

INCREASING SOCIAL SUPPORT FOR NEW PARENTS: A PRELIMINARY LOOK AT ONE PROGRAM'S EFFECTIVENESS

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ABSTRACT

We know that child outcomes are often affected by parental factors such as perceived social support, but how can we assist parents in improving such factors?

The preliminary evaluation findings presented here indicate that **participation in a parenting curriculum is an effective way for new parents to gain some of the social support they need.**



What Does the Literature Say?

The literature shows that there is a relationship between social support and parental attitudes and behavior. For example, **when parent well-being suffers, so does the child's well-being** (Meadows, McLanahan, & Brooks-Gunn, 2007), **especially for those living in poverty and single mothers** (Andresen & Telleen, 1992).

METHODS

Incredible Years: Babies Classes

- Delivered in 6-12 sessions
- 15 participants

Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS)

- Administered at pre & post intervals
- Paired Samples T-Test on the Overall Score & 3 Subscale Scores

Caregiver Satisfaction Survey

- Administered at the end of the class
- Descriptive Statistics

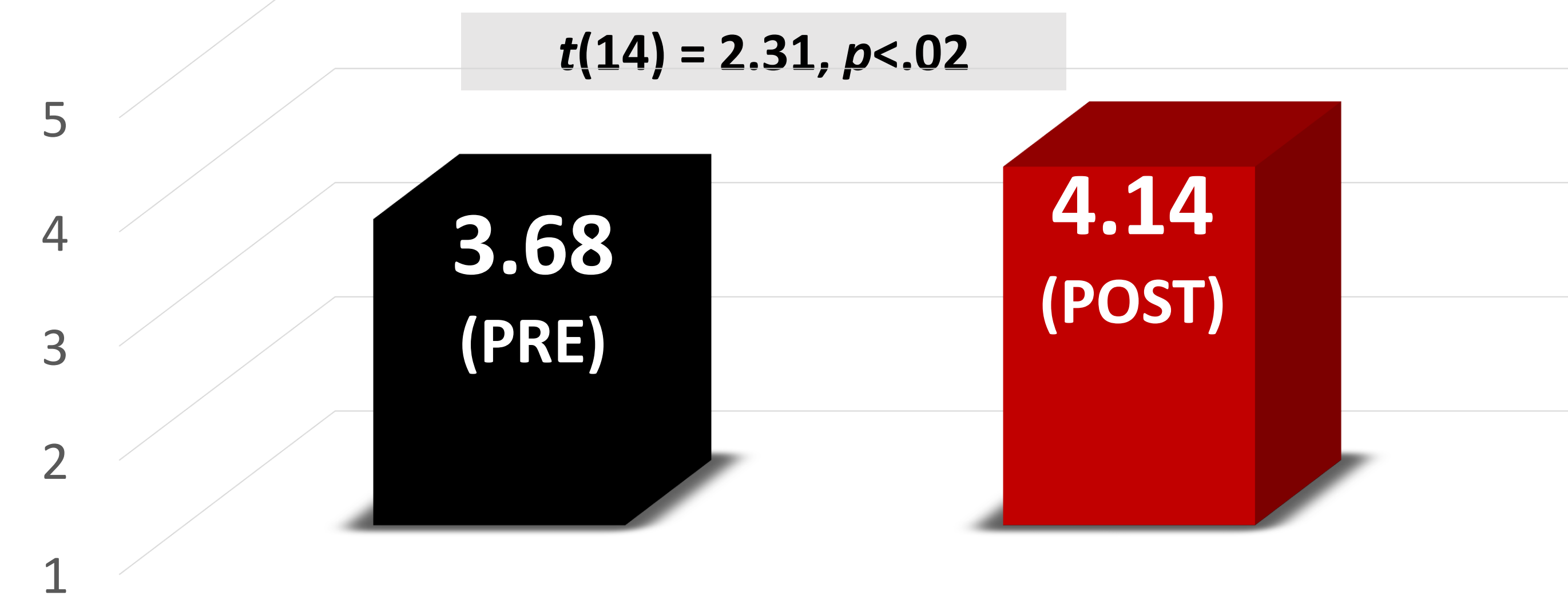
EVALUATION FINDINGS

Participant Demographics

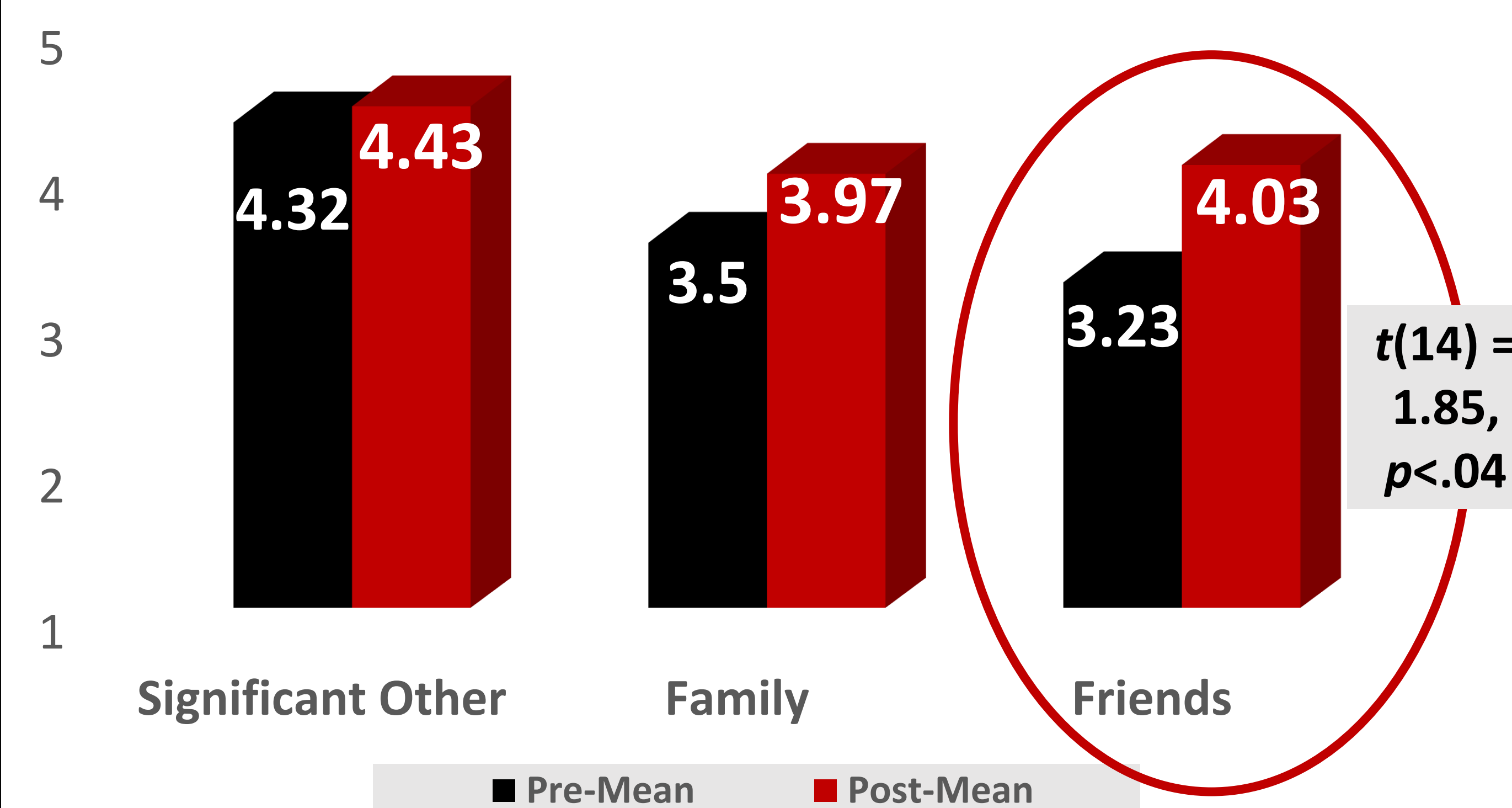
- All were **Female** (100%)
- Majority were **African American** (87%)
- Average age was **21**
- Most make **less than \$15,000/year** (>80%)
- Most were **not employed** (80%)
- Many were **currently pregnant** (>60%)

MSPSS

Overall Social Support Increased

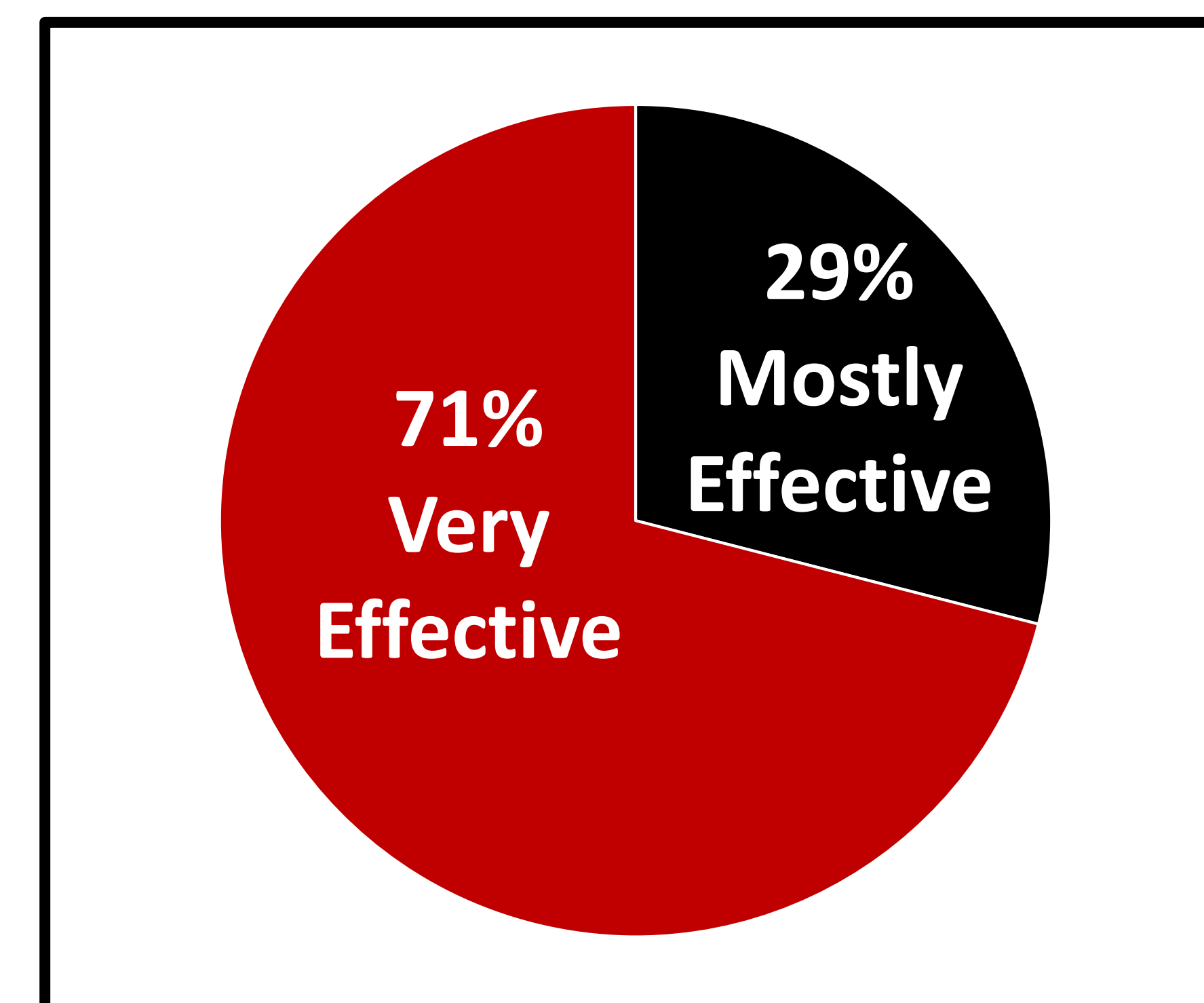


...specifically in the area of "Friends"



Caregiver Survey

Participants thought the classes were effective in helping them to **GAIN SUPPORT**



What was the main thing PARENTS LEARNED from attending the parenting classes?

- "Support"
- "The main thing I learned is **gaining support...**"
- "To **never be afraid to ask anyone for help...**"

CONCLUSIONS & IMPLICATIONS

1. Parenting programs can be effective in building parental social support.
2. Social support is important for parents, especially single mothers living in poverty.
3. Increasing parental social support is a way to improve outcomes for children.