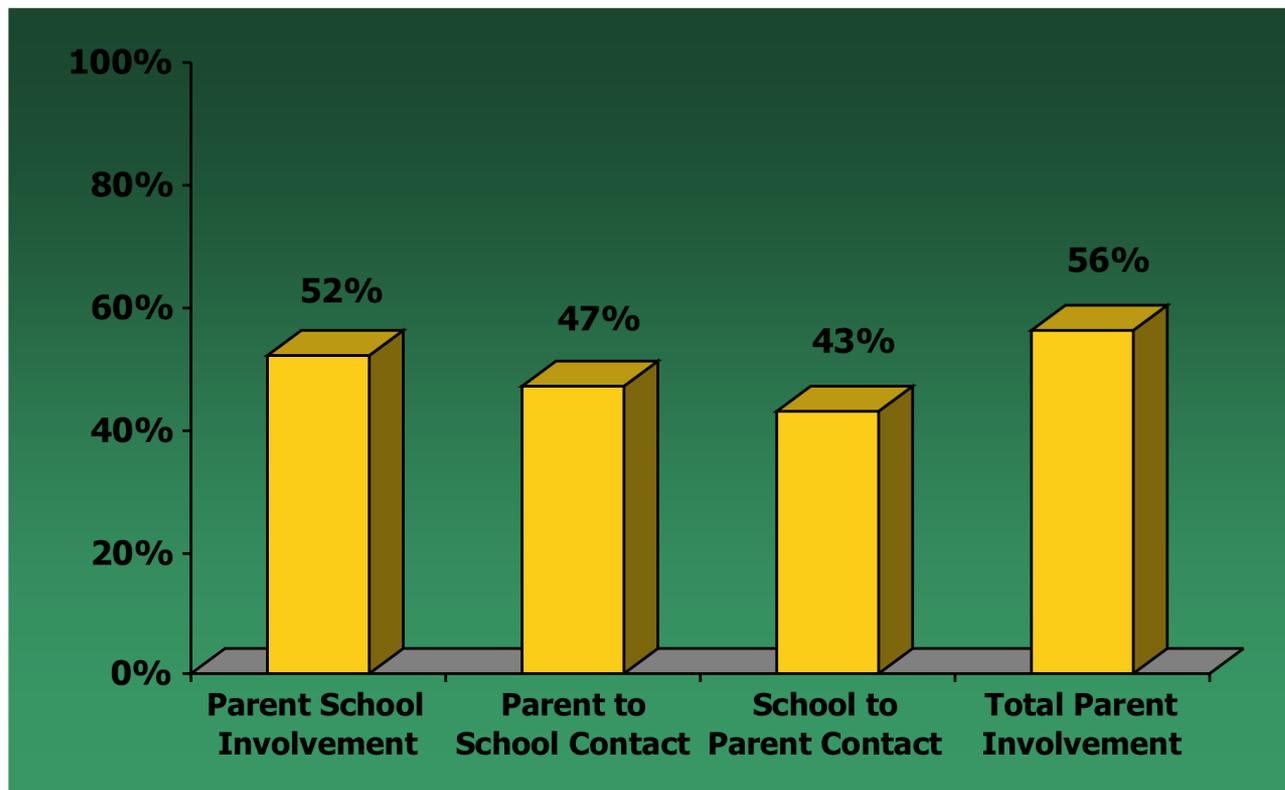


These findings indicate that youth behavior has improved.



Parent Involvement in Education

On the Parent Involvement in Education Questionnaire, parents reported the following improvements:



These increases in parental involvement in school are likely to result in greater academic success of FAST youth.



Obstacles to Parent Involvement

- The perception that low-income parents and single parents will not or cannot spend as much time helping their children as middle-class parents (Epstein, 1995)
- Language barriers between parents and staff
- Lack of cultural awareness/understanding
- The perception that the older a child becomes, the less they need parent involvement in their school



“It doesn’t matter how many structured activities a school creates; parents must feel welcomed, accepted, respected, and validated at their school and by school leaders.”

--Connecticut Principal

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