

**Preliminary Results from the Supporting Parents Program:
An Evaluation of *Promoting First Relationships*® in a Sample of Toddlers in CPS**

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Introduction

The Supporting Parents Program is a randomized clinical trial of Promoting First Relationships (PFR: Kelly et al., 2003; 2008) in a sample of infants and toddlers whose families were under investigation for maltreatment by Child Protective Services. A previous randomized clinical trial of PFR in a sample of foster parents, kin providers, and reunified birth parents showed an improvement in parental sensitivity, parental beliefs, child competence (Spieker et al., 2012), particularly among reunified families (Oxford et al., 2015), and uninterrupted stable care that increased the likelihood of adoptions by foster and kin providers who received PFR (Spieker et al., 2014). In addition, PFR has been shown to predict fewer child sleep problems, operating by reducing separation distress (Oxford et al., 2013). The current study, a community based partnership between Washington State Children's Administration, the YWCA Lynnwood, and the University of Washington tested the feasibility and effectiveness of PFR, an attachment-based intervention, in improving outcomes for families referred to CPS for maltreatment.

Methods

Study Design: Between 2011 and 2014, we enrolled 247 biological parents with children aged 10 to 24 months who were under investigation by Child Protective Services. Participants were enrolled, completed a time one research visit, and then were randomized to a service (treatment or control). An immediate post-intervention research visit followed completion of the service, approximately 4 months after enrollment. Two more research visits were conducted: three months after the second research visit and another three months later.

Participants were randomized to one of two treatments:

- **Resource and Referral (control)**—participants received a phone-based needs assessment and personalized referral information relevant to their neighborhood. They received a total of 3 phone calls (assessment, referral, and follow up). n = 123
- **Promoting First Relationships (PFR) Home Visiting (treatment)**—participants received 10 home visits from community based social service providers trained to deliver PFR for the project. PFR consists of weekly one hour visits, videotaped feedback, and educational handouts and activities. n = 124

Measurements:

- Raising a Baby (Kelly & Korfmacher, 2008) measure of parent knowledge of infant and toddler social emotional needs and developmentally appropriate expectations
- NCAST Teaching Scale (Barnard, 1994) of parental sensitivity
- Parenting Stress Index (Abidin, 1995) dysfunctional interaction
- TAS-45 (Kirkland et al., 2004) attachment security scale
- ITSEA (Carter & Briggs-Gowan, 2006) internalizing and externalizing
- Bayley Behavior Rating Scale (Bayley, 1993) self-regulation and engagement
- Post-enrollment removals by Child Protective Services according to state child welfare records

Results

- Evidence was found for a positive effect of PFR on parent knowledge and parent sensitivity (Table 1 & Figure 1).
- Children whose families received PFR were less likely to be removed from their home (Figure 2).
- As of the 3-month follow-up, little difference was found in child attachment security or behavioral outcomes.

Next Steps: 6-month follow-up data has been gathered and will be coded and analyzed to assess longer-term effects of PFR on child-welfare families.

Table 1

Unadjusted means at baseline, post intervention and 3-month follow-up by condition and estimate of effect of the PFR intervention.

	Baseline		Post intervention		3 month follow-up		PFR effect ^a	
	R&R (n=124)	PFR (n=123)	R&R (n=109)	PFR (n=115)	R&R (n=105)	PFR (n=109)	Coeff. (SE)	d ^b
	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)		
Raising a Baby parent knowledge			50.04 (4.40)	52.09 (5.17)			2.06** (.65)	.42
NCATS total sensitivity	36.60 (4.75)	35.44 (4.27)	35.07 (5.03)	35.65 (4.86)	36.04 (4.83)	36.46 (4.85)	0.97* (.50)	.21
PSI dysfunctional interaction	18.60 (5.67)	18.44 (5.28)			18.80 (5.04)	18.48 (5.73)	-0.27 (.74)	-.05
TAS security scale	0.11 (0.08)	0.11 (0.09)	0.13 (0.09)	0.13 (0.08)	0.14 (0.08)	0.14 (0.08)	0.01 (.01)	.12
ITSEA								
Externalizing	0.59 (0.31)	0.56 (0.26)	0.62 (0.30)	0.61 (0.29)	0.64 (0.35)	0.65 (0.28)	0.01 (.03)	.04
Internalizing	0.49 (0.21)	0.49 (0.20)	0.54 (0.22)	0.53 (0.21)	0.49 (0.22)	0.55 (0.21)	0.02 (.02)	.10
Bayley Behavior Rating Scale								
Self-regulation					3.96 (0.65)	3.82 (0.64)	-0.11 (.09)	-.17
Engagement					4.25 (0.58)	4.15 (0.57)	-0.08 (.02)	-.14
					n (%)	n (%)	Coeff. (SE)	Hazard Ratio
Removal from parent home					7(5.6)	16 (13.0)	-0.94* (.45)	0.39

^a For outcomes measured at one follow-up time point, based on regression model with baseline (where available) and child age as covariates; for outcomes with two follow-up time points, based on mixed model with two follow up time points as indicators of post-intervention outcome and controlling for baseline and child age; for removals, based on survival model controlling for child age.

^b Effect size calculated as estimated effect of PFR divided by pooled standard deviation of the given measure at baseline. For measures not available at baseline, effect size is the estimated effect of PFR divided by pooled standard deviation at 3 month follow-up.

*p<.05, **p<.01

Figure 1

Unadjusted means of observed sensitivity across three time points by treatment group.

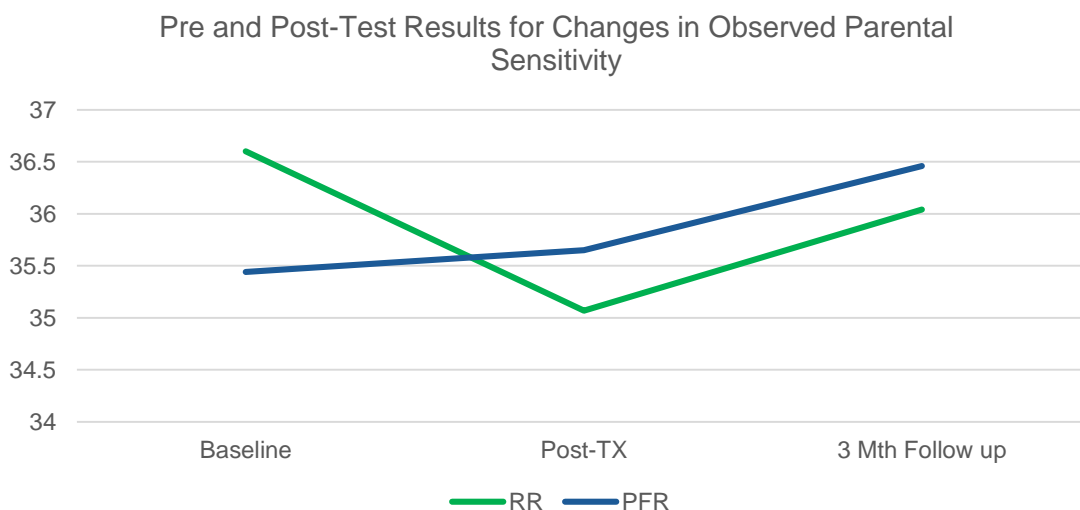
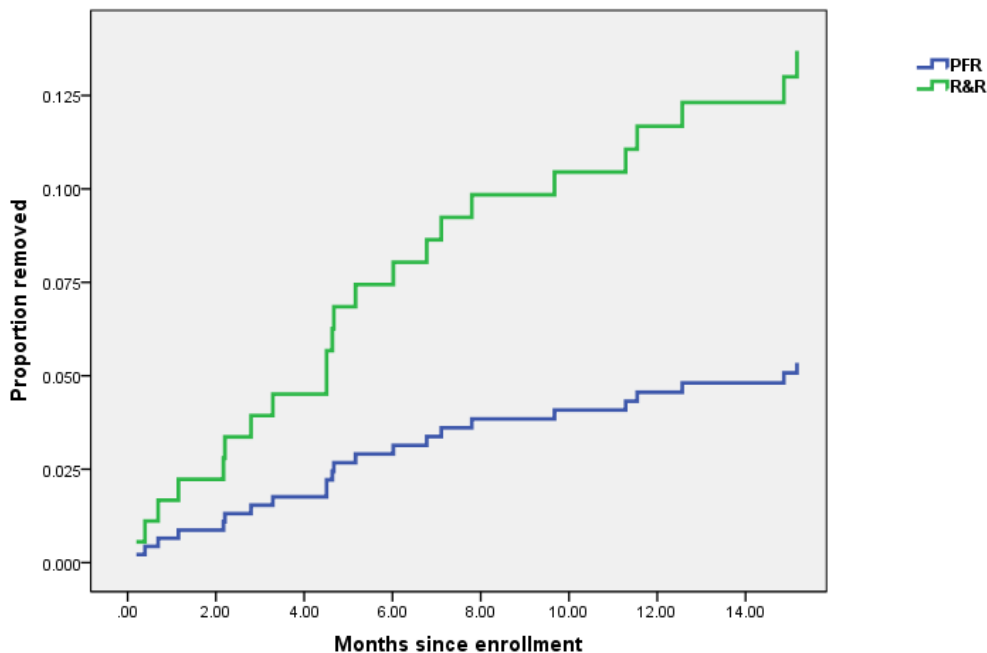


Figure 2
 Cumulative hazard of removal from birth parent home for children in PFR and R&R conditions



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