

How to manage children with externalized behavior problems ? Effectiveness of a parent-implemented language intervention

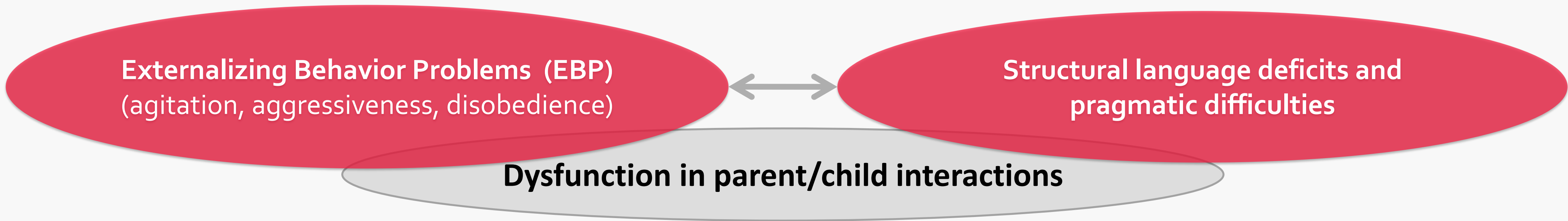
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1/3 of children with externalized behavior problems display language deficits and 2/3 pragmatic impairments (Mackie & Law, 2010). These difficulties are frequently undiagnosed.

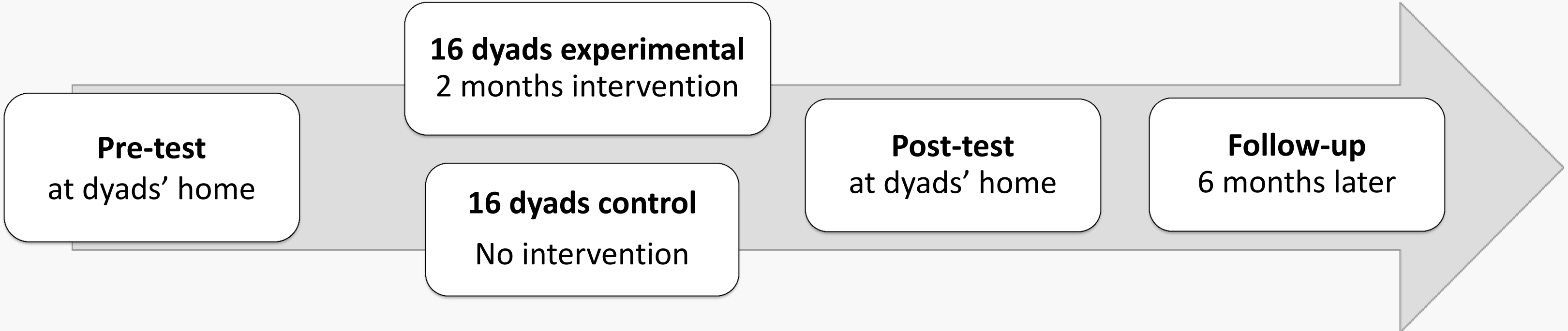
This association could be intensified by a common risk factor: **a dysfunction in parent/child interactions** (Barnett et al., 2012).

We evaluated the efficiency of a parent-implemented language intervention on parent/preschoolers interactions, preschoolers communication and behavioral characteristics.



METHODOLOGY

Participants : we had met thirty-two parent/child dyads.
3 to 5 years old, French speaking children whose parents encountered difficulties to manage their child behaviour.



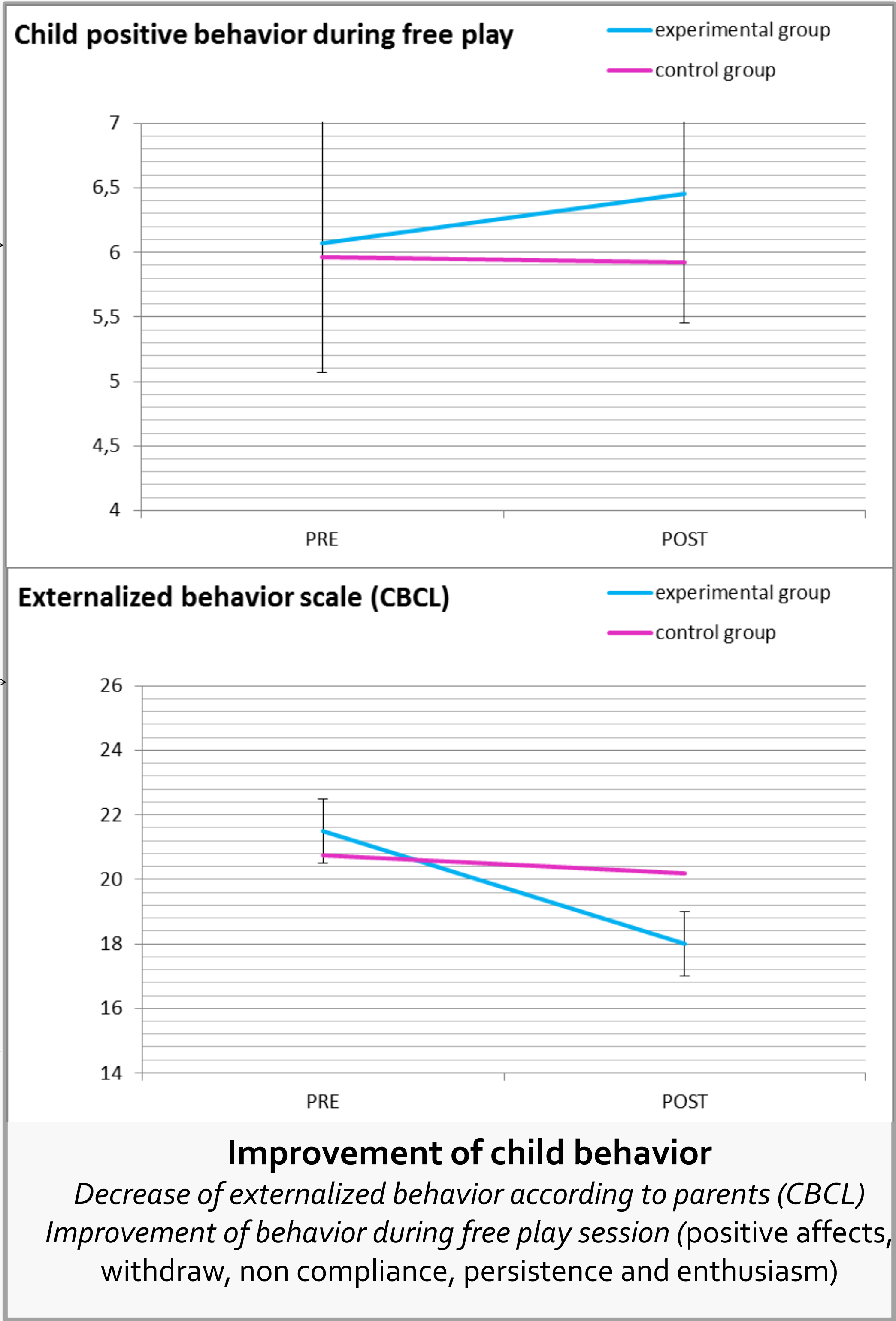
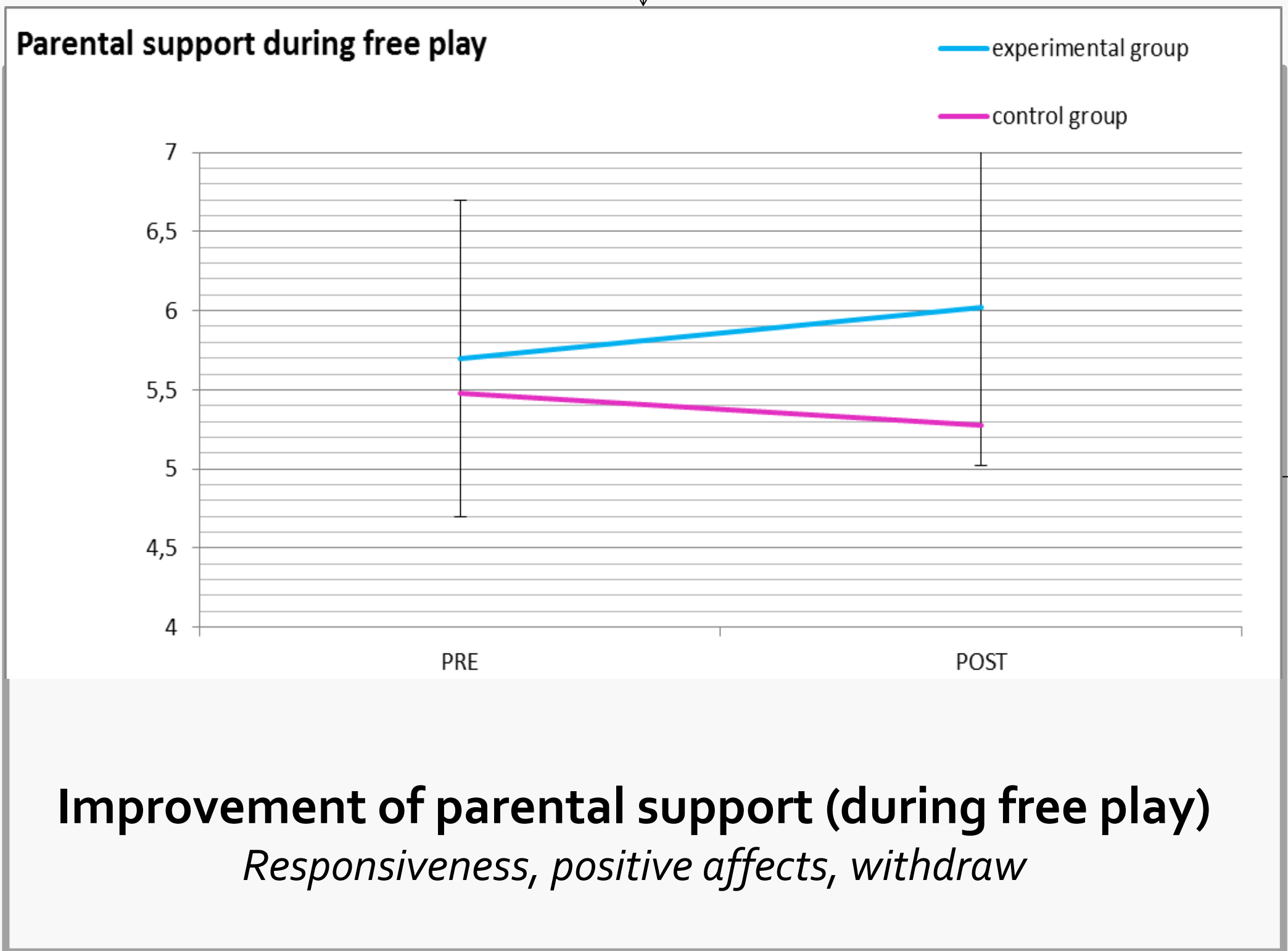
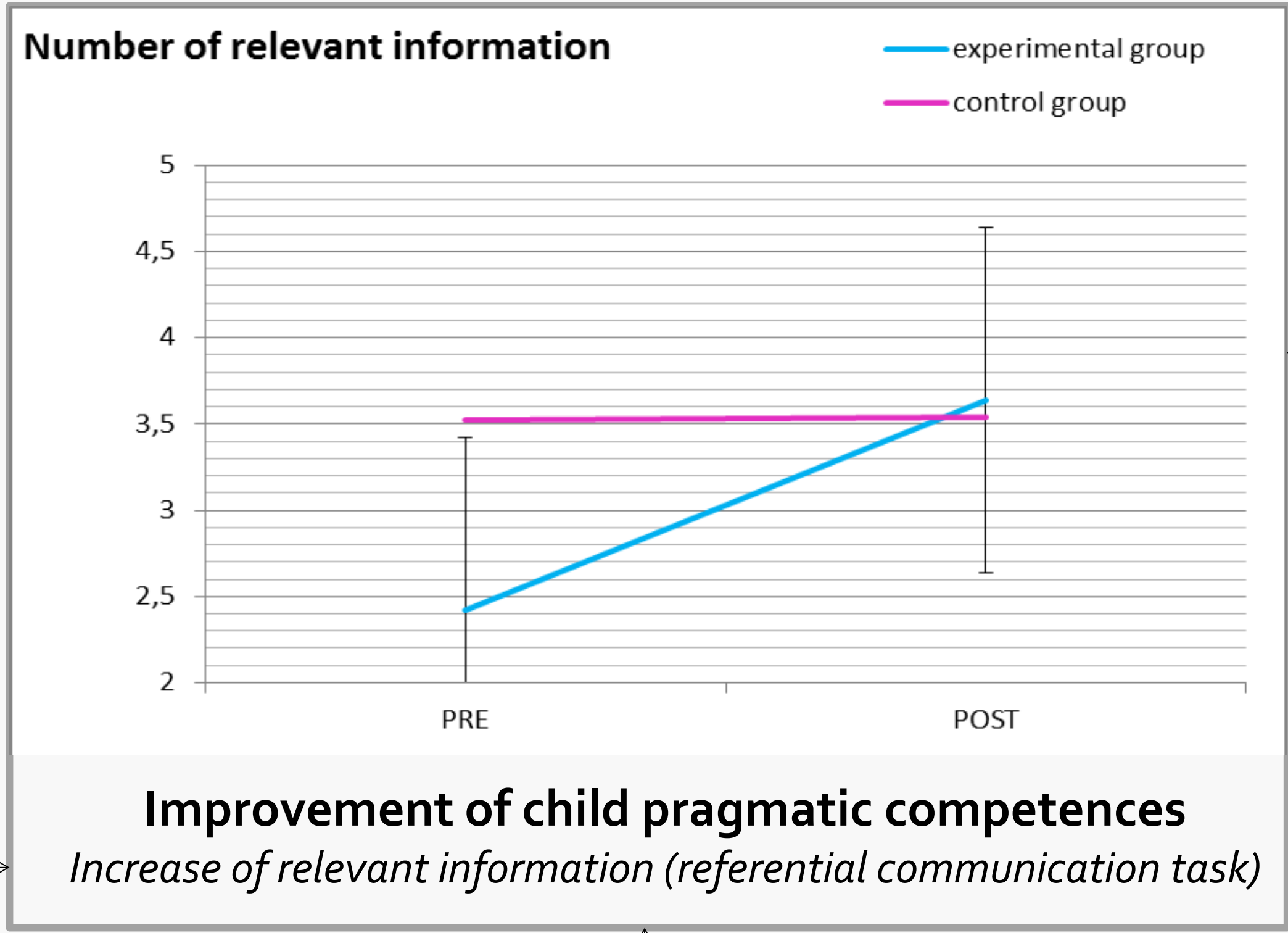
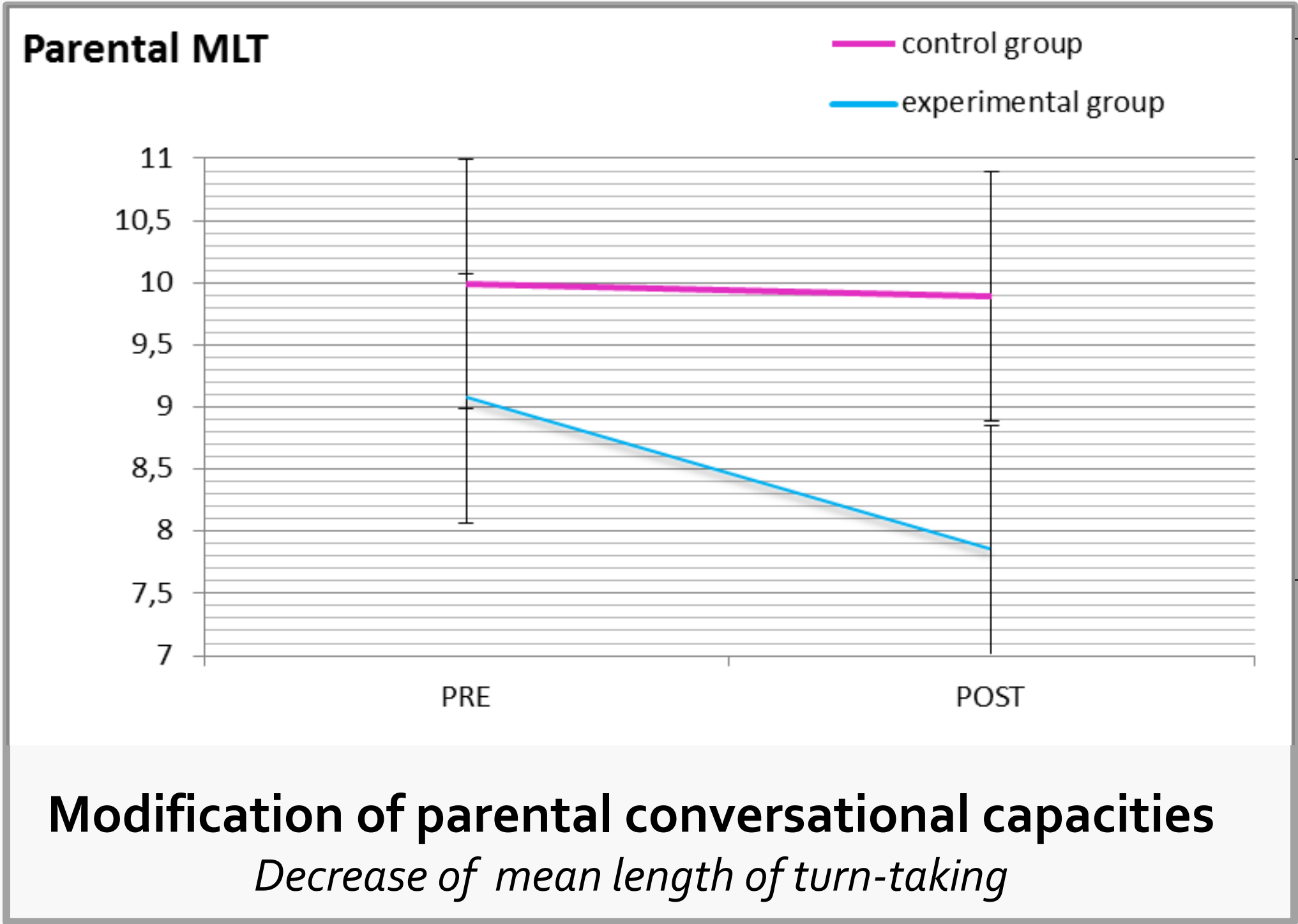
Measures and tasks	Variables
How is the parent/child communication ? Parent/child free play session (transcription by CHILDES)	Conversational capacities : parent and child mean length of turn-taking (MLT)
How are the parent/child interactions ? Parent/child free play session (Crowell & Feldman, 1988)	Parent : behavioral and emotional responsiveness, positive affects, withdraw and irritability Child : positive affects, withdraw, irritability, non compliance, persistence and enthusiasm
How are the child pragmatic competencies ? The child described 5 pictures in order to the experimenter find them (A referential communication task)	Number of relevant information Number of irrelevant information
How is the child behavior ? Parental questionnaire CBCL (Achenbach, 2004)	Attention problems Aggressive behavior

Intervention : Adapted from The *Hanen Early Language parent Program* (Girolametto & al., 1986). Series of eight group sessions (1.5 hours). Included : review of information from previous session, discussion of home activities, presentation of new strategies, opportunities to practice and explanation of activities to be carried out at home.

Week	Title of session	Content
1	We play an essential role in our child development!	Impact of the child communication for his socialization, behavior and learning achievement. Importance of playing with the child.
2	How can we become more responsive partners?	Following the child's lead. Enjoying the interactions with the child.
3	How to react to what the child say?	Maintaining face-to-face interactions. 4 strategies : repeating and interpreting, requesting for clarification and commenting the child's acts.
4	How to understand our child's behavior?	Balancing turn-taking. Asking real questions to encourage conversation.
5	How do we make ourselves understandable for our child?	Slowing down the rate of speech. Simplifying vocabulary and grammatical structures. Decreasing child instructions during play and increasing verbal praise.
6	What do we learn by watching us?	Review of the first sessions : strategies illustrated with participants pretest videos.
7		Video feedback session : coaching and feedback.
8	How to encourage our child development?	3 strategies : expansion, recast and responding labelling.

RESULTS

- Following the intervention :
- Parents modify their **conversational pattern** : decrease their length of turns, give a greater place for child in conversation.
 - Parents increase their child support and their **sensibility and responsiveness**.
 - Children **pragmatic abilities** are enhanced as a result of these modifications.
 - A diminution of child **externalized behavior** appears as a result of modifications of parental conversational and interactional patterns and enhancement of child communication.



Conclusion and clinical implications :

1. A **dysfunction of parent/child interactions** partly explains the communication deficits of children with EBP.
2. The **multidisciplinary assessment** of children with EBD shall include an evaluation of language development and particularly **pragmatic abilities**.
3. **Early identification and support** of communication needs of children with EBP is essential in clinical practice.