



National Center for **Research** on
Rural Education (R²Ed)

Rural Family-School Partnerships: Bridging Research and Practice

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Our Goals for Rural Students

Optimal
Development of:

Academic Skills

*Academic
Behaviors*

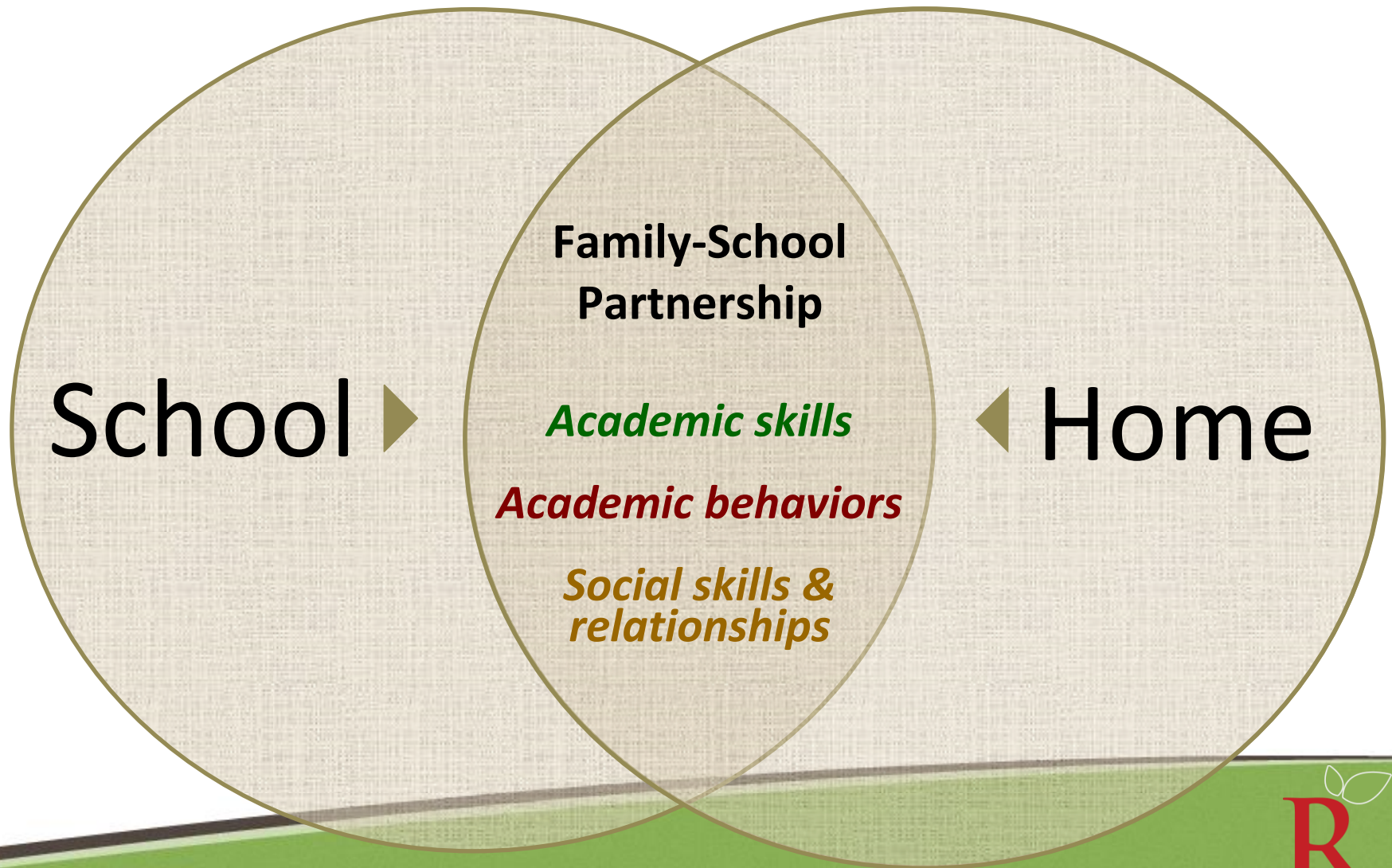
*Social Skills &
Relationships*



What Promotes Learning?



What Strengthens Learning?





HOW CAN THIS BE ACCOMPLISHED?

Family-School Partnerships



What are they?

Characteristics

- **Relationships** involve: close collaboration between parents and schools that have clearly specified *rights* and *responsibilities*.
- **Relationships** that are:
 - Valued
 - Balanced
 - Cooperative and interdependent
 - Based on mutual respect, trust, and open communication
 - Student-centered

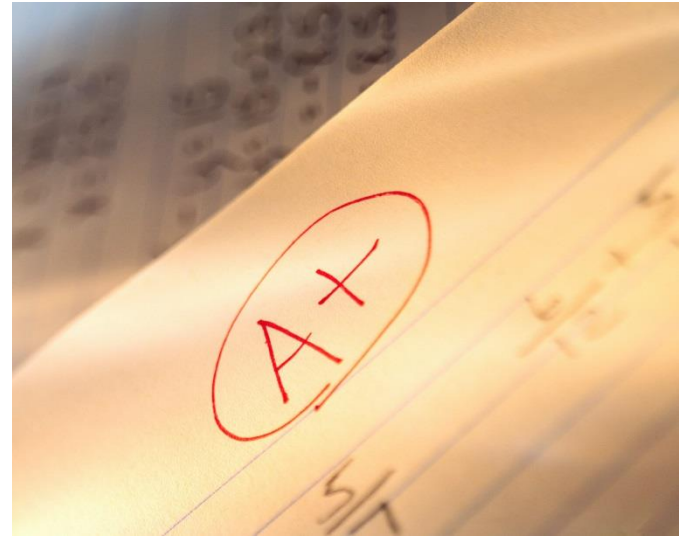
(Sheridan & Kratochwill, 2009, p. 1)



Goals of Family-School Partnerships

- Improve experiences and outcomes for children
- Strengthen relationships (among adults & with child)
- Address education across settings (e.g., home, school)
- Increase:
 - cooperation and collaboration
 - diversity of expertise and resources
- Increase shared:
 - commitments to educational goals
 - understanding of problems, challenges, needs across settings
 - ownership for problem solution
- Adopt various perspectives





WHY DO THEY MATTER?



Key Research Findings

Highly correlated with many positive outcomes for students, families, and teachers

- Improved academic skills and performance
- Improved academic behaviors and decreased disruptive behaviors
- Long-term academic success; school completion
- Teacher enhancement in instructional skills
- Greater parental knowledge of school functioning



Federal Policy and Learning Across Settings

- Students spend 70% of their waking hours outside of school from birth-18 (Clarke, 1990)
- Offers valuable learning time
- Mandates schools to engage in partnerships with parents to meet the increasing academic, behavioral, and social needs of students
- IDEA, NCLB for federal mandates calling for parents as partners in their child's education



**FAMILY-SCHOOL
PARTNERSHIPS
PROMOTE SUCCESS
FOR STUDENTS
NEEDING ADDITIONAL
SUPPORTS**



Conjoint Behavioral Consultation (CBC)

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



CBC Goals

- Bring *together families and schools* on behalf of children's learning
- Establish and maintain *positive home-school relationships* via partnership
- Promote positive *outcomes for students* through joint, cross-system planning
- Promote *parent engagement* via meaningful participation
- Establish daily, positive *home-school communication* system



CBC Procedures

Implemented in a 4-stage process by semi-structured *conjoint* interviews used to guide meetings with the child's parent(s) and teacher(s) and facilitated by a trained CBC Consultant

- Needs Identification (“Building on Strengths”)
- Needs Analysis/Plan Development (“Planning for Success”)
- Cross-setting Plan Implementation
- Plan Evaluation (“Checking and Reconnecting”)



What Interferes with Family-School Partnerships in Rural Communities?

- Lack of access to services
- Lack of specialized information
- Physical distance
- Limited interactions
- Feelings of isolation
- History of negative relationships
- Lack of perceived need; reluctance
- Stigma



Family-School Partnership Research Needed in Rural Communities

- Well-documented research support in non-rural settings
- Lack of research studies conducted in rural areas
- Need for research examining effects of family-school partnerships in rural communities led to a current study – “CBC in Rural Communities”



Current Research Questions

- What are the effects of CBC in rural communities on behavioral and social-emotional outcomes of students with or at risk of developing behavioral disorders?
- What are the effects of CBC in rural communities on parent and teacher practices, relationships, engagement, and beliefs about family-school partnerships?



Setting and Participants

- Setting
 - Rural schools (n = 20) defined using NCES locale codes; rural and town included
 - Population < 31,000
 - Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas
- 90 K-3 students displaying externalizing behaviors and their parents
- 54 K-3 teachers



Preliminary Analyses

- Independent group *t*-tests were used to compare mean scores between the control and treatment groups
- Repeated measures *t*-tests were used to evaluate change in scores from pre-test (wave 1) to post-test (wave 2) for the control and treatment groups

Preliminary Findings

- Preliminary results suggest promising effects of CBC for parents, teachers, and students, including:

Teacher-Report Behavioral Symptoms Index**

- Aggression
- Conduct Problems
- Depression

Parent* and Teacher Communication**

- Talk about concerns
- Share student progress
- Ask for suggestions

Parent Engagement in Consultation**

- Share information
- Communicate effectively
- Decision-making

Parent Competence in Problem-Solving*

- Set goals for child
- Collect data
- Figure out what works

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$



Preliminary Findings: Students

Significant changes over time for CBC students:

Externalizing Problems**

- Hyperactivity
- Aggression
- Conduct problems

Internalizing Problems**

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Somatization

School Problems**

- Attention Problems
- Learning Problems

Adaptive Skills*

- Adaptability
- Leadership
- Social Skills
- Study Skills

Behaviors at Home**

- Arguing
- Noncompliance
- Tantrums

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$



Preliminary Findings: Parents

Significant group differences in favor of CBC parents:

Positive Involvement*

- Talk with child
- Volunteer
- Fun activities

Corporal Punishment**

- Spank
- Slap
- Hit

Joining with Teacher*

- Trust
- Cooperation
- Respect

Significant changes over time for CBC parents:

Inconsistent Discipline*

- Threaten
- Talks out of punishment
- No punishment

Self-Efficacy

- Know how to help child
- Feel successful about help
- Make significant impact

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$



Preliminary Findings: Teachers

Significant group differences in favor of CBC teachers:

Competence in Problem-Solving*

- Set goals for child
- Collect data
- Figure out what works

Effective Strategies*

- Praise good behavior
- Use time-out
- Ignoring

Beliefs about Parental Involvement*

- View parents as partners
- All families have strengths
- Parents know how to help

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$



Early Findings within the Rural Context

- CBC provides access to effective instructional and behavioral supports often lacking in rural schools
- Partnership-building strategies used by CBC consultants may effectively address family-school partnership barriers unique to rural settings:
 - isolation, perceptions and attitudes of participants based on generational histories
- Increased trust and altered negative attitudes may result from:
 - frequent contact, constructive problem solving, mutual input toward solutions, individual roles and responsibilities, and home-school communication



SPECIAL FOCUS: CASE STUDIES HIGHLIGHT UNIQUE APPLICATIONS OF CBC IN THE RURAL CONTEXT



Unique Case Features for “Braxton”

- 5 years old, Kindergarten student
- **Poverty and drug use**
 - Low-income, single-parent household
 - Family received several social supports (e.g., Medicaid, free/reduced lunch)
 - Parent participation was a significant concern given concerns with drug use in the home
- **Lack of access to services**
 - Typical and available school services were largely insufficient to address Braxton’s behavior



“Braxton’s” Needs and Supports

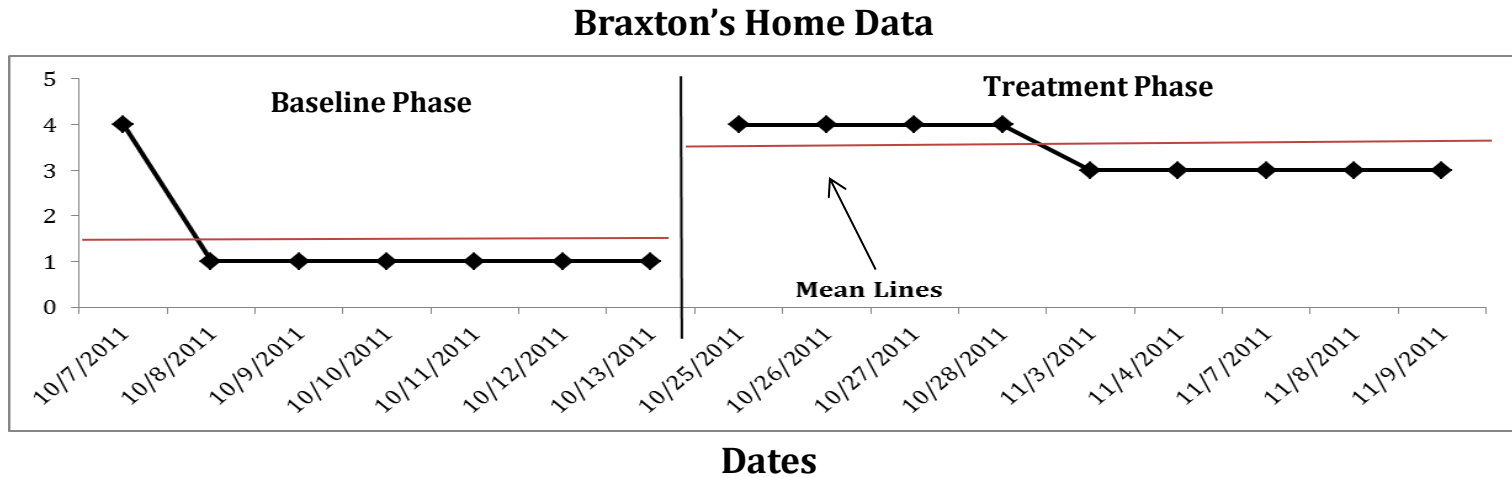
- **Target behaviors:**
 - Home: Following directions
 - School: Following directions
- **Home and school plan components:**
 - Chart moves, scheduled breaks, after school routine checklist, labeled praise for compliance, contingent rewards, and a home-school note



Braxton's Outcomes

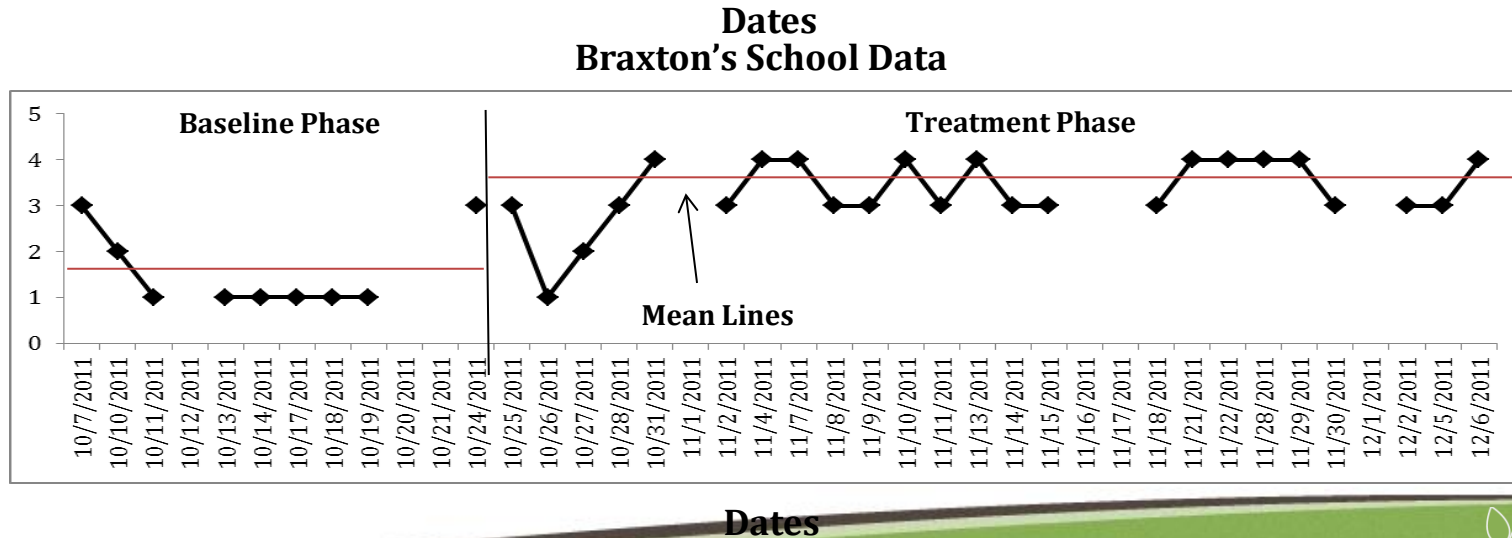
Following Directions:

Performance Rating Scale



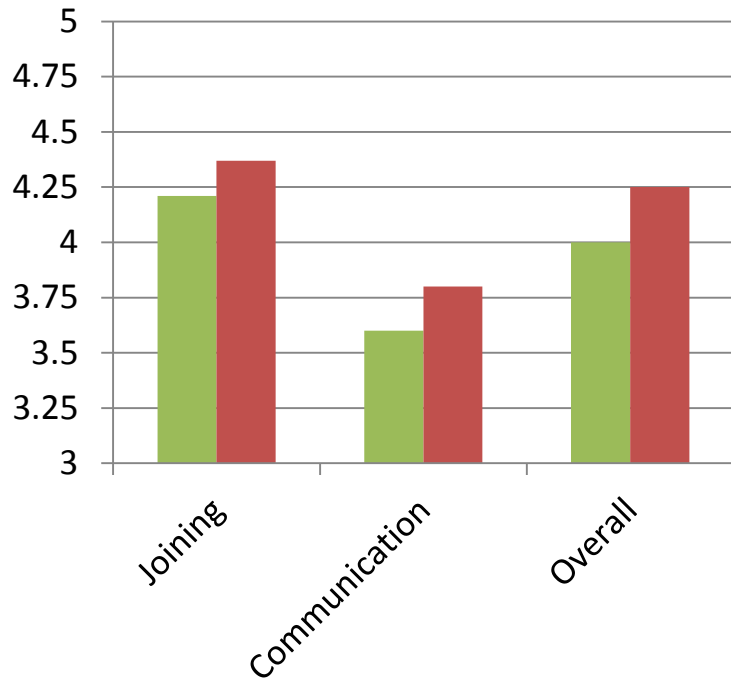
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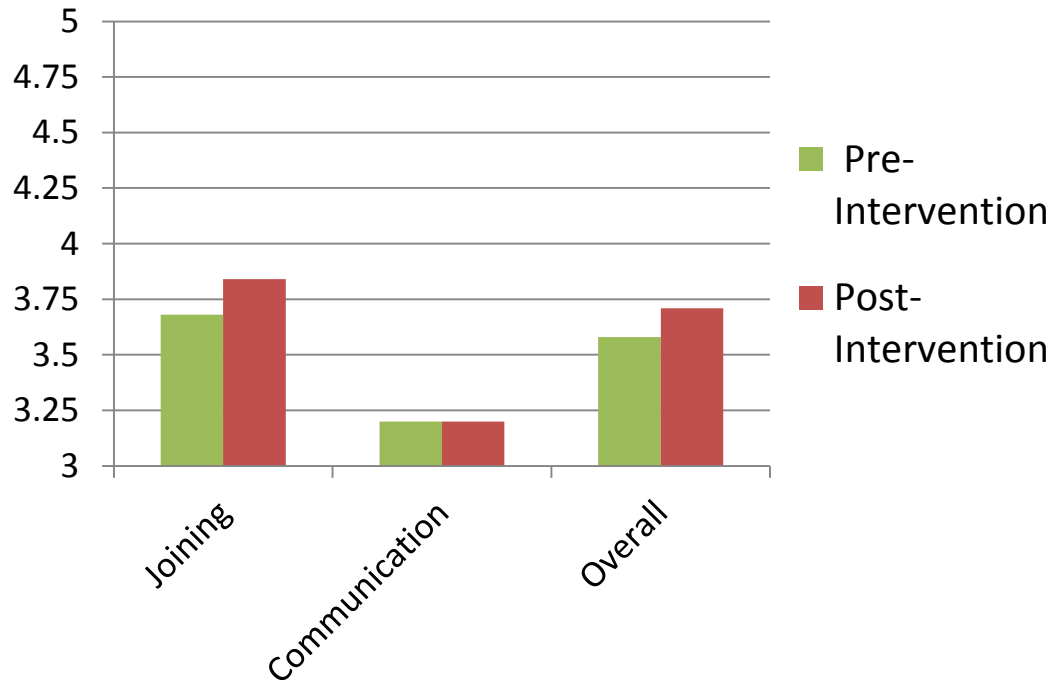


Parent-Teacher Relationship

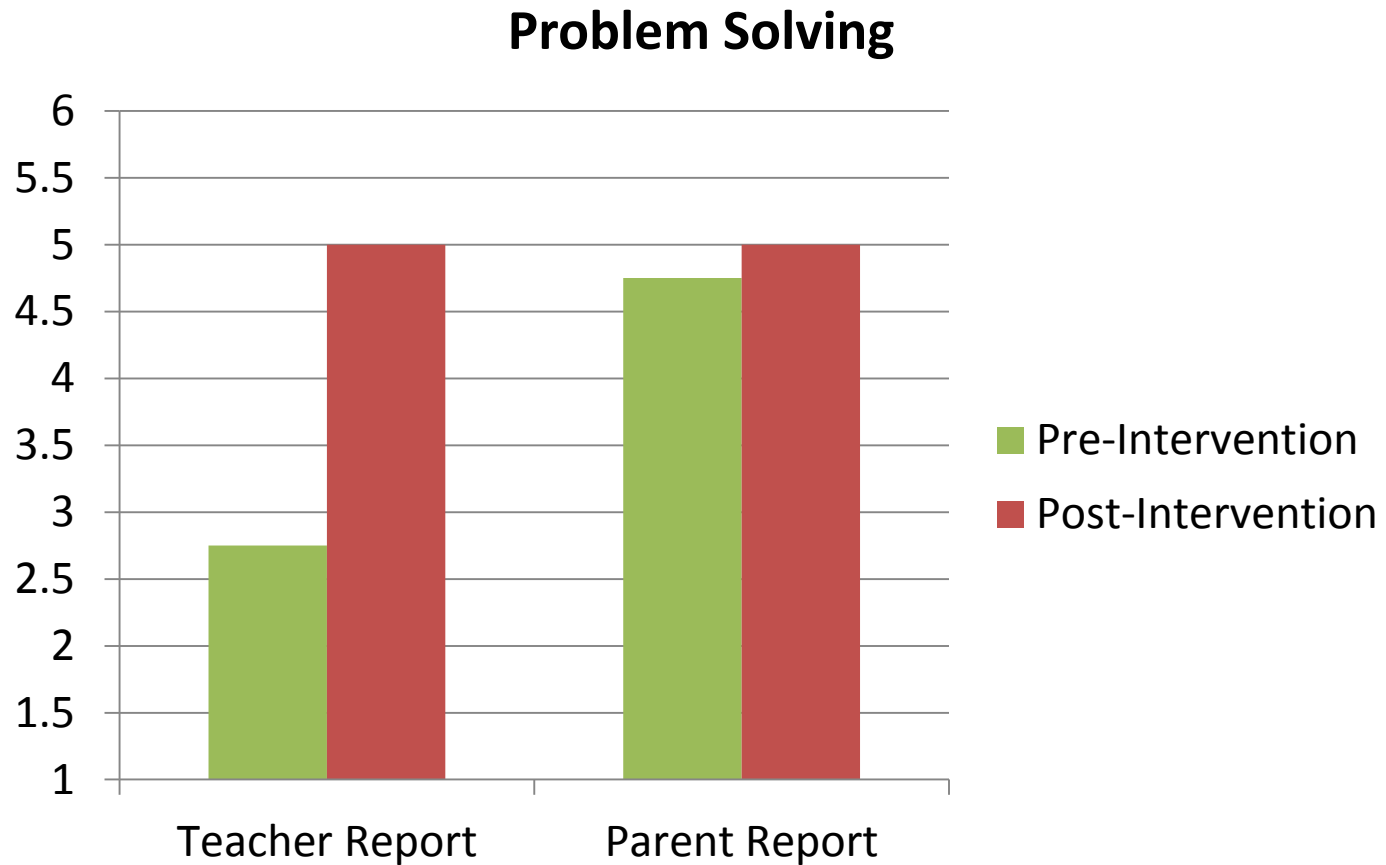
Parent Report



Teacher Report



Parent-Teacher Competency in Problem Solving



Bridging Research and Practice

- Partnership Academy Training available through CYFS
- Three Packages:
 - “Power of Partnerships” (Foundational Seminar)
 - “Nuts and Bolts of Partnerships” (Hands-on Workshop)
 - Customized
- Two Location Options:
 - UNL campus
 - On-site at the organization



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