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INTRODUCTION

- Parent involvement in Part C early intervention (EI) is mandated by legislation (P.L. 108-446) and is promulgated by practitioners of “family-centered early intervention” (e.g., Dunst, Trivette, & Deal, 1994).
- Scant research has been conducted into whether or not parent involvement in EI impacts child and family outcomes (e.g., Mahoney & Bella, 1998) or into the factors that predict parent involvement in EI (e.g., Unger, Jones, Park, & Tressell, 2001).
- Educational psychologists have empirically tested a model of parent involvement in their school-aged children’s education which consists of three constructs: parents’ motivational beliefs (including role construction and self-efficacy beliefs), parents’ perceptions of invitations for involvement, and parents’ perceived life context variables (Green, Walker, Hoover-Dempsey, & Sandler, 2007; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997).
- While EI is not exactly the same as public schooling, the Hoover-Dempsey model can be used as a rubric upon which to build a model of parent involvement in EI.

Purpose of Study

- This study examined three predictors of parent involvement (attendance and commitment to intervention) in EI: parent role beliefs, parental self-efficacy beliefs, and parent knowledge about child development.

METHOD

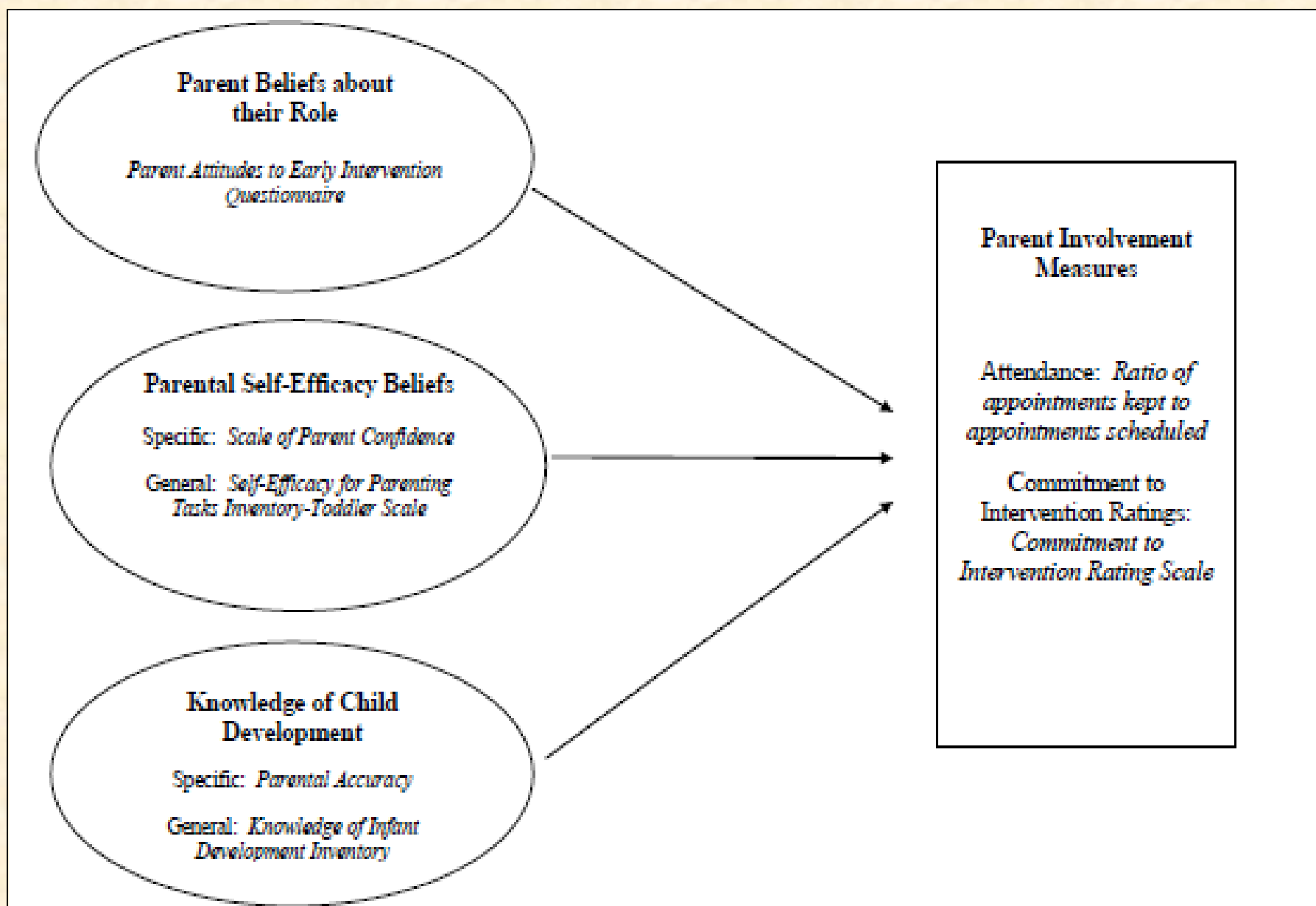
Participants

- This study was conducted in four county-based EI programs in central and southeastern Ohio. Each county provides primarily home-based services and employs Early Intervention Specialists (EIS) to provide services. EIS recruited participants who had been receiving services for at least 6 months for the study.
- 98 participants were recruited
 - 93 mothers, 2 female legal guardians, 2 fathers, and 1 grandfather
 - Mean age = 32.6 (SD = 6.95)
 - 90% White
 - 90% completed high school
 - 75% married/living with a partner
 - Median income = \$30,000 - \$44,999
 - 20% worked full time
 - Mean number of children in the home = 2.4
 - Mean age of enrolled child = 24.6 months (SD = 7.40)
 - There were some significant differences between counties on number of participants who completed high school, were married/living with a partner, and median income.
- 16 EIS participated
 - Mean age = 49 (SD = 8.66)
 - Mean years of experience in EI = 10.6 (SD = 5.58)
 - Participation rates of EIS varied widely between counties



Measures and Procedures

- Parents were visited in the home and completed 5 questionnaires in model at right plus a demographic questionnaire to measure *a priori* covariates:
 - highest educational attainment
 - family income
 - number of hours worked/week
 - number of siblings
- EIS completed *Commitment to Intervention Scoring Form* after the parent meeting



RESULTS

Hypothesis Testing

- Parent role beliefs significantly predicted commitment to intervention above and beyond the influence of highest educational attainment and number of siblings, $f^2 = .292$.

Regression of Commitment to Intervention

	β	p	f^2
Parent Role Beliefs	.274	.004	.079
Highest Educational Attainment	.274	.004	.079
Number of Siblings	-.273	.010	.061

R^2 for Step 1 = .153; ΔR^2 for Step 2 = .073, $p = .004$

- Parent role beliefs did not predict attendance.
- Neither parental self-efficacy beliefs nor parent knowledge of child development predicted attendance or commitment to intervention.

Post-hoc analyses

- Highest educational attainment and number of siblings significantly predicted attendance, $f^2 = .139$.

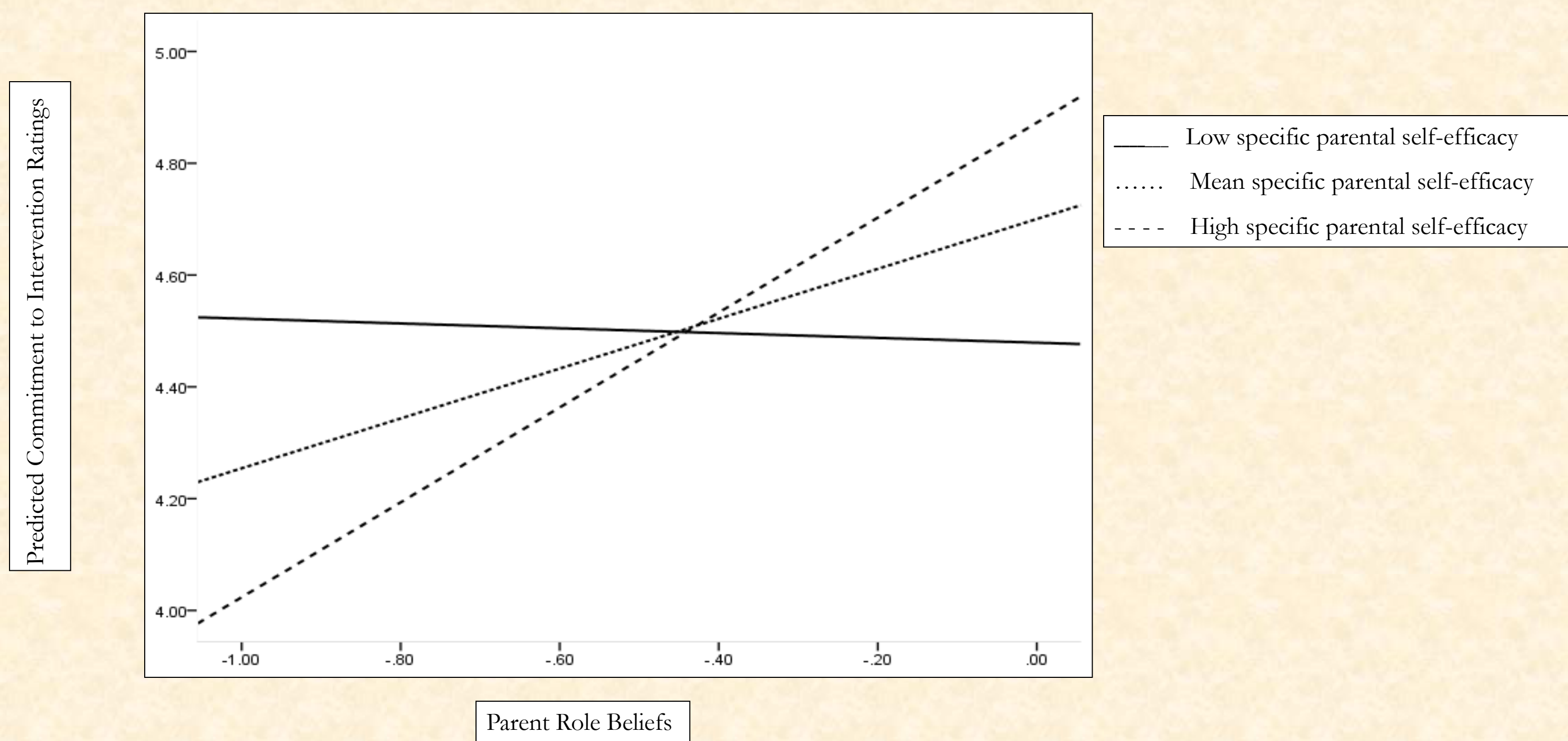
Regression for Attendance

	β	p	f^2
Highest Educational Attainment	.285	.010	.069
Number of Siblings	-.210	.033	.046

$R^2 = .122$, $p = .007$

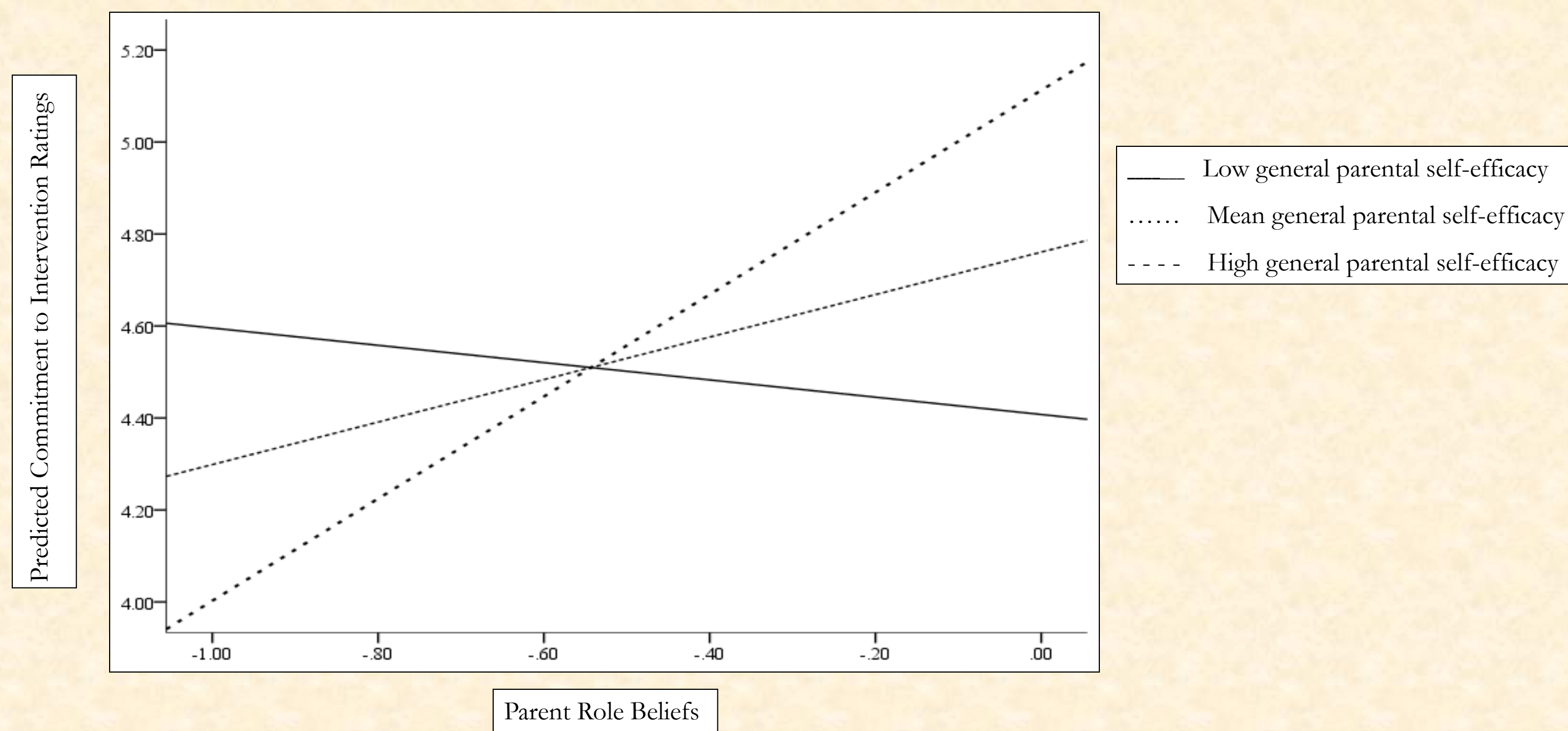
- Parent role beliefs and parental self-efficacy beliefs interacted to predict commitment to intervention.

Predicted Commitment to Intervention Ratings by Parent Role Beliefs and Levels of Specific Parental Self-Efficacy



(RESULTS CONTINUED)

Predicted Commitment to Intervention Ratings by Parent Role Beliefs and Levels of General Parental Self-Efficacy



- Two counties use caregiver/provider agreements upon program enrollment.
 - Written agreements spell out the expected roles for caregivers and providers in the EI program.
 - 66 participants had agreements, 32 did not.
 - Participants in counties that use agreements had significantly better attendance than participants without, $t(96) = 4.13$, $p < .001$, $d = .843$.
- Participants did not report the presence of significant barriers to their participation in their child's EI program.
 - Most frequently reported barrier to participation was lack of child care for other children
 - Most frequently reported options for enhancing participation were more services for their child and family and more flexible scheduling.

CONCLUSIONS

- Parents who had high beliefs in the importance of parent involvement in EI were rated as more involved in their child's program by their EIS than parent with lower beliefs, after covarying out highest educational attainment and number of siblings. This provides partial support for the modified Hoover-Dempsey model of parent involvement in EI.
- Those with higher educational attainment and fewer children had better attendance than those with lower educational attainment and more children.
- Parental self-efficacy beliefs moderated the relation between parent role beliefs and commitment to intervention.
 - Those with low role beliefs but high self-efficacy beliefs were rated as less committed to the intervention than those with high role beliefs and high self-efficacy beliefs.
 - Commitment to intervention ratings were still 4 out of 5 for low belief/high self-efficacy parents.
- Parents who were given a written agreement spelling out participation expectations upon program enrollment had better attendance than parents who were not given a written agreement. **EI programs should consider using a written agreement to explain the roles of the service provider and parents and to clarify expectations for participation.**