

The background of the slide features a silhouette of a family—a woman, a man, and a small child—walking along a beach. They are holding hands and walking away from the viewer towards the ocean. The sky is filled with soft, golden light from a setting or rising sun, creating a warm and contemplative atmosphere.

# Poverty or Neglect? Promoting Caregiver Sensitivity

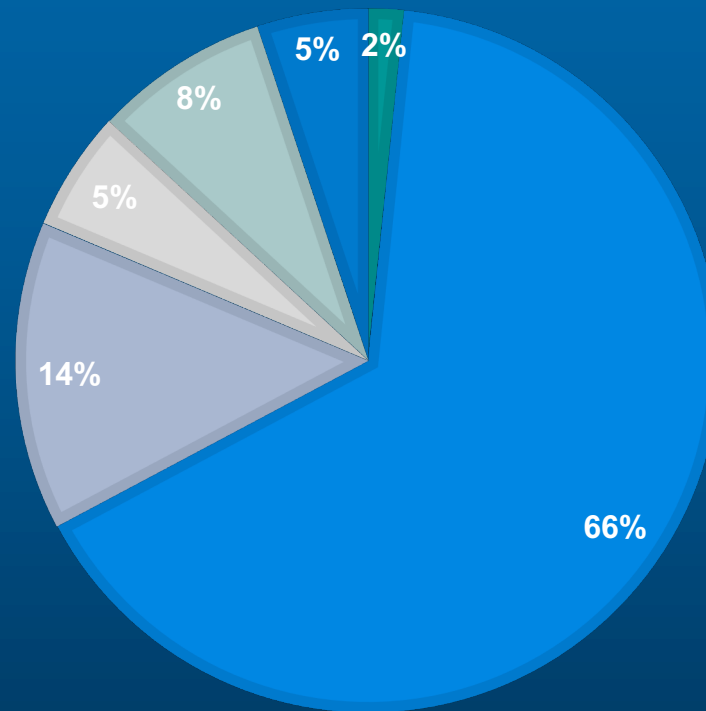
**Disentangling Neglect from Poverty**  
**Center for Healthy Children**  
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# Types of Child Maltreatment Reported

## MALTREATMENT TYPES

- Medical Neglect
- Neglect
- Physical Abuse
- Psychological Maltreatment
- Sexual Abuse
- Other



# Poverty & Neglect

- Neglect is the most common type of child maltreatment, accounting for 59% of cases reported to Child Protective Services in the United States
- More than any other type of child maltreatment, past research has reported that child neglect is positively related to poverty

*Nikulina, V., Widom, C. S., & Czaja, S. (2011).*

# Why are Relational Interventions Needed?

- If parents have sustained trauma and insensitive care giving during their own childhoods, then they may learn skills & still be unable to implement them with their children.

John Bowlby (1969, 1973) theorized that, within the first year of life, infants form a type of psychological connectedness with their caregivers known as attachment.

A caregiver's reliable and sensitive responsiveness to children's cues, particularly bids for comfort when distressed, is a critical aspect in the development of secure attachment

(Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978, Bowlby, 1969)

# Important points in Attachment Theory

- Attachment is a unique type of relationship.
- Attachments form across a wide range of conditions.
- Infants are biologically predisposed to form attachments. The issue is the quality of these attachments.
- Attachment behaviors may be adaptive for gaining protection but not adaptive in all situations.



# Attachment-Theory Informed Interventions

Given the adverse effects of maltreatment on attachment security, intervening in this developmental domain emerges as an important window of opportunity:

- Work with Children in foster care (Dozier,ABC; Fischer)
- Egeland & Erickson's STEEP (Steps Toward Effective/Enjoyable Parenting)
- Fonagy – Integrating psychodynamic theory with empirical research; Parent-Infant Psychotherapy
- Lieberman & VanHorn's work with CPP & Domestic Violence
- Steele & Steele – Intergenerational consequences of attachment
- Marvin – Circle of Security



# Child-Parent Psychotherapy (CPP)

- CPP is a relationship-based form of intervention that focuses on child-parent interaction within a dyadic format.
- The theoretical target of CPP is the web of jointly constructed meanings in the child-parent relationship, which emerge from each partner's mental representations of self and other (Lieberman et al., 2000).

# Child-Parent Psychotherapy (conceptualization)

- Rooted in psychodynamic theory
- Origins in the work of Selma Fraiberg (Ghosts in the Nursery, 1975)
- Lieberman applied model to immigrant Latina mothers and infants (Lieberman, Weston, & Paul, 1991)
- Maternal past can affect Mother-Child relationship
- Joint observation of Mother-Child dyad provides insights into the influence of maternal representations on parenting
- Non-didactic, although developmental guidance is utilized as needed.



# Preventive Interventions for Maltreated Infants

- ◆ The efficacy of two competing preventive interventions in promoting positive parenting & fostering adaptive development in maltreated infants was evaluated
  - Child-Parent Psychotherapy (CPP)
  - Psychoeducational Parenting Intervention (PPI)

# Groups

**Psychoeducational  
Parenting Intervention  
(PPI)**

**Child-Parent  
Psychotherapy (CPP)**

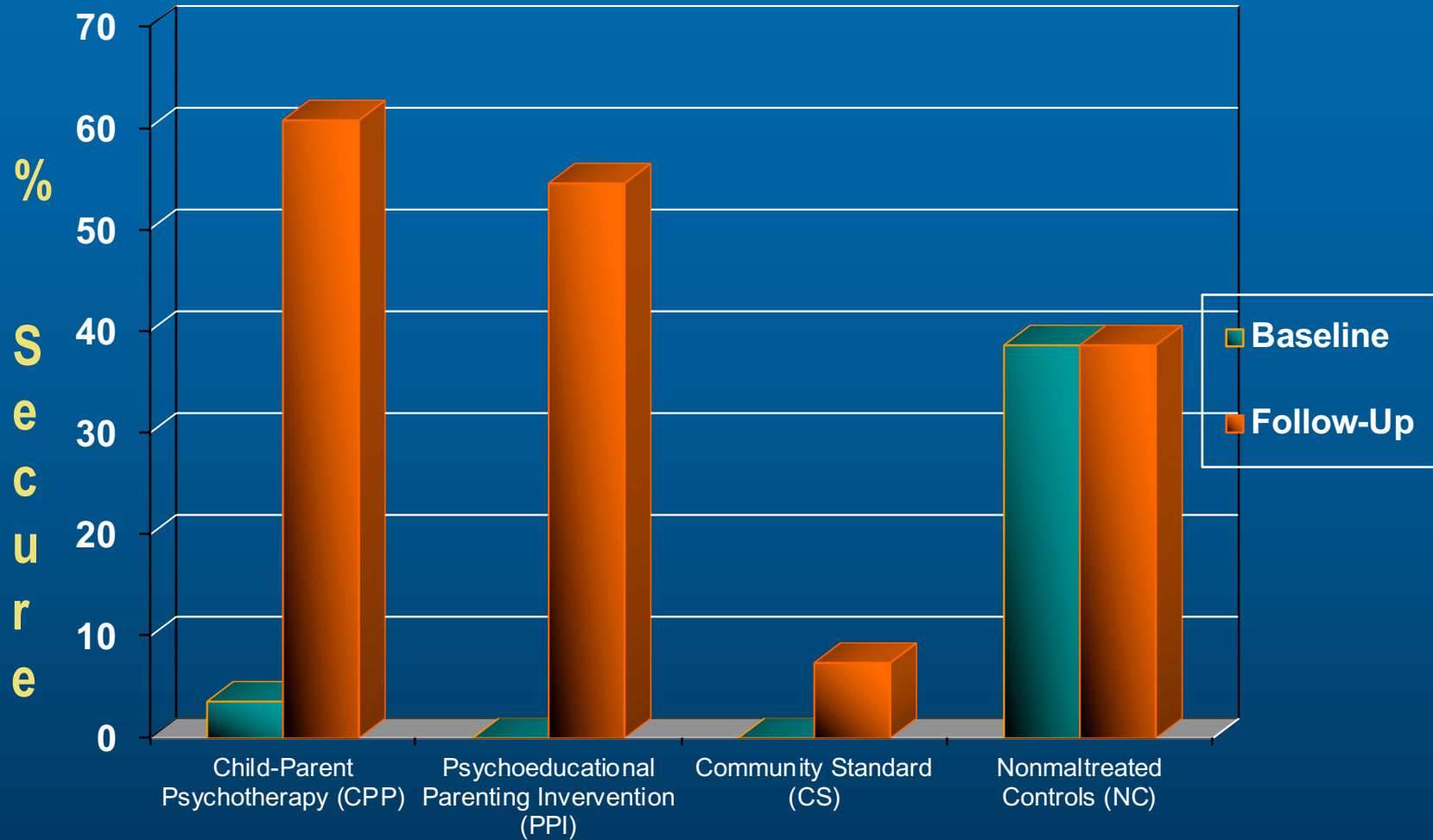
**Intervention Groups**

**Nonmaltreated**

**Community  
Standard**

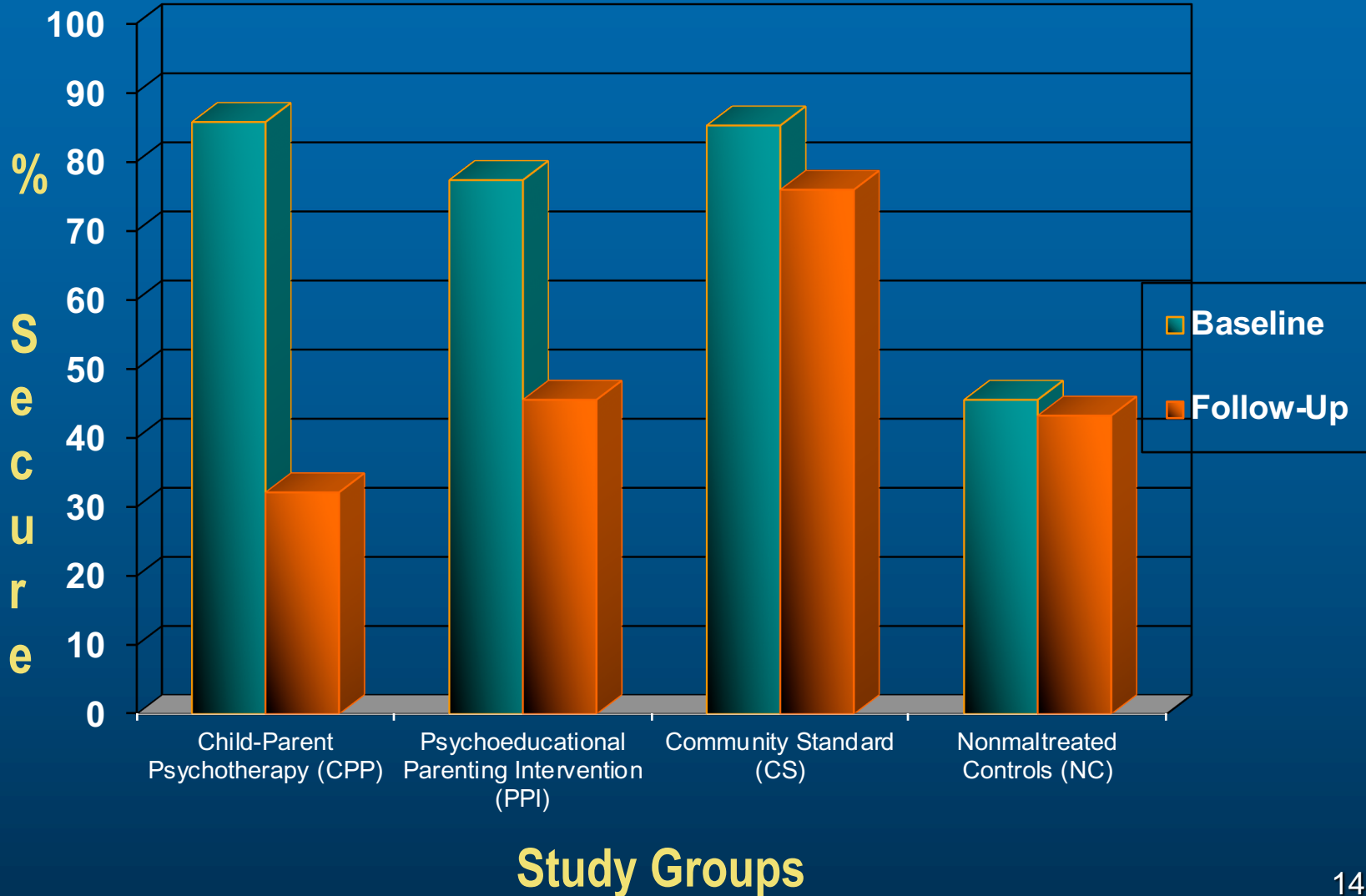
**Comparison Groups**

# Percentage of *secure* attachments in four study groups at baseline and follow-up



Study Groups

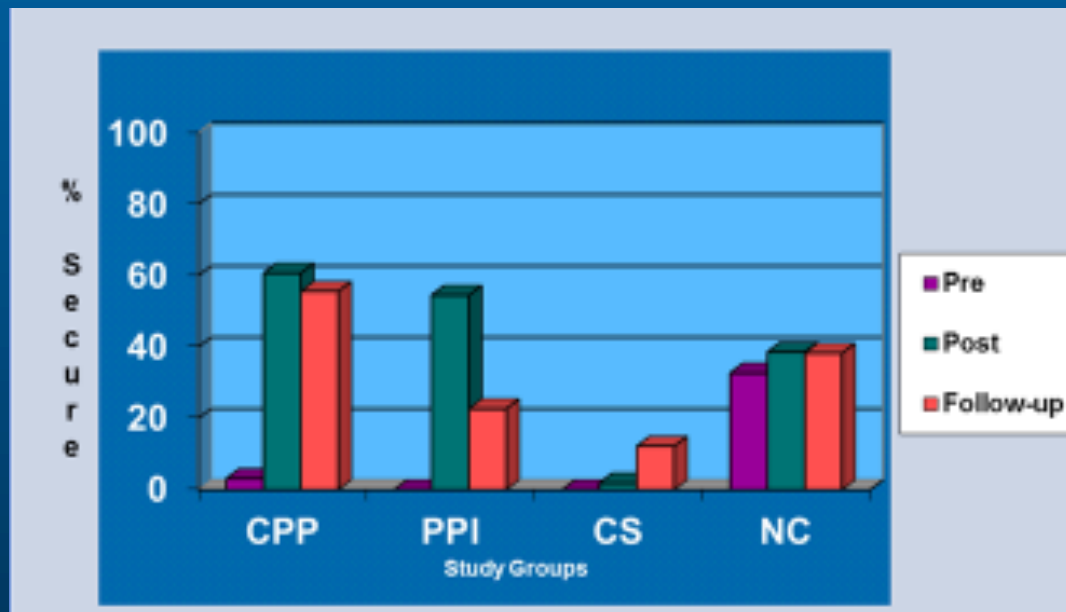
# Percentage of *disorganized-disoriented* attachments in four study groups at baseline and follow-up



# One Year Follow-Up

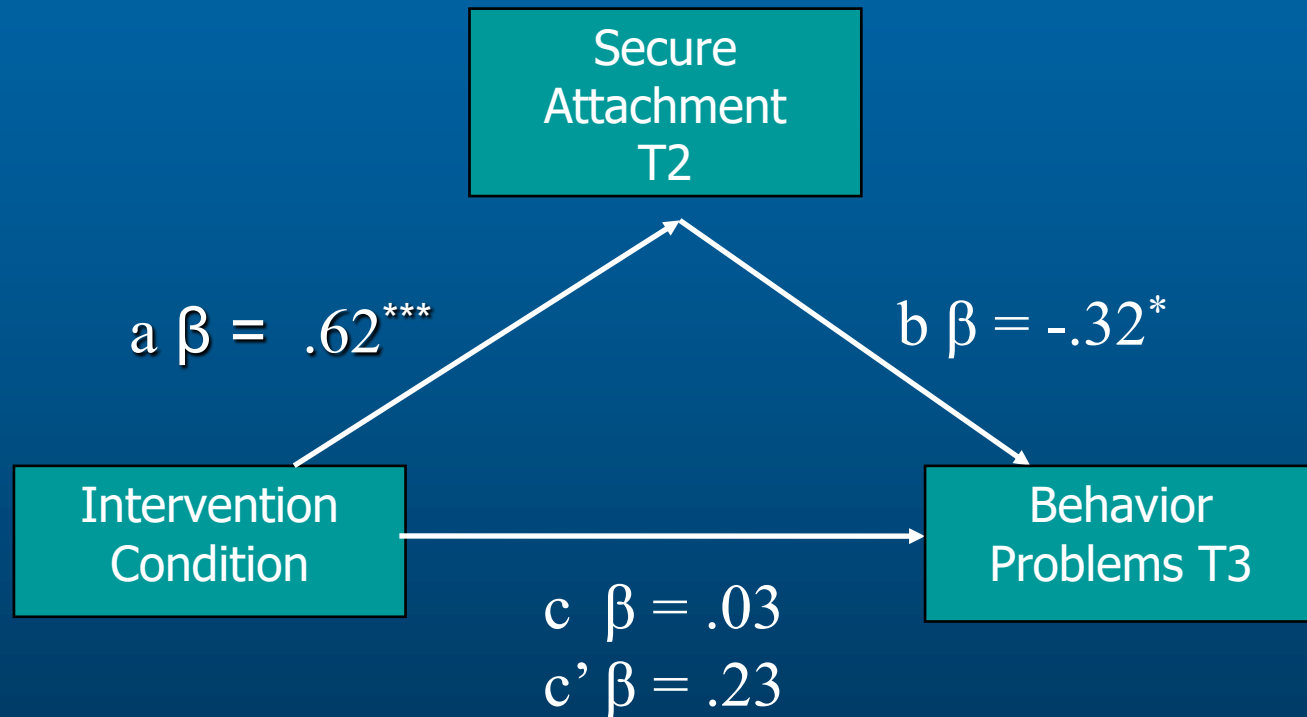
- At 38 months of age, one year after the intervention, only children in CPP were found to have sustained secure attachment

(Stronach, Toth, Rogosch & Cicchetti, 2013)



# Child Behavior Problems

- Regardless of CPP or PPI, secure attachment moderated behavior problems.



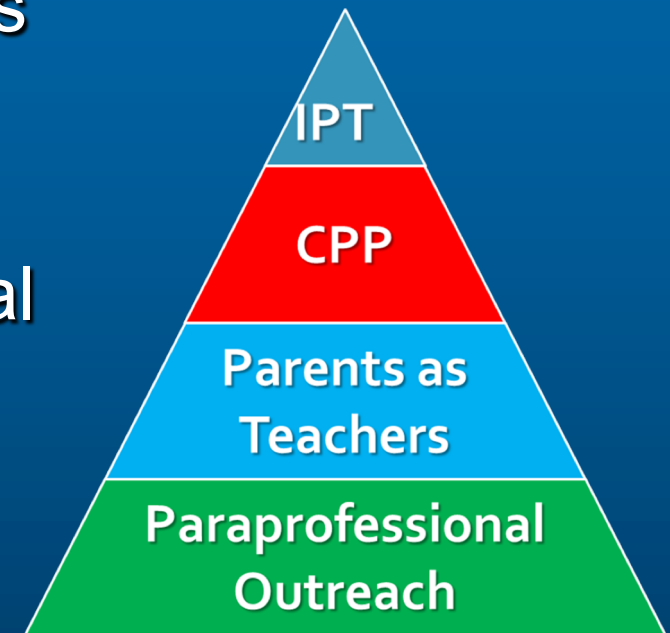
*Note:* For active intervention, receipt of either child-parent psychotherapy or psychoeducational parenting intervention was coded "1", receipt of community standard intervention was coded "0". Standardized regression coefficients are shown. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .



# Building Healthy Children

## The Dissemination of Evidence-Based Intervention into Community Settings

- Promote positive relationships between parents and their young children.
- Foster positive socioemotional wellbeing for mothers and their young children.
- Support physical health and development of young children.



# BHC Outcomes & Follow Up

## ➤ Outcomes

- Children in the BHC program completed all of their preventive well-child check-ups by age 2 at a statistically higher rate than those in the control condition.
- Results indicated a significant difference between BHC and control families on rates of indicated child maltreatment via CPS record data at post-intervention.

## ➤ Follow Up Study

- Target child 6-10 years old by follow-up visit (3-7 years post-intervention)
- 237 Eligible families
- Families who received BHC continued to show improvements in parenting behavior and child symptomatology (according to both parent report and teacher report).

# Summary: Treatment Outcomes

- Evidence-based treatments are available for children who have been maltreated
- Preventive interventions for maltreated infants and preschoolers have been shown to be efficacious in promoting secure attachment

# Next Steps: Translation

- Once efficacy has been established, it is critical that these preventive interventions be exported to the clinical world more broadly
- Unfortunately, evidence-based modalities continue to be all too scarce in non-University settings

## Collaborators

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**“It takes a Village”**