



# Addressing the Impact of Childhood Exposure to Violence: Safe From the Start Program Evaluation Findings

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**618,000** children  
victimized in 2020

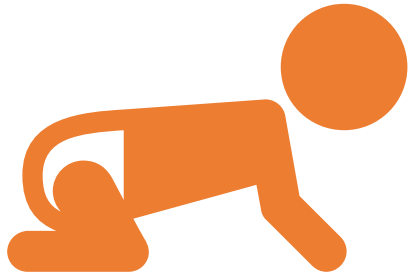
U.S. - **8.4** victims per **1,000**  
children

Illinois - **12.8** victims per **1,000**  
children

(U.S. Department of Health & Human  
Services et al., 2022)

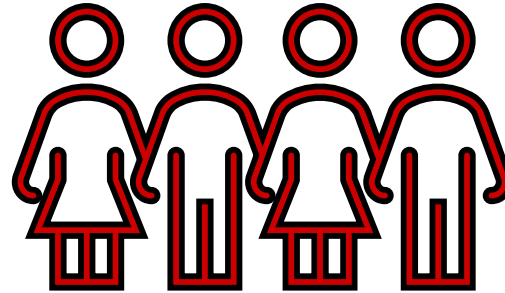
**57.7%** children  
experienced violence

physical assault  
sexual victimization  
maltreatment  
property victimization  
domestic violence  
intimate partner violence  
community violence  
(Finkelhor et al., 2015)



## Age

<5 years old  
25.1 per 1,000  
children



## Gender

8.9 per 1,000 **girls** >  
7.9 per 1,000 **boys**



## Race & Ethnicity

American Indian  
(15.5 per 1,000)  
Black  
(13.2 per 1,000)

(U.S. Department of Health & Human Services et al., 2022)

## Individual Factors

- Child's sex (OJP, 2020)
- Race x poverty (Dixon, 2008, as cited in Phillips et al., 2022)
- Prior victimization (Finkelhor et al., 2009)

## Family Factors

- Substance abuse (U.S. DHHS et al., 2022)
- Parental mental health (Moore et al., 2015)
- Biological parents (Maguire-Jack et al., 2022)
- Caregiver-child relationship (Assink, 2019)

## Community Factors

- Resources (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2019)
- Sense of belonging (Moore et al., 2015)
- Social supports (Maguire-Jack, 2022)

## **Physical** (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2019)

- Malnutrition
- Cardiovascular disease
- Diabetes

## **Social/Emotional** (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2019)

- Poor emotional health
- Insecure caregiver-child attachment

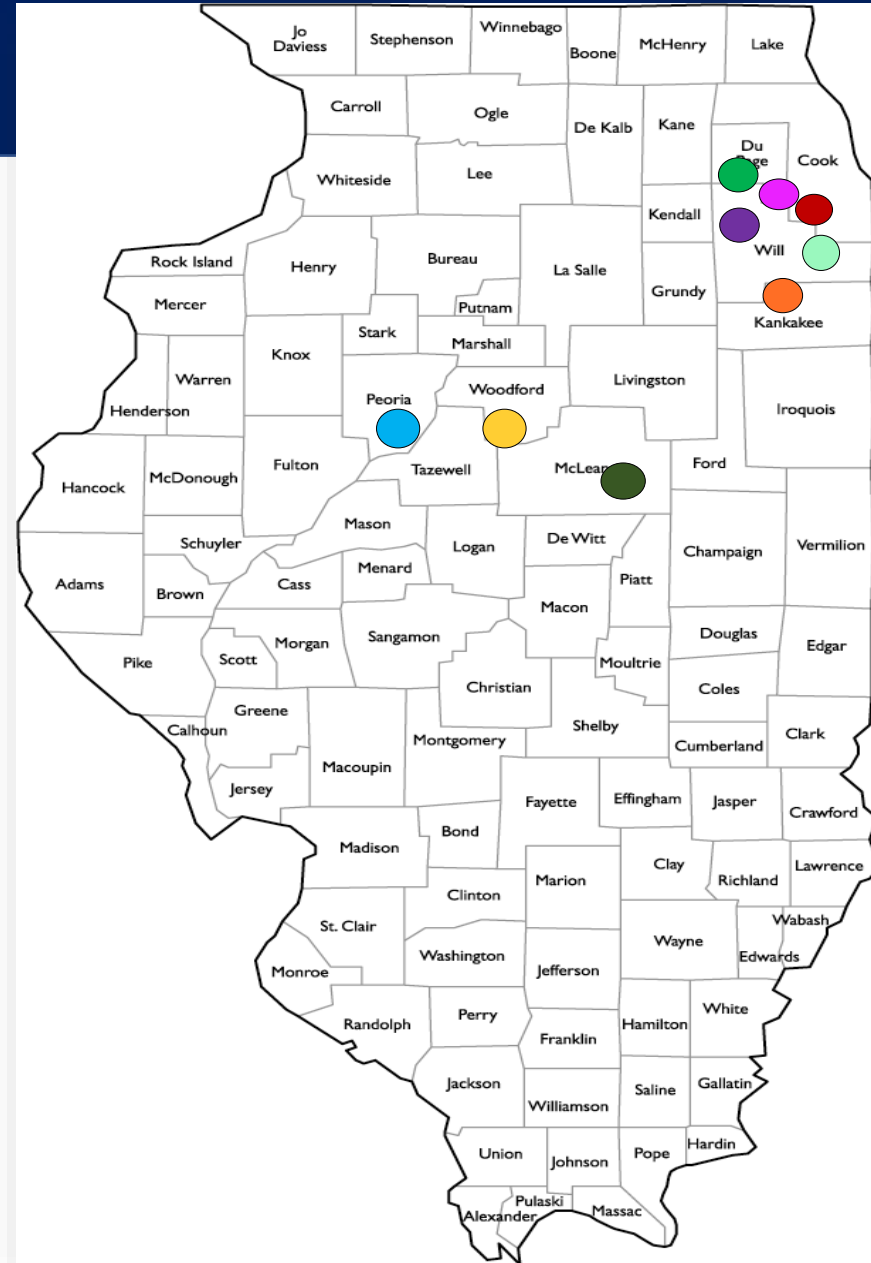
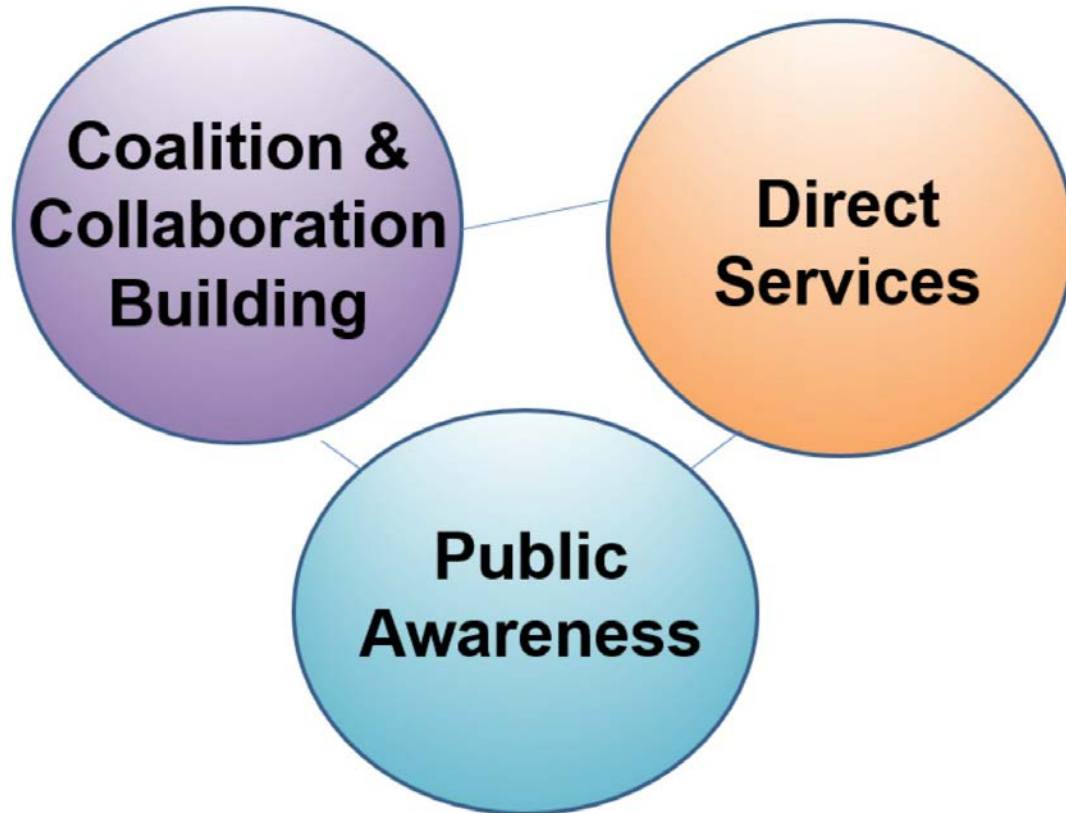
## **Psychological** (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2019)

- Diminished cognitive skills
- Toxic Stress

## **Behavioral** (Duke et al., 2010, as cited in OJP, 2020)

- Substance dependency
- Delinquency
- Risky sexual behaviors
- Perpetrating violence

## Safe From the Start Program



1. What are the characteristics and experiences of young children and caregivers exposed to violence?
2. What are the risk and protective factors for children at the individual, family, and community levels?
3. What is the impact of violence on young children?
4. What types of services do children and their caregivers receive?
5. What is the impact of service provision on children and their caregivers?



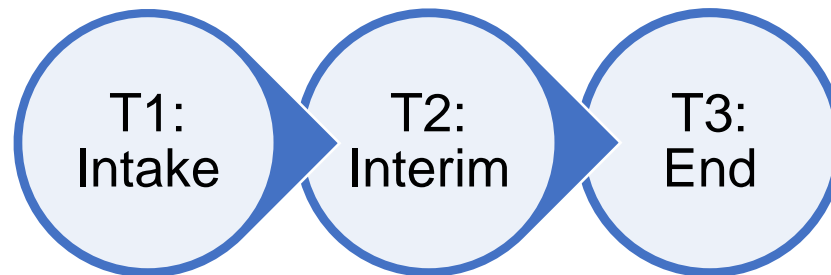
**Inclusion Criteria:** Caregiver has to have at least one child under five years old who was exposed to violence.



**Informed Consent:** Providers inform caregivers of study. Only those who provide written consent are included.



**Data Collection Period:** July 1, 2011, to June 30, 2021  
Providers collected case level data at three timepoints and entered information into a centralized database.



# Data Sources

| Assessment Name  | Description   | Validity/<br>Reliability   | Timepoint<br>Administration   |
|--|---|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Background Information Form (BIF)</b>   | Gathers client demographics, violence exposure characteristics, risk & protective factors, and family history | N/A                        | Time 1                        |
| <b>Child Behavioral Checklist 1 ½ -5 (CBCL)</b>  | Measures internalizing and externalizing behavioral problems in young children                                | 85%<br>reliability rate    | Time 1, 2, & 3                |
| <b>Ages and Stages Questionnaire 1<sup>st</sup> Edition (ASQ)</b>                        | Identifies children at risk for developmental delays or disorders by measuring 5 key areas                    | 86%<br>validity rate       | Time 1 &<br>Time 2 (Optional) |
| <b>Ages and Stages Questionnaire: Social-Emotional 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (ASQ:SE-2)</b> | Measures social-emotional behaviors in young children   | 92%<br>validity rate       | Time 1 &<br>Time 2 (Optional) |
| <b>Parenting Stress Index Short Form 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (PSI-SF-3)</b>               | Measures three domains of parental stress for caregivers  | 68-85%<br>reliability rate | Time 1, 2, & 3                |
| <b>Child and Caregiver Completion of Services Form</b>                                   | Gathers information on a family's progress and termination from the program                                   | N/A                        | Time 3                        |

- Analytic Strategy

- Cross Tabulations using Chi-Square Statistic
- Paired Sample T-Tests
- McNemar Tests

- Limitations

- Non-Representative Sample
- Missing Data



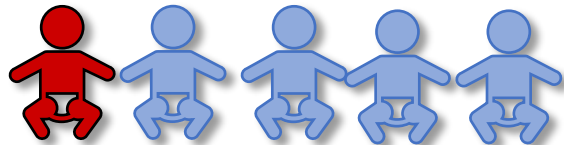
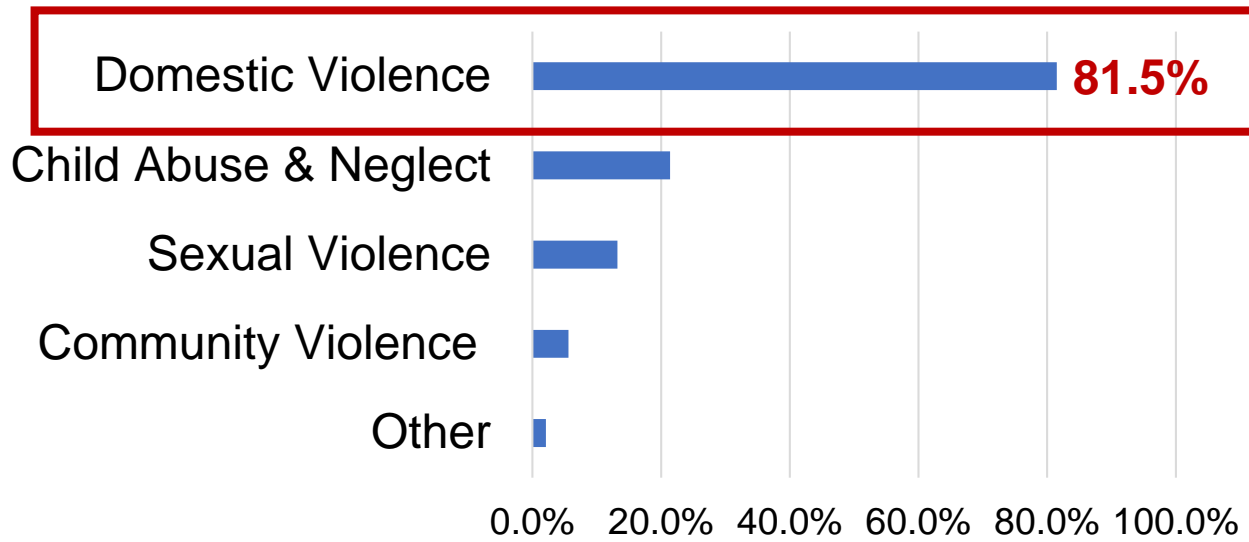
**2,272 children and 1,408 caregivers**



**83.5% of caregivers were the child's mother  
(Biological, Adoptive, Stepmother)**

| Demographic Information | Child                      | <i>N</i> | Caregiver (Mother)           | <i>N</i> |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|----------|------------------------------|----------|
| Age                     | 5 years old<br>Range: 0-17 | 2,029    | 30 years old<br>Range: 17-54 | 997      |
| Race/Ethnicity          | 39.9% White                | 1,991    | 61.1% White                  | 736      |
| Sex                     | 52.2% Male                 | 1,973    | N/A                          | N/A      |

## Percentages of Children Exposed to Violence, By Violence Type (n = 1,922)



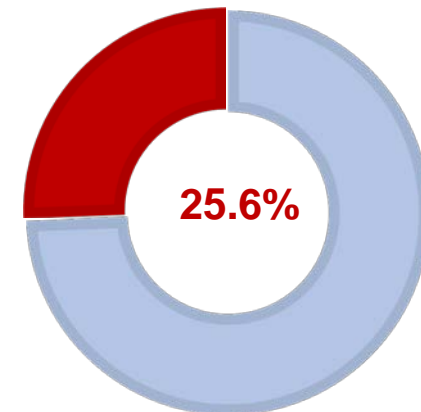
One in five children were exposed to two or more types of violence (n = 1,922).

## ASQ Findings

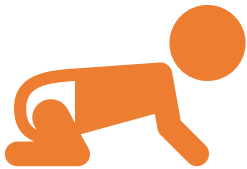
### Key Developmental Areas (4-60 Month Old)

- Communication
- Gross Motor
- Fine Motor
- Problem Solving
- Personal Social

### Percentage of Children At-Risk for Developmental Delays in at Least One Area at Time 1 (n = 980)



## Associations Between Child Characteristics and Violence Exposure



Older children (6+) were exposed to sexual violence more than younger children (0-2)

$$X^2(2, N = 2,029) = 21.80, p < .001$$



Female children were exposed to sexual violence more than male children

$$X^2(1, N = 1,973) = 32.79, p < .001$$



Black children were exposed to community violence more than other races

$$X^2(6, N = 2,006) = 66.90, p < .001$$

## Numbers and Percentages of Children with a Family Risk Factor

| Risk Factor                             | <i>n</i> | %    |
|---|----------|------|
| Single Parent ( <i>N</i> = 1,958)       | 1,480    | 76.6 |
| Mental Health Issue ( <i>N</i> = 1,976) | 1,123    | 61.4 |
| Living in Poverty ( <i>N</i> = 1,459)   | 782      | 53.6 |
| Housing Insecurity ( <i>N</i> = 1,954)  | 452      | 23   |

**Community Support:** 68.3% of caregivers felt supported by their community

## Services Provided



- 53% received case management
- 50.5% received individual therapy
- 47.4% received family therapy



- 61.8% received case management
- 46% received individual therapy
- 44.1% received family therapy

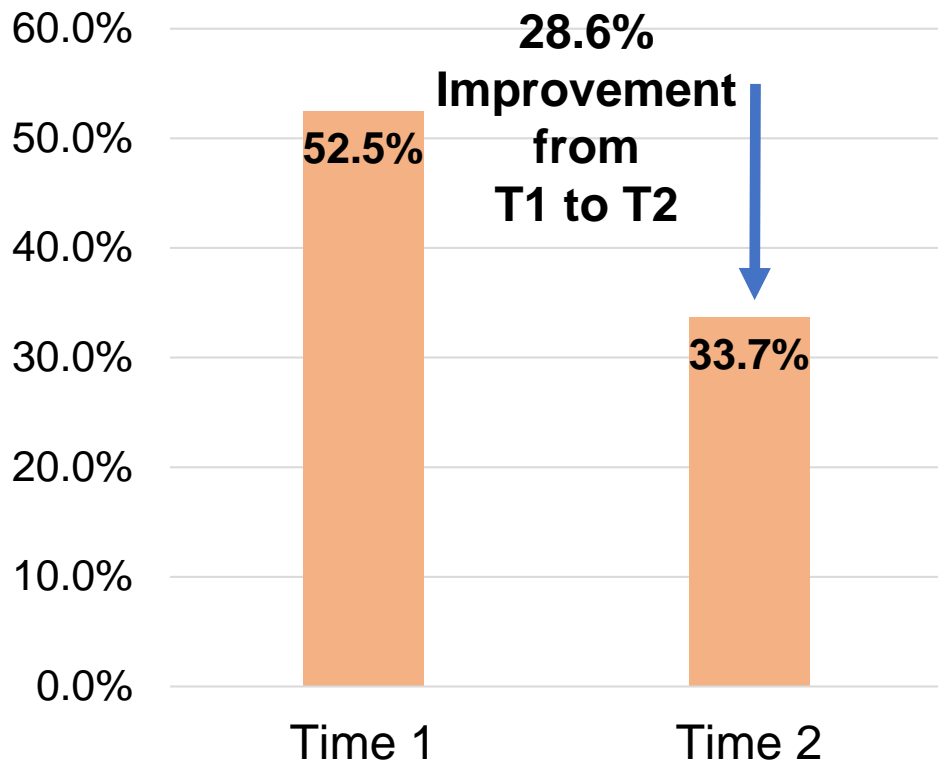
## Treatment Modalities Used

- 42.3% of children received therapy using the Play Therapy modality
- 27.4% of children received therapy using two or more modalities



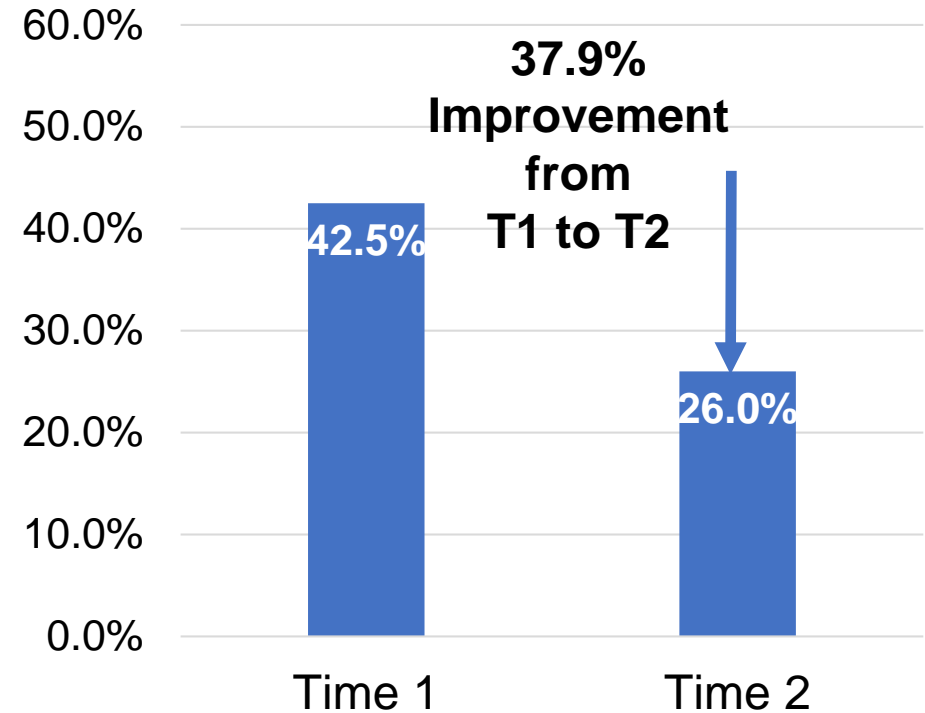
## ASQ:SE Pre-Post Analysis

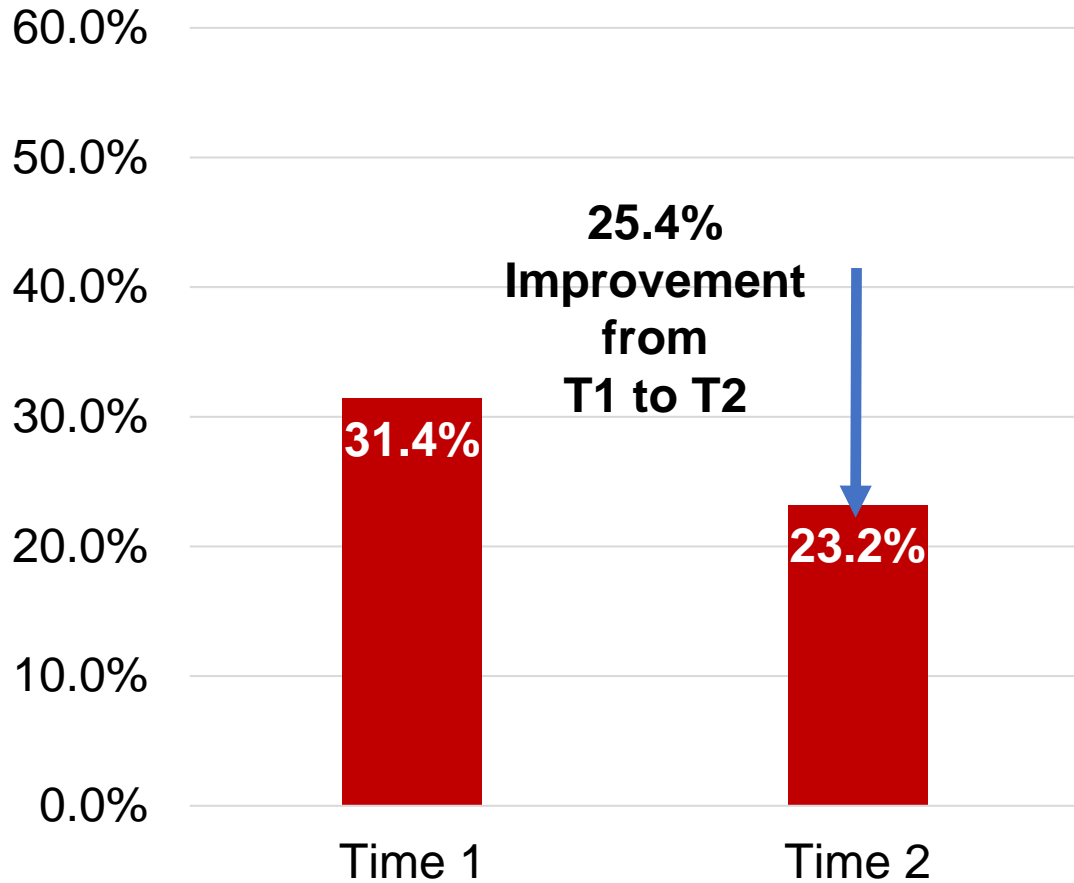
A statistically significant difference was found in the proportion of children at risk pre- and post-intervention,  $N = 288$   $p < .001$ .



## CBCCL Pre-Post Analysis

Children ( $n = 171$ ) who scored in the borderline/clinical level at Time 1 ( $M = 71.41$ ,  $SD = 6.39$ ) improved significantly at Time 2 ( $M = 61.96$ ,  $SD = 10.46$ ;  $t = 13.07$ ,  $p < .001$ ).





Caregivers ( $n = 350$ ) who scored in the borderline or clinical level at Time 1 ( $M = 101.74$ ,  $SD = 12.04$ ) improved significantly at Time 2 ( $M = 89.07$ ,  $SD = 19.20$ ;  $t = 13.94$ ,  $p < .001$ ).



## 1. Additional research using greater representation

- Additional research on the impacts of violence exposure of young children using greater racial minority and geographical representation is needed.

## 2. Additional research on multiple victimization of young children

- Our analysis of violence exposure types led to other research questions that seek to explore characteristics of young children exposed to multiple forms of violence.
- Identify factors that increase or decrease a child's risk of revictimization.

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