

# **The Secondary and Tertiary Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect:**

## **An Evaluation of the Parent Aide Program at the Child Abuse Prevention Center in Dallas, Texas**

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# Presentation Outline

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- ▶ Overview:
  - Statement of the problem
  - Review of the empirical literature
  - Methods and hypotheses
- ▶ Findings
- ▶ Limitations
- ▶ Implications for social work practice



# Statement of the Problem

In the United States in 2002:

2.6 million reports of alleged child abuse or neglect were investigated by Child Protective Service agencies.

896,000 children were victims of abuse and neglect

1,400 children died of abuse or neglect.

*U.S. Department of Health &  
Human Services, 2004*

- ▶ Child abuse and neglect is a problem for the child, the family, and society at all levels.
- ▶ There is still much to learn on the most effective means to prevent child abuse and neglect.



# Levels of Prevention



# Review of the Empirical Literature

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## ▶ Findings

- Nurse Home Visitation Program
- Treatment integrity and participant attrition
- Length of services
- Risk factors
- Home-based vs. center-based
- Service provider



# Three Hypotheses

- #1 The Parent Aide program reduces the risk for child abuse and neglect in the families who complete the program.
- #2 Parents who complete the Parent Aide program have fewer subsequent, substantiated reports to CPS for alleged child abuse or neglect than do those parents who refuse to participate or drop out of the Parent Aide program.
- #3 The Parent Aide program prevents and reduces the risk for child abuse and neglect just as effectively when a parent is matched with a professional Case Manager as it does when a parent is matched with a volunteer Parent Aide.



## Independent Variable: **The Parent Aide Program**

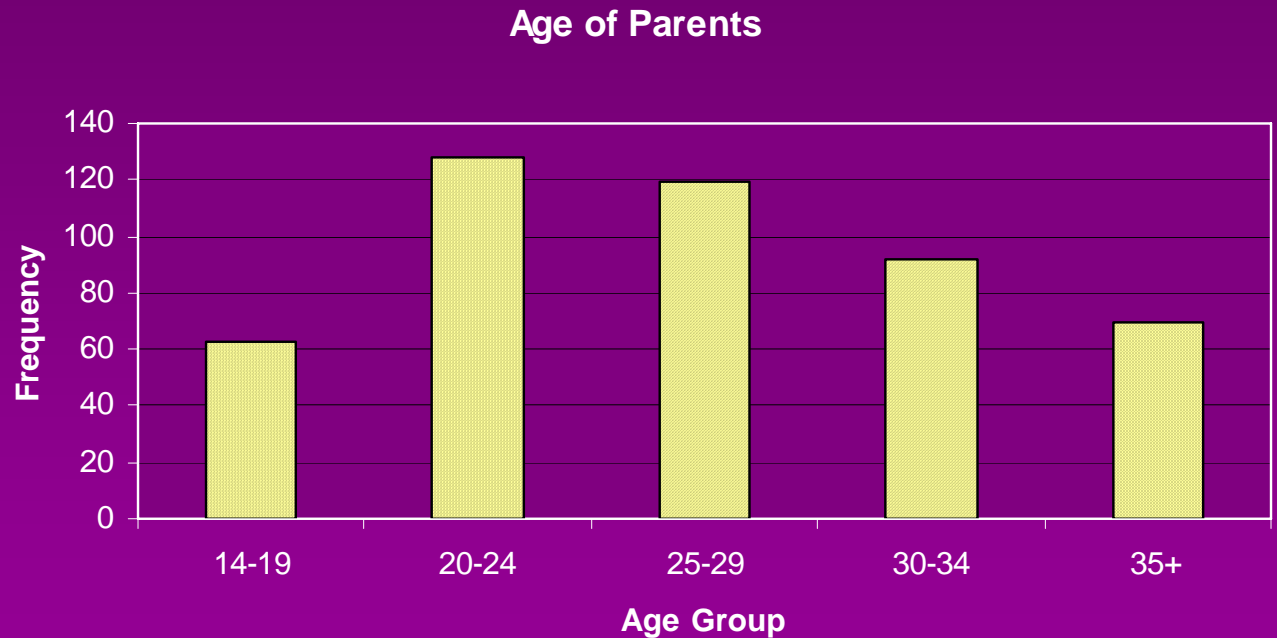
- ▶ A program of the Child Abuse Prevention (CAP) Center in Dallas, Texas. (The CAP Center is a member of the National Exchange Club Foundation for the Prevention of Child Abuse.)
- ▶ The mission of the Parent Aide program is to break the cycle of child abuse through the provision of in-home services, free of charge, to families in Dallas County, referred by Child Protective Services (CPS).
- ▶ Services offered voluntarily and for up to 1 year.
- ▶ Professional Case Manager conducts Initial Needs Assessment.
- ▶ Parent receives weekly home visits from either the Case Manager or an assigned volunteer Parent Aide.
- ▶ Services: parenting and life skills, case management for needs such as housing, childcare, welfare, substance abuse, domestic violence.



# Overall Sample (n=472)

Gender: 96% female

Mean age of parents:  
27.6 years  
(range=14-72)



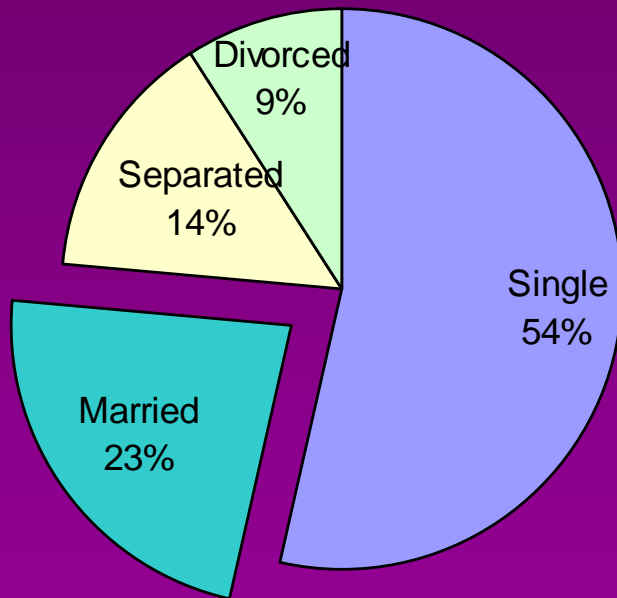
# of children: 2.6 (range=1-12)

Age of children: 4.6 years

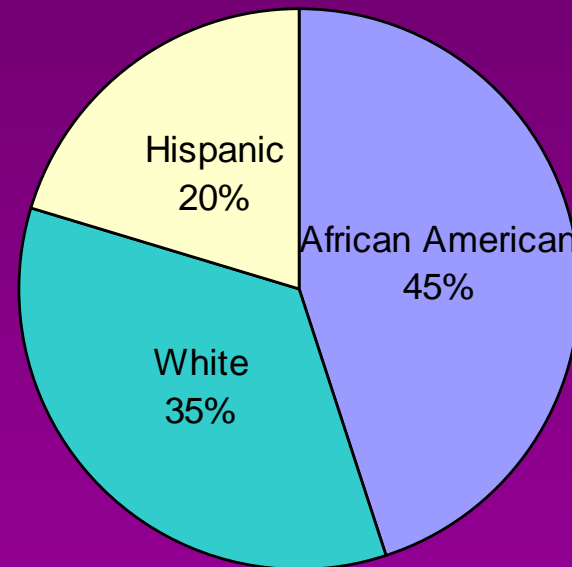


# Overall Sample (n=472)

## Marital Status of Parents



## Race of Parents



Education: 45% had high school diploma or GED

Financial assistance: 69% on welfare assistance

Employed: 69% employed full- or part-time



# Hypothesis #1 Test Scores

The Parent Aide program reduces the risk for child abuse and neglect in the families who complete the program.

<b>Sample Size</b>	<b>Research Design</b>	<b>IV</b>	<b>DV</b>	<b>Statistical Tests</b>
31 sets of the PSI-SF	One-group pretest-posttest	Parent Aide program	Test scores	Descriptives, paired sample <i>t</i> -tests
38 sets of the Case Evaluation tool				

## Hypothesis #1 Test Scores PSI-SF Scores for Completers

Subscale	(n=31)	t value	Mean score	Mean diff
Parental Distress	Pre-test	4.035***	63.1	-24.1
	Post-test		39.0	
Parent-Child Dysfunctional Interaction	Pre-test	2.445*	64.2	-11.7
	Post-test		52.6	
Difficult Child	Pre-test	3.979***	64.5	-19.5
	Post-test		44.9	
Total Stress	Pre-test	3.997***	68.3	-22.7
	Post-test		45.6	

\*  $p \leq .05$     \*\*\*  $p \leq .001$

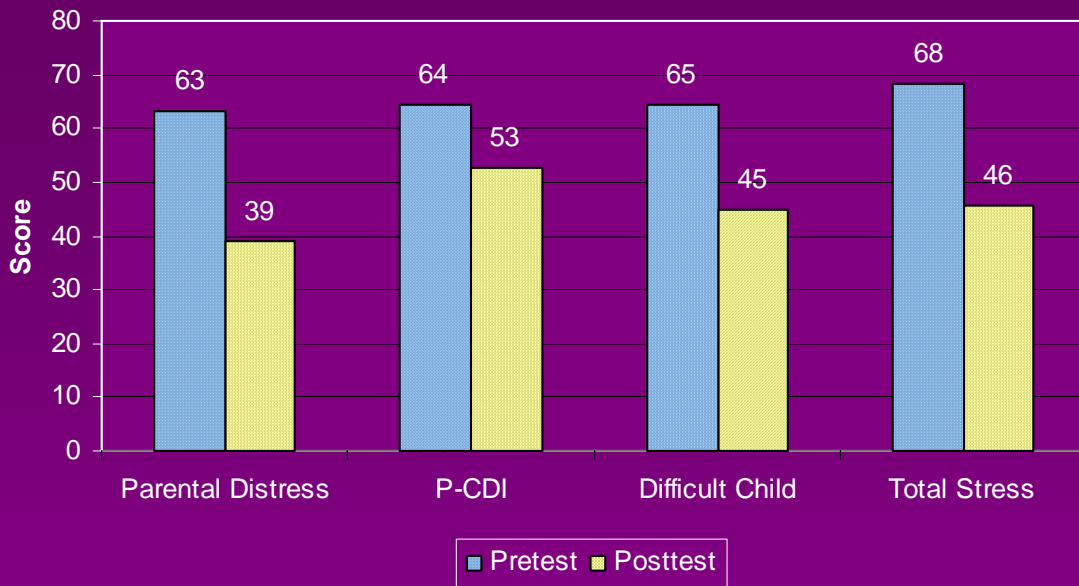
# Hypothesis #1 Test Scores

## Case Evaluation Scores for Completers

Subscale	(n=31)	t value	Mean score	Mean diff
Risk for child abuse and/or neglect	Pre-test	-7.578***	3.16	.87
	Post-test		4.03	
Problem-solving and life skills	Pre-test	-8.198***	3.26	.92
	Post-test		4.17	
Parenting skills	Pre-test	-9.938***	3.23	.91
	Post-test		4.13	
Parent's social support	Pre-test	-7.157***	3.01	.82
	Post-test		3.83	
Meeting of basic needs: child's	Pre-test	-6.537***	3.93	.61
	Post-test		4.54	
Meeting of basic needs: Parent's	Pre-test	-6.872***	3.77	.53
	Post-test		4.30	
Meeting of basic needs: household's	Pre-test	-6.040***	3.55	.70
	Post-test		4.26	

\*\*\*  $p \leq .001$

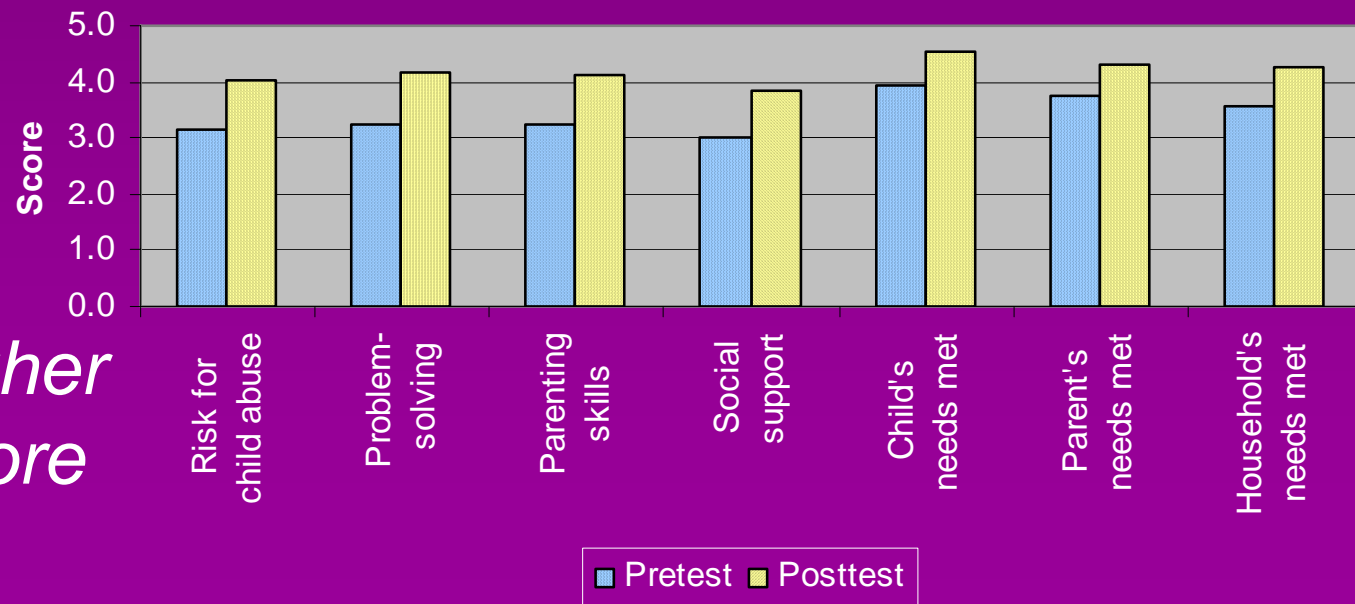
### PSI-SF Scores



Hypothesis #1  
Test Scores

*Reduced stress*

### Case Evaluation Scores



*Lower risk, higher level skills, more needs met*

## Hypothesis #2 Recidivism

Parents who complete the Parent Aide program have fewer subsequent, substantiated reports to CPS for alleged child abuse or neglect than do those parents who refuse to participate or drop out of the Parent Aide program.

<b>Sample Size</b>	<b>Res Design</b>	<b>IV</b>	<b>DV</b>	<b>Statistical Tests</b>
71 Completers 138 Dropouts 263 Refusers Total = 472	Quasi-exp	Parent Aide program	Subsequent, substantiated referrals to CPS	Descriptives, <i>t</i> -tests, correlations, ANOVAs, and ANCOVA

## Hypothesis #2 Recidivism

### Parent/Family Characteristics

	Stat. Test	Completer ( <i>n</i> =71)	Dropout ( <i>n</i> =138)	Refuser ( <i>n</i> =263)
Parent's age	$F = 3.181^*$	28.7 yrs	26.2 yrs	28.0 yrs
Avg age of children/ family	$F = 6.267^{**}$	4.7 yrs	3.8 yrs	5.0 yrs
Parent is only adult in home	$\chi^2 = 24.759^{***}$	38%	28%	31%
Employed	$\chi^2 = 12.734^{**}$	83%	61%	61%

\*  $p \leq .05$     \*\*  $p \leq .01$     \*\*\*  $p \leq .001$

No statistical significant differences: race, gender, marital status, # of children/family, education, or welfare.

# Hypothesis #2

## Parent/Family Risk Factors

	$\chi^2$	Completers	Dropouts	Refusers
Parent's history of abuse	19.429***	77%	81%	56%
At-risk for substance abuse	6.769*	37%	55%	46%
At-risk for domestic violence	5.379†	28%	43%	34%
Inadequate social support	28.755***	62%	56%	28%
Inadequate housing	14.090***	54%	57%	37%
Inadequate childcare	16.389***	49%	52%	30%
# of previous, substantiated reports to CPS	6.296	76% had none	66% had none	75% had none
Index referral was substantiated	1.578	54%	50%	46%

†  $p \leq .10$    \*  $p \leq .05$    \*\*\*  $p \leq .001$

## Hypothesis #2 Recidivism

### Subsequent, Substantiated Referrals to CPS

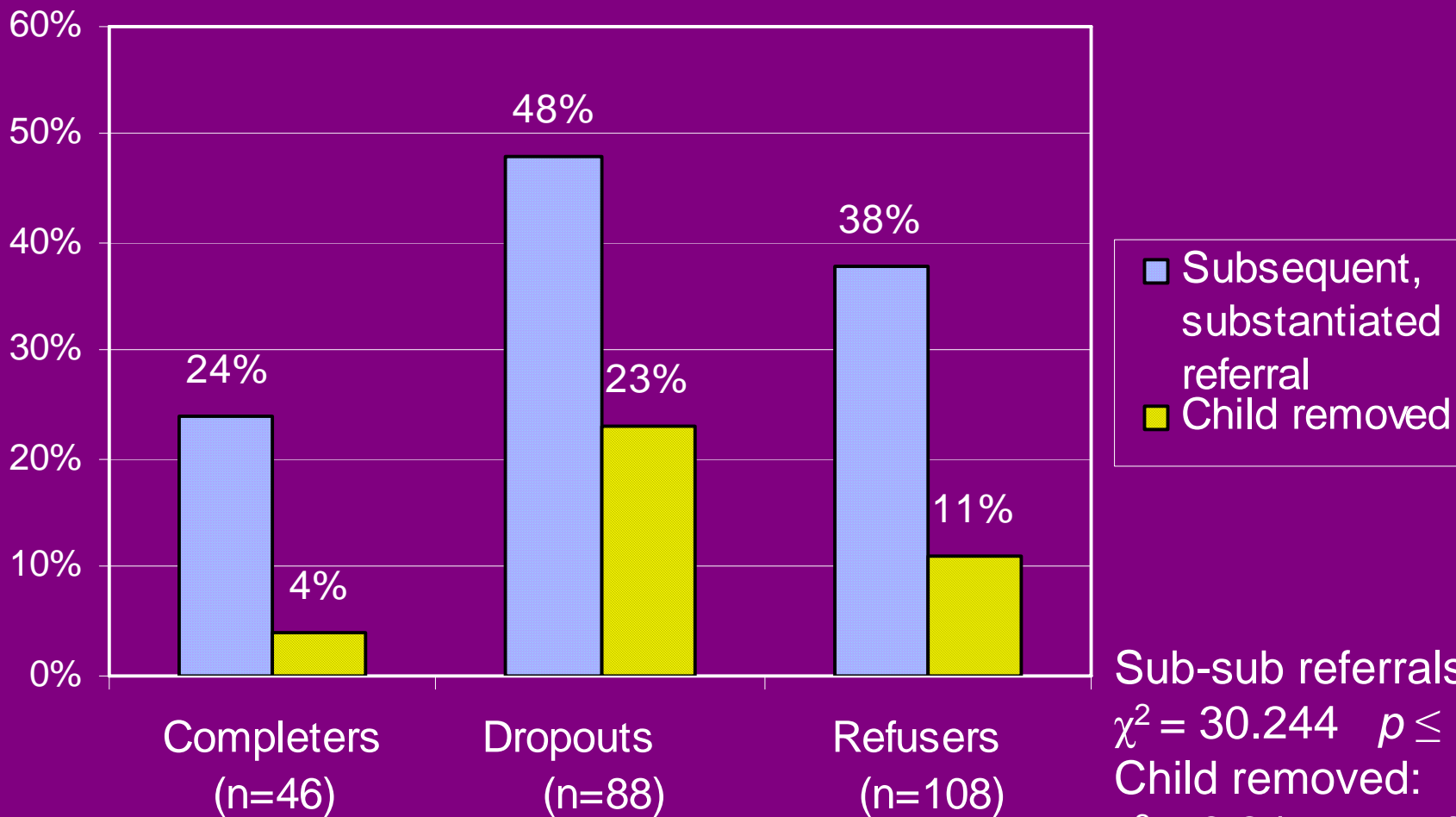
	<i>n</i>	<i>F</i> value	Mean # of Referrals	(SD)
Completers	46	7.957***	.39	(.829)
Dropouts	88		.92	(1.280)
Refusers	112		.43	(.640)

\*\*\*  $p \leq .001$

*Post hoc* analysis (*Gabriel*) showed a statistically significant difference between Completers and Dropouts, and between Refusers and Dropouts, but not between Completers and Refusers.

# Hypothesis #2 Recidivism

## Subsequent, Substantiated Referrals to CPS



Sub-sub referrals:  
 $\chi^2 = 30.244$   $p \leq .001$   
Child removed:  
 $\chi^2 = 9.845$   $p \leq .01$

## Hypothesis #3 Service Provider

The Parent Aide program prevents and reduces the risk for child abuse and neglect just as effectively when a parent is matched with a professional Case Manager as it does when a parent is matched with a volunteer Parent Aide (and supervised by a professional Case Manager).

<b>Sample Size</b>	<b>Res Design</b>	<b>IV</b>	<b>DV</b>	<b>Statistical Tests</b>
126 parents matched with a Parent Aide 45 parents matched with a Case Mgr Total = 171	Quasi-exp	Parent Aide program	Close reason; test scores; subsequent, substantiated reports to CPS	Descriptives, <i>t</i> --tests, correlations, ANOVAs and ANCOVAs

# Hypothesis #3 Service Provider Group Differences

- No meaningful statistically significant differences in parent/family characteristics or risks between those parents matched with a Case Manager and those matched with a Parent Aide.

*Variables examined: age, race, gender, marital status, #/age of children, education, welfare, history of abuse as a child, substance abuse, inadequate housing or childcare, domestic violence, inadequate social support, previous substantiated referrals to CPS, type of abuse or substantiation of index referral.*

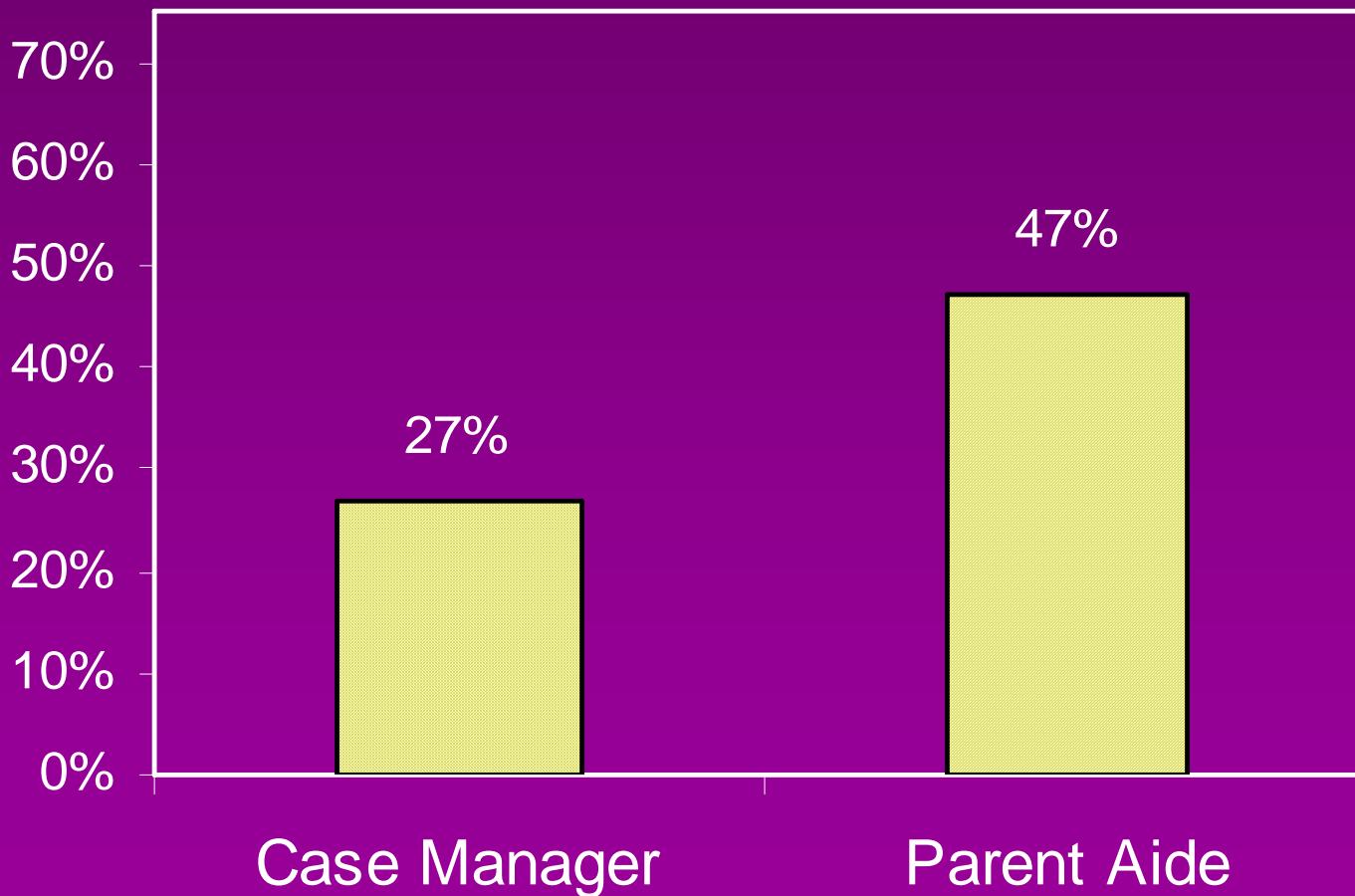
- Parents matched with a Case Manager had slightly higher PSI-SF pre-test scores, especially on the “Difficult Child” subscale.
- No statistically significant differences in Case Evaluation pre-test scores.

# Hypothesis #3 Service Provider Parent Aide Services

	<i>t</i> value	CM-matched	PA-matched
<b><u>Pre-INA</u></b>			
# of days on waiting list	-2.627*	66	41
# of days referral to INA complete	-2.156*	70	53
# of home visits	-4.027***	5.1	2.4
<b><u>Post-INA</u></b>			
# of days in match	1.004	132	150
# of home visits in match	2.337*	9.0	13.4
<b><u>Overall</u></b>			
# of days referral to close	1.260	208	236

\*  $p \leq .05$     \*\*\*  $p \leq .001$

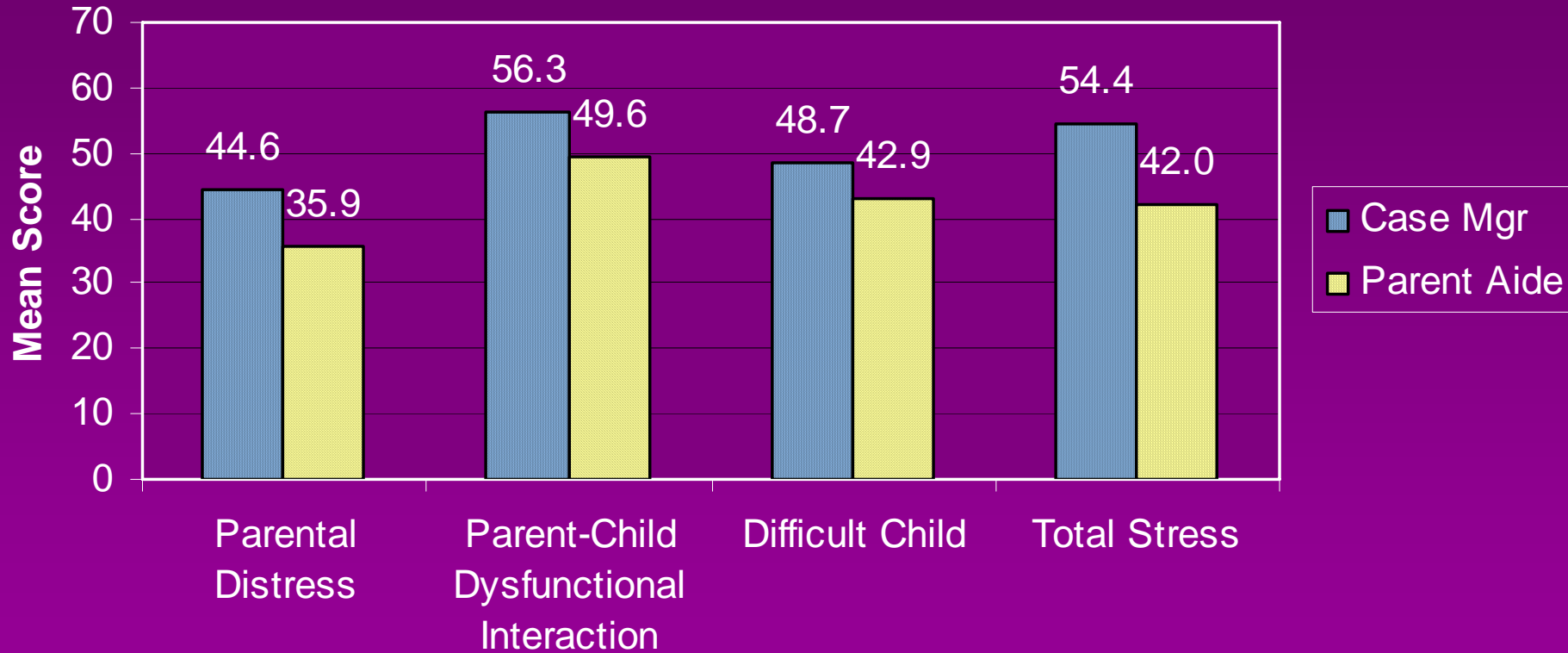
# Hypothesis #3 Service Provider % of Parents Completing Program Successfully



$\chi^2 = 5.549$   
 $p \leq .05$

# Hypothesis #3 Service Provider

## PSI-SF Post-Test Scores (Completers only)

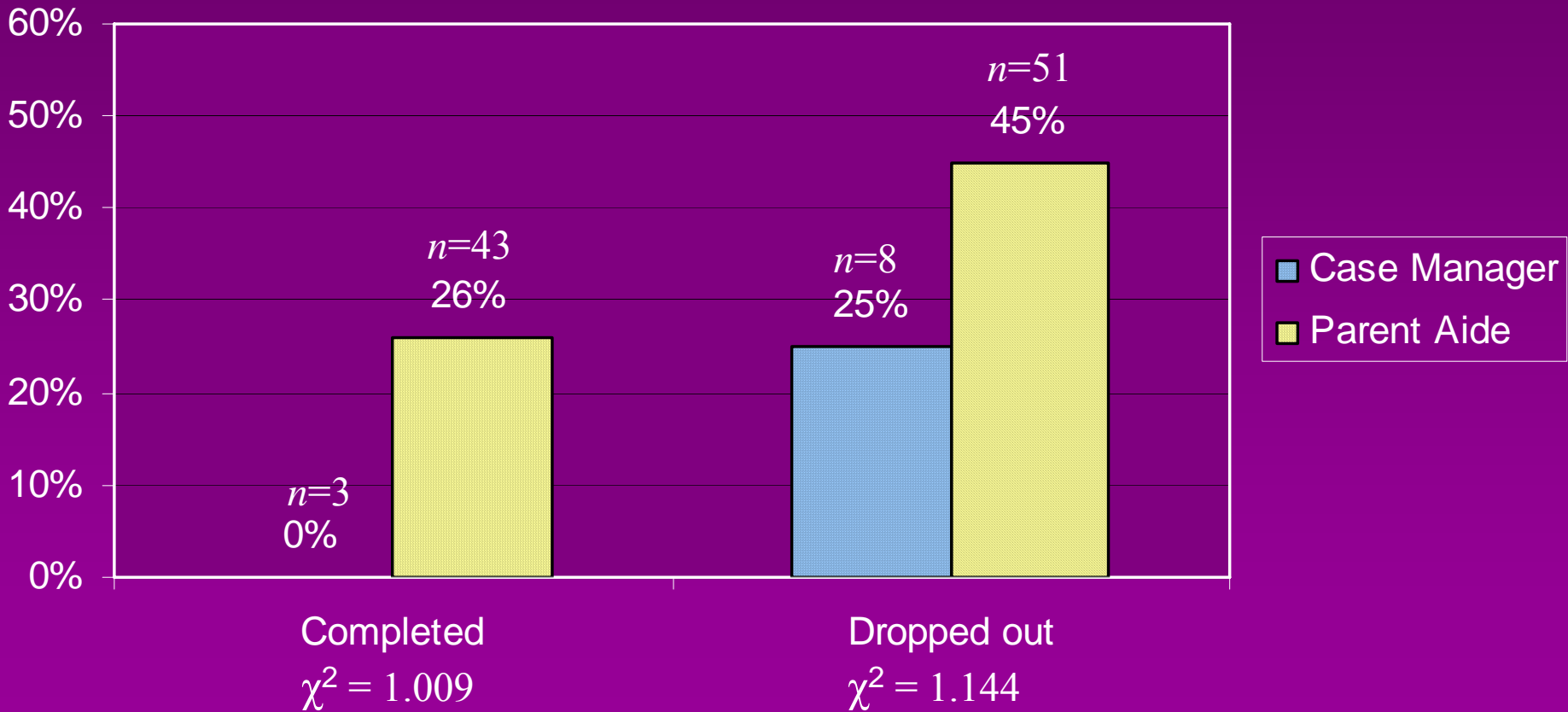


## Case Evaluation Post-Test Scores (Completers only)

No statistically significant difference.

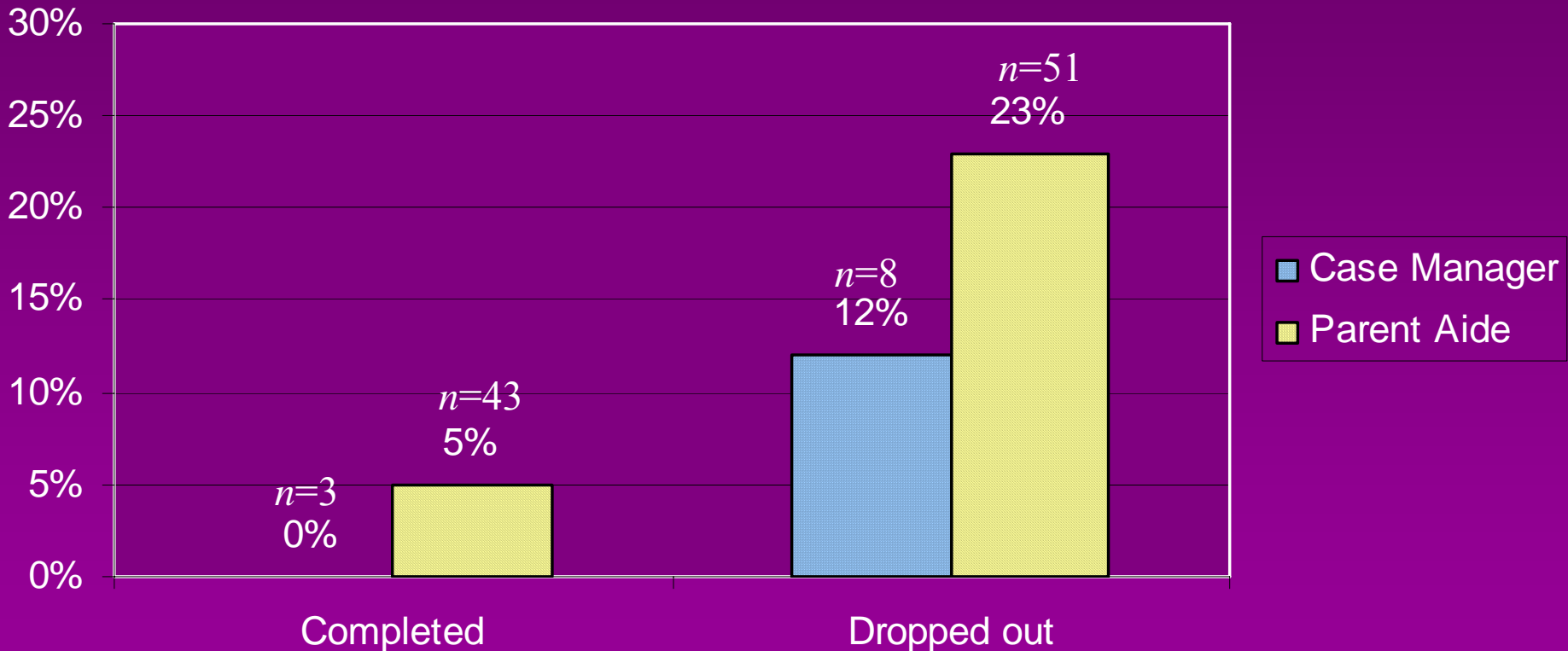
# Hypothesis #3 Service Provider

## Subsequent, Substantiated Referrals to CPS



# Hypothesis #3 Service Provider

## Child(ren) Removed at Subsequent Referral to CPS



# Limitations

- Non-randomized control group.
- Small sample sizes.
- Generalizability.
- Use of clinical data gathered retrospectively from client files for research purposes.
- Re: recidivism data: Not all abuse and neglect is reported to Child Protective Services (CPS). Also, CPS database only covers the State of Texas.
- Changes over the course of 11 years:
  - Investigative services at CPS.
  - Parent Aide program services.
  - Parent demographics and risk factors.



# Implications for Social Work Practice

Limited to programs similar to the Parent Aide program and those serving a similar population.

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- Home visitation to at-risk parents can be effective in reducing the risk for child abuse and neglect.
- More work remains to be done in engaging and retaining parents.
- Important to have staff that are culturally competent, including the ability to speak the language of clients served.
- Be attentive to multiple, multi-level factors in families' lives.
- The question of service provider warrants further investigation.



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**CONCLUSION**

