

# Head Start's Role in Helping Families



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# Head Start parents most frequently participated in....

<b>Home visits with staff</b>	<b>83%</b>
<b>Parent-teacher conferences</b>	<b>82%</b>
<b>Classroom observations</b>	<b>77%</b>
<b>Volunteering in children's classrooms</b>	<b>69%</b>
<b>Preparing food or materials</b>	<b>66%</b>
<b>Attending social events</b>	<b>55%</b>
<b>Assisting with field trips</b>	<b>51%</b>



# Parent Involvement in Head Start

In order to examine the relationship between involvement in Head Start and other factors, a summary involvement score and a categorical involvement variable were created for each parent.

The score and categories are based on parents' reports of how frequently they participated in each of 12 activities over the past school year.

## Involvement Score

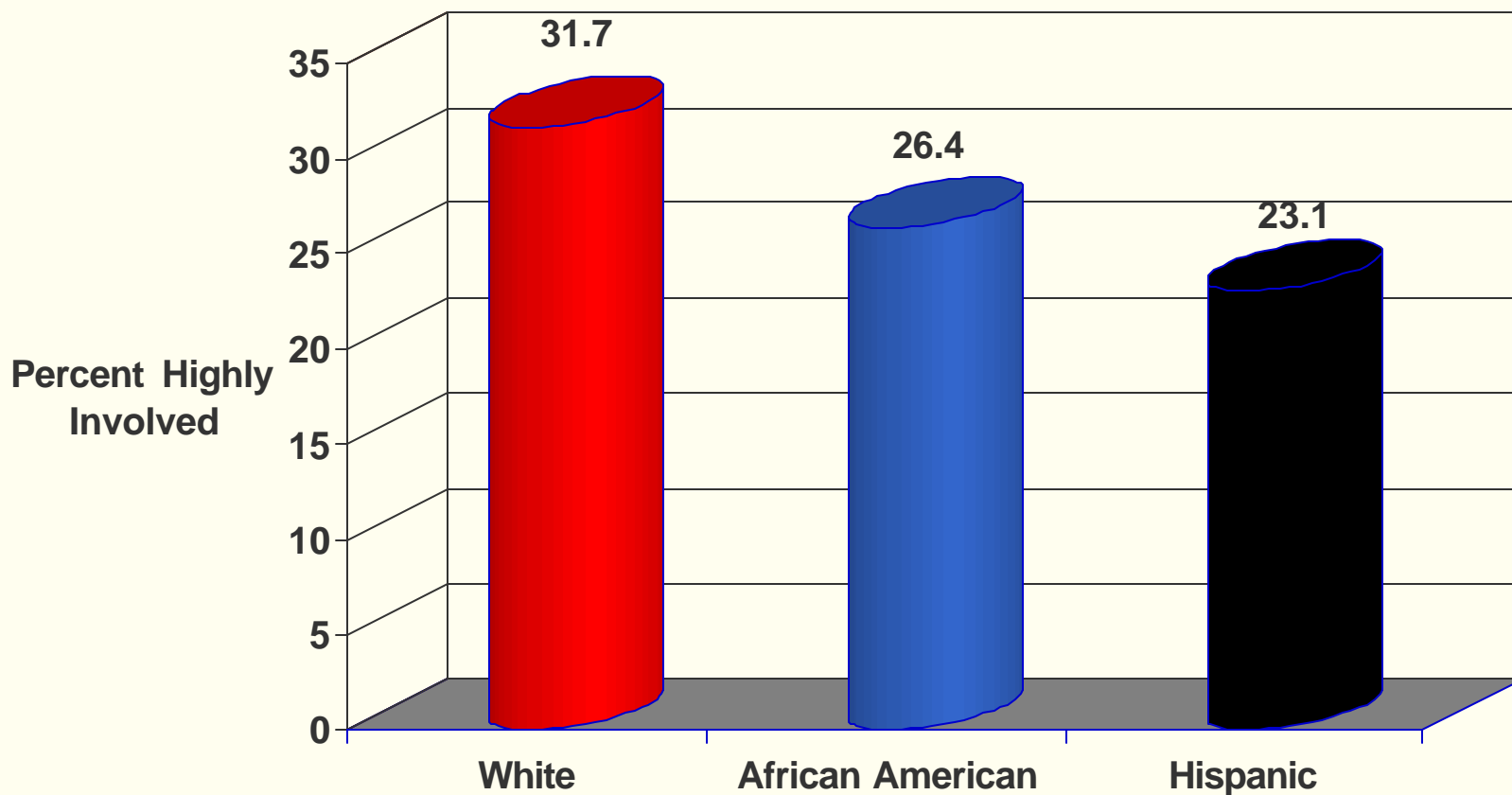
- ❑ **Range = 12 to 36**
- ❑ **Mean = 22.1**
- ❑ **SD = 5.2**

## Involvement Categories

- ❑ **Low: Score = 12 to 18**
- ❑ **Moderate: Score = 19 to 25**
- ❑ **High: Score = 26 to 36**



# Levels of Parent Involvement Varied by Ethnicity





## Parents Who Were More Involved ...

- Were more likely to participate in weekly and monthly activities with their children,
- Were more likely to have prior exposure to the program through the enrollment of another child or grandchild,
- Were less likely to be employed,
- Had a more internal locus of control, and
- Had greater satisfaction with the Head Start program.



# Parent Involvement in Head Start Predicted Parent-Reported Child and Family Outcomes

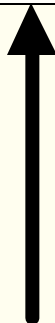
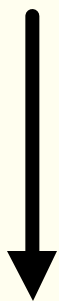
Parents who were more involved in Head Start reported . . .

**More Positive  
Child Social  
Behavior**

**Higher Child  
Emergent  
Literacy Skills**

**Increased Use Of  
Household Rules  
and Safety Practices**

**Less  
Aggressive  
Child  
Behavior**

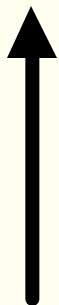




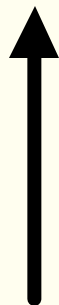
# Parent Involvement in Head Start Predicted Child Cognitive Outcomes

Children of parents who were more involved in Head Start scored significantly higher on....

**Book Knowledge**



**Color Naming**



**Creativity**



**Design Copying**





# Parents had Positive Feelings Towards Their Experiences with Head Start

**Over 95% of parents reported....**

- Their children often or always felt safe and secure in Head Start,**
- They were happy to be in the program,**
- Their children felt accepted by the teachers,**
- Their children were treated with respect by teachers,**
- That teachers often or always made them feel welcomed, and**
- That teachers made them feel supported as parents.**





# Parents Were Very Satisfied with Head Start

**Over 80% of parents indicated that Head Start ...**

- Maintained a safe program,**
- Respected their families' cultures,**
- Helped their children to grow and develop,**
- Provided them with services, and**
- Prepared their children for kindergarten.**



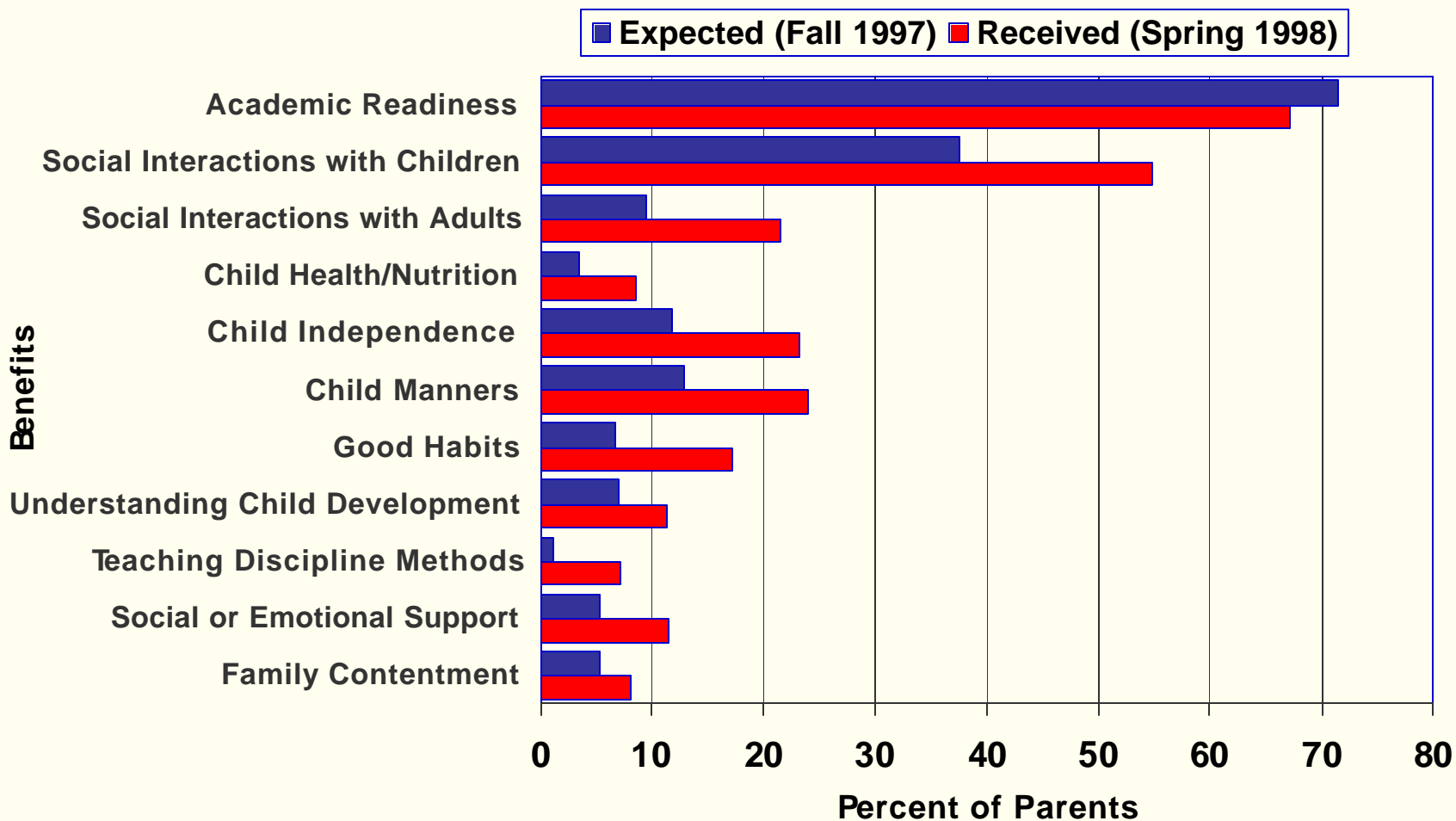
# Parents Were Very Satisfied with Head Start

**Parents with higher levels of satisfaction.....**

- Were more involved with Head Start,**
- Had less than a high school diploma**
- Lived in the South, West or Midwest**
- Were parents of Hispanic children,**
- Were unemployed, and**
- Were parents of girls.**



# Parents' Perceptions of Benefits Received Exceeded Their Expectations





# Parents Had a Few Suggestions for Improving Head Start

**Top suggestions for improvement were...**

- Focus more on academic skills,**
- Have extended hours,**
- Improve facilities (e.g., better playgrounds, classrooms),**
- Provide transportation.**



# Head Start May Play a Role in Protecting Families

**We know that.....**

- Exposure to neighborhood violence predicted problem child behavior, and**
  
- Exposure to neighborhood violence predicted maternal depression.**

**Does Head Start protect children and families from the negative effects of exposure to violence?**



# Head Start May Play a Role in Protecting Families

A series of linear regression models tested whether the effect of exposure to violence on child behavior and maternal depression varied with (or was moderated by) satisfaction, experience, and involvement in Head Start.



# Head Start May Play a Role in Protecting Families

- ❑ Being **satisfied** with Head Start and having a **positive experience** significantly moderated the negative effect of exposure to neighborhood violence on maternal depression and child behavior for Hispanic and White families.
- ❑ We also found that **higher involvement** in Head Start significantly moderated the negative effects of exposure to neighborhood violence on maternal depression for Hispanic families.
- ❑ No significant interactions were found for African American families.



# Summary

The FACES data support the notion that having high parental involvement, positive experiences, and increased satisfaction with Head Start may help protect families from the risks and challenges they often face.