



Collaborative Problem-Solving from the Start

The Effects of Family-School Partnerships on Child, Parent and Teacher Outcomes

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Early Learning and Development

- Children live in multiple contexts (i.e., home and school) that affect their functioning, both separately and together; continuity and congruence among systems are key
- Effective cross-system partnerships between families and educators are critical to maximizing the growth potential of a child
- Children's social emotional and behavioral competence impacts their ability to learn



Why Family-School Partnerships?

“The evidence is consistent, positive, and convincing: families have a major influence on their children’s achievement in school and through life... The research continues to grow and build an ever-strengthening case. When schools, families, and community groups work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and like school more.”

(Henderson & Mapp, 2002)



Ecological-Systems Thinking

- Children develop optimally when they are part of healthy systems, and when there are healthy relationships among those systems
- Children growing up in systems that are dysfunctional, conflictual, nonsupportive have difficulties with self-regulation, goal setting, time management, responsible decision making
- If concerns are indeed the result of the systems within which children reside, therein must our interventions focus



Ecologically-Based Practices

Requires

- Professionals (teachers, counselors, administrators, parents, and others) to work in tandem with one another
- A focus on facilitating change in the behaviors of *adults* (teachers, parents) in a child's life
- Relationship-building and intensive, ongoing communication and collaboration via consultation, program planning, and home/classroom support



Conjoint Behavioral Consultation: A Definition

- A strength-based, cross-system problem-solving and decision-making model wherein parents, teachers, and other caregivers or service providers work as *partners* and *share responsibility* for promoting positive and consistent outcomes related to a child's academic, behavioral, and social-emotional development (Sheridan & Kratochwill, 2008, p. 25)
- All stages of consultation (from problem identification to plan evaluation) are conducted with parents and teachers together, in a collaborative manner



Conjoint Behavioral Consultation

- Promotes and supports *home-school partnerships* in the context of cooperative and collegial problem-solving
- Emphasizes meaningful parental/family engagement in education
- A vehicle by which to foster constructive, goal directed, solution-oriented services for children
- An extension of traditional (teacher) consultation that goes beyond the school setting and brings parents into the intervention and decision making process



Stages of Conjoint Behavioral Consultation

- Problem/Needs Identification
 - Problem/Needs Analysis
 - Plan Implementation
 - Plan Evaluation
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CBC Goals

- ***Behavioral* goals address outcomes on behalf of the child**
 - Address children's learning and behavioral needs
 - Improve skills and knowledge of all parties
 - Enhance generalization and maintenance of treatment effects
- ***Process* goals focus on strengthening the partnership between the family and school**
 - Improve communication and knowledge about the child, family and classroom
 - Promote shared ownership for solutions



Early Research Findings: Outcomes

(see Sheridan, Clarke, & Burt, 2008)

- CBC provides an effective mechanism for addressing the needs of children with behavioral, academic, and social-emotional concerns (Guli, 2005; Sheridan, Eagle, Cowan, & Mickelson, 2001)
- CBC has been shown to be effective in Head Start classrooms serving children and families living in poverty (Sheridan, Clarke, Knoche, & Edwards, 2006)
- CBC has been demonstrated to be efficacious with culturally diverse clients (Sheridan, Eagle, & Doll, 2006)
- CBC has been found to address concerns of children with developmental disabilities (Ray, Watson, & Skinner, 1999; Wilkinson 2005)



Early Research Findings

(see Sheridan, Clarke, & Burt, 2008)

- **Process Research:**

- CBC establishes a collaborative context for joint planning, decision making and problem solving (e.g., Erchul et al., 1999; Sheridan et al., 2002)
- Relational communication studies demonstrate bidirectional communication and reciprocal relationships in CBC (Grissom, Erchul, & Sheridan, 2003), and its collaborative nature (Sheridan, Meegan, & Eagle, 2002)

- **Social Validity Research:**

- CBC is acceptable to parents, teachers, school psychologists (including relative to other approaches; e.g., Freer & Watson, 1999)
- Perceptions of goal attainment within CBC are high (Sladeczek et al., 2001)



Current Research

- A 4-cohort randomized trial testing the efficacy of CBC (Sheridan, S.M. & Glover, T.A. IES Grant # R305F050284)
- Aims of the study were to determine the efficacy of CBC, immediately and at one year follow up on:
 - Child behavior regulation and social/adaptive skills;
 - Parent engagement, self-efficacy, and involvement;
 - Teacher beliefs and attitudes about parent involvement;
 - Parent-teacher relationships immediately and at one-year follow up



Research Questions

- What is the effect of CBC on children's disruptive behaviors, adaptive skills, and social competencies?
- What is the effect of CBC on the parent-teacher relationship, and teachers' beliefs about parent involvement?
- What is the effect of CBC on parent participation in problem solving?
- Does the parent-teacher relationship mediate the effect of CBC on child behaviors?



Participants & Data Collection

- 207 children aged 5-8 ($M = 6$), their parents and teachers from 21 schools participated over 4 years
- 82 classrooms were randomly assigned to treatment or control conditions
- Students with disruptive classroom behaviors (e.g., noncompliance, aggression) were selected based on teacher nomination, ratings on a short behavioral inventory, and the *Systematic Screening for Behavior Disorders* (SSBD; Walker & Seversen, 1990)
- Assessments conducted at baseline and post-CBC; follow up assessments conducted in the following academic year



Select Measures

- Behavioral Assessment Scale for Children (Reynolds & Kamphaus, 2004)
- Social Skills Rating Scale (Gresham & Elliott, 1990)
- Family Involvement Questionnaire-Elementary (Manz, Fantuzzo, & Power, 2004)
- Parent Participation in Problem Solving (Sheridan, 2004)
- Parent-Teacher Rating Scale-II (Vickers & Minke, 1995)
- Hoover-Dempsey et al. (1992, 2002) scales measuring teacher beliefs about parent involvement; also parent role construct, self-efficacy



Home-School Interventions

- Consultation team selected interventions for behavioral plans from a *Behavioral Strategies Toolkit* with standardized protocols for evidence-based strategies (from Tough Kid series) to promote behavioral regulation and self-control
- All behavioral plans contained a *motivation component* (e.g., reward menu) and a *home-school communication system*
- Additional training and support for parents and teachers were scheduled as needed
- Fidelity of intervention implementation assessed via self-reports, permanent products, and direct observation (classroom only)



Data Analyses

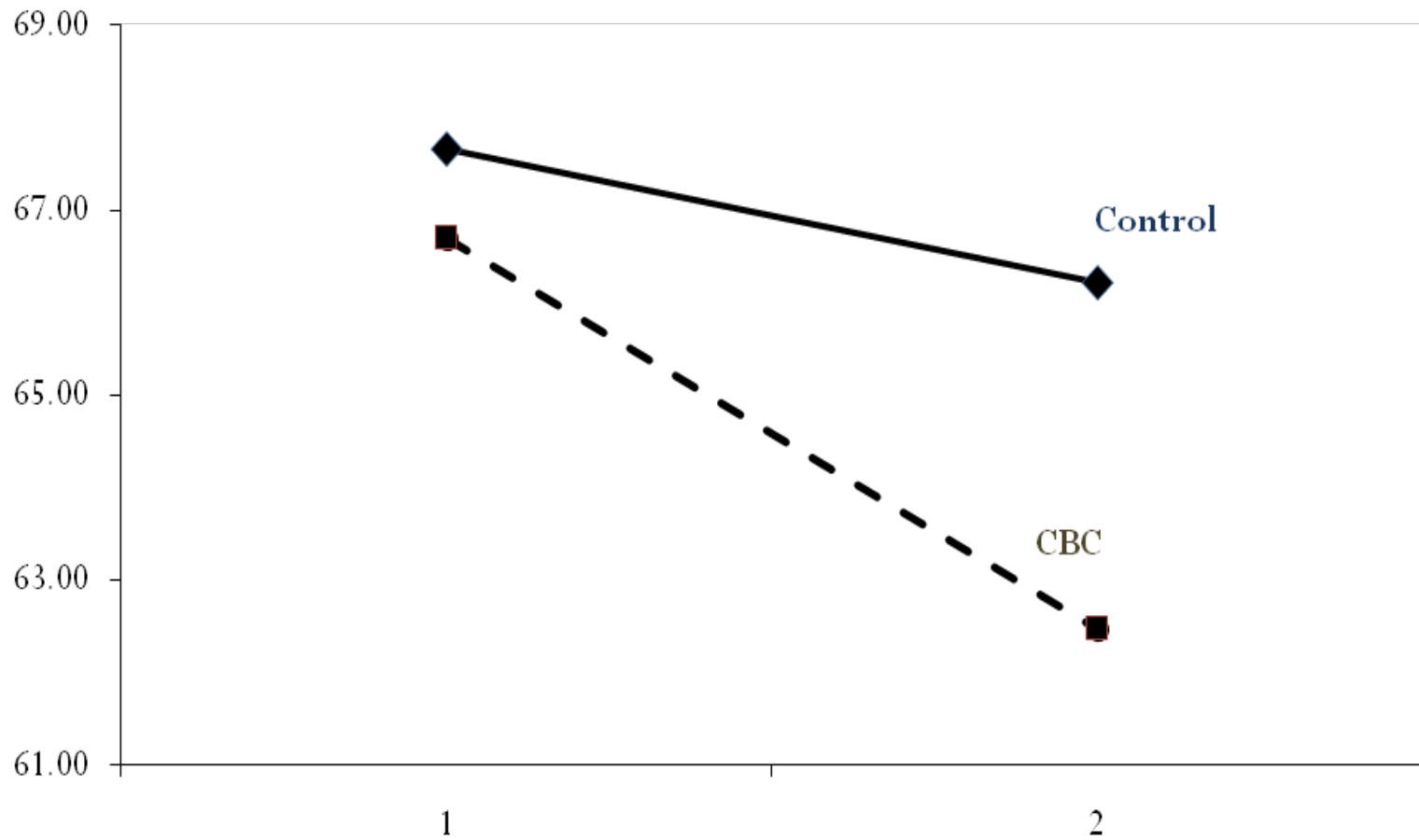
- The direct effects of CBC on child outcomes and parent/teacher relationships were tested
- The indirect relationship between CBC and child outcomes as mediated by the parent-teacher relationship was also modeled



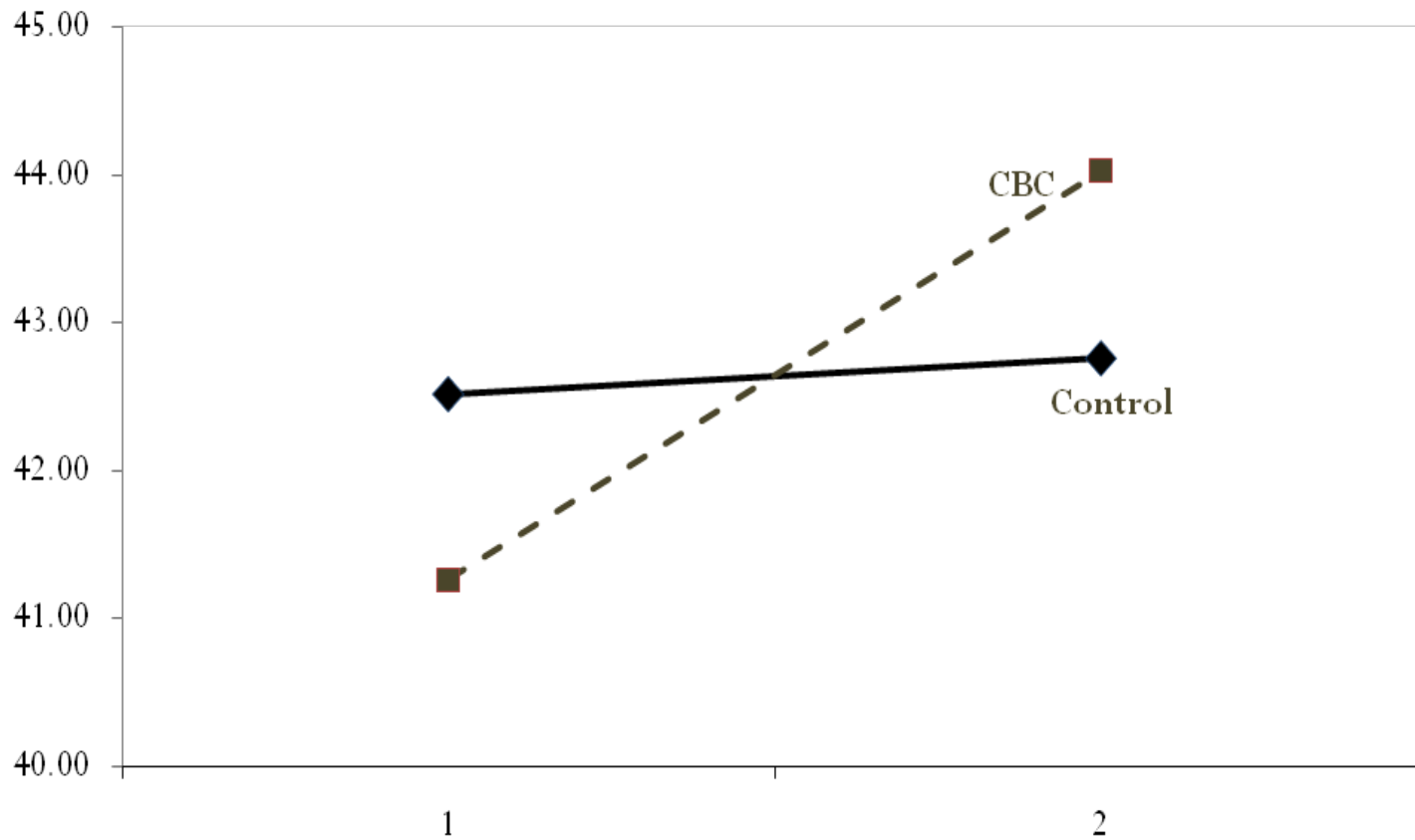
Current Research Findings: Students

- CBC produced **significant improvements in teacher reported child behaviors** relative to a control group
- After controlling for the severity of behavior problems at baseline, children in the CBC group relative to controls demonstrated statistically significant differences in:
 - **externalizing problems** ($p < .05$)
 - **adaptive skills** ($p < .05$)
 - **social skills** ($p < .05$)

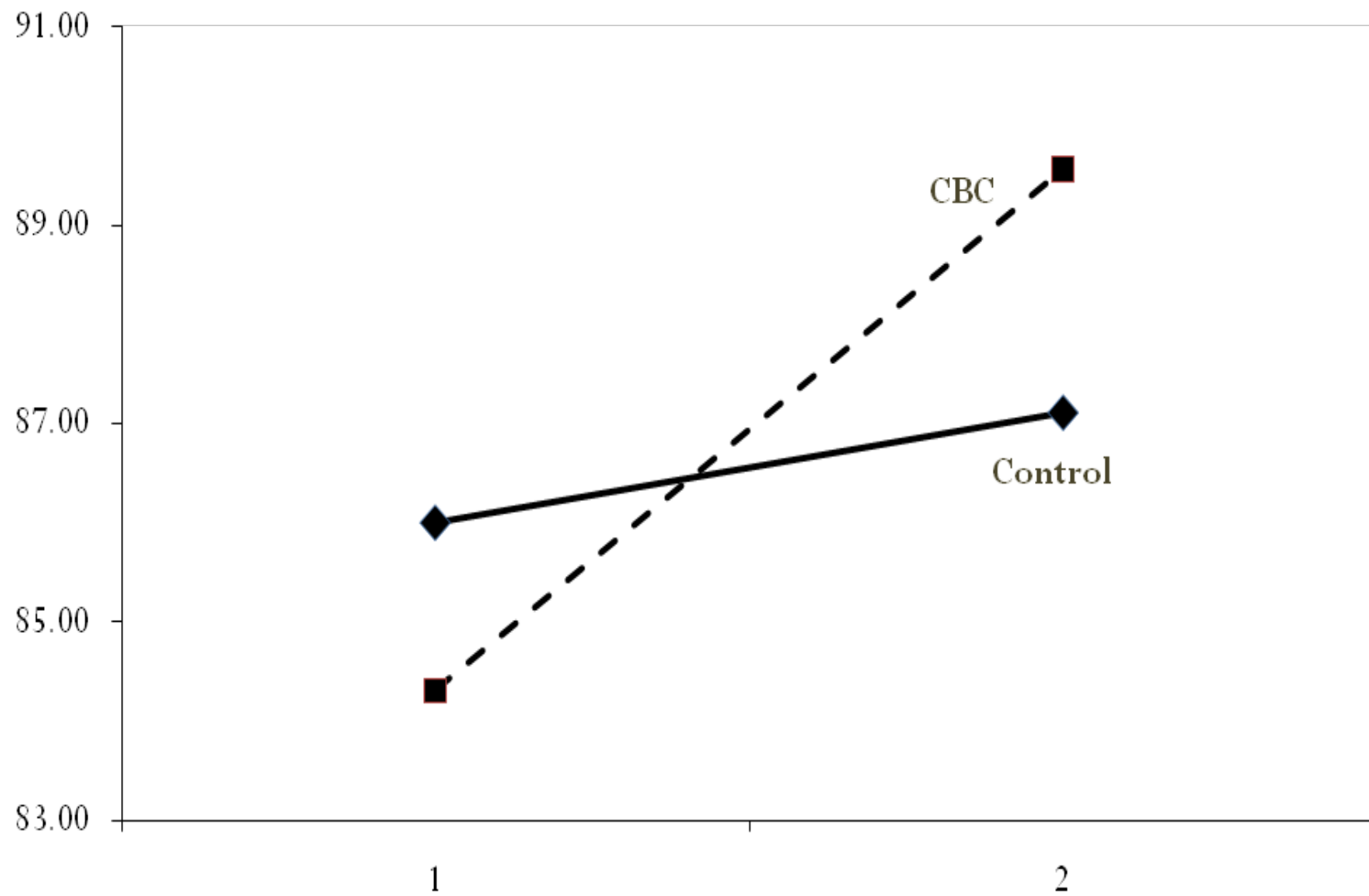
Externalizing Behaviors (Teacher BASC)



Adaptive Skills (Teacher BASC)



Social Skills (Teacher SSRS)

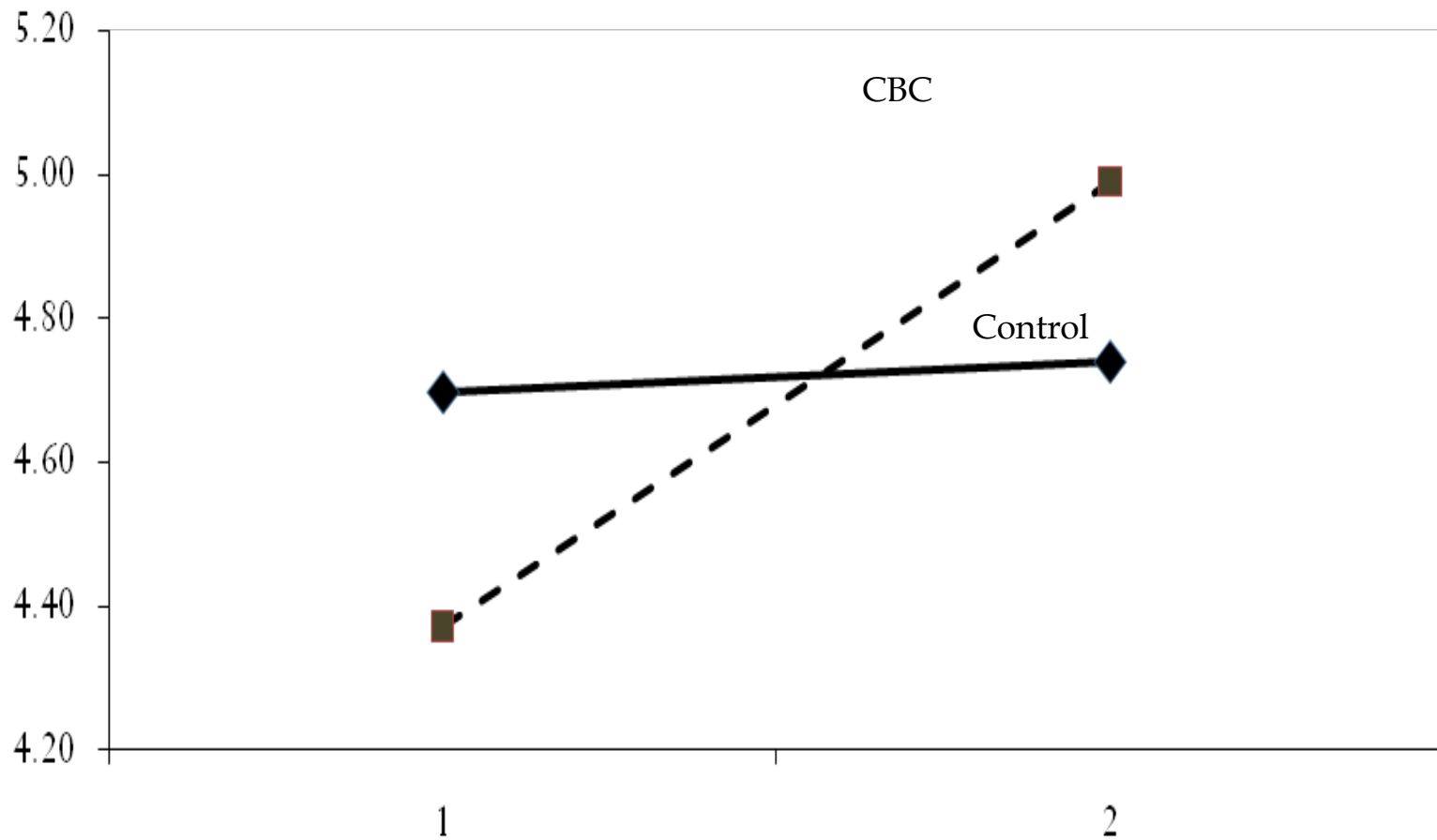




Current Research Findings: Parents

- Relative to control parents, those who participated in CBC reported to increase their:
 - **active participation** in educational problem solving ($p < .001$);
 - **involvement in home-school communication** ($p < .01$)
 - improvements in **parent involvement** appear to **continue for at least one year** follow up

Parent Participation in Problem Solving

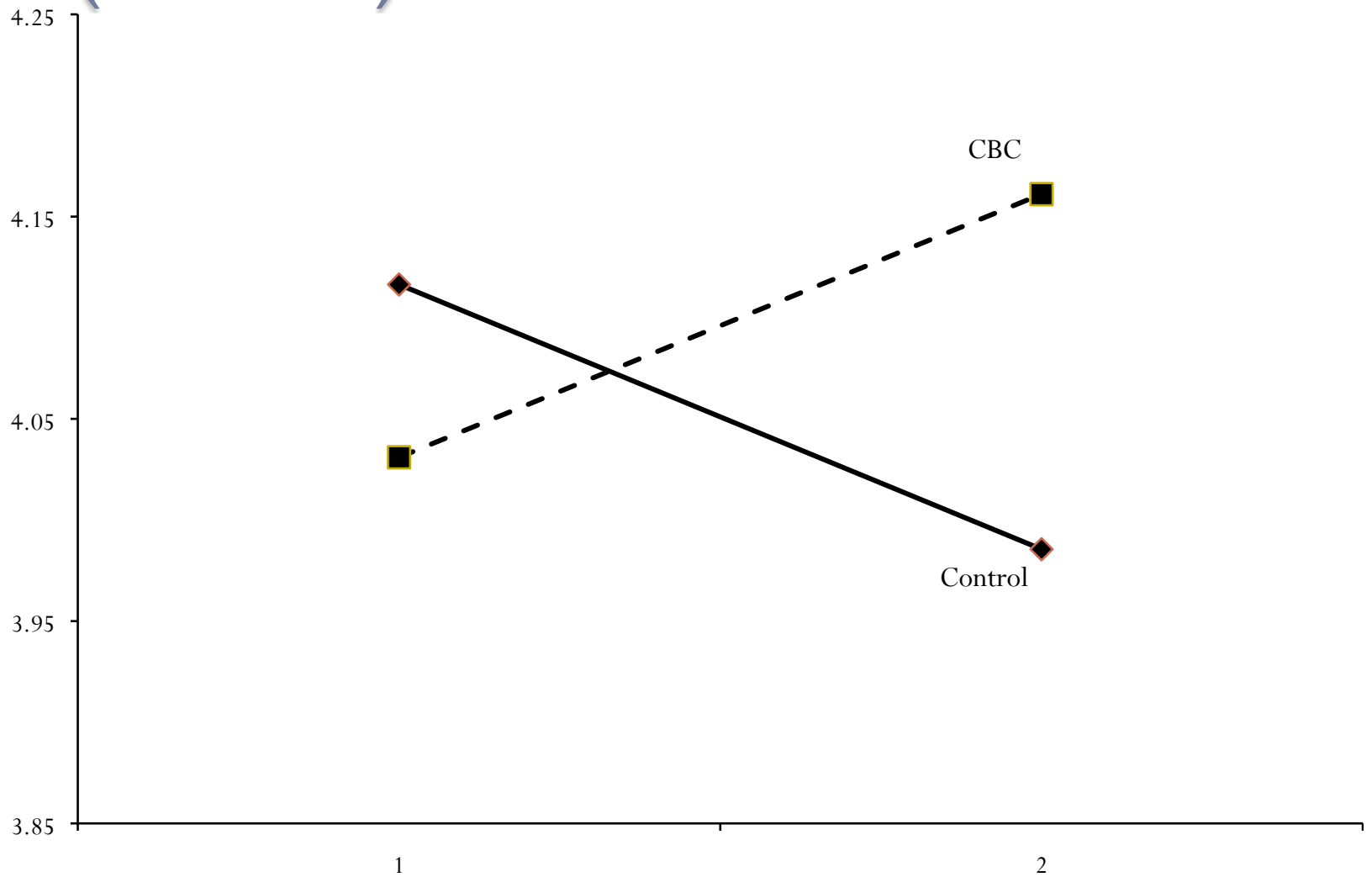




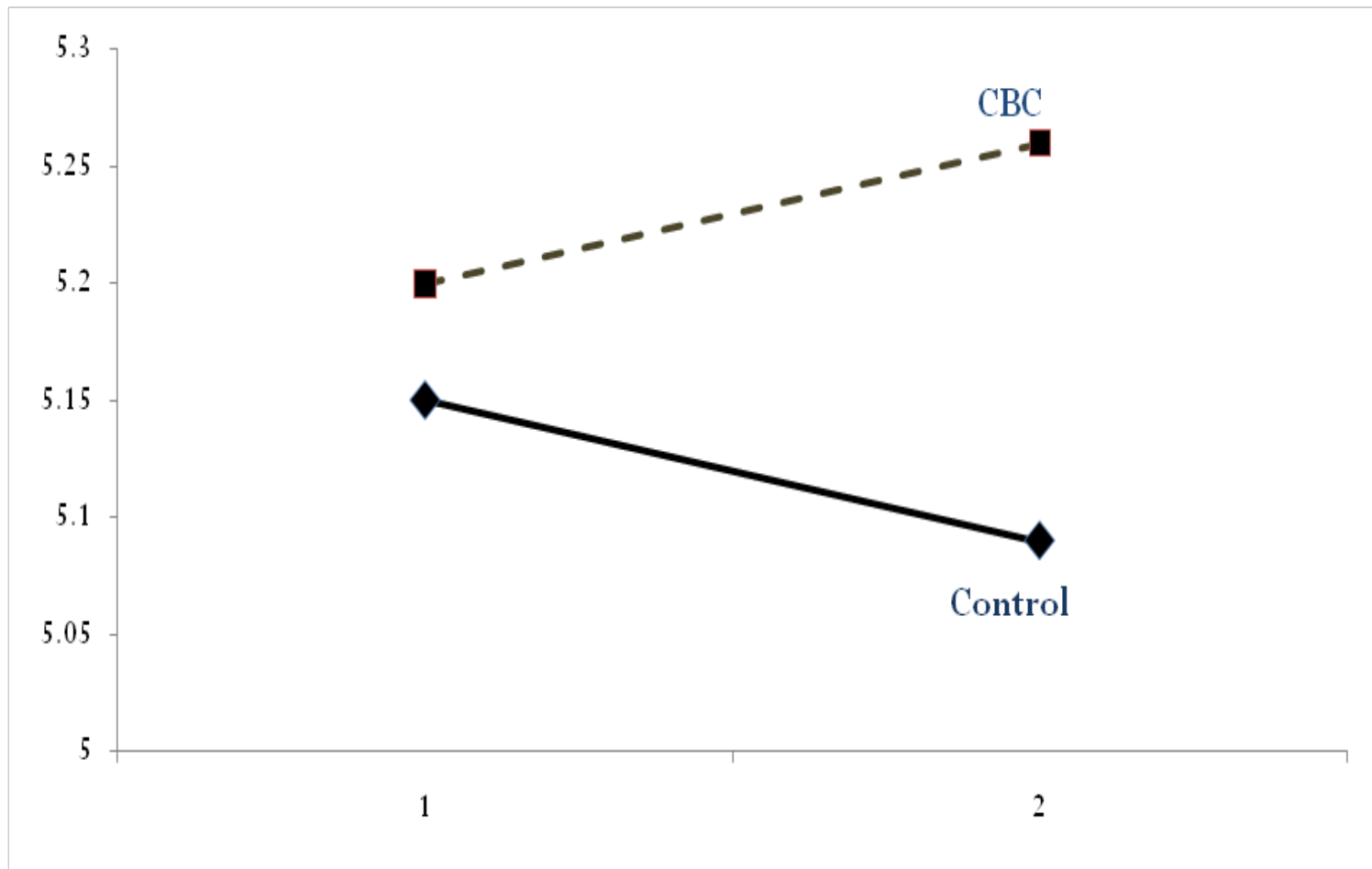
Current Research Findings: Teachers

- Relative to control teachers, positive outcomes for CBC teachers include:
 - **better overall relationship** with parents ($p < .01$)
 - more positive **beliefs about parental involvement** ($p < .01$)

Parent-Teacher Relationship (Teacher)



Teacher Beliefs about Parent Involvement

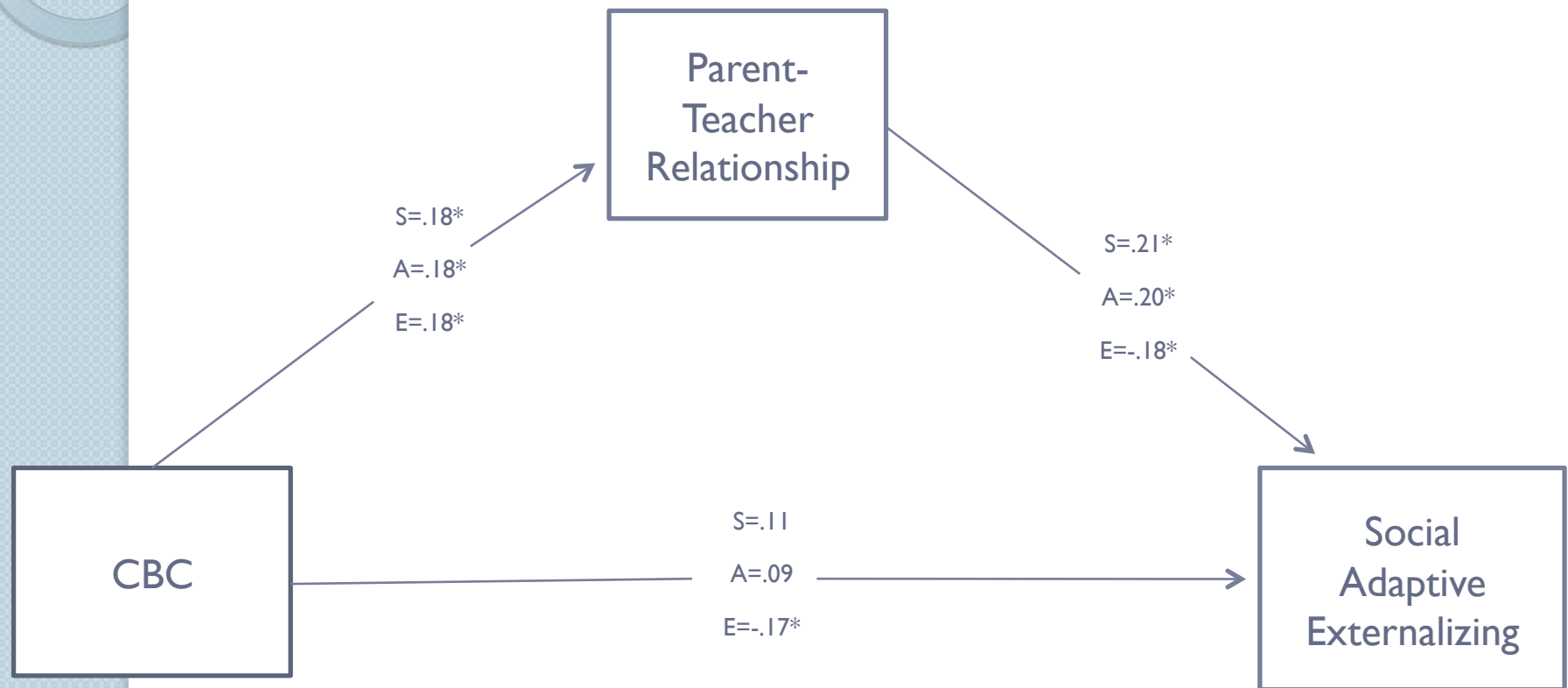




Mediation: What Accounts for the Effects?

- Investigated whether the parent-teacher relationship mediates CBC's effects
 - Answers the question: *Does the parent-teacher relationship account for CBC's efficacy?*
- The parent-teacher relationship accounted for the positive CBC effect on children's
 - Increased adaptive skills ($p < .05$)
 - Increased social skills ($p < .05$)
 - Decreased externalizing behaviors (marginal; $p = .053$)
- Suggests significant implications for how consultation is practiced

Mediation: Parent-Teacher Relationship



The parent-teacher relationship mediates the effects of CBC on child behaviors



Discussion of Findings

- CBC appears to result in important outcomes for all parties:
 - Significant improvements in child behavior
 - Significant improvement in parent participation & home-school communication
 - Significant improvement in teacher beliefs & teacher-parent relationships



Discussion of Findings

- CBC seems to have its effects through the parent-teacher relationship
 - Points to the importance of attending to the parent-teacher relationship within the context of ongoing CBC practice
 - Reinforces belief that it is not just the type of intervention but how it is delivered that makes it effective



Ongoing Research

- Investigating other potential mediators, such as implementation fidelity, parent/teacher engagement, and continuity across home and school
- Need to investigate moderators – under what conditions can we expect CBC to have its greatest effect?
- Effectiveness of CBC for addressing various concerns in other contexts being investigated
- Need to determine application and efficacy in the context of “authentic” practice



Implications for Practice & Policy

- Interventions developed within the context of home-school partnerships are effective for addressing children's early learning and development concerns
- Collaborative problem-solving helps to promote continuity and congruence across environments on behalf of children
- CBC is an effective collaborative problem-solving model that strengthens home-school partnerships and addresses a variety of concerns for young children

Thank You!!

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Research funded by IES Grant #R305F050284 awarded to Susan Sheridan and Todd Glover. Jim Bovaird is Statistical Expert and Consultant.