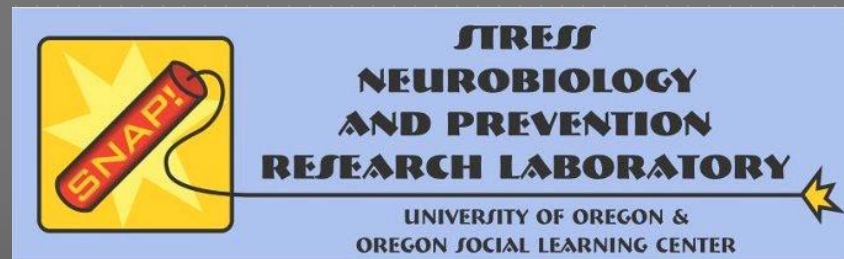


INTERVENTIONS FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE, ADOPTED CHILDREN, AND OTHER CHILDREN WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Philip Fisher, PhD
Professor of Psychology,
University of Oregon

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Center on the Developing Child  HARVARD UNIVERSITY

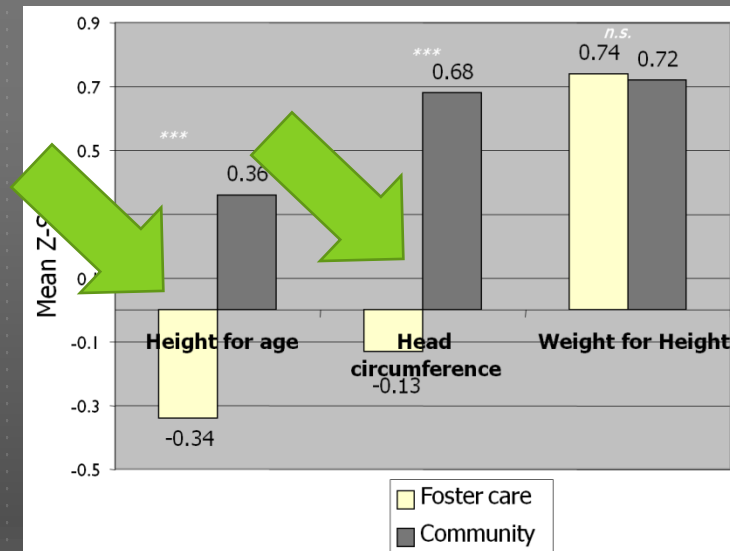
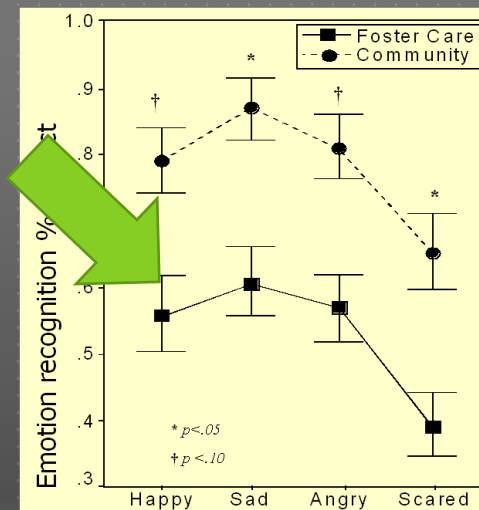
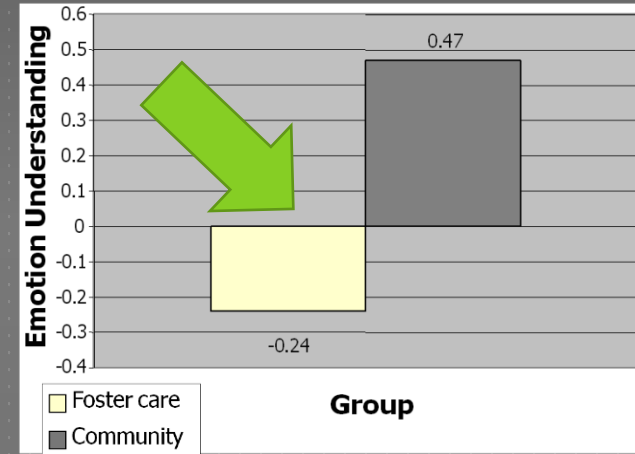
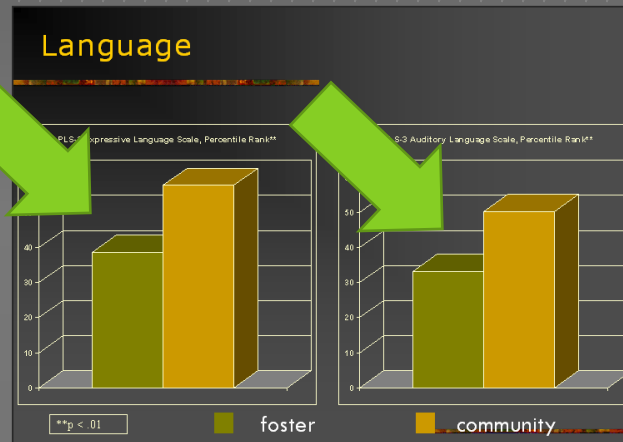
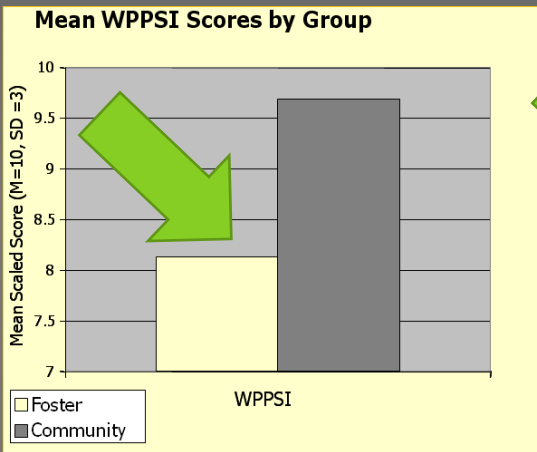
The text "Center on the Developing Child" is in a black, serif font. To its right is the Harvard University logo, which is a red shield with a white cross and four smaller red shields in the quadrants. To the right of the logo is the text "HARVARD UNIVERSITY" in a black, serif font.

FOUR THEMES

- ▶ The science of early brain development is allowing us to understand the needs of maltreated children in ways never before possible, and we can be increasingly precise about who is at greatest risk for poor outcomes.
- ▶ Evidence-based interventions that leverage our understanding of the brain's plasticity in infancy and childhood have the potential to mitigate biobehavioral risks conferred by adverse early life experiences.
- ▶ Innovative two-generation intervention models are being developed that have the potential to vastly accelerate progress in this area
- ▶ Multilevel involvement and commitment of executive, legislative, and judicial branches, child welfare, community agencies and providers, researchers, and families is critically important if we are to realize the full potential that exists

THEME 1:
THE SCIENCE OF EARLY BRAIN
DEVELOPMENT IS ALLOWING US TO
UNDERSTAND THE NEEDS OF
MALTREATED CHILDREN IN WAYS NEVER
BEFORE POSSIBLE, AND WE CAN BE
INCREASINGLY PRECISE ABOUT WHO IS
AT GREATEST RISK FOR POOR
OUTCOMES.

FOSTER CHILDREN SHOW THE EFFECTS OF TOXIC STRESS

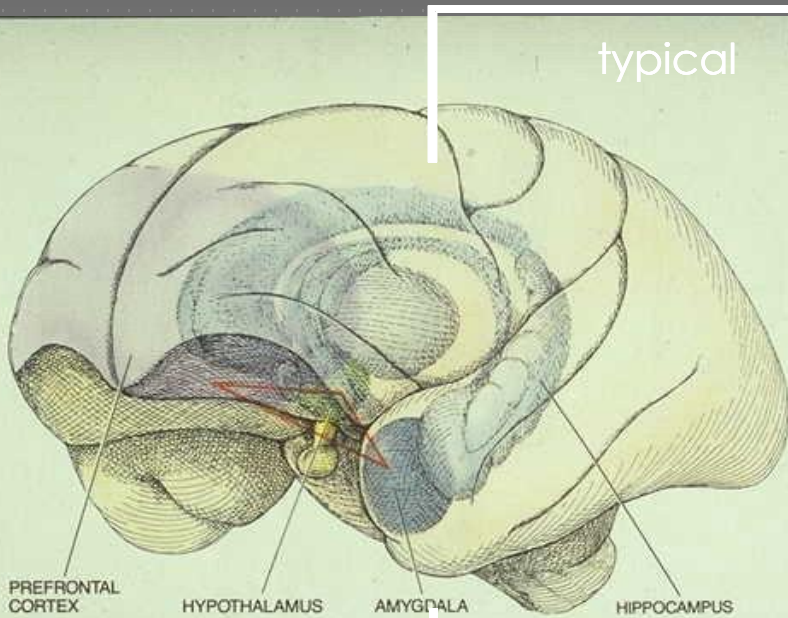


WHO IS AT RISK AND WHY?

- ▶ I. The most severely neglected children (i.e., story isn't just about bad things that happen, it's about good things that don't!)

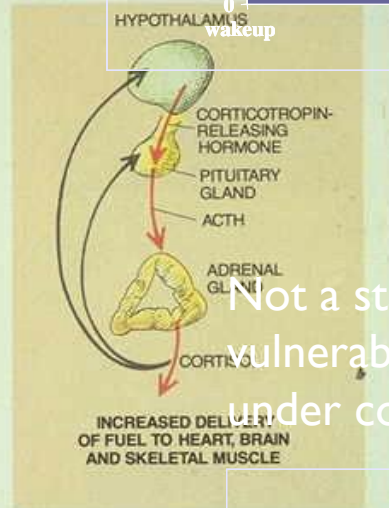
Daytime cortisol activity

Cortisol—the “stress hormone”



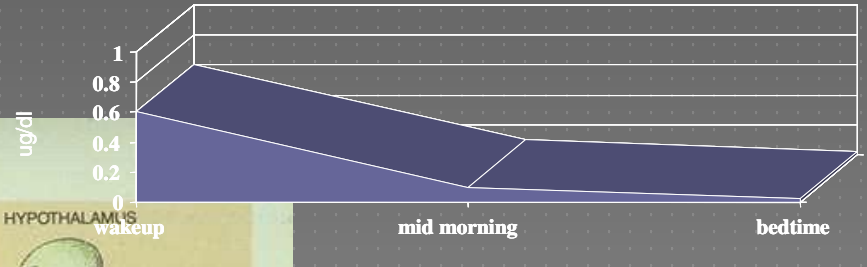
THREE BRAIN REGIONS that are interconnected by neural pathways (shown schematically by red lines) are critically important in regulating fear-related behaviors. The prefrontal cortex (purple) participates in assessing danger. The amygdala (dark blue) is a major constituent of the

typical



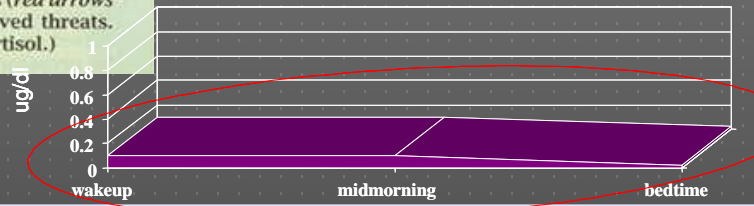
ing limbic system (light blue). And the hypothalamus (green), in response to signals from the prefrontal cortex, amygdala and hippocampus, directs the release of hormones (red arrows in box) that support motor responses to perceived threats. (Cortisol is a major constituent of the

typical daytime HPA activity



Not a stable pattern—represents a vulnerability to lose morning peak under conditions of chronic stress

low daytime HPA activity



stress-induced
'blunted'
pattern

PTSD, conduct disorder,
mental health problems

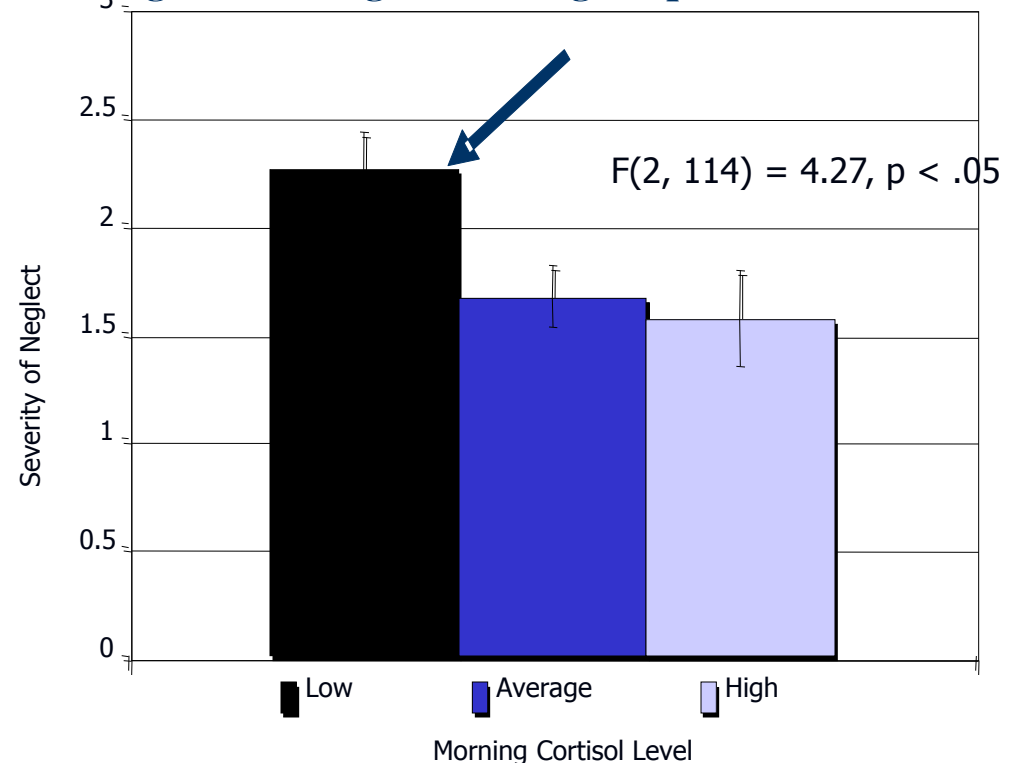
SEVERITY OF IS NEGLECT ASSOCIATED WITH ALTERED HPA AXIS FUNCTION

Method: Coding of case files

Only severity of neglect was associated with this pattern of cortisol activity, *NOT* severity of physical abuse, sexual abuse, lack of supervision, total # incidents, total # of types of maltreatment, or total number of placements

Also, we see this same pattern in children adopted from overseas orphanages

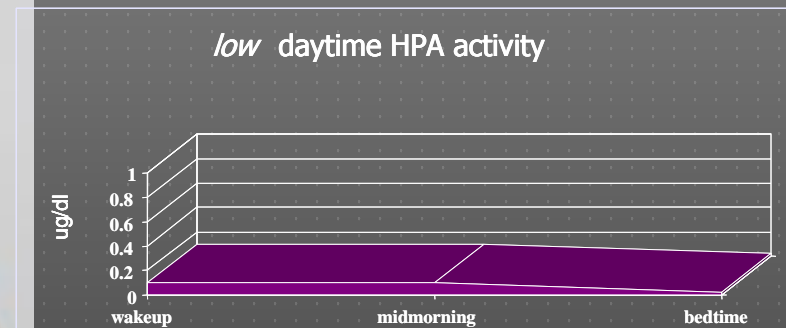
Severity neglect in low, average, and high morning cortisol groups



WHY LOW CORTISOL IN NEGLECTED CHILDREN?

Responsive parenting in infancy and early childhood provides a buffer against stress, and helps a child become competent at regulating stress themselves.

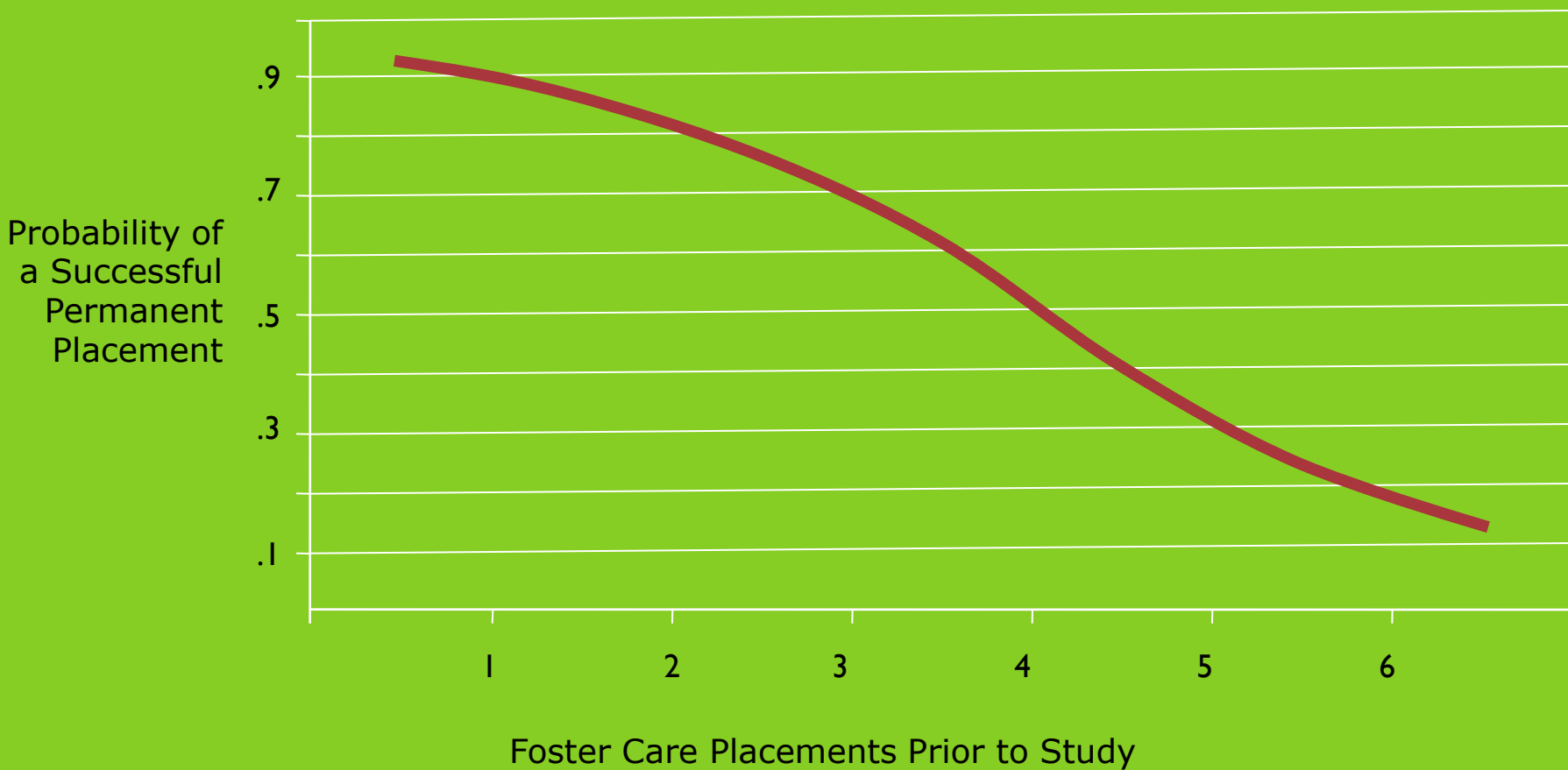
Conversely, absence of SERVE AND RETURN is a toxic stressor.



WHO IS AT RISK AND WHY?

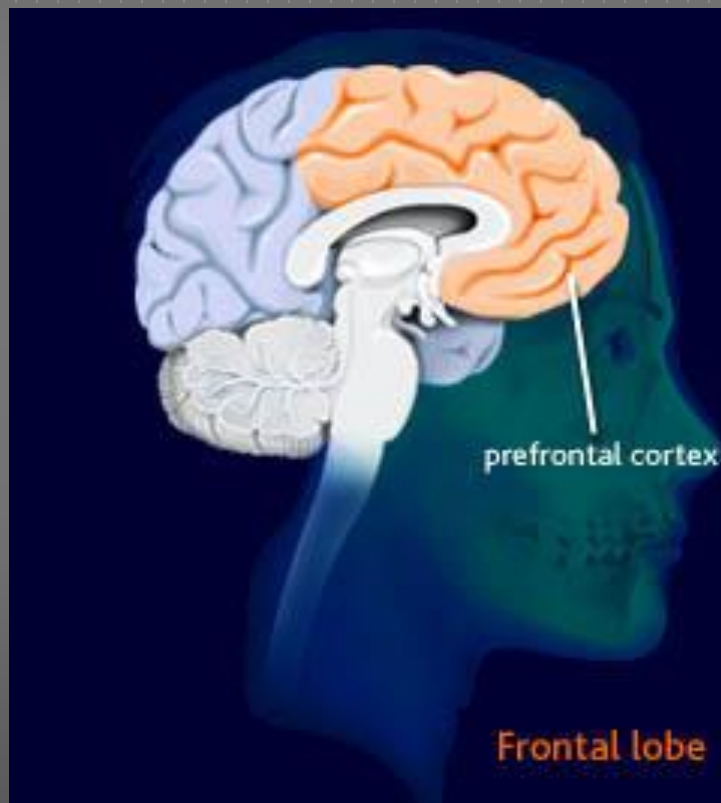
- ▶ 2. Children who have had many placement changes

Placement instability begets more instability



Source: Fisher, Burraston & Pears (2005)

ANOTHER PROBLEM WITH PLACEMENT INSTABILITY:
FOSTER CHILDREN WITH MANY PLACEMENTS HAVE DIFFICULTY
ON EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING TASKS



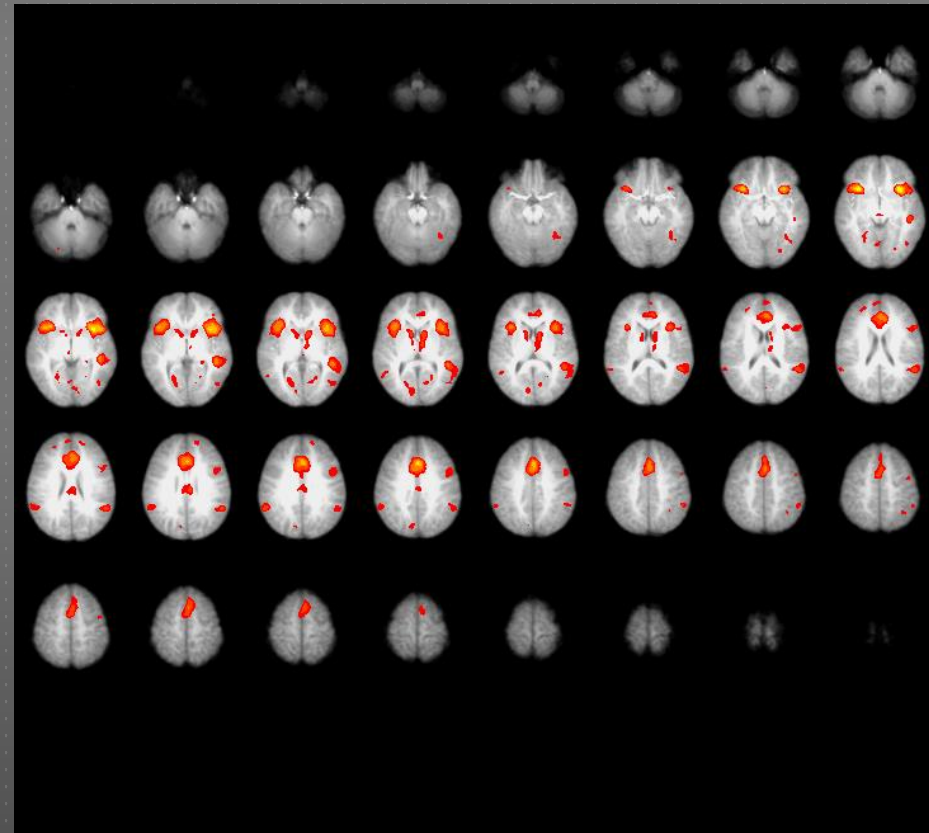
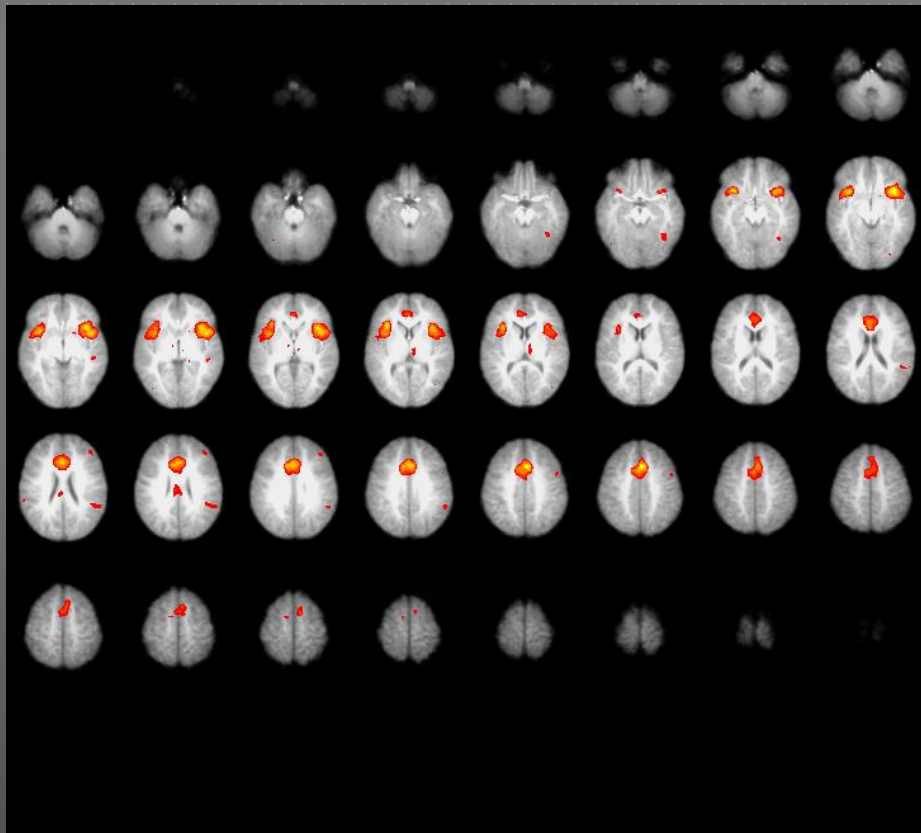
Pears, Bruce, & Fisher (2009) *Child Abuse and Neglect*

*Similar findings reported by
Lewis, Dozier et al. (2007)*

PATTERNS OF BRAIN ACTIVATION DURING A GO-NO GO TASK FOR COMMUNITY AND FOSTER CHILDREN

Normal control (n=8)

Foster care (n=8)



Theme 2:

Evidence-based interventions that leverage our understanding of the brain's plasticity in infancy and childhood have the potential to mitigate biobehavioral risks conferred by adverse early life experiences.

MULTIDIMENSIONAL TREATMENT FOSTER CARE (MTFC)



MTFC CORE MODEL

- ▶ Treatment techniques:
- ▶ *Simple, practical, & effective*
- ▶ Areas of emphasis:
 - ▶ Support and encourage positive behavior
 - ▶ Clear and consistent limits
 - ▶ Close supervision of the child

MTFC CORE PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Foster Parent Consultant

Family Therapist

'Daily Report' Caller

STAFF

Program Supervisor

Child Therapist
Behavioral Skills Trainer

Child Psychiatrist

Caregiver -Child
Relationship

Case Management

Child Needs

Contexts

Home

Community

Preschool/school

5 KEY PROGRAM COMPONENTS

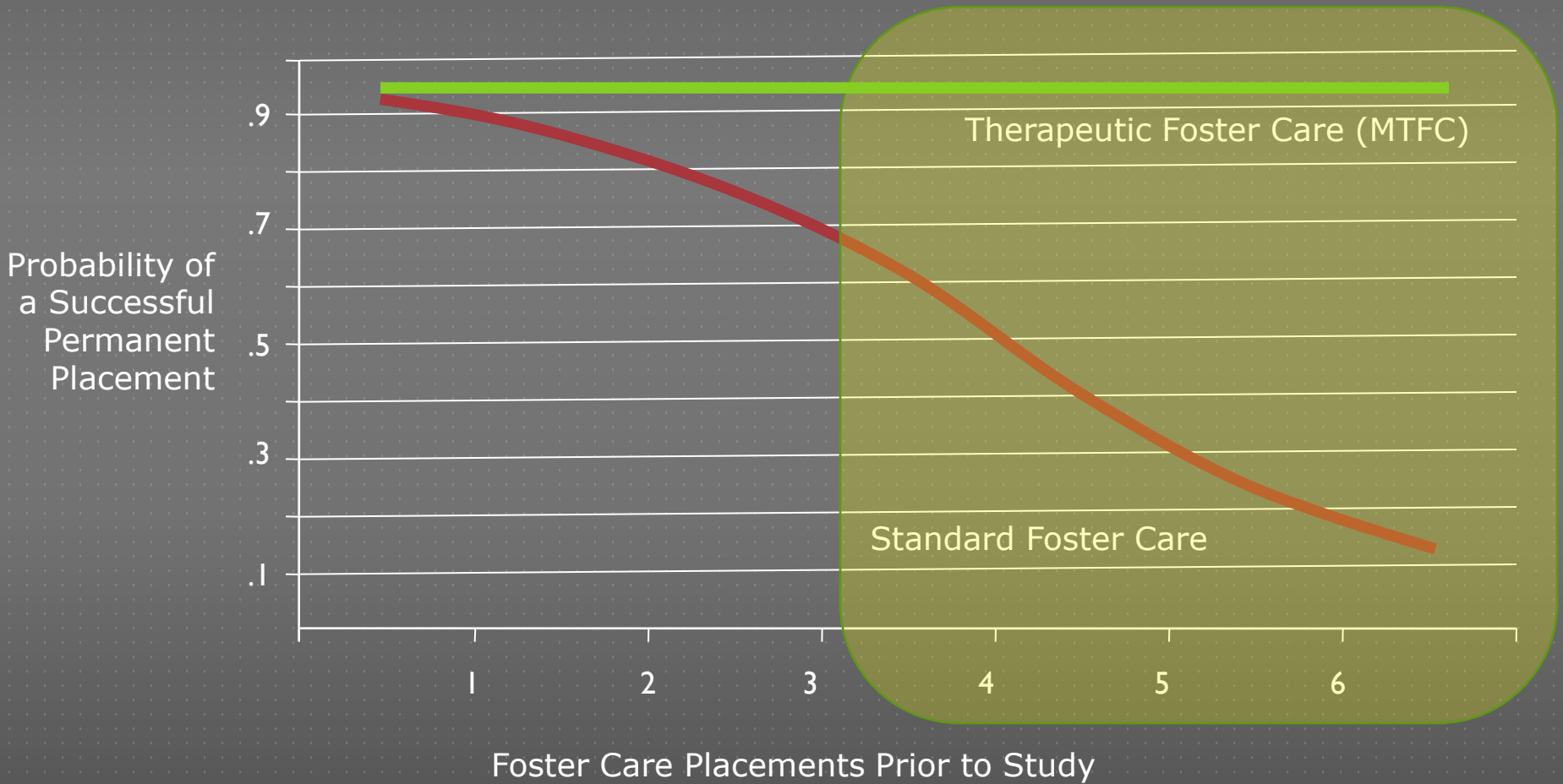
- ▶ Caregiver support & consultation services
 - ▶ Pre-placement training
 - ▶ Weekly group meeting
 - ▶ 24/7 on call support
- ▶ Child treatment services
- ▶ Parenting support for birth/adoptive families
- ▶ Parent Daily Report telephone check-in w/caregiver
- ▶ Clearly specified staff roles & responsibilities



FOR MORE
INFORMATION...

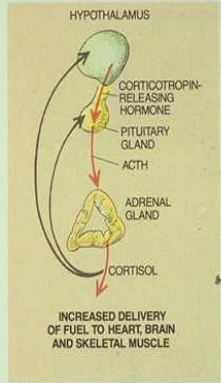
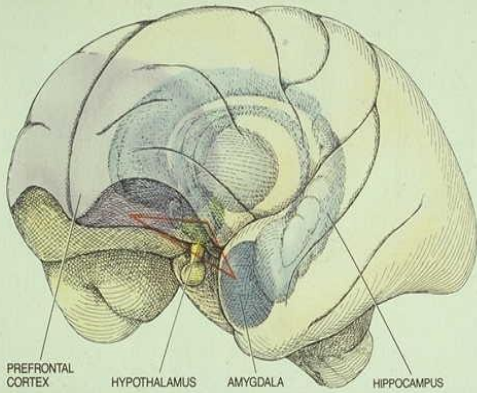
www.mtfc.com

MTFC increases likelihood of permanent placement



Sources: Fisher, Burraston & Pears (2005);
Fisher, Kim, & Pears (2009)

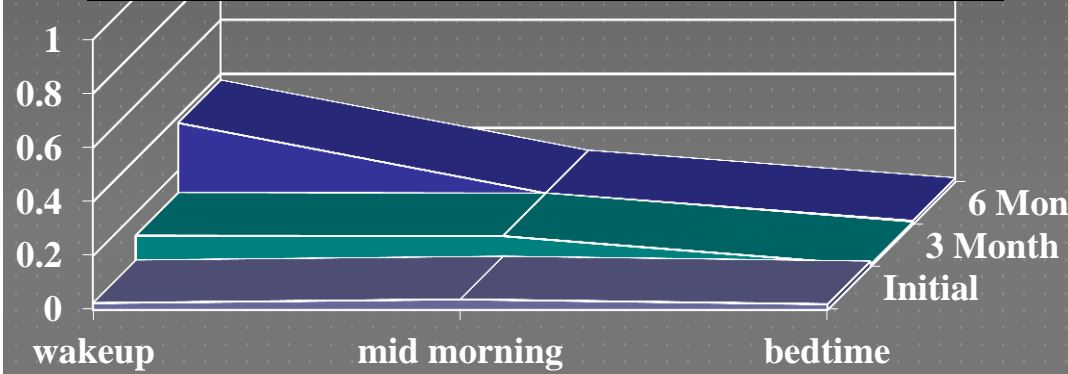
HPA PLASTICITY



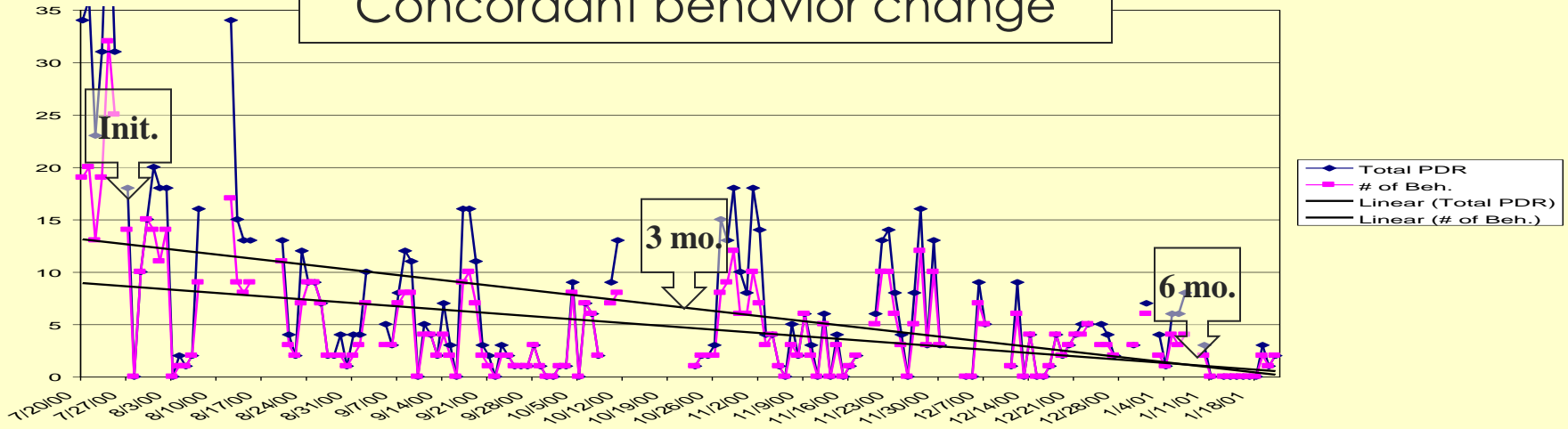
THREE BRAIN REGIONS that are interconnected by neural pathways (shown schematically by red lines) are critically important in regulating fear-related behaviors. The prefrontal cortex (purple) participates in assessing danger. The amygdala (dark blue) is a major constituent of the emotion-producing limbic system (light blue). And the hypothalamus (green), in response to signals from the prefrontal cortex, amygdala and hippocampus, directs the release of hormones (red arrows in box) that support motor responses to perceived threats. (Gray arrows represent inhibitory activity by cortisol.)

ing limbic system (light blue). And the hypothalamus (green), in response to signals from the prefrontal cortex, amygdala and hippocampus, directs the release of hormones (red arrows in box) that support motor responses to perceived threats. (Gray arrows represent inhibitory activity by cortisol.)

Therapeutic intervention



Concordant behavior change



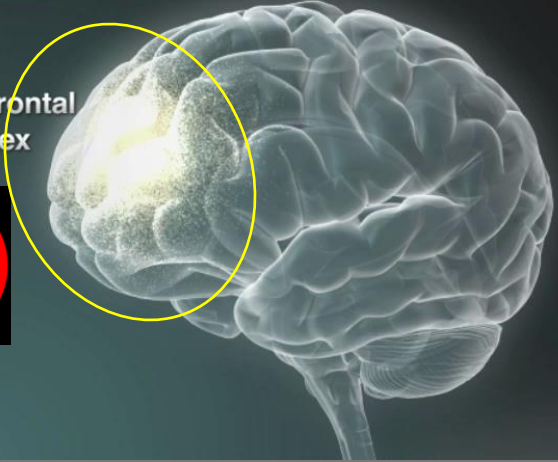


Prefrontal
Cortex





Prefrontal Cortex



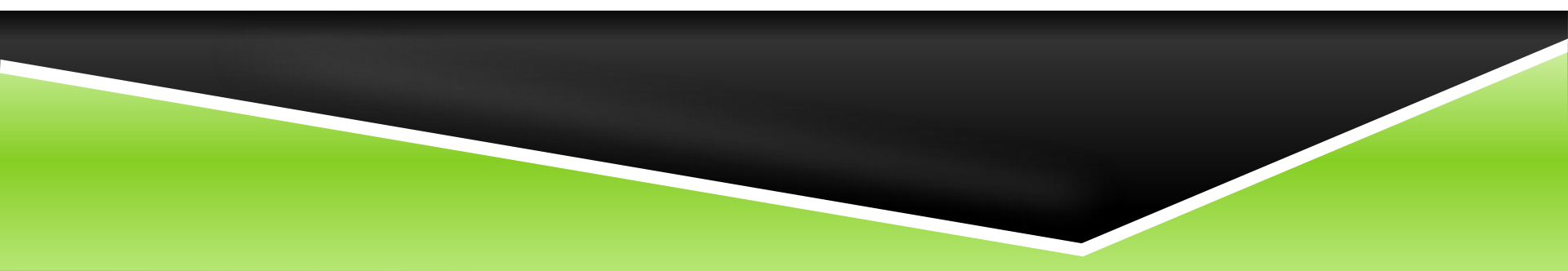
Prefrontal Cortex



Prefrontal Cortex



**THEME 3:
INNOVATIVE TWO-GENERATION
INTERVENTION MODELS ARE BEING
DEVELOPED THAT HAVE THE
POTENTIAL TO VASTLY ACCELERATE
PROGRESS IN THIS AREA**









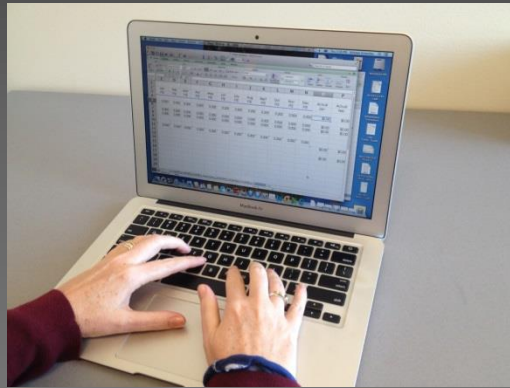
















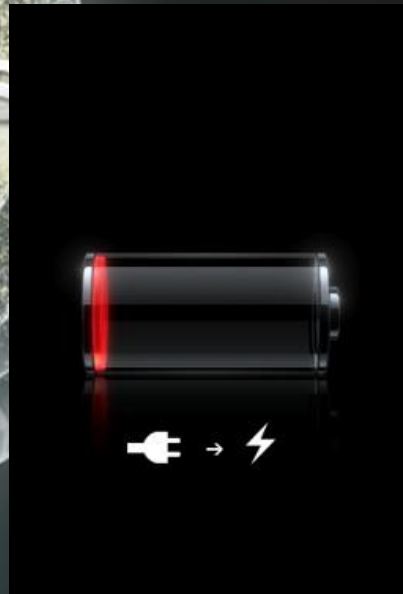








Motor Skills
Behavioral Control
Language
Memory
Emotion
Vis





THEME 4 (CALL TO ACTION):
MULTILEVEL INVOLVEMENT AND
COMMITMENT OF EXECUTIVE, LEGISLATIVE,
AND JUDICIAL BRANCHES, CHILD WELFARE,
COMMUNITY AGENCIES AND PROVIDERS,
RESEARCHERS, AND FAMILIES IS CRITICALLY
IMPORTANT IF WE ARE TO REALIZE THE FULL
POTENTIAL THAT EXISTS

Stanford SOCIAL
INNOVATION REVIEW

Collective Impact

LARGE-SCALE SOCIAL CHANGE REQUIRES
BROAD CROSS-SECTOR COORDINATION,
YET THE SOCIAL SECTOR REMAINS
FOCUSED ON THE ISOLATED INTERVENTION
OF INDIVIDUAL ORGANIZATIONS.

BY JOHN KANIA & MARK KRAMER

Illustration by Martin Jarrie



