



Key Ingredients of Interventions Targeting Caregivers' Language Support for Young Children



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Building Solid Foundations of Oral Language Skills through Targeted

PARENT TRAINING



What do young children need to develop language?



Frequent **mutual engagement** (interactions) with a responsive caregiver

Caregivers **adapting language** spoken to the child (types of words, length of utterance) as child's language level increases

Frequently hearing **words of high quality** in a variety of contexts

Use of **gestures** that accompany verbalizations

Language input that follows the child's **focus of attention** and is contingent to their **previous vocalizations**

Engaging **intonation** patterns (eg. motherese)

Frequent exposure to **rich vocabulary** words (words that carry meaning) in **meaningful contexts**



Early Language Input in Low SES Homes

- Language used mostly to direct behavior
“Put this away”, “Pick that up”
- Fewer rich vocabulary words (words that carry meaning)
- Less complex language structure
“Your ball rolled under the table and got stuck behind the chair leg.”
- Less language to elicit conversation
“Why is your doll wearing that outfit?”
- Less child-directed language; children do not develop language by overhearing others conversations.

Negative Effects of Hearing Limited Language

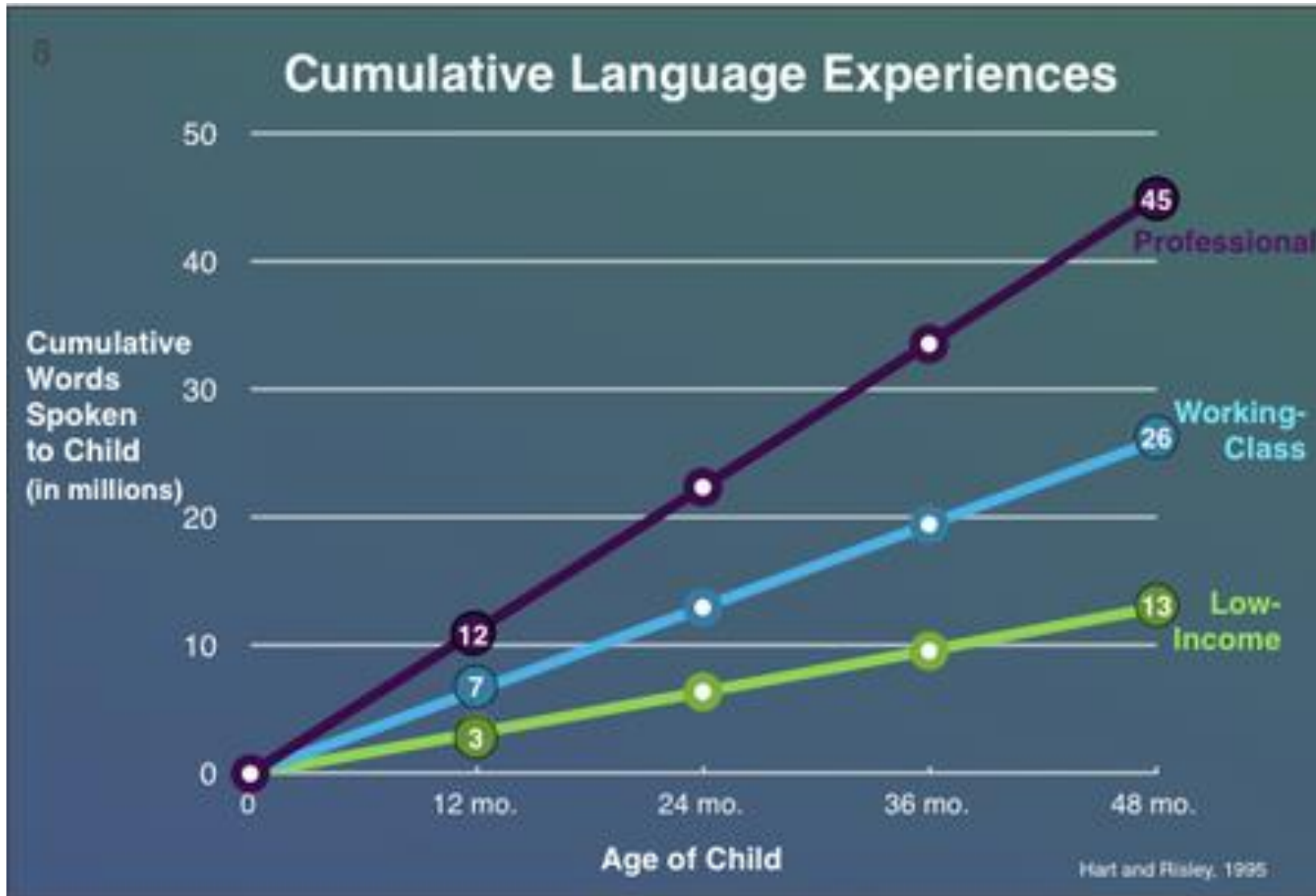


Language differences related to this word gap are evident by **18 months** of age.

Language differences related to SES word gap are more pronounced than other cognitive skills.

Early differences persist and by **3 to 4 years of age** are difficult to remediate.





Hart & Risley, 1995



Language Minority Homes

41% of children living in poverty hear a language other than English at home.

Great variety in whether by pre-K ELLs will speak only their home language or become bilingual.

Recent research on ELL children from low SES homes shows in general they are **1 to 2 standard deviations** (15 to 30 points) below monolingual norms in vocabulary and language comprehension skills.





Play & Learning Strategies

MAIN CONCEPTS

- Identify infant's signals
- Respond contingently
- Use sensitivity behaviors
- Maintain infant's interests and attentional focus
- Provide information about toy or activity (demonstrations, labeling, scaffolding)
- Avoid restricting infant's behavior



Original PALS Intervention Format



Short educational videos including mothers demonstrating parenting concepts with their infants and toddlers



Discussion of concepts throughout video between facilitator and mother.

Mother is filmed trying concept with her infant or toddler.



Review of filmed interactions with mother critiquing how infant or toddler responded to her interactive style.

Inclusion of other family members who provide care.



Curriculum manual and videos are in Spanish and English for both age groups.

Linking Vocabulary



Introducing and Maintaining Interest



PALS Research Results



Significant change in mothers' behaviors if they received PALS:

- Contingent responsiveness
- Labeling words and actions
- Providing more gestures
- Verbal scaffolding of children's utterances



PALS Research Results



Differences in child's skills related to language:

- Greater growth in vocabulary skills
- Complex language
- Verbal responses to caregivers' requests
- Increased social engagement



Scaling Up

3 Models

Original

- Face-to-face family coach
- DVD sets

Hybrid

- Digital components housed on web-based platform
- Remote calls with family coach

Online

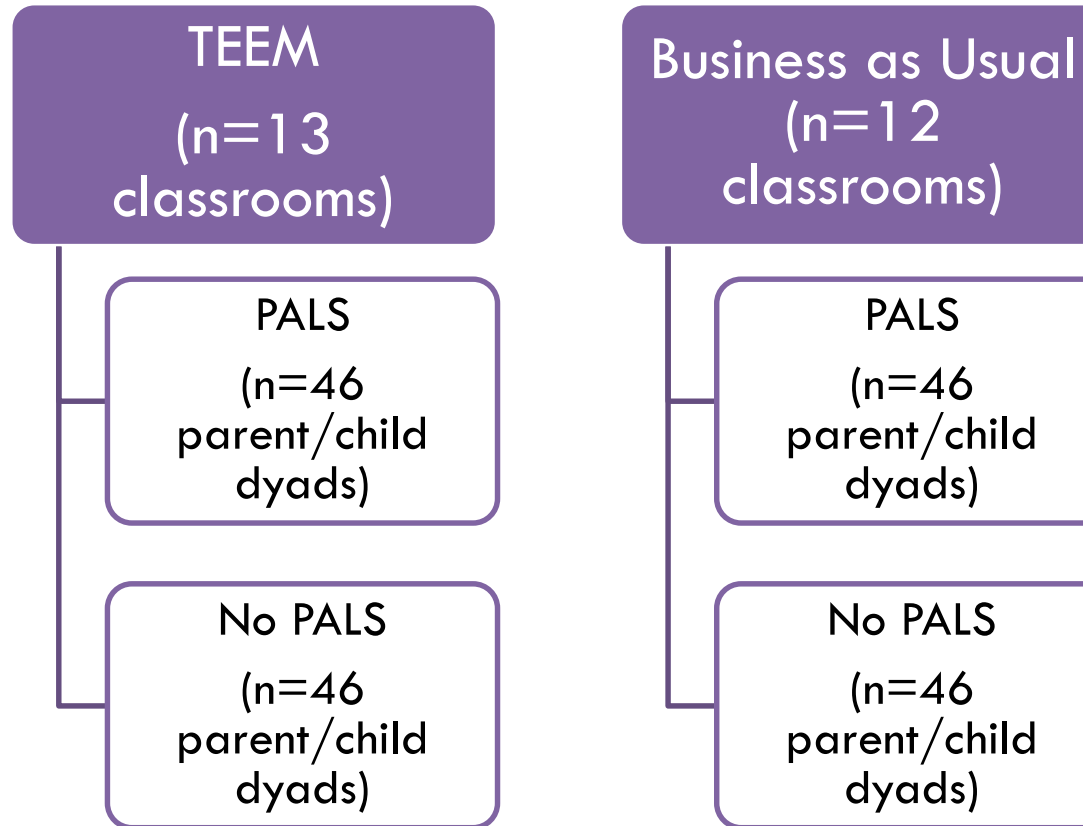
- Interactive technology to simulate coach
- Accessible at no cost for parents enrolled in CLI Engage



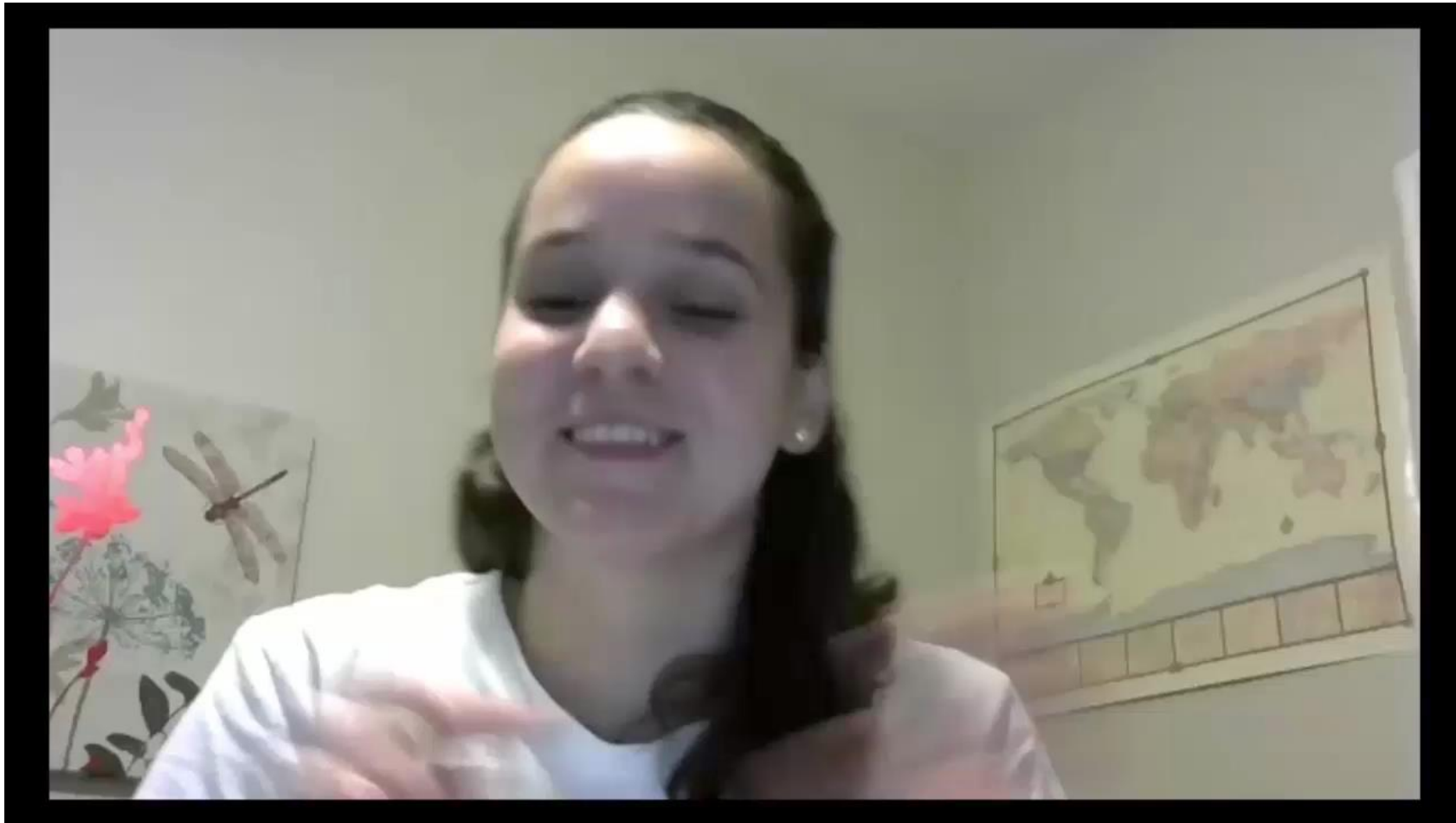
ePATT: a Goal-3 IES study

remote Parents and Teachers Together

- Year 1: Cohort 1 of 3 (1 per year)
- Sample: 25 Head Start teachers consented & randomized
- 184 parent/child dyads randomized to PALS vs no PALS
- Attrition: 30%



Hybrid Coaching Session



ePATT: Year 1

Preliminary Child Language Results

English

Expressive One-word
Vocabulary

TEEM X PALS

$p = .02$; $ES = .31$



Spanish

Expressive One-word Vocabulary

PALS versus No PALS

$p = .04$; $ES = .24$

Preschool Language Scale (PLS):
Expressive Communication

TEEM X PALS

$P = .09$; $ES = .59$

Concluding Thoughts

- Early childhood is a crucial period for building the language skills needed for success in school
- Children living in poverty are far less likely to receive quality language inputs at home
- There is very little oversight for quality in the majority of early childhood settings that serve children from poverty

The good news:

We have research proven tools and programs to help teachers and families build language—the key is finding innovative ways to disseminate them.

