

The Effectiveness of Families and Schools Together: Improving Parent, Child, and School Outcomes*

**Haluk Soydan (Institute for Evidence Base Social Work Practice)
Chad Nye (University of Central Florida)
Salvador Chacón-Moscoso (University of Seville)
David Alarcón-Rubio (University of Seville)
Julio Sánchez-Meca (University of Murcia)
Fulgencio Marin Martinez (University of Murcia)
Tania Huedo (University of Murcia)**

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Introduction

- Among preventive programs for younger children, Families and Schools Together program (FAST) seems promising and takes an outstanding place (See Layzer et. al. 2001).
- FAST has been implemented in 45 states in the United States, and internationally in five countries (Australia, Austria, Canada, Germany, and Russia).



Philosophy of FAST

Families and Schools Together (FAST) **builds protective factors** on multiple levels around children identified by teachers as being **at risk of failure in school**. It is a positive approach based on family systems and community/school/parent collaborations to **enhance the child's functioning** in school, in the community, and at home



Program of FAST

FAST is an eight-week, multi-family group process with structured activities to build social connections and reduce social isolation in 3 steps:

Step 1 FAST

An outreach process by trained FAST team partners to invite whole family participation in FAST with face to face visits at the parents' convenience;



Step 2 FAST

An 8 week multi-family engagement process for 8-12 families facilitated by a trained parent-professional partnership (for which there are site-based training visitors who directly observe pilot implementations and work to adapt the process to respond to local needs);



Step 3 FAST

An ongoing two year FASTWORKS reunion process of monthly multi-family meetings of FAST graduates which is run by the families with support of the team.



FAST Program Goals

- Enhance family functioning.
- Prevent the target child from experiencing school failure.
- Prevent substance abuse by the child and family.
- Reduce the stress that parents and children experience from daily life situations.



Review Question

How effective is the
FAST program in
improving child,
parent, and school
outcomes?



Specific Outcomes

Outcomes related to Child

- Social skills
- Attention span
- Academic competence and performance
- Level of aggression at home and in the classroom
- Level of anxiety and depression

Outcomes related to Parent

- Level of anxiety and depression
- Parent involvement in school
- Relationship outcomes
- Level of family conflict
- Objectives of the Review



Method

Search for studies to review:

- Primary source for identified studies was the FAST Center at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI and the program originator, Dr Lynn McDonald.
- Search strategies included electronic searches to include: ERIC, PSYCH Info, Educational Abstraction Abstracts, Academic Index, SocAbstracts, NCJRS Abstracts, and Dissertation Abstracts
- International.



Method

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

- Only randomized trials with assignment to either a treatment or control condition prior to the initiation of the FAST program are included in the review.
- Only available studies conducted in the United States are included in the review



Families & Schools Together

Funding Source	NIDA	OERI	OSERS	SAMHSA
Location	Inner City-Latino/ African American	Rural-Native American	Urban-African American	Urban-Latino/African American
Sample Size	473 Families 10 Schools	100 Families 3 Schools	407 Families 9 Schools	67 Families 8 Schools
Follow Up	2 year	1 year	1 year	1 year
Design	R of classes prior to recruitment into program	Tch CBCL used to match before R assign	Recruited at sch level; R of matched pairs with Tch CBCL	R of matched pairs with Tch CBCL

Assessment of Methodological Quality: Coding System

1. Sample Characteristics

- Child age
 - Age (Range)
 - Age (mean)
- SES

2. Intervention Characteristics

- length of program
- number of sessions



Coding System

3. Design

- Experimental ; randomized

4. Units Random Assignment

- None and without control of extraneous variables
- None but with control of extraneous variables.
- Yes



Coding System

5. Sample size

- $n < 5$
- $5 < n < 10$
- $n > 10$

6. Attrition in experimental group posttest

- $> 30\%$
- $< 30\%$
- Without Attrition



Coding System

7. Follow-up period

- < 6 months
- 6-11 months
- > 11 months

8. Moments of measurement

- Post intervention
- Pre and post intervention

9. All measures in pretest appear in posttest

- No
- Some
- All of them



Coding System

10. Normalized dependent variables

- Without (self-reports and post hoc records)
- Questionnaires or standardized self-reports
- At least one is objective (psychophysiological measures)

11. Intervention homogeneity

- subjects do not receive the treatment in the same contextual conditions
- subjects receive treatment in the same contextual conditions

12. Control Techniques

- Blind (beneficiaries)
- Blind (implementers)
- Both
- Other



Outcomes Measures & Variables

- **Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL)**
 - Subscore for internalizing behavior
 - Subscore for externalizing behavior

- **Social Skills Rating System (SSRS)**



Procedure

- 1.** Two independent reviewers completed the assignment of the quality issues.
- 2.** All questions concerning the rating of methodological quality was resolved through a consensus decision process.
- 3.** Outcomes variables: CBCL and SSRS were rated by teachers and parents.
- 4.** Analysis Instruments: SPSS 11.0 to codify and analyze data.



Descriptive Results

1. Sample Characteristics

- **Child age**
Age (Range): 6-10
Age (mean) = 7.37
- **SES: low income**



Descriptive Results

2. Intervention Characteristics

- length of program: 8 weeks
- number of sessions: 8
- length of sessions: 2.5 hours



Descriptive Results

3. Design

- Experimental ; randomized

4. Units random assignment

- Yes

5. Sample size

- $n > 9$

6. Attrition in experimental group posttest

- $< 30 \%$



Descriptive Results

7. Follow-up period

- > 11 months

8. Moments of measurement:

- Pre and post intervention

9. All measures in pretest appear in posttest.

- All of them



Descriptive Results

10. Normalized dependent variables

- Questionnaires or standardized self-reports

11. Intervention homogeneity

- subjects receive treatment in the same contextual conditions

12. Control Techniques

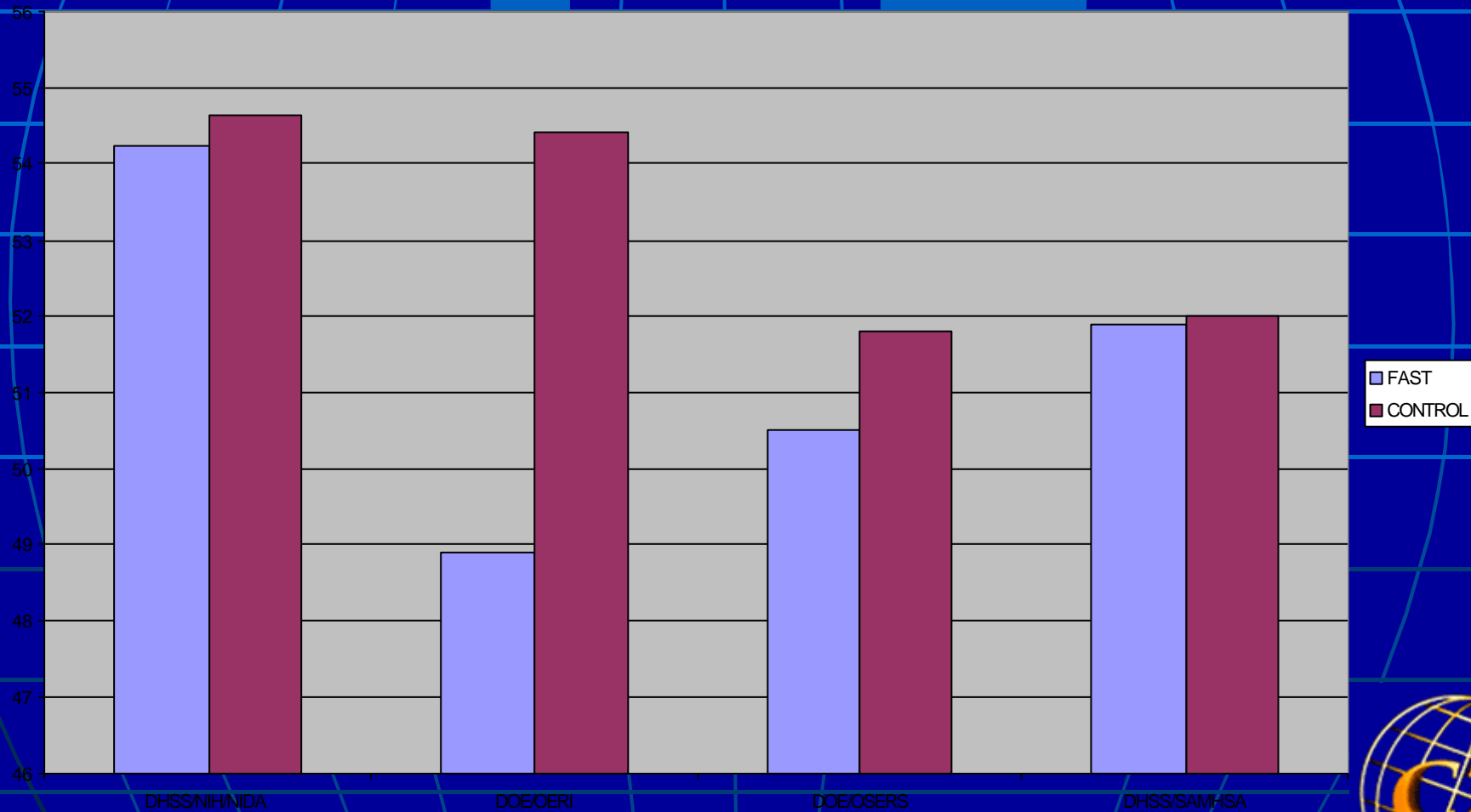
- Blind (implementers)
- Other



	<u>Immediate CBC</u>	<u>1 Year Post CBC</u>	<u>2 Years Post CBC</u>
Teachers	Study 1: M & SD	Study 1: M & SD	
	Study 2: F value	Study 2: F value	
	Study 3: M & SD		Study 3: M & SD
	Study 4: F value	Study 4: F value	
Parents	Study 1: M & SD	Study 1: M & SD	
	Study 2: F value	Study 2: F value	
	Study 4: F value	Study 4: F value	

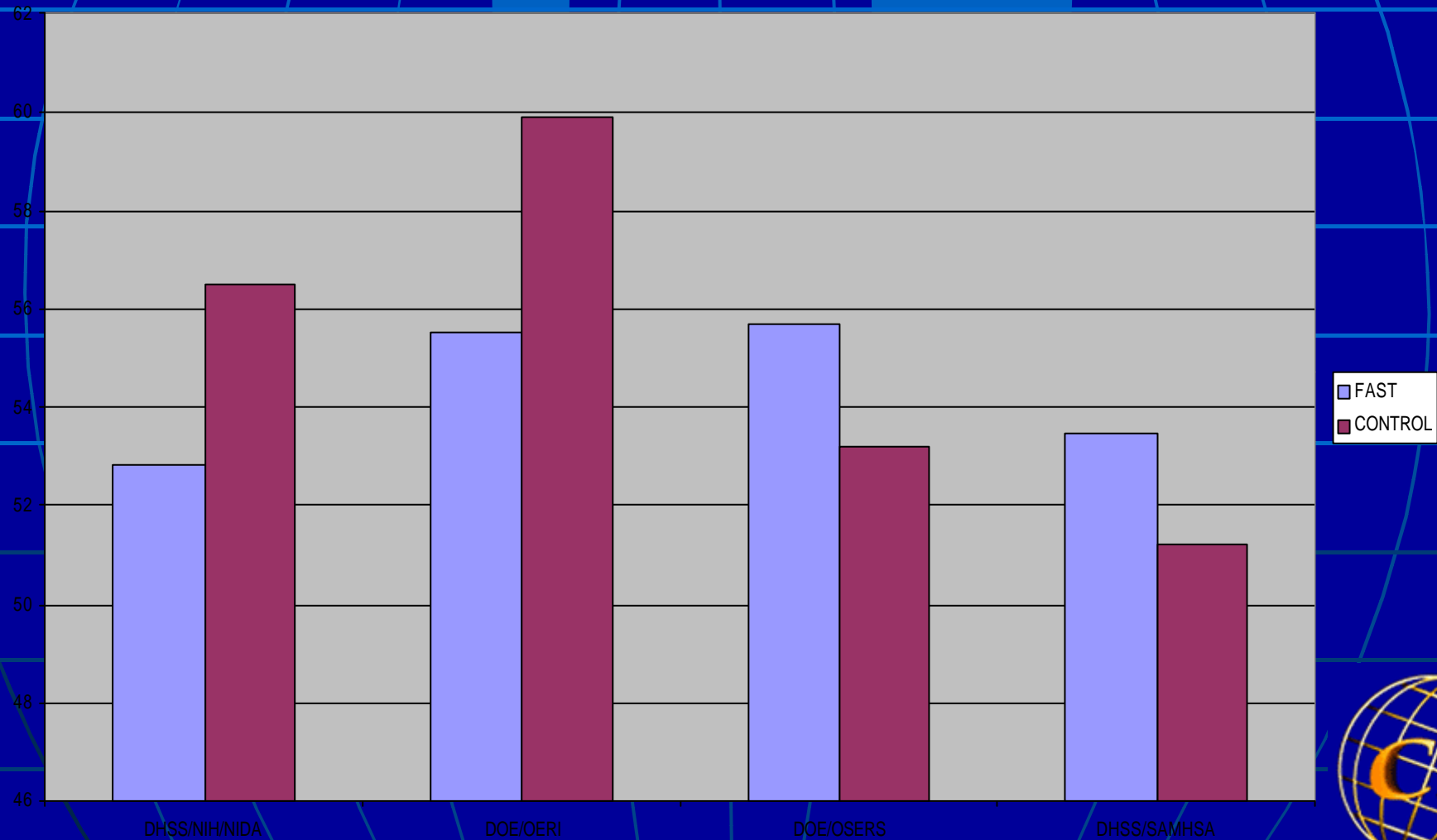
Outcome Variable (average posttest effects)

Child Behavior Checklist Internalization: **Teacher**



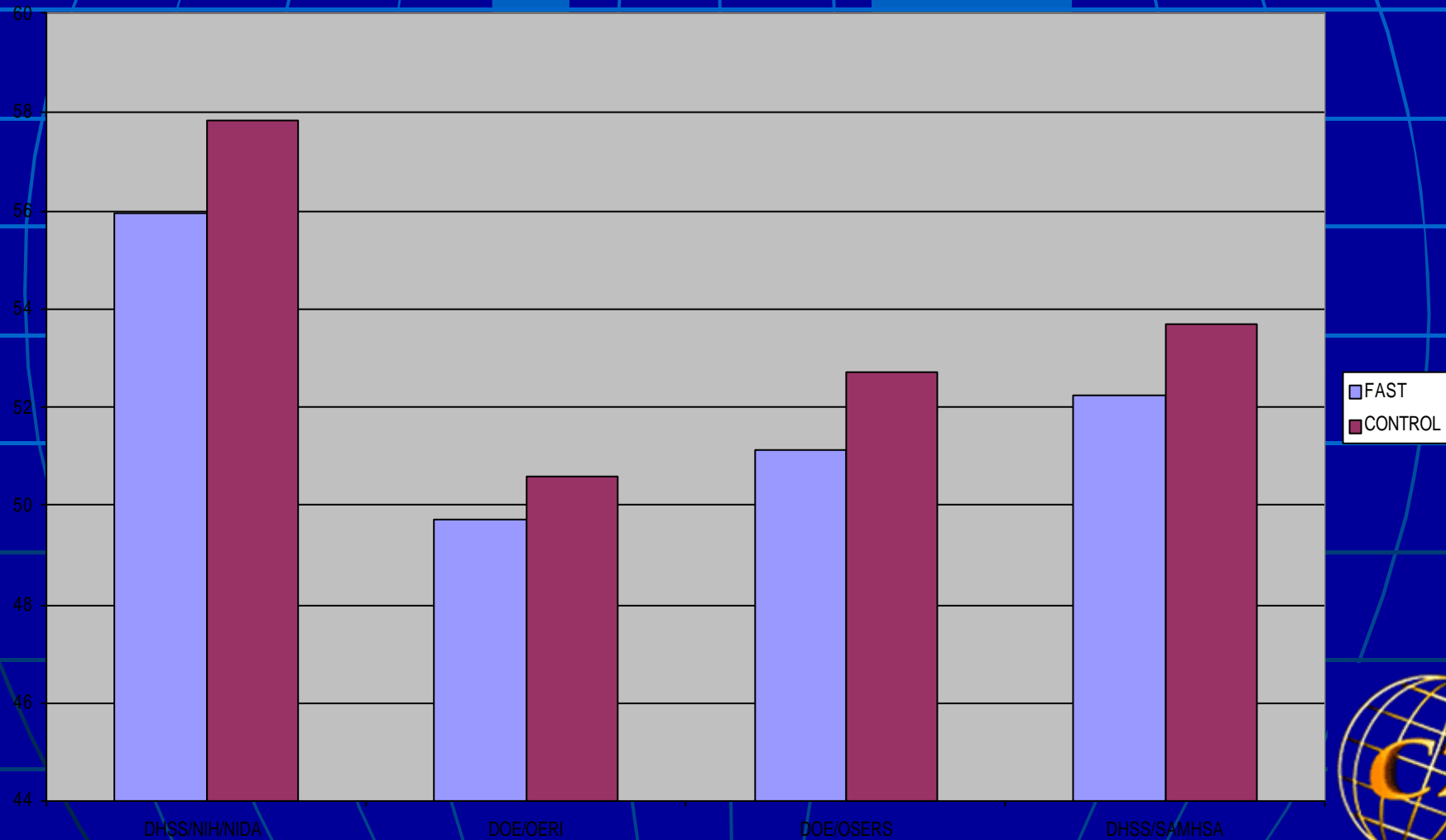
Outcome Variable (average posttest effects)

Child Behavior Checklist Externalization: **Teacher**



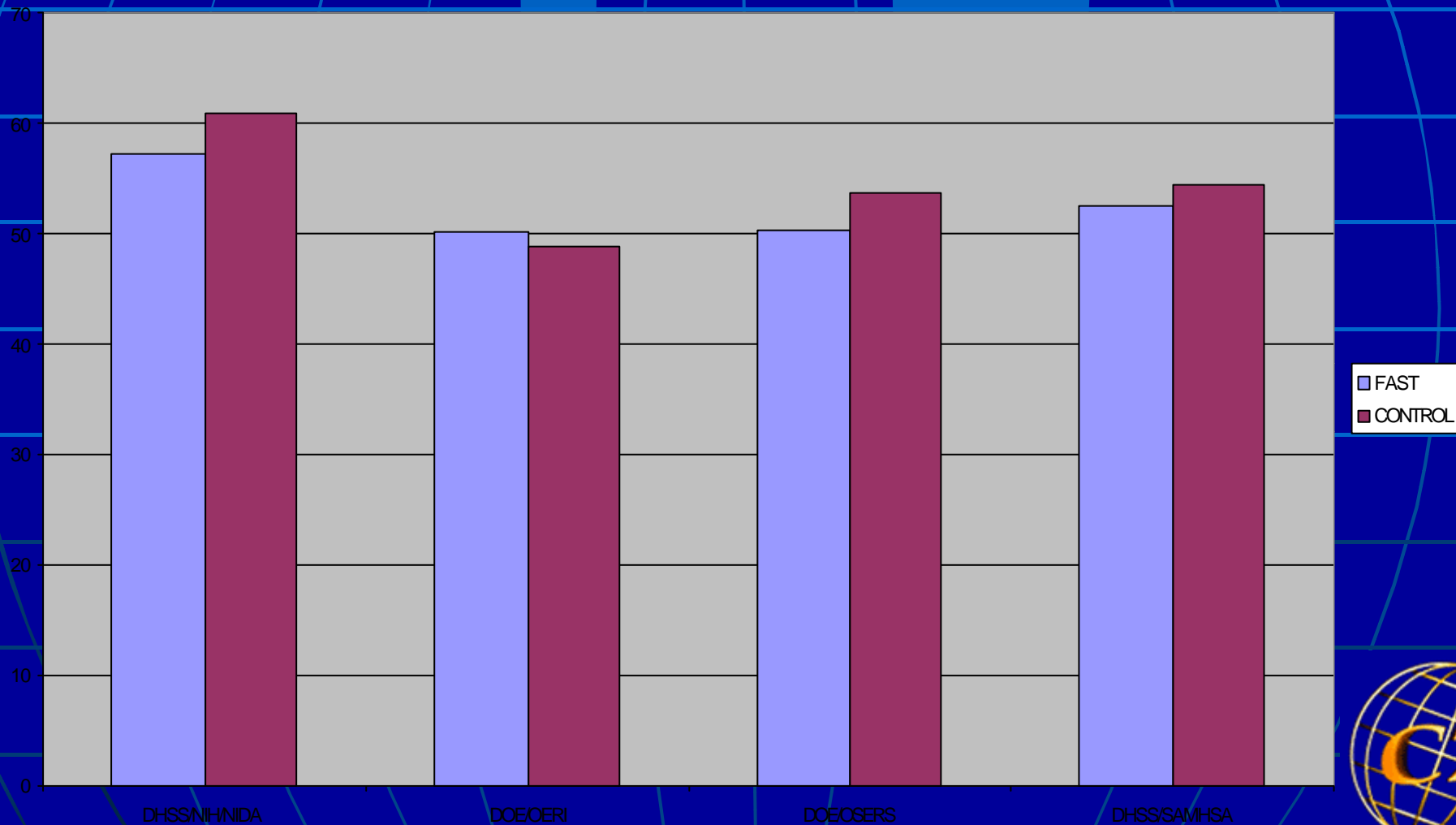
Outcome Variable (average posttest effects)

Child Behavior Checklist Internalization: Parent



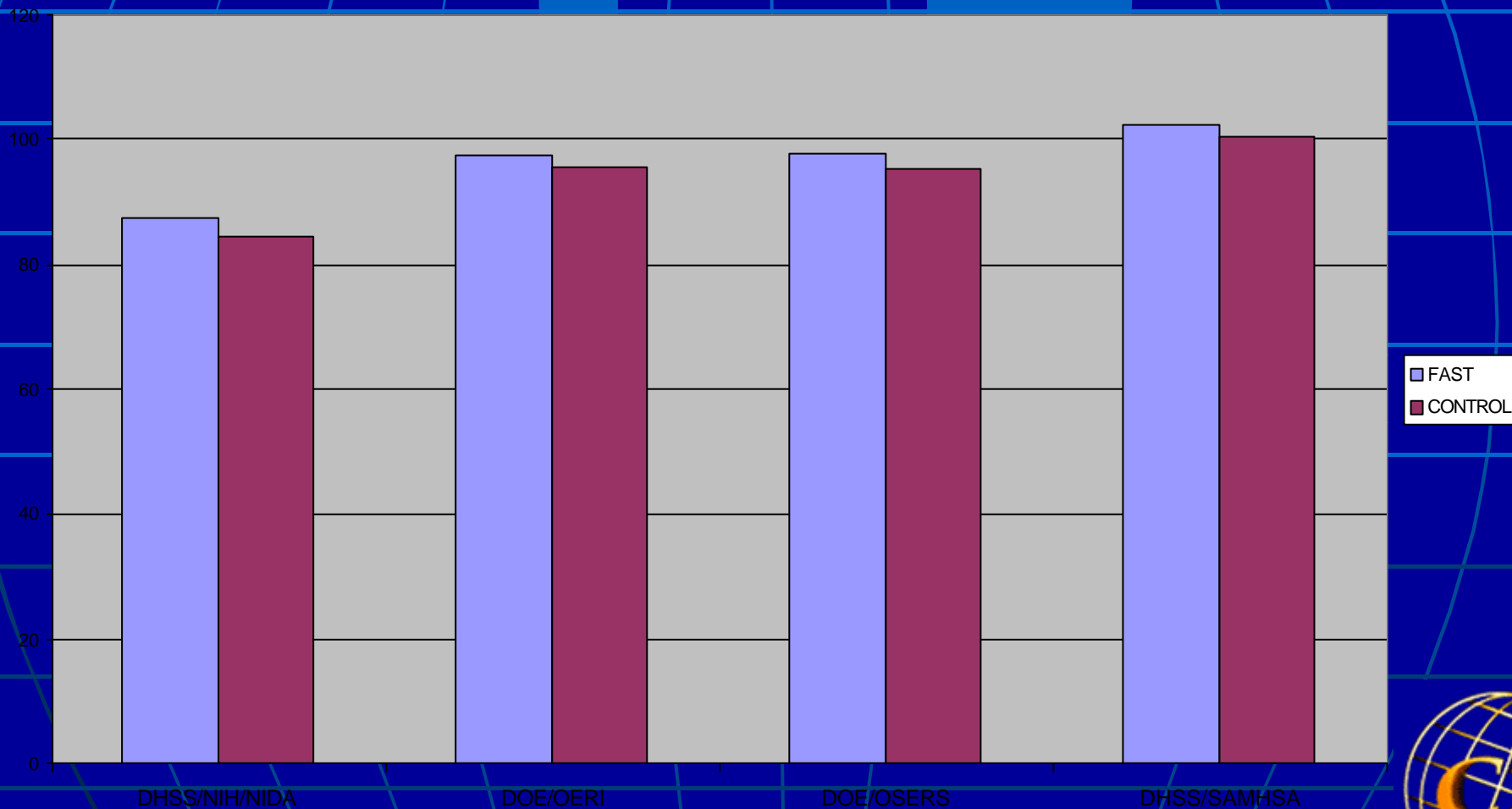
Outcome Variable (average posttest effects)

Child Behavior Checklist Externalization: **Parent**



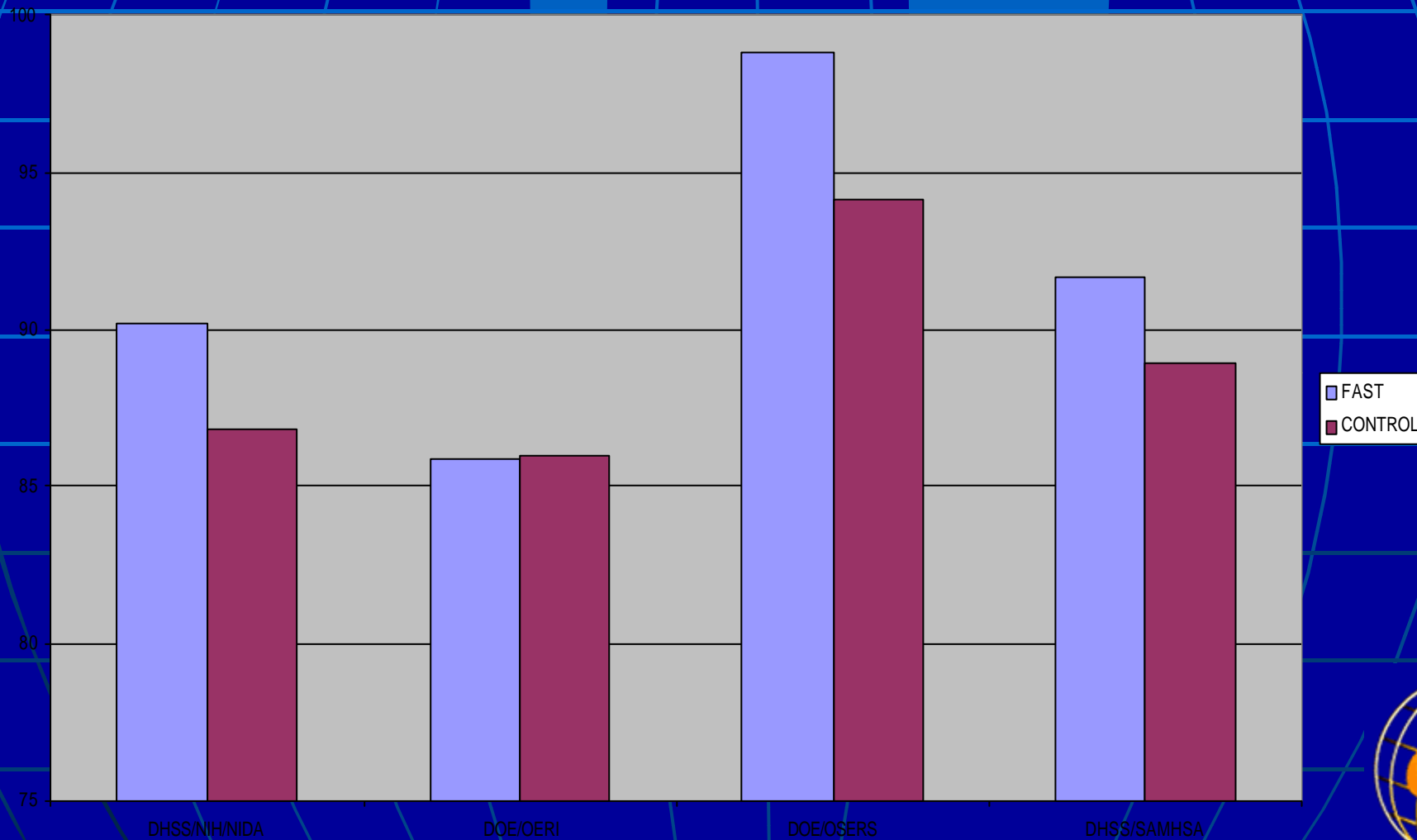
Outcome Variable (average posttest effects)

Social Skills Rating System: **Teacher**

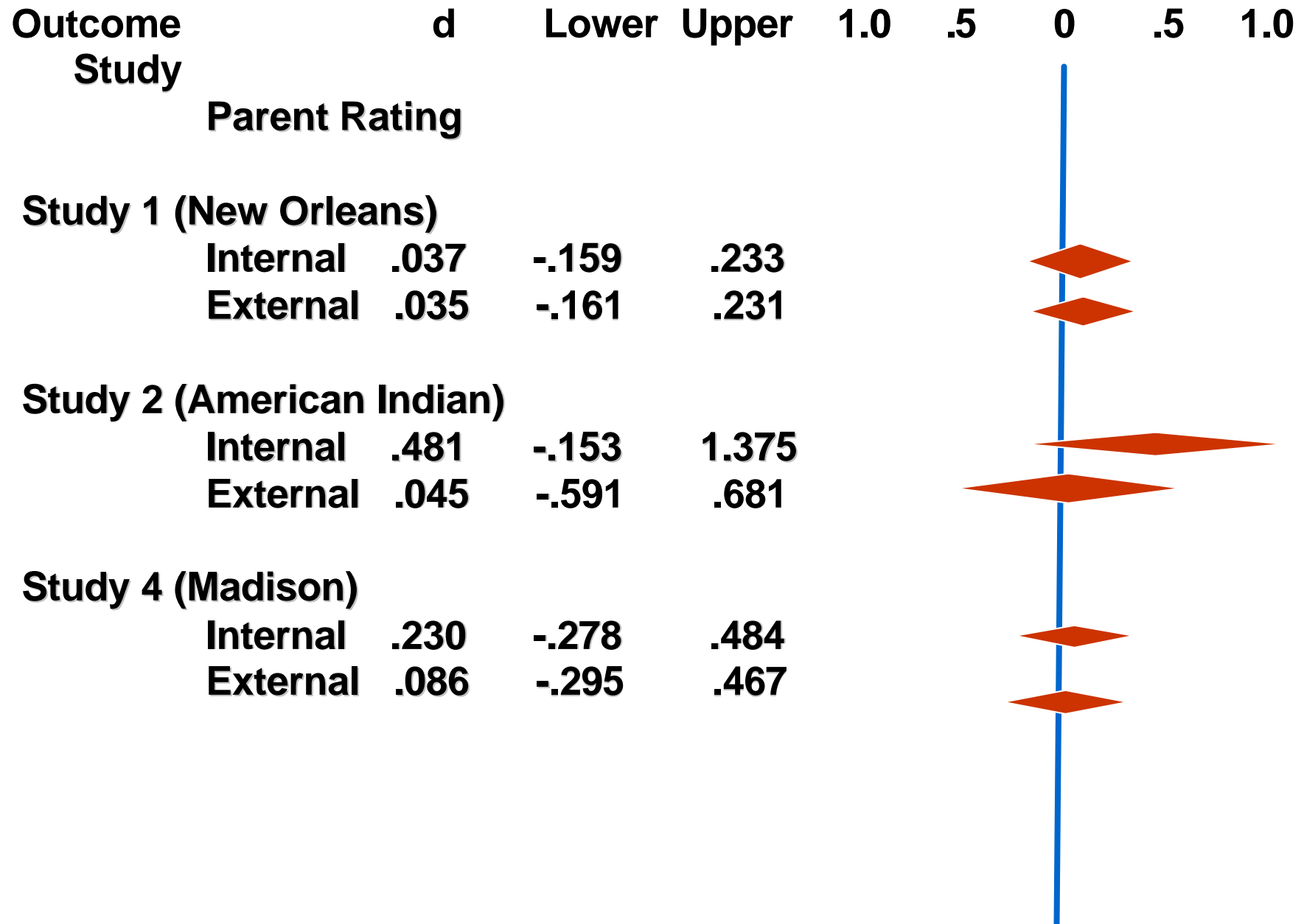


Outcome Variable (average posttest effects)

Social Skills Rating System: Parent



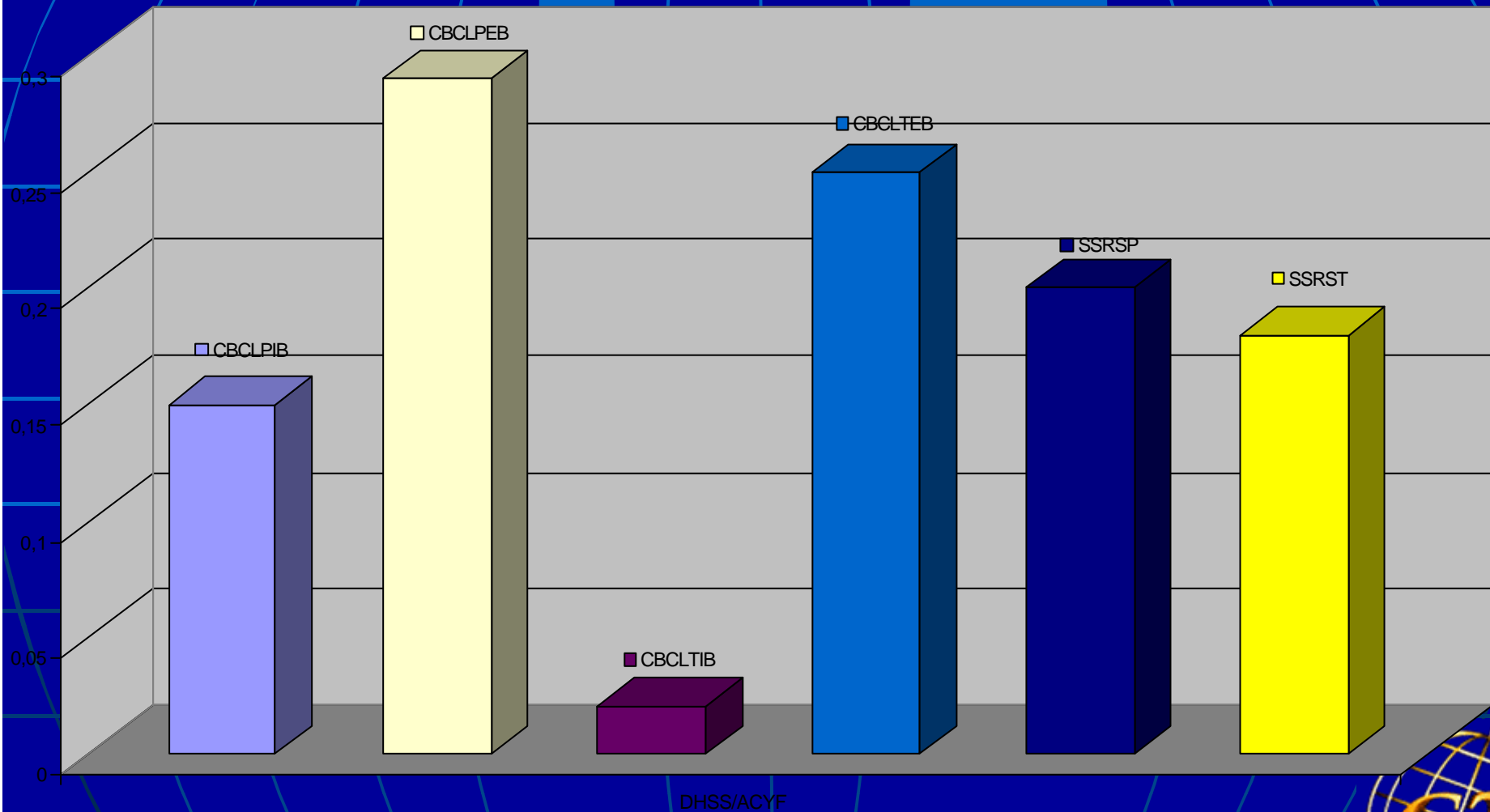
Inmediate Post CBCL: Parent Rating



Outcome Variable

Abt Research Associates (African-American)

Subscales Effect Sizes



DHSS/ACYF



Key Points

- Homogeneous interventions
- High quality methodological characteristics
- Posttest Outcome variables available
- Enhance use of primary data
- Increase reported data
- Include process variables
- Compare results with Non-Randomized studies

