

# Transforming How First Time Parents are Prepared for Parenting

4<sup>th</sup> National Community Health Nurse Conference June 16-18, 2010 Karon Foster R.N. BScN Med

#### Invest In Kids

- The only national charity with a mission to transform the way Canadian parents are educated and supported, to ensure children reach their full potential.
- Research forms the basis of all our work; leaders in understanding what new parents think, feel and need
- Translation of science into engaging resources for parents and professionals working with young families
   = Comfort, Play & Teach™
- Parenting Experts for organizations and media outlets nationwide



# Presentation Learning Outcomes

- Explain the rationale for this program including the relevant literature.
- Describe this program including it's design, and content.
- Identify strategies used to engage parents.
- Outline the challenges and lessons learned.
- Discuss implications for staff working with parents.





# parenting partnership m

NEW PARENTS LEARNING TOGETHER

# The Parenting Partnership Program

Prenatal and parenting program for *couples* expecting their 1st baby

- Begins during pregnancy and lasts until child is about 14 months
- Weekly online sessions with 20 face-to-face classes; based on Comfort, Play & Teach™ approach
- Scheduled when parents most want and need them
- 3 modules: Pregnancy to birth; Birth to 6 months;
   7 14 months





#### Objectives For The Program

- Increase parents' knowledge, skills and confidence about pregnancy and birth.
- Increase parents' knowledge, skills and confidence in parenting and child development.
- Promote sensitive, responsive and warm parent/child and parent/parent relationships.
- Foster parents' sense of support for their role.



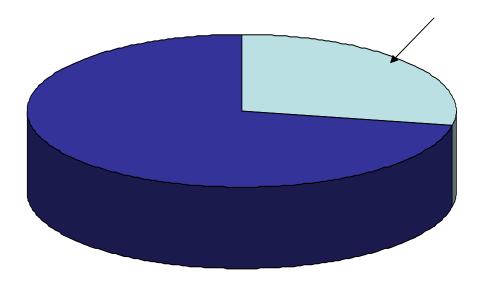
# Rationale For This Program

What did the science say...



#### Vulnerable Children

Nearly 30% of Canada's infants and young children have cognitive or behavioural problems



The greatest numbers of vulnerable children are <u>not</u> in the lowest income category.

The effects of good parenting far outweigh the effect of income on children's problems.

D. Willms, Vulnerable Children: Findings from Canada's National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth



# Parenting Needs Improvement

- 92 % of parents say parenting is the most important thing they do.
- Majority know little about child development
- Only 1/3 use the authoritative parenting style
- 1/3 could improve their positive parenting
- 2/3 could decrease their punitive parenting
- Invest in Kids Survey found excessive levels of negative parenting in
   24% of Moms and 30% of Dads

Oldershaw, L. A National Survey of Parents of Young Children

Willms, Vulnerable Children: Findings from Canada's National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth

Crill Russell et. al., Vital Communities, Vital Support

# Today's Pregnant Parents

- 75% of couples are employed full time at the birth of their 1st child.
- 35% of mothers are delaying the birth of their 1st baby until after age 30.
- 25% of children have parents who will separate before these children reach their 6th birthday.
- Only 10% of 1st time parents are single parents.

Oldershaw, L. A National Survey of Parents of Young Children







#### Parents' Mindset: 1<sup>ST</sup> Child

- Assess ability to become a "good parent."
- Appraise and re-align their current friends
- Seek out other new parents
- Search for experts to educate and guide them
- Prenatal halo- "perfect family"







#### Life After Birth

Parents experience a "crash of expectations".

- marital relationships suffer and their parenting.
- Many may feel incompetent, and unsupported. (55% felt they received enough emotional support and practical support).
- Mood disorders occur in both Moms and Dads.
- this may spill over into poor parenting, and to social, emotional and intellectual problems in children.

Crill Russell et. al., Vital Communities, Vital Support



#### Parent Education?

- A patchwork of services and supports to 1<sup>st</sup> time parents, with limited doses of information.
- Primarily targeted to high risk parents, leaving the majority of non-high risk parents without supports or resources.
- Programs are largely unevaluated -who attends, are they effective?
- Majority of parents may not attend parenting programs.



Crill Russell, C (2003) Parent Education: What is Required to Build the Skills Parents Need to Raise Healthy Children?

# Design & Development...





### Development of the Program

- · Working with researchers to know parents—
- Working with experts to pull the content together extracting best evidence and best practice.
- Working with instructional designers to create the program—making it compelling.
- Working with community partners to ideally situate the program—meeting the needs of modern parents.
- Survey and feedback from parents.



#### Delivery Methods

For today's parents, a modern blend:

- Face-to-face group sessions—to build a community of support
- Face-to-face individual/couples/family sessions for individual issues and to customize learning
- Online content—the way parents today access information; accommodates every parent's schedule
- Online access to each other and parent educators email is a lifeline; online community
- Lots of materials to supplement



#### Subject Matter examples...

- Fetal Development: week x week
- Lifestyle: nutrition, exercise, home & workplace hazards, stress, sleep, hot tubs & cat litter
- Labour & Delivery: preterm labour, medical/surgical procedures, stages of labour, breathing techniques
- Couple Relationship: pre/postnatal sexuality, quality couple time, expectations and roles, conflict resolution, family violence, saving time for it
- · Mental Health: common worries, mood disorders
- Parenting: positive parenting, becoming a mother/father, routines, myths of, temperament
- · Baby: breast feeding; jaundice; diapering, soothing



#### Face-to-Face Classes

Module 1 (Prenatal): 7 consecutive weekly sessions

Module 2 (Birth to 6 months): 6 monthly sessions

- One Dads Only Sessions
- · One Moms Only Session
- Rest are for Family (with baby)

Module 3 (7-14 months): 6 sessions every 5 weeks

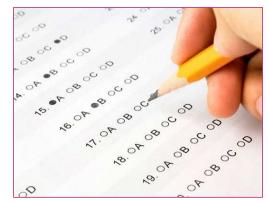
Same format as Module 2



#### Face-to-Face Classes

#### How to make them engaging?

- Variety of teaching strategies
- Opportunities for Dads only and Moms only discussion
- Demonstrations
- Opportunity to practice skills i.e. massage, swaddling











#### Parent Educators

# Critica

- 44 Parent Educators trained
- 2 facilitator teams









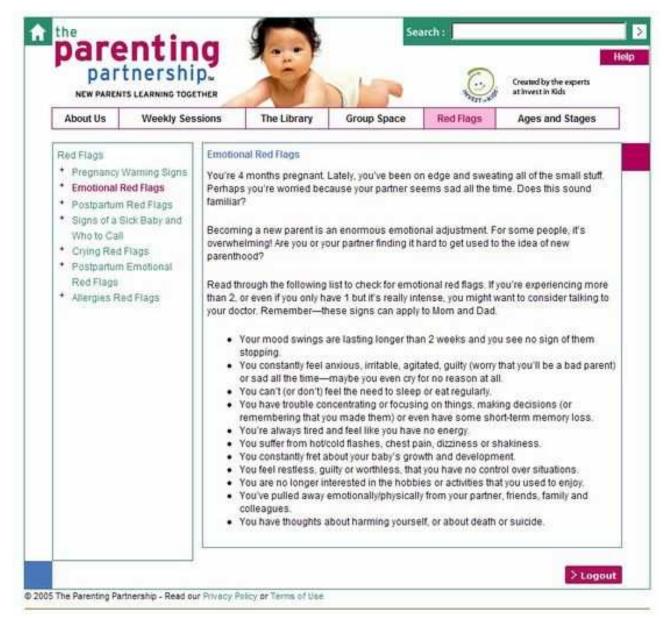


### Online Session - Homepage



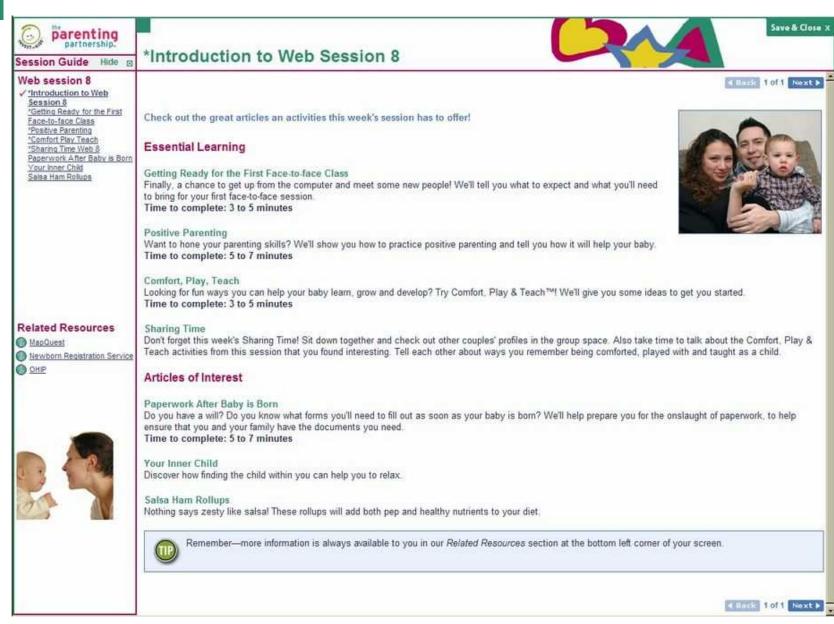


# Red Flags



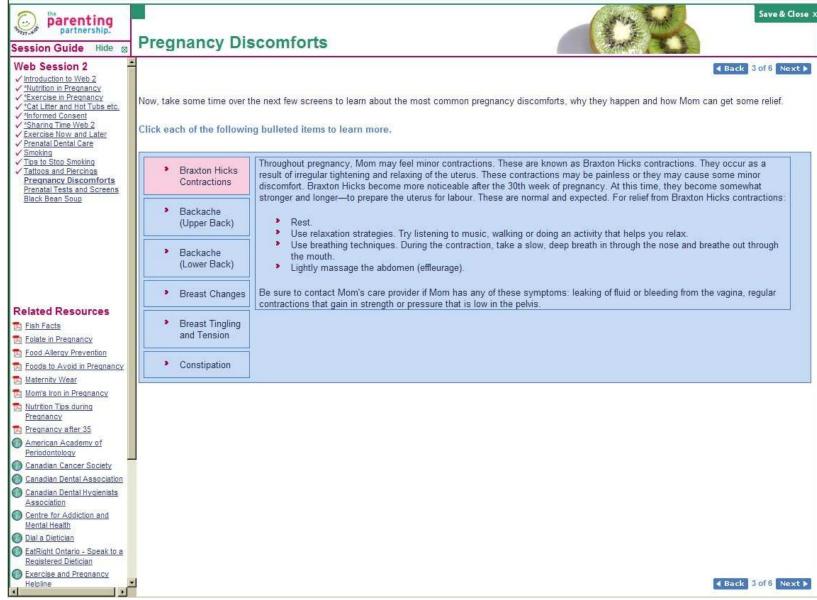


# Weekly Session Intro Page



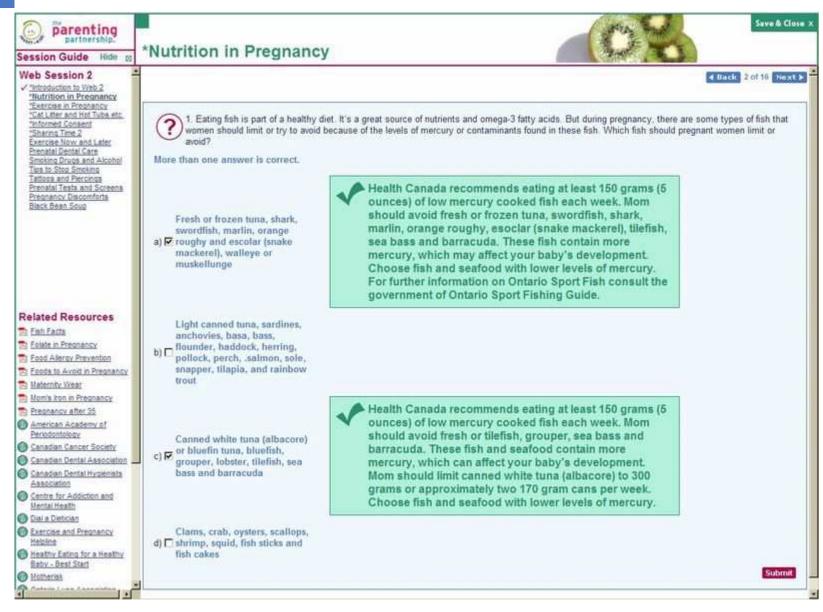


#### Click & Reveal



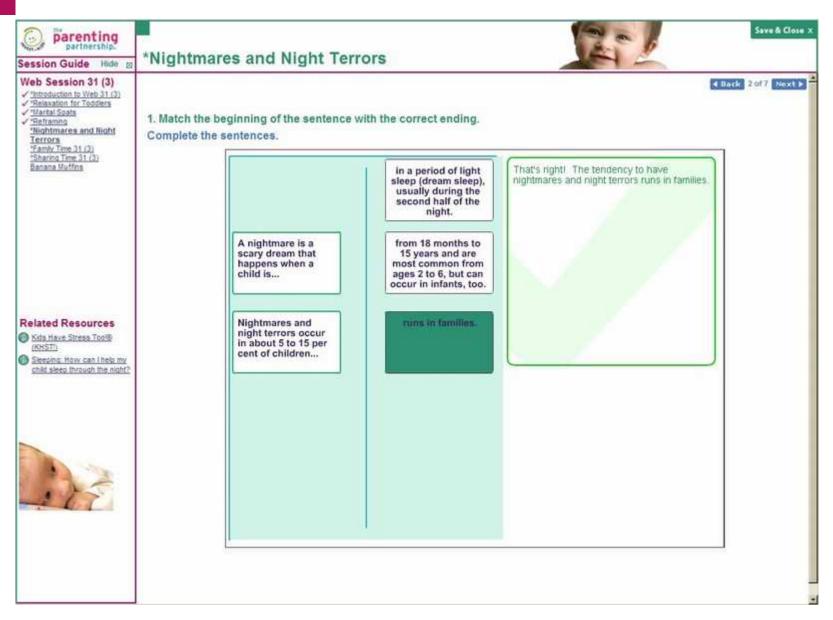


#### Quiz



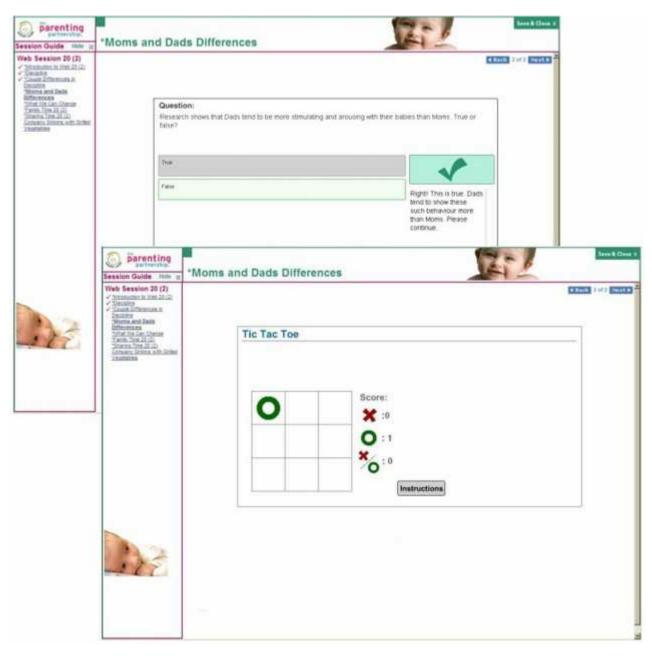


# Matching Game



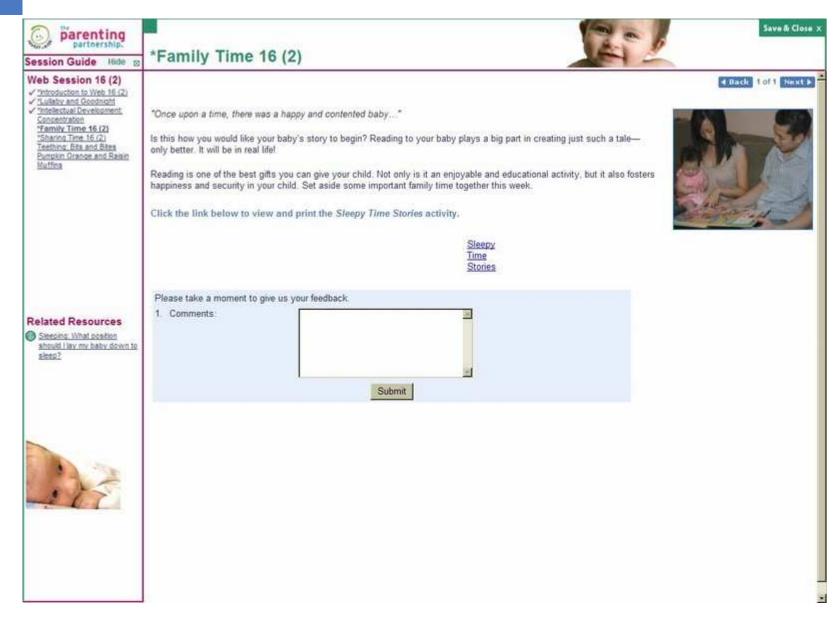


#### Tic Tac Toe





# Family Time



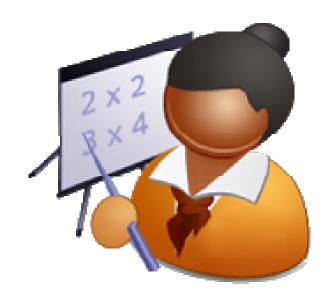


# Sharing Time





# Lessons Learned and challenges...





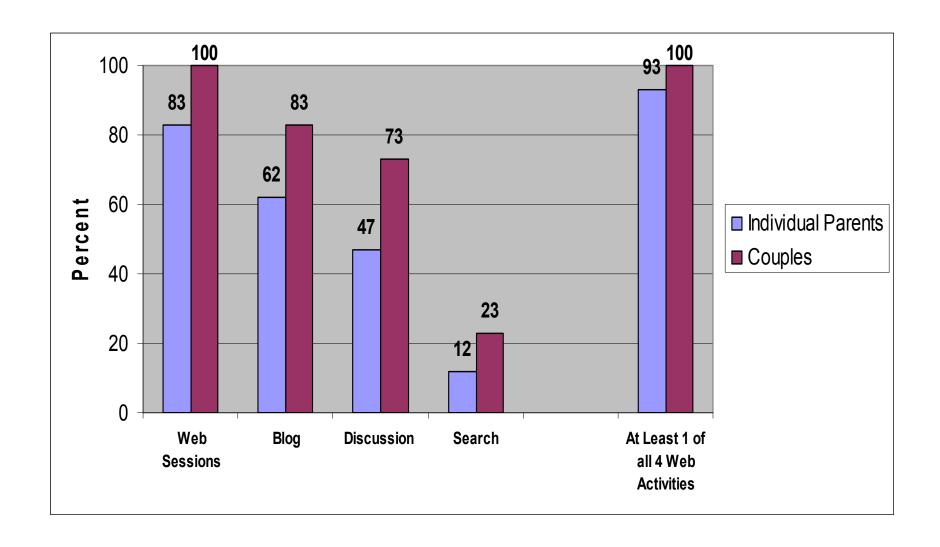
# Findings re Web

#### What we found:

- Parents are engaged with web sessions—they pick and choose
- Some parents really like the Web sessions and some do not like on-line learning
- Not all parents are computer savvy
- Engaging parents in an on-line discussion can be challenging
- Technology issues can and will happen
- · Online learning courseware changes frequently



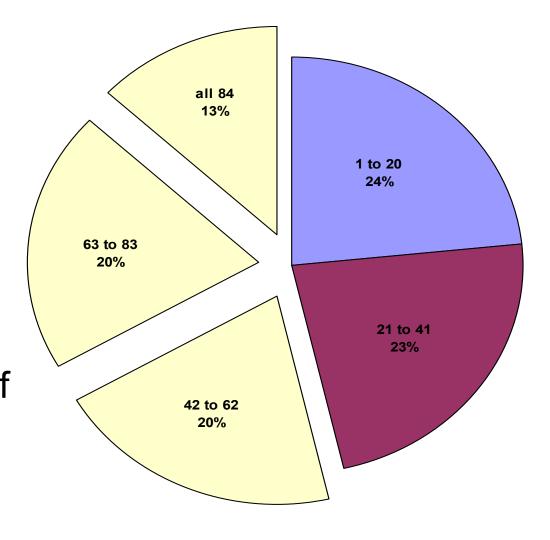
### Web Engagement of Parents





# Essential Web Topics Couples

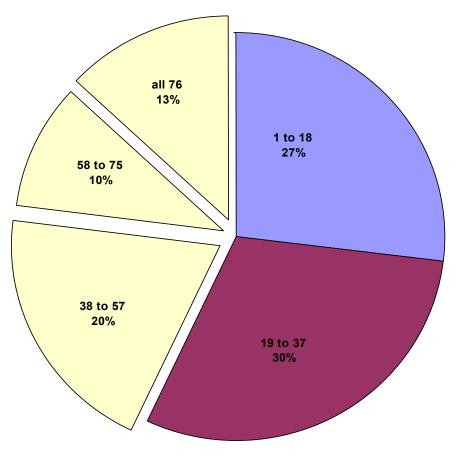
- Essential Topics were determined by the experts at Invest in Kids
- About 20 minutes to complete
- 50% of couples completed half or more of the 84 Essential items in Prenatal module





# Recommended Web Topics Couples

- Topics of additional interest to some but not all parents
- Some sessions would only have a few, others would include 5 or more
- 43% of couples completed half or more of the 76 recommended items



**Couples** 



# Time spent on Web



	Parents	Couples
	Median	Median
	hr/min	hr/min
Time spent on Essentials	1:22	1:57
Time spent on Recommended	0:49	0:57
Time spent on Both	2:10	3:16
Time spent on Blog	0:11	0:13
Time spent on Discussion	0:00	0:01
Time spent on all Web Areas	1:46	4:04



#### Engagement in Online Discussion

- 40% have found Blog moderately useful
- About 20% of parents and couples posted on Blog
- Like: having access; the communication; hearing from others and the PEs
- Would post a comment if: there were more postings, had a comment to make, need an answer





# Barriers to Using Website

- Lack of Time
- Lots of content
- Content not timed right
- Technology issues
- Start of Face-to-Face classes



#### Classroom Attendance



- 75% of parents and 90% of couples attend half or more (>4) of the classes.
- Contacting parents prior 1<sup>st</sup> class improves attendance.
- Attendance does fall slightly in last class in prenatal classes.
- Module 2 and 3 attendance varies.



#### Face-to-Face Feedback

#### Knowledge

# The Parenting Partnership

#### Connections

"The program took me though the whole arc of what to expect."

"I felt prepared - I was conscious of what is possible."

"It helped me to deal with my spouse and the changes we were going through."

"The instructors have so much credibility. You trust them and their experience."

"Now I'm part of a group of people that are not afraid to share their experiences."

"It gave us so much comfort knowing that other parents were feeling the same way we were."

"It's more than we bargained for - we have made real friendships for ourselves and our child."



# What Parent Educators Say...

The postnatal sessions allowed time for more learning, support and in the case of the Scarborough Group build a supportive community"—Counselor

"the support and training provided by Invest in Kids was an important part of the success I enjoyed as an educator. Their organization of monthly meetings, feedback session, continuing education and evaluations, I personally was able to step outside my comfort zone and grow as an educator and as a parent"—

PE Health Practitioner

"I had no idea what a wonderful experience that this would be—not just for the parents but for myself as well. I have taught many Parenting groups over the years but this one is unique"—Nurse

"I have and continue to support this program as a success; the tools and materials will assist in creating healthy and balanced children, relationships and a better society"—Counselor



#### Implications for Others

#### On-line learning/website

- Expect technology issues
- · Doesn't appeal to everyone
- On-line group discussions can pose challenges

#### Program length

- Allows for small group development/support
- · Parents will stay if engaged

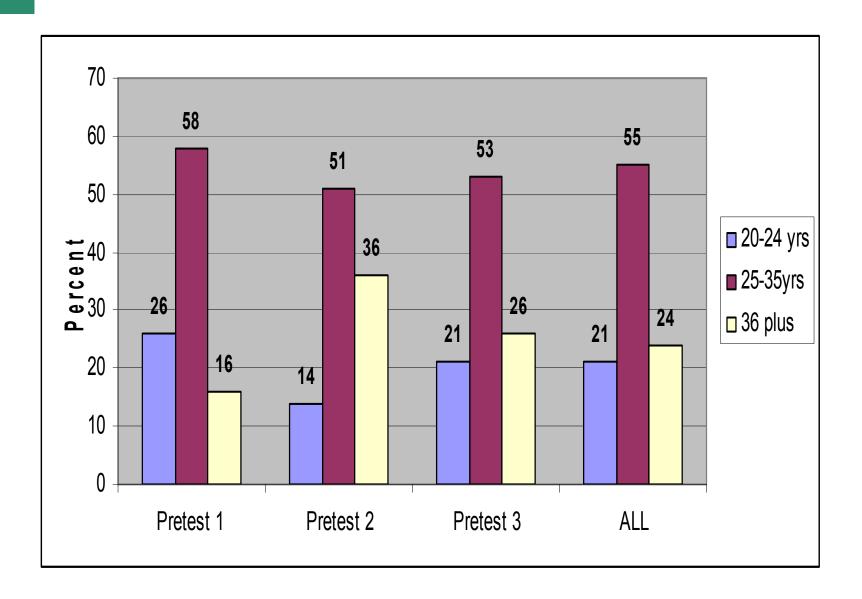


# Who are our parents?



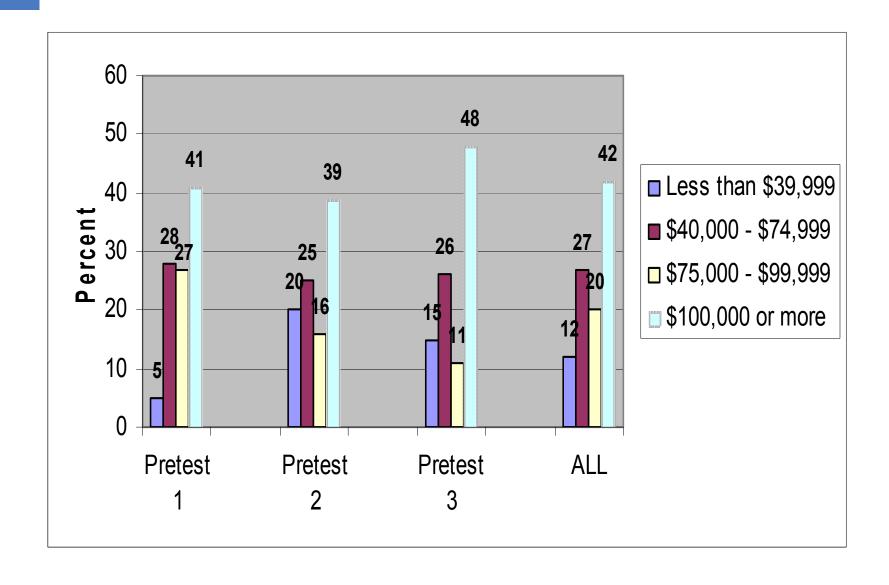


# Age





#### Household Income



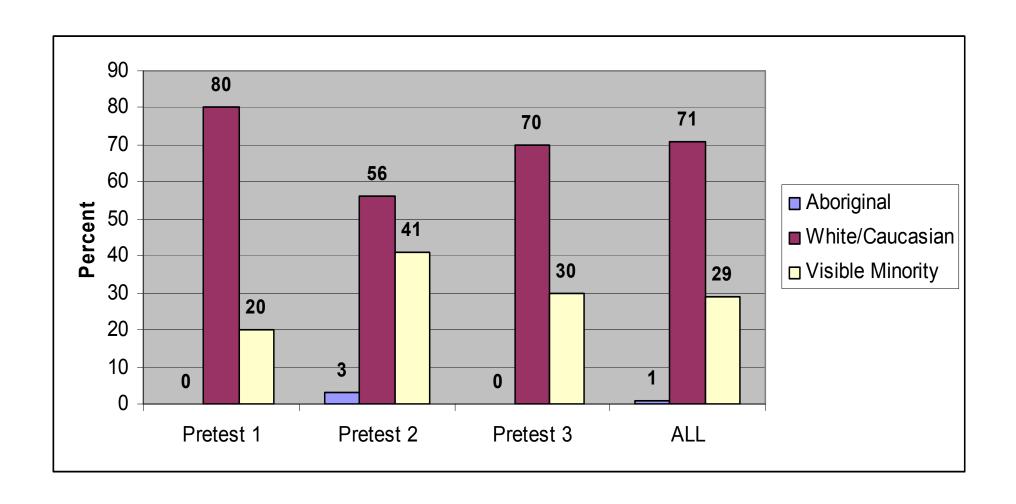


#### Education

	Pretest 1	Pretest 2	Pretest 3	All
Highschool or less	6% (7)	8% (5)	7% (4)	7% (16)
Some college/ university	11% (12)	3% (2)	17% (10)	10% (24)
Completed college/university	65% (71)	73% (48)	50% (29)	63% (148)
Post graduate degree	18% (20)	17% (11)	26% (15)	20%(46)
Total	(110)	(66)	(58)	(234)



# Ethnicity





#### Questions



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