



A PILOT STUDY OF TIES: Teaching Interventions to Empower and Strengthen Families



Brandon Hollie, M.A.¹; Jacob Christenson, PhD²; Molly Lamb, B.A.³
¹Syracuse University, ²Mount Mercy University, ³ Southern Illinois University

Introduction

- Individuals who show signs of conduct problems during early childhood are more likely to have these problems persist during adolescence, and consequently are more likely to drop out of high school.
- In addition, later risk of Antisocial Personality Disorder, Mood Disorders, and substance abuse are all associated with children who experience behavioral problems.
- Literature also suggest an association between external and internal behavioral problems and parental stress levels
- Parent and Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT), Positive Parenting Program (Triple P) The Incredible Years, and the Regional Intervention Program (RIP) are all treatment programs that have been developed to alleviate behavioral programs in children.

Limitation of current approaches

- Apart from the RIP and PCIT, the current approaches lack involvement of the parents in a systemic focused manner. The focus tends to be more on individual training of either the parent(s) and/or the child instead of seeing them as a family.
- The price of participation in several of the current approaches, as well, seems inconvenient considering low SES is a predictive factor of disruptive behaviors in children
- Although the parenting skills are often targeted, there seems to be a lack of focus on other factors that maintain the behaviors. For example, stress, one of many predictive factors of negligent parenting is rarely given any attention in the treatment process

Background of TIES and Purpose

- In contrast to other programs, TIES not only focuses on treating the children, but efforts are also focused on reducing the parental stress level simultaneously
- Parents serve as the primary therapist and the TIES staff are simply in a supportive teacher role.
- Furthermore, parents who have completed the program serve as volunteers with implementing the intervention to incoming families. This structure allows for services to be free of charge for families.
- Based off of the RIP program, TIES has theoretical underpinnings in applied behavioral analysis and social learning (ABA), utilizing positive reinforcement of desirable behavior, extinction of undesirable behavior, and differential reinforcement.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of an alternative parenting program approach, TIES, in alleviating externalizing and internalizing behavior in preschool aged children, and reducing parental stress levels. In addition, the study examined the correlation between children's disruptive behaviors and parental stress.



Methods and Materials

Participants

There were 42 participants total. Participants were children aged 6 years and under that have completed the TIES program and their respective parent(s) or guardian(s) (21 children, 21 parents.).

Measures

- Behavior assessment system for children, second edition (BASC-2) was used to measure childhood behavioral problems pre and post intervention.
- Parent stress index short form (PSI-SF) was used to measure parental stress pre and post intervention.

Procedure

- Archival data was collected from the TIES staff, de-identified, and analyzed. TIES gave consent for the research to be done on the program. In addition, IRB approval was obtained before any data was collected or received.
- BASC-2 and PSI-SF were filled out pre and post intervention
- One-way repeated-measures ANOVA was conducted to determine whether mean scores on the BASC-2 scale differ between pretreatment and posttreatment, as well as to determine whether or mean scores on the PSI form differ pretreatment and posttreatment. Multiple Linear Regression was conducted to determine the effects of the children's behavioral problems on the parental stress levels.

Hypothesis/Results

Hypothesis 1

- Hypothesis one stated that externalizing and internalizing behaviors will decrease from pretest to posttest following participation in the TIES intervention program. **Results:** Results showed there was a significant main effect following the TIES interventions for aggression, hyperactivity, social skills, and depression.

Hypothesis 2

- Hypothesis two stated parents stress levels will decrease pretest to posttest following participation in the TIES intervention. **Results:** Results indicate that parental stress levels decreased following participation in TIES program.

Hypothesis 3

- Hypothesis three stated the change in parent's stress would be associated with the change in the child's functioning from pretest to posttest. **Results:** The results of the regression indicated that the predictors together explained 48.7% of the variance However only social skills and gender were significant predictor factors at the .10 level. There was a negative association between change social skills and parental stress change. The results supported the notion that parental stress improved as the child's social skills improved; however, no externalizing or internalizing behaviors were significant predictors, when controlling for other factors.

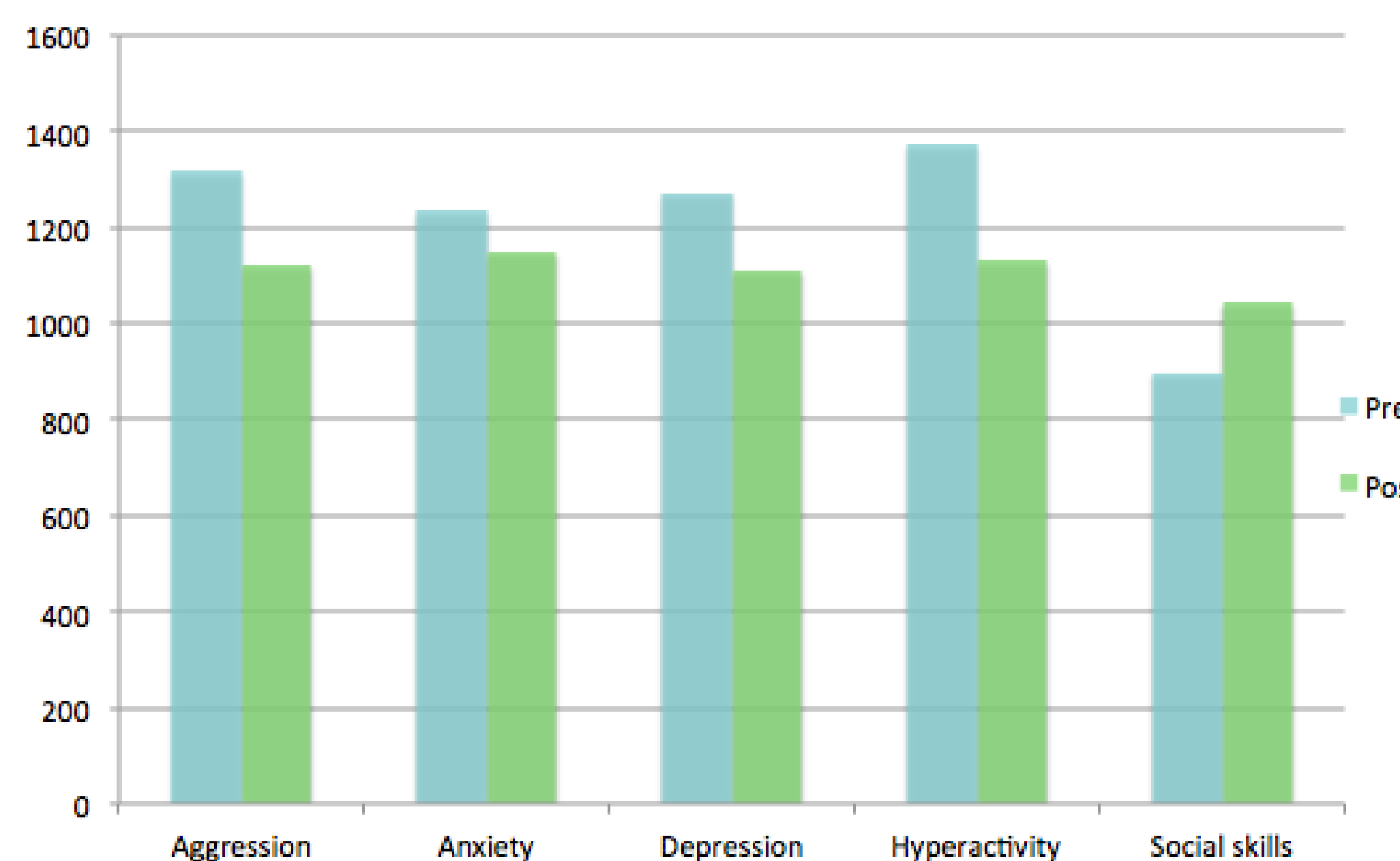


Figure 1. Pre and Post scores of BASC-2

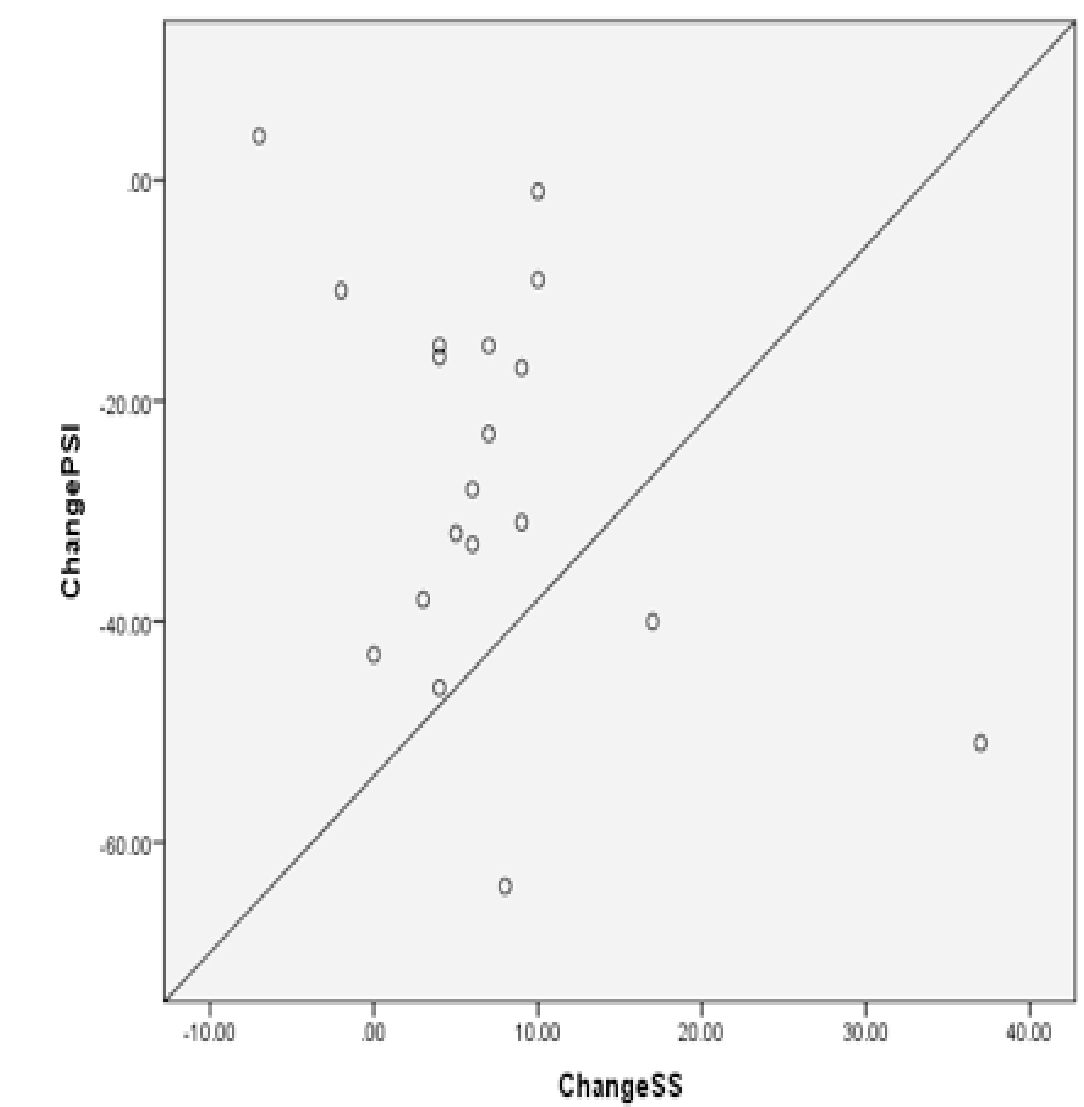


Figure 2. As social skills increased parental skills decreased

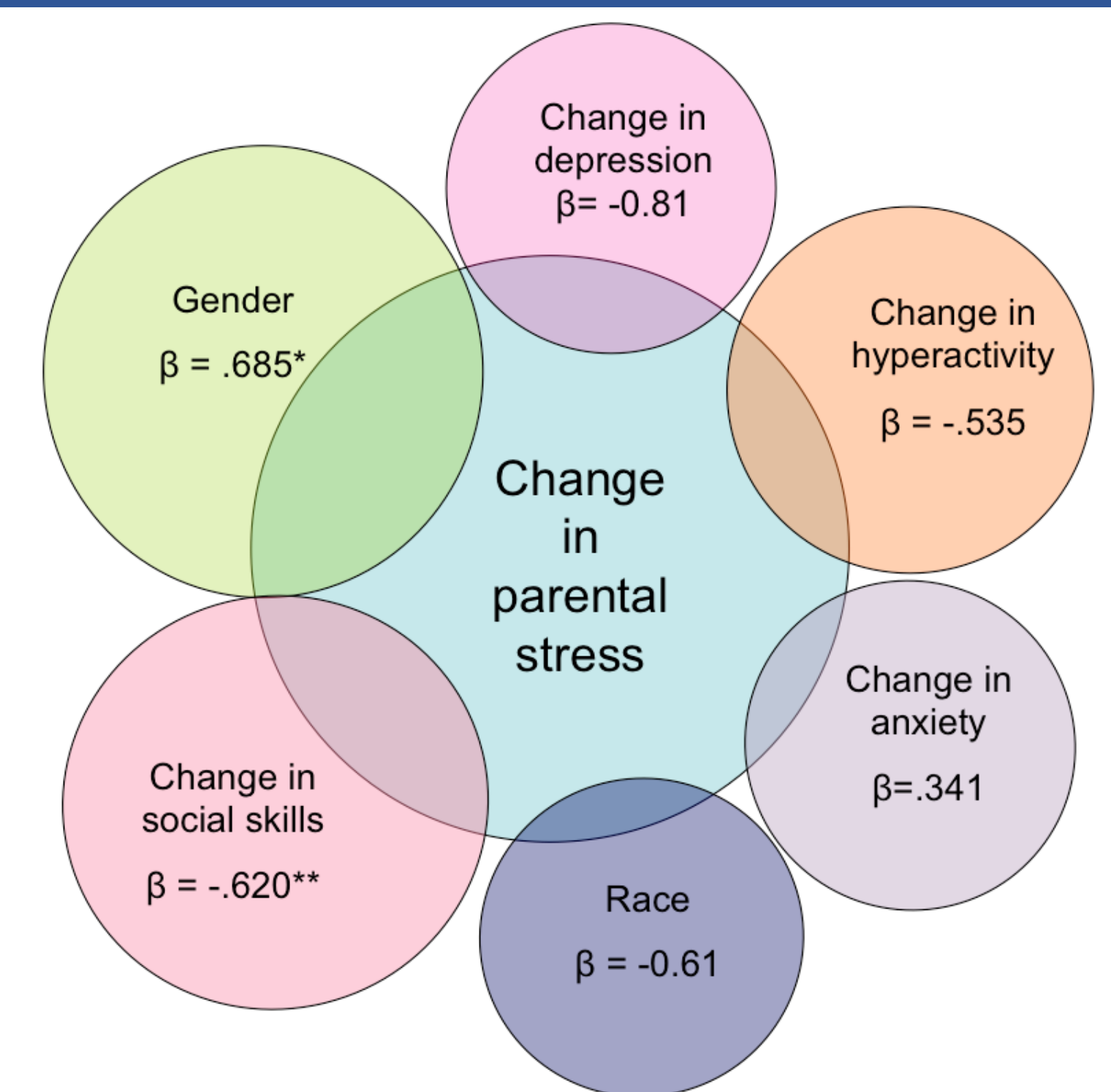


Figure 3. Venn diagram of regression analysis

Discussion

Limitations

- This study included archival data; therefore, the researcher was not able to determine how accurately the data was collected
- Much of the data could not be used because it had already been aggregated and the originals destroyed. The researcher had no way to obtain the raw data from the already compiled sets.
- Convenience sampling
- Small sample size
- Little information was available about the sample composition, and it is more than likely they are not representative of the entire population
- Due to the lack of father participation their experience is not represented
- Finally, using an alpha of .10 is higher than what is usually accepted and as a result it increases the chances of Type 1 error. However, considering that this is an exploratory pilot study this level is sufficient. Results from this analysis should be interpreted with caution.

Conclusion

- In general, these findings suggest that TIES has a positive impact on children's behavior and parental stress levels.
- TIES adds to lack of literature regarding children's behavioral problems and parental stress levels.
- In addition, TIES results further suggest the importance of parents and child being treated in conjunction.
- The systemic focus, cost free, and real time feedback that TIES offers makes it a valuable program to implement in community settings.
- Furthermore, giving "power" to the parents by having them serve as the primary therapist can instill trust between clients and clinicians and a feeling of hope that parents can serve as mechanisms of change.

Contact

Brandon Hollie
Syracuse University
bhollie@syr.edu
515-509-8472

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