

Recruitment and Retention **SAFE Children Program**

**Families and Communities Research Group
Institute for Juvenile Research
Department of Psychiatry
University of Illinois at Chicago**

Funded by:

Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, Substance
Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Collaborators

Families and Communities Research
Group

Patrick Tolan, Ph.D.

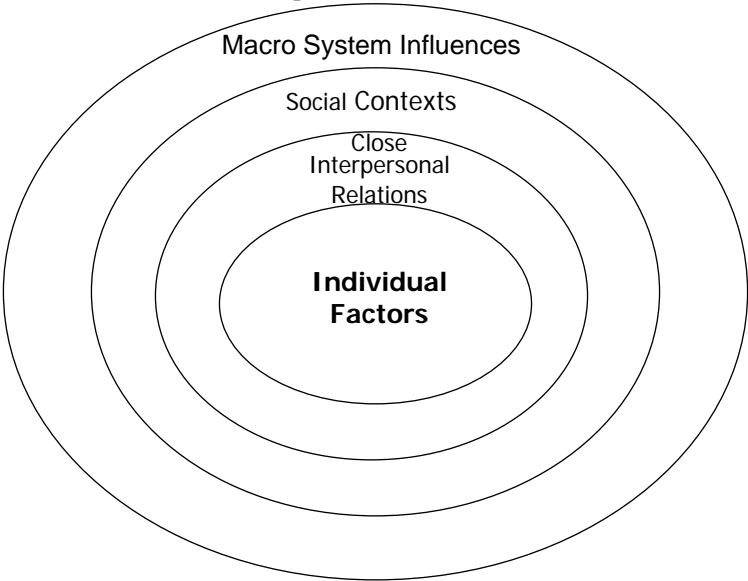
Deborah Gorman-Smith, Ph.D.

David Henry, Ph.D.

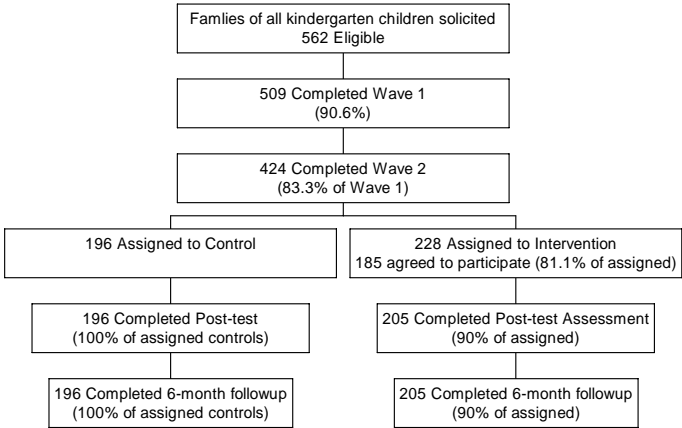
Michael Schoeny, Ph.D.

Franklin Gay, M.P.H.

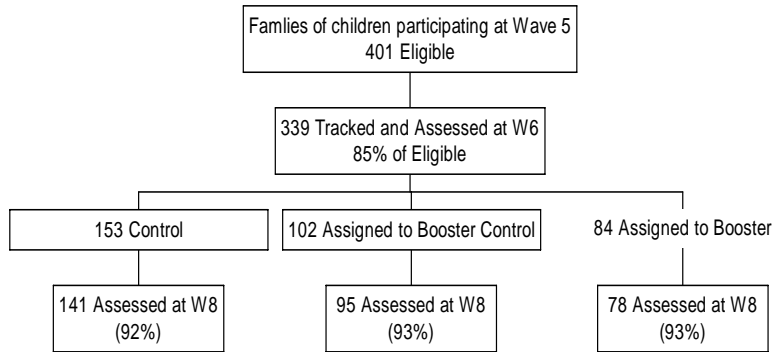
Ecological Model



SAFEChildren Recruitment and Retention Initial Phase



SAFEChildren Recruitment and Retention Booster Phase



What is Retention?

- We actually assessed 339 at Wave 6 and 339 at Wave 8 of the booster phase.
- However, only 314 (93%) of the Wave 8 families were the same families assessed at Wave 6.
- The remainder were families who had participated in the initial phase, but could not be located at the beginning of the booster phase.

Barriers to Recruitment and Retention

- **Mobility:** In the Metropolitan Area Child Study, we experienced 40% mobility per year, much within communities, and sometimes between conditions. SAFEChildren began with 7 schools when children were in kindergarten. By 4th grade, children attended over 100 schools.
- **Logistics:** Transportation, child care, work schedules, crime.
- **Perceived lack of expertise or condescension of service provider or interviewer.**
- **Parental psychopathology or antisocial behavior, family disorganization.**

Tracking/Recruitment Strategies

Project Strategies

- Give “change of address” cards to families at initial contact
- Maintain regular contact with schools, asking about changes of address
- Include permission to obtain forwarding information in consent forms
- Ask families for names of persons who will be able to contact them
- Ask for SSN during interview
- Send out newsletter with “address correction”

Interviewer Strategies

- Home visits
- Directory Assistance
- Call/visit contacts
- Talk with neighbors, churches, agencies, and local businesses for information
- Search tracking web sites
- Be creative in locating families

Twice Yearly Newsletter

SAFE Children Project Newsletter Spring/Summer, 2001

SAFE Children Receives National Award

We would like to share some recent good news with you. In May of this year, in Washington, DC, the SAFE Children project will receive the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention's Annual Exemplary Prevention Program Award. This award is given to programs from around the country that show unique promise in helping children or adolescents avoid involvement in substance abuse and other related problems. We are very proud to receive this award but know that it is only through the involvement of your family and others that we have been able to show how useful a family-oriented approach to prevention can be.

SAFE Children: Present and Future

As you know, we were recently funded by SAMHSA, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, to continue the program for another three years. All of the families participating at the end of the first phase of the SAFE Children Project were asked to continue to participate in this second phase of the study. Families have been interviewed once already (between late-Summer, 2000 and Winter 2001) and will be interviewed two more times over the course of the next year. We would like to take this time to thank you for your participation in the first set of interviews. We realize that, for many of you that were interviewed in the summer, this interview took longer than expected. Based on your feedback, we shortened the interview and are committed to making sure that future interviews stay a reasonable length too. As you should already know, the second set of interviews will take place in the summer of 2001. If you haven't been contacted yet, you will be soon. You can always feel free to call us too (312-413-1744). Our interviewers and staff look forward to working with you again. Your participation, as always, is very important to us. Without you, there would be no SAFE Children project.

Sample Articles

- SAFEChildren Research Findings
- Other Research News
- Parent Involvement Matters
- Helping Children Cope with Tragedy (after 9/11/01)
- Thank you for participating
- What's Next at SAFEChildren
- Why are my family's interviews so important?

Family Engagement Strategies

- Group leader makes initial contact with family.
- Group leader discusses schedule or other potential barriers to participation.
- Schedule meetings to accommodate families with similar schedules and locations.
- Contact families the day before the first meeting to remind and re-assess commitment.
- Families who miss a meeting are contacted immediately to determine reason and potential barriers to participation.

Participation/Retention Strategies

- Offer make-up sessions in groups or individually in homes for families who miss.
- Provide dinner for group meetings if this helps families participate.
- Arrange transportation if neighborhood is unsafe or transportation problems prohibit family from participating.
- Be flexible and creative in resolving barriers.
- Be willing to assess anywhere.
- Include a financial incentive with a “completion bonus”.

When are incentives coercive?

The ethical principles of respect for persons and justice govern the use of incentives in research. Incentives are coercive if...

- subjects “cannot afford not to participate”
- amount is out of proportion to fair compensation for the inconvenience/cost of participating
- incentive is “an excessive, unwarranted, inappropriate or improper reward” (Belmont Report)
- subject would not have participated except for the incentive

However, participants’ time and inconvenience is of value. Incentives demonstrate respect.

Incentives are less likely to be coercive if they are introduced after the family has already agreed to participate.

Principles of Recruitment and Retention

- **Justice: Every individual is important**
 - Contrary to the assumptions made by parametric statistics, those of greatest interest are often those at highest risk. Moving the tail is often more important than moving the mean.
 - Do whatever is necessary to assess/involve every participant.
 - Impute data or use methods that allow inclusion of participants with partial data.
- **Respect for participants**
 - Barriers to participation are often ecological.
 - Be patient, persistent, flexible and creative.
 - Stay in touch.

Is It Worth the Effort?

A study of engagement and participation in
the SAFEChildren Program

Questions

- Are there distinguishable subgroups of families based on recruitment ease and participation level?
- Do these groups differ in their motivation for involvement, in their functioning as families, or the child's risk status?
- How does the recruitment ease and participation level relate to response to the intervention?

Engagement and Retention Effort

- Engagement
 - Establishing an initial connection between family and service provider
- Retention
 - Ongoing involvement in the program

Indicators

- number of contact attempts needed
- rated effort expended to tell family about program
- reported extent of effort to get agreement to be a participant and attend a first session
- rated effort to maintain ongoing participation
- perceived enthusiasm
- number of sessions attended

Engagement/Participation Groups

- **Joiners:** full or near full participation, low recruiting effort ($n=119$, 64%)
- **Responders:** full or near full participation, moderate to high recruiting effort ($n=23$, 12.4%)
- **Minimal Participants:** Less than full participation after extensive recruiting effort ($n=28$, 15.1%)

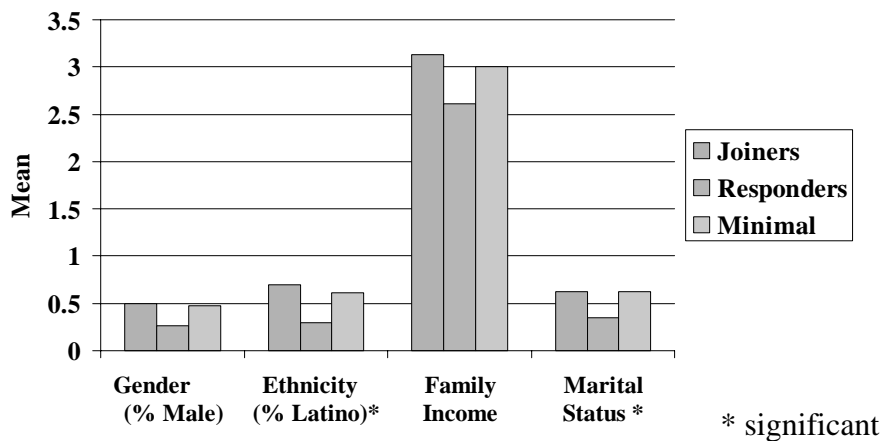
Outcome Measures

- **Attitudes Toward School** (BASC, Reynolds & Kamphaus, 1992) Children's enjoyment of school. ($\alpha=.89$)
- **Extent of Involvement** (Gorman-Smith, Tolan, Zelli & Huesmann, 1996) Degree to which parents are engaged with children in activities. ($\alpha=.81$)
- **Parent Involvement in School** (Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group, 1993) Parent attendance at school functions, conferences, report-card pickup. ($\alpha=.73$)
- **Letter-Word Identification** (Woodcock Diagnostic Reading Battery) Ability to identify letters and single-syllable words.
- **Positive Parenting** (Gorman-Smith, Tolan, Zelli & Huesmann, 1996) Degree to which parents use positive feedback in disciplining children. ($\alpha=.68$)

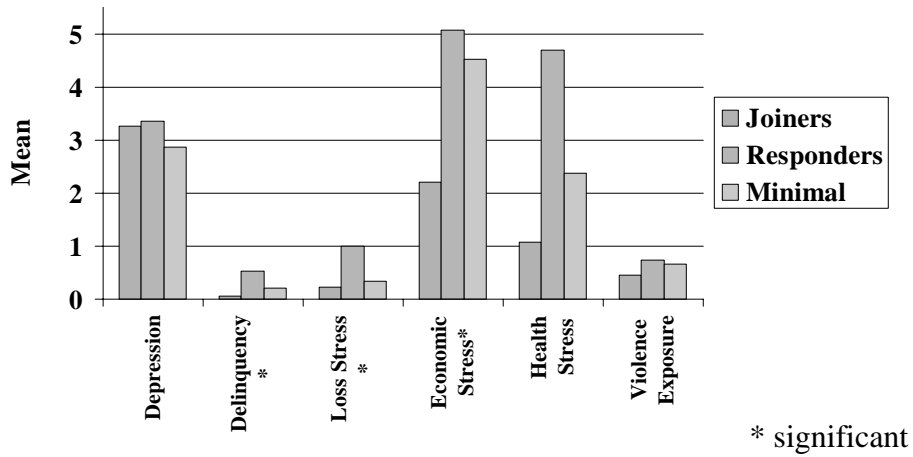
Categories of Predictors

- **Demographics**
 - Gender, Ethnicity, Family Income, Marital Status
- **Parent Characteristics**
 - Depression, Delinquency, Stress, Exposure to Violence
- **Parenting and Family Relationship Characteristics**
 - Discipline, Monitoring, Beliefs, Cohesion, Structure
- **Child Characteristics**
 - Aggression, Depression, Hyperactivity

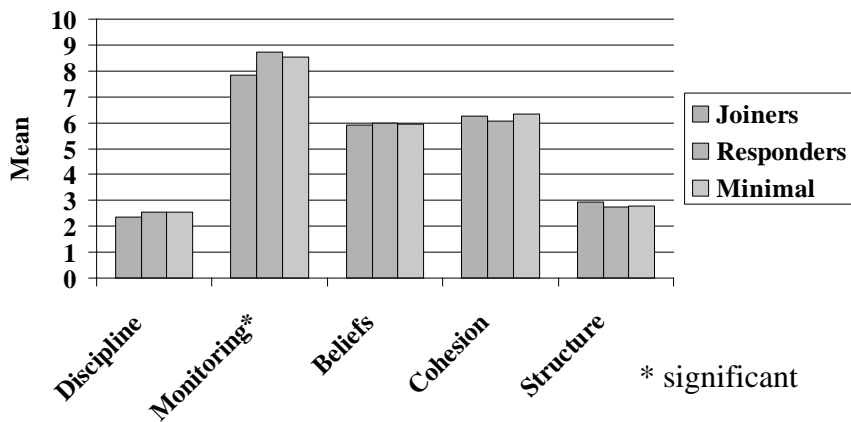
Demographic Characteristics



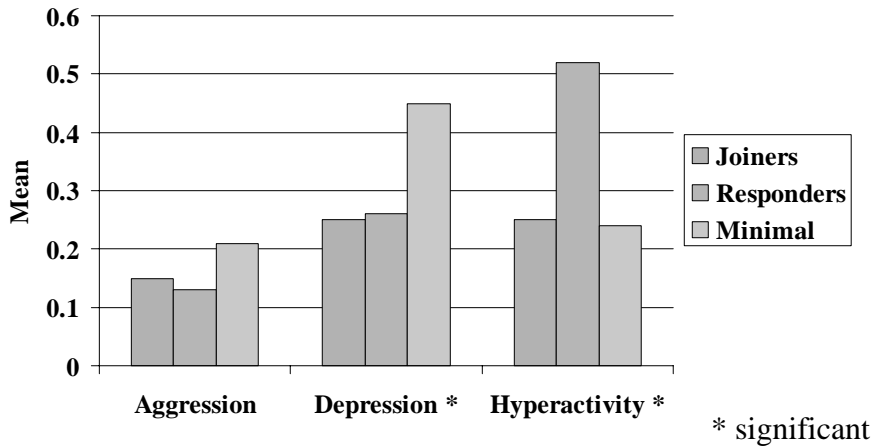
Parent Characteristics



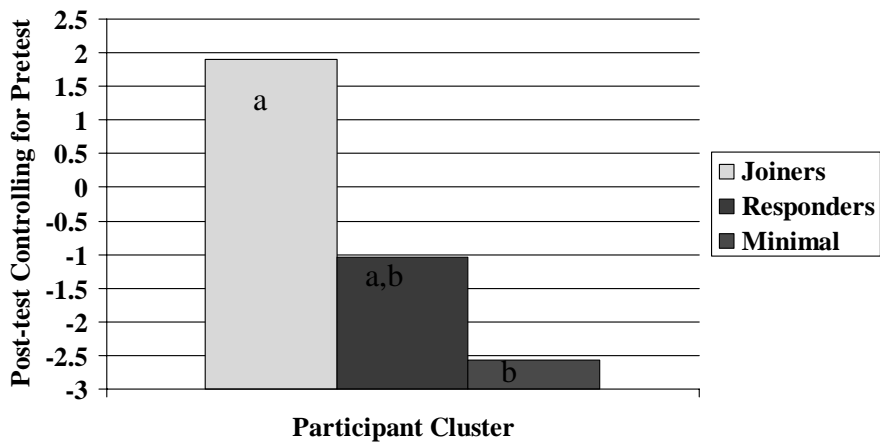
Parenting & Family Relationship Characteristics



Child Characteristics

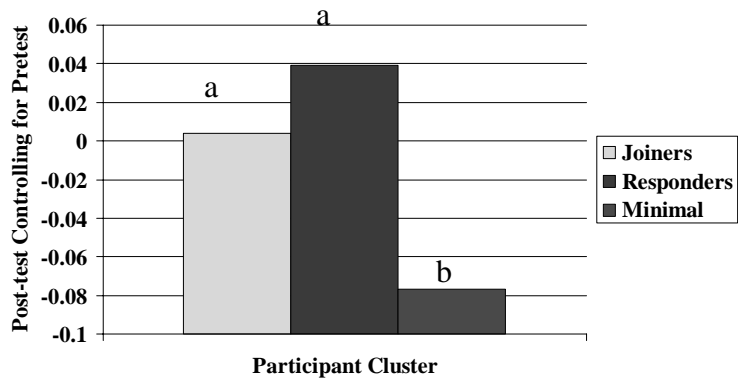


Intervention Effects Letter-Word Identification



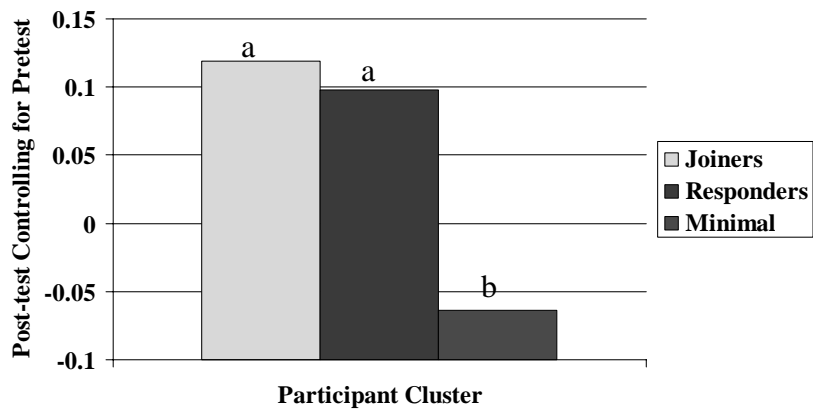
Note: Means with different subscripts are significantly different from each other.

Intervention Effects Attitudes Toward School



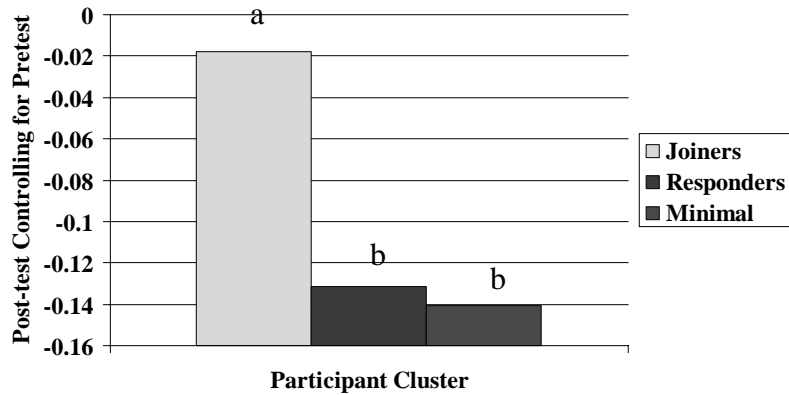
Note: Means with different subscripts are significantly different from each other.

Intervention Effects Parent Involvement in School (Teacher Report)



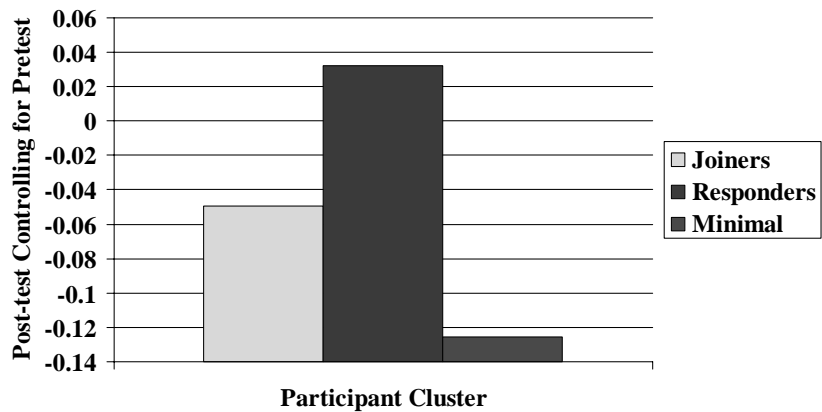
Note: Means with different subscripts are significantly different from each other.

Intervention Effects Extent of Involvement



Note: Means with different subscripts are significantly different from each other.

Intervention Effects Positive Parenting



Note: The significant differences in this analysis are in the linear growth trends. Joiners have significantly steeper growth trends than do either responders or minimal participants.

Summary and Conclusions

- **Three patterns identified: Joiners, Responders, Minimal Participants**
- **Responders and Minimal Participants rated themselves higher on Monitoring than did Joiners.**
- **Responders differed from other groups:**
 - More likely to report being African-American and single
 - Had higher levels of antisocial behavior and loss and economic stressors
 - Children had higher scores on hyperactivity

Summary and Conclusions

- **Intervention affected Joiners and Responders equally on Parent Involvement in School and Attitudes toward School.**
- **Stronger effects for Responders than for Minimal Participants on elementary reading skill (Letter-Word Identification).**
- **Responders did not differ from Minimal Participants on Positive Parenting**

Was it worth it?

- **Extra recruiting and retention effort boosted participation from 64% to 91% (some participation) or 76% (near full participation).**
- **Like Joiners, Responders showed benefits from participation in the intervention.**