

No Father Left Behind: Exploring Positive Father Involvement as a Protective Factor in the Prevention of Neglect and Adverse Child Outcomes



Ericka M. Lewis, LMSW
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—|| of Social Work ||—

Presentation Objectives

Background

Methods

Analytic Plan

Discussion

Background



Child Neglect is the **most common form** of child maltreatment¹

Child welfare-involved children are at an **increased risk** for developing behavior problems²⁻⁴

The effects of neglect have long-lasting consequences on **child well-being**⁵⁻⁸

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Neglect and

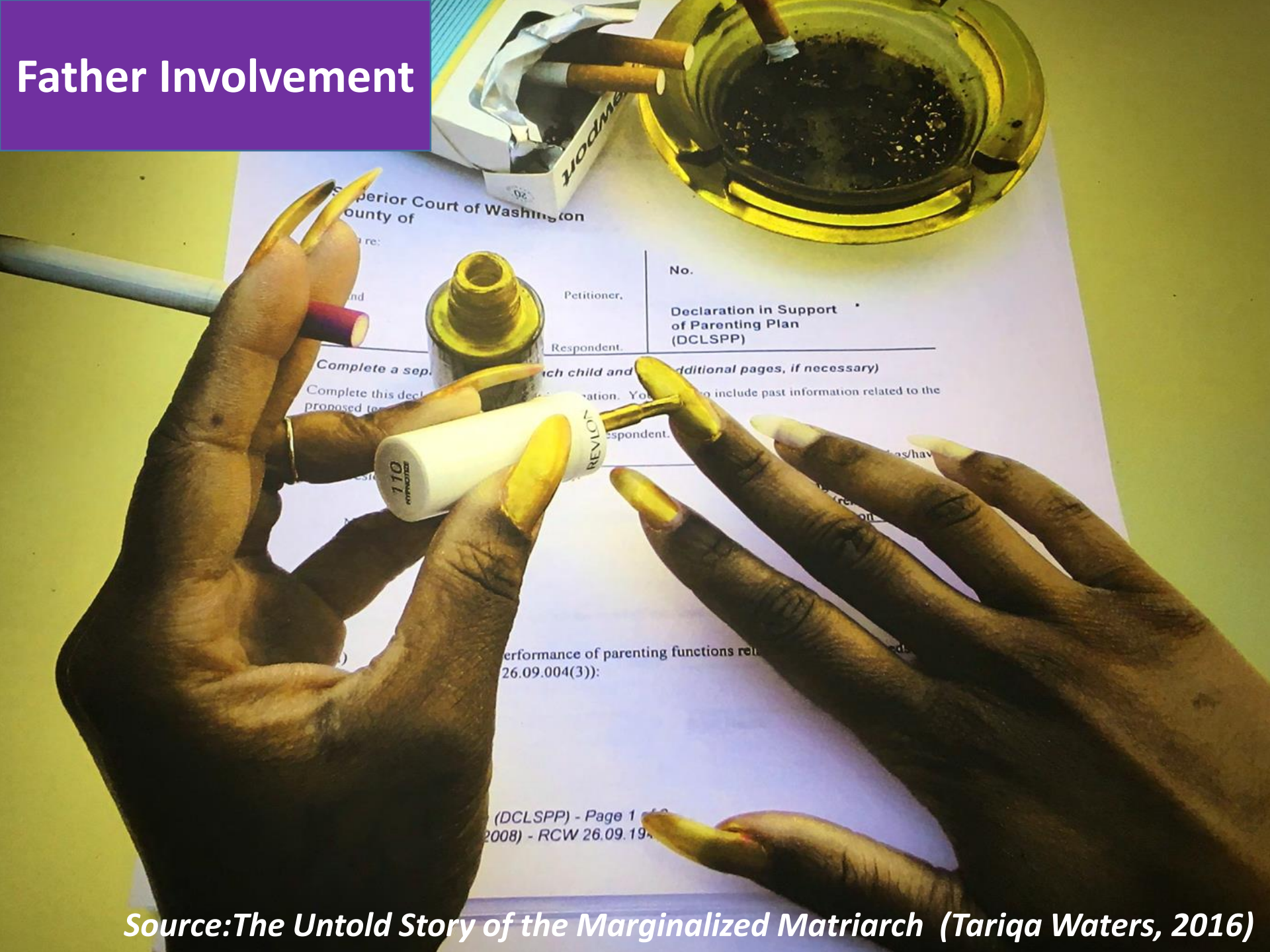
Family Functioning

Household characteristics and family daily interactions are among the factors commonly associated with **neglect risk**⁹⁻¹¹

There is a strong positive relationship between **parenting behaviors** and **child developmental outcomes**¹²⁻¹⁴

The majority of evidence focuses on **mothers**

Father Involvement



Source: *The Untold Story of the Marginalized Matriarch* (Tariqa Waters, 2016)

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Methods & Analysis Plan

Theoretical Frameworks

Cabrera's Heuristic Model of Father Involvement¹⁵

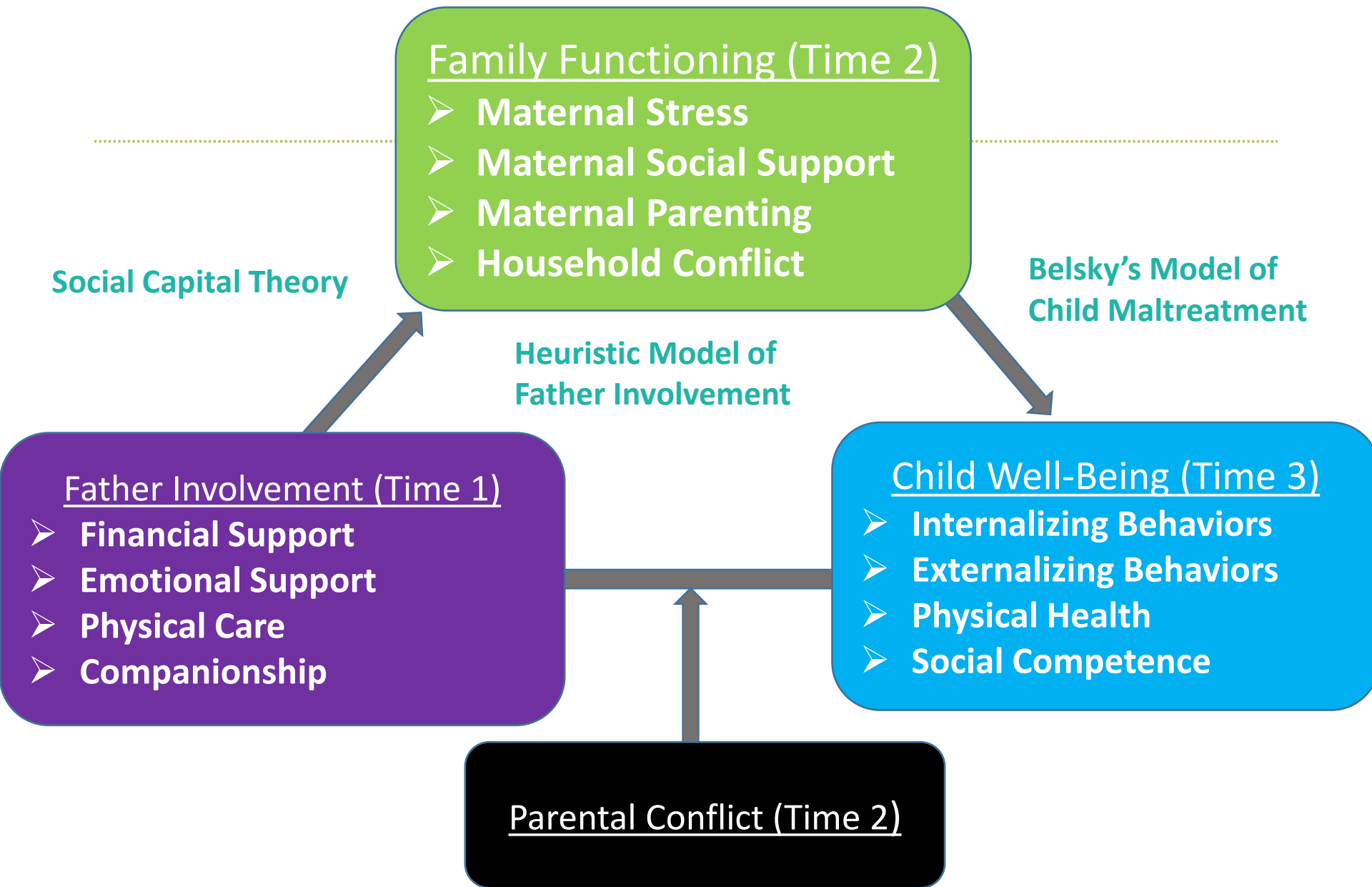
- father characteristics
- father behaviors

Belsky's Model of Child Maltreatment¹⁶

- family characteristics
- social support

Social Capital Theory¹⁷

- parental resources
- family norms



Conceptual Model

Specific Aims & Research Questions



Specific Aim 1: Test the **direct and indirect relationships** between father involvement and child well-being among low-income families.

RQ 1.1: Does father involvement influence child well-being over time?

RQ 1.2: Does family functioning mediate the relationship between father involvement and child well-being over time?

Specific Aim 2: Examine the **moderating effects** of parental conflict on the relationship between father involvement, family functioning, and child well-being over time.

RQ 2: Does parental conflict moderate the relationship between father involvement, family functioning, and child well-being over time?

Methods: Data Source

The Longitudinal Studies on Child Abuse and Neglect (LONGSCAN)¹⁸

- Consortium of 5 longitudinal prospective studies (1991-2009)
- Studies conducted across 5 US States (urban, suburban, and rural)

Study Sample

- Variables examined at three time points (age 6, 8, and 12)
- Restricted to families that had a father/father-figure present at baseline
- Control Groups and Child-welfare involved families (e.g., report, substantiated, & foster care)

Methods: Measures

Latent Factor	Indicator Variable	Measurement Tool	Data Points* (Child Age)	Respondent
<i>Endogenous Variable</i>				
Child Well-Being	Physical Health	Child Health Assessment	6, 8, & 12	Maternal Caregiver
	Externalizing Behaviors	Teacher Report Form	6, 8, & 12	Teacher
	Internalizing Behaviors	Teacher Report Form	6, 8, & 12	Teacher
	Social Competence	Vineland Screener	6, 8, & 12	Maternal Caregiver
<i>Exogenous Variable</i>				
Father Involvement	Financial Support	Father Involvement with Child Instrument	6 & 8 12	Maternal Caregiver Child
	Physical Care	Father Involvement with Child Instrument	6 & 8 12	Maternal Caregiver Child
	Emotional Support	Father Involvement with Child Instrument	6 & 8 12	Maternal Caregiver Child
	Companionship	Father Involvement with Child Instrument	6 & 8 12	Maternal Caregiver Child
<i>Mediator</i>				
Family Functioning	Maternal Social Support	Social Provisions Scale	8**	Maternal Caregiver
	Maternal Parenting Behaviors	About My Parents	6, 8 & 12	Maternal Caregiver
	Household Environment	Self-Report and Family	6, 8, & 12	Maternal Caregiver
<i>Moderator</i>				
Parental Conflict	Reasoning	Conflict-Tactics Scale: Partner-to-Partner	6 & 8	Maternal Caregiver
	Verbal Aggression	Conflict-Tactics Scale: Partner-to-Partner	6 & 8	Maternal Caregiver
	Physical Aggression	Conflict-Tactics Scale: Partner-to-Partner	6 & 8	Maternal Caregiver

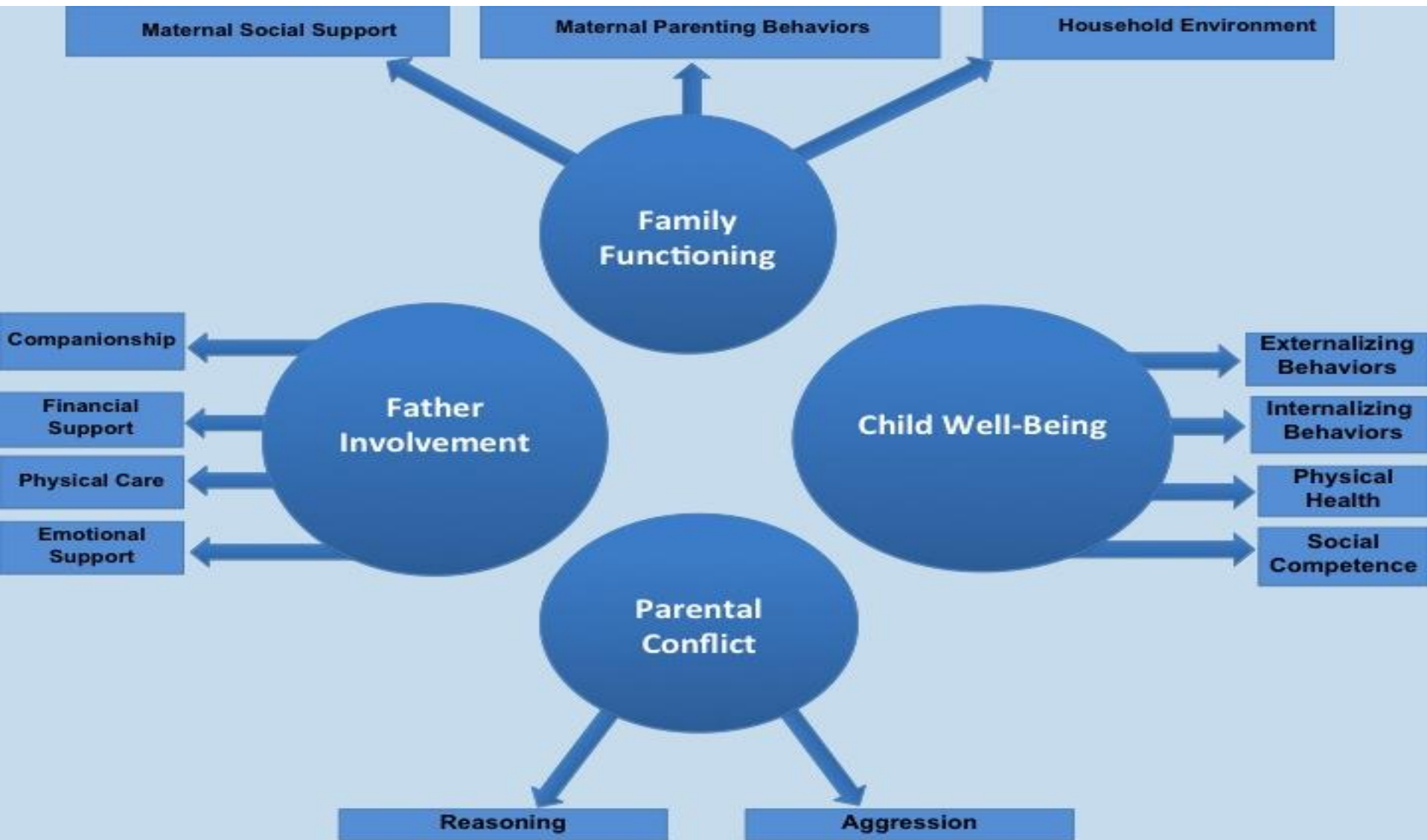
*Time 1= Child Age 6; Time 2=Child Age 8; and Time 3= Child Age 12.

** Additional Measure was utilized to examine variable for Time 1 and Time 3

Methods: Data Analysis Plan

- ❧ Descriptive Statistics
- ❧ SEM (CFA & Cross-Lagged Panel Modeling)
 - ❧ Maximum- Likelihood Estimator
 - ❧ Full Information Likelihood (FIML)
 - ❧ Global Model Fit Assessed:
 - ❧ Chi-square Test
 - ❧ Comparative Fit Index (CFI)
 - ❧ Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI)
 - ❧ Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)
 - ❧ Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR)

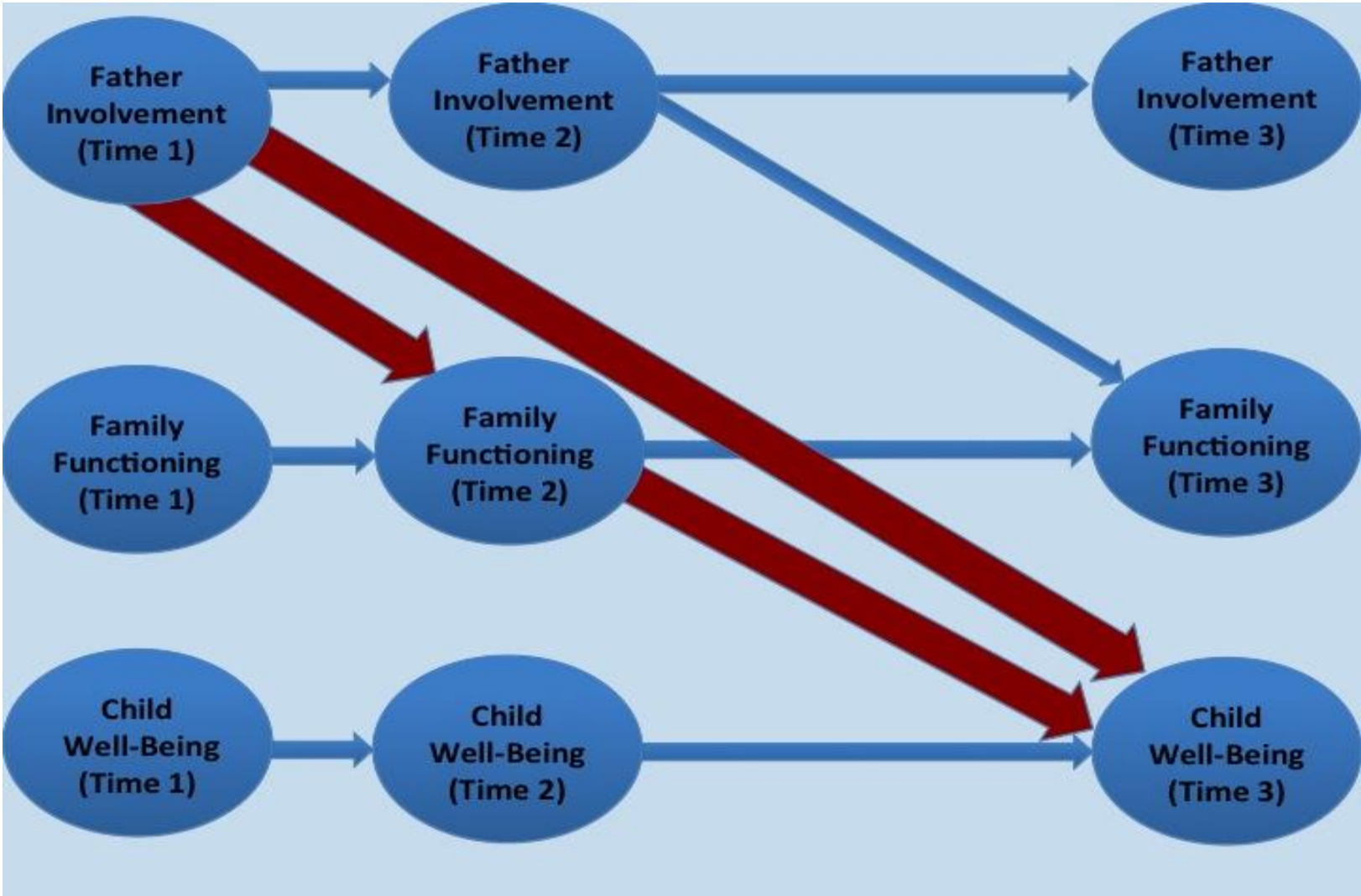
Methods: Latent Constructs



** Parcel Items

** Single Latent Factors

Cross-Lagged Panel Mediation Model



Ericka's Conundrum

- There are **statistically significant differences** in the outcome variables between sites. Could I examine the differences by controlling by site? Or, do I need to run separate models for each group?
- "Physical Health" is an **index variable** with varying types of conditions and disorder (e.g., asthma to cerebral palsy). How can I examine this variable without assigning the same value to every condition?
- The Child Well-Being and Family Functioning constructs are not yielding **statistically significant measurement models**. What strategies can I implement to decrease the number of models run (e.g., separate models for each indicator variable)?



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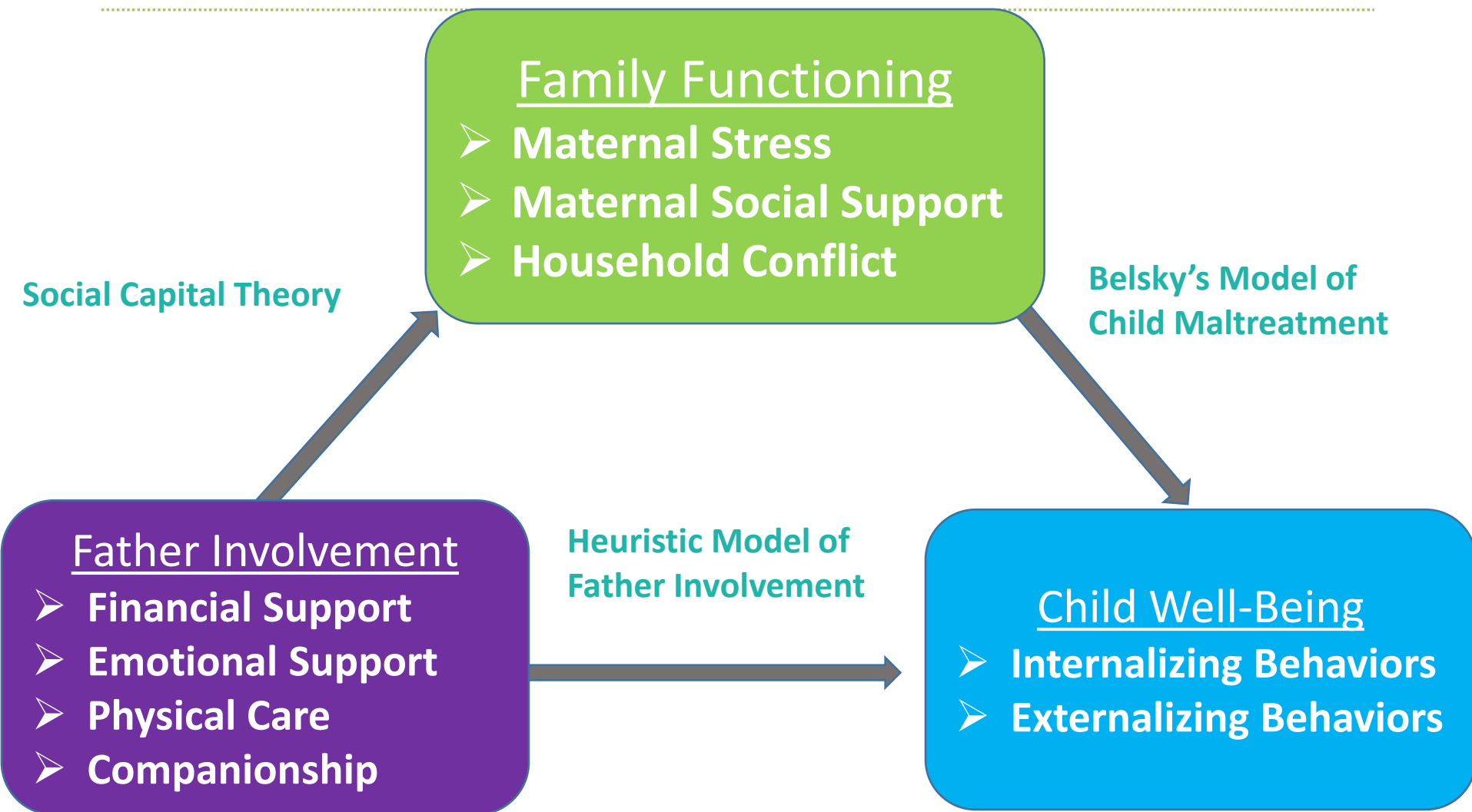
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Thank You!

Contact Information:
Ericka M. Lewis, LMSW
ericka@wustl.edu

Additional Slides

Conceptual Model



Analysis Plan

☞ SEM (Path Analysis)

- ☞ Maximum- Likelihood Estimator

- ☞ Full Information Likelihood (FIML)

- ☞ Global Model Fit Assessed:

 - ☞ Chi-square Test

 - ☞ Comparative Fit Index (CFI)

 - ☞ Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI)

 - ☞ Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)

 - ☞ Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR)

Methods: Measures

Variable	Operationalization	Measurement Tool
Father Involvement	Perception of financial support, physical care, emotional support, and companionship	Father Involvement with Child
Child Behaviors	Aggression, Social Withdrawal, Somatic Complaints, and Anxiety/Depression	Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL)
Maternal Stress	Stress related to difficulties with children's father	Everyday Stressors Index (ESIA)
Maternal Social Support	The amount of personal social support	Duke-UNC Functional Social Support Questionnaire
Household Conflict	Perception of family's functioning related to household conflict	Self-Report Family Inventory (SIFA)

Study Sample Description (N=393)

Father Figure: 35% biological father, 65% father-figure

Mother's Age: $M=39.14$, $SD=10.38$

Mother's Marital Status: 48% married, 23% single, 20% divorced

Race/Ethnicity: 43% white, 29% black, 28% Hispanic/Asian/multi-racial

AFDC Recipient: 56%

Child Gender: 52% female, 48% male

Child Internalizing and Externalizing Behavior: 26% clinical range, 9% borderline

Results

- ❧ Model Fit Assessment
- ❧ Direct Effect Path (n=1)
- ❧ Indirect Effects Paths (n=3)
- ❧ Total Indirect and Total Effects Models (n=2)

Assessment of Model Fit



Chi-Square= 3.9 p-value= .26 *df*=5

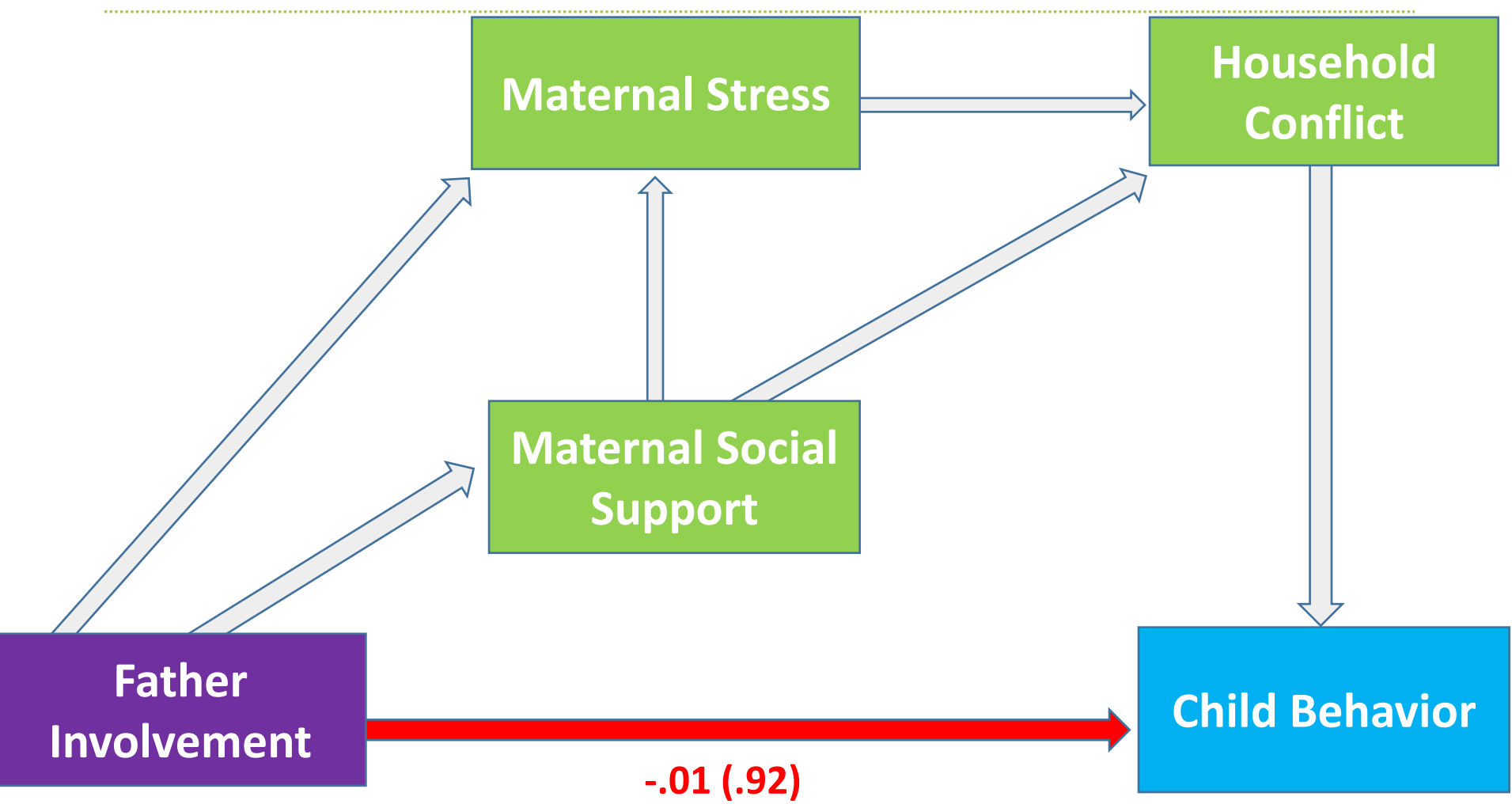
RMSEA= .029

SRMR= .01

CFI= .99

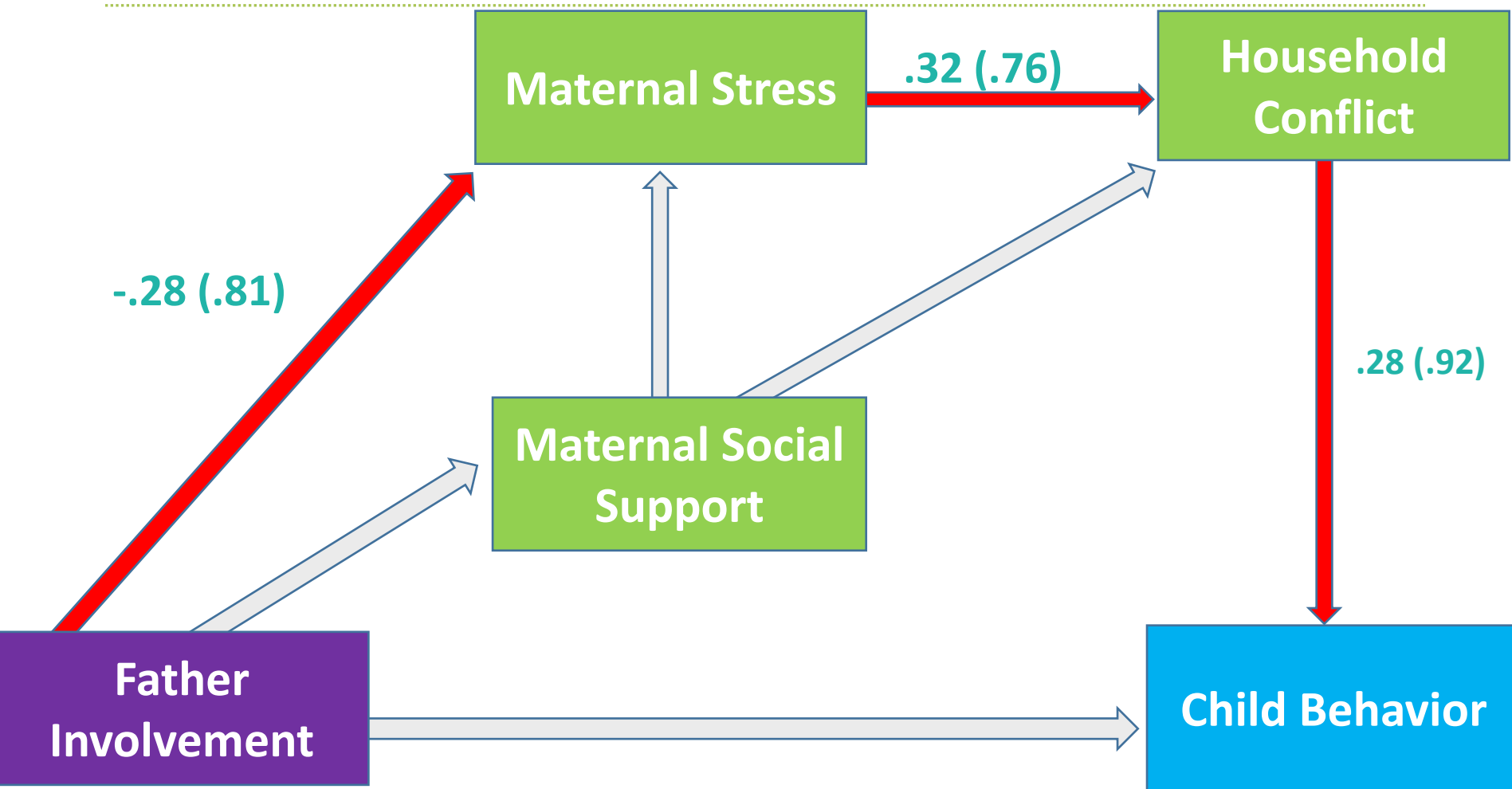
TLI= .98

Does father involvement have a direct effect on child behavior?



($B = -.01, Z = -.28, p = .78$)
Direct Effects Path

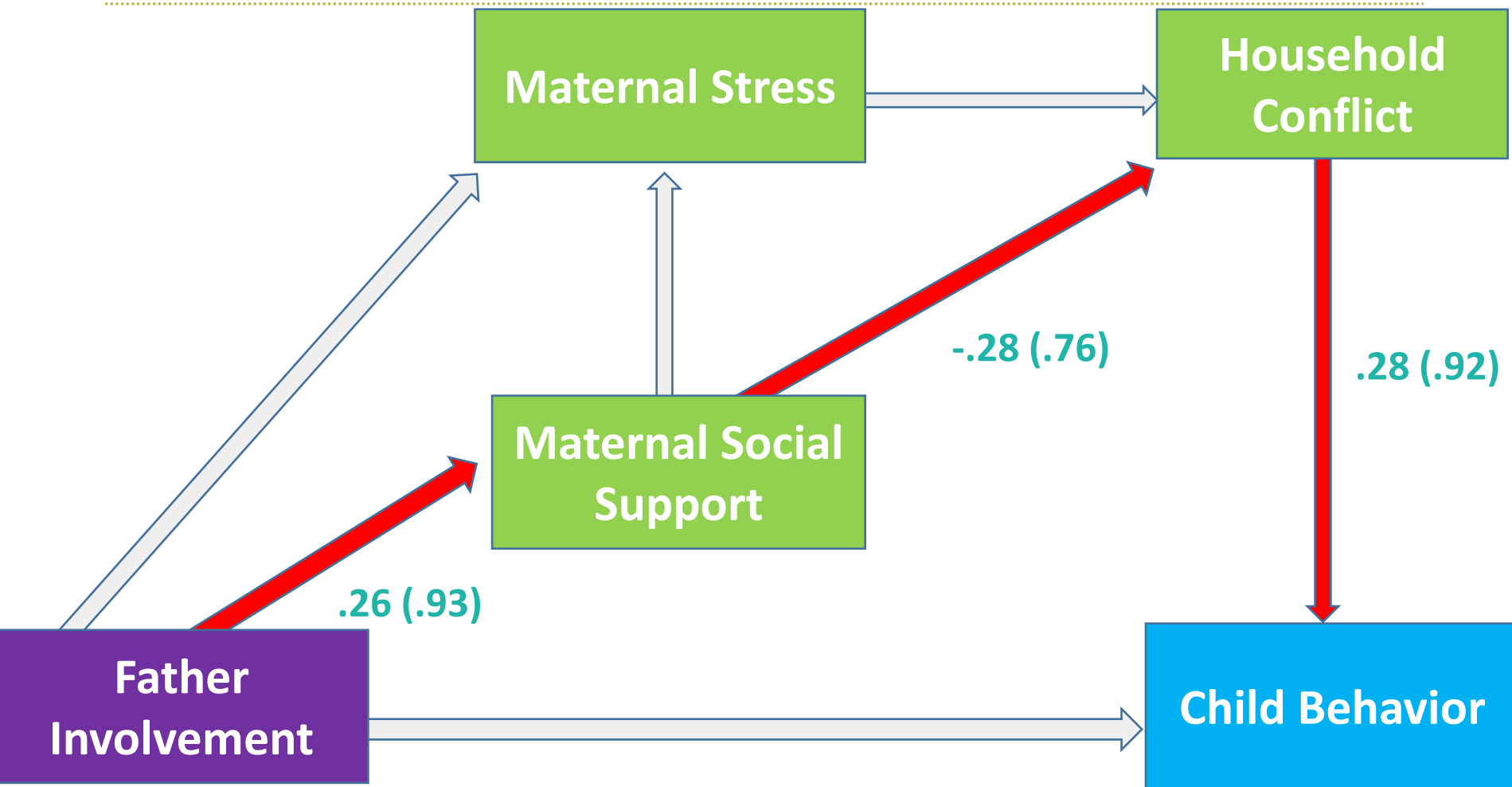
Does family functioning mediate the relationship between father involvement and child behavior?



$(B = -.03, Z = -3.45, p = .001)$

Indirect Path #1

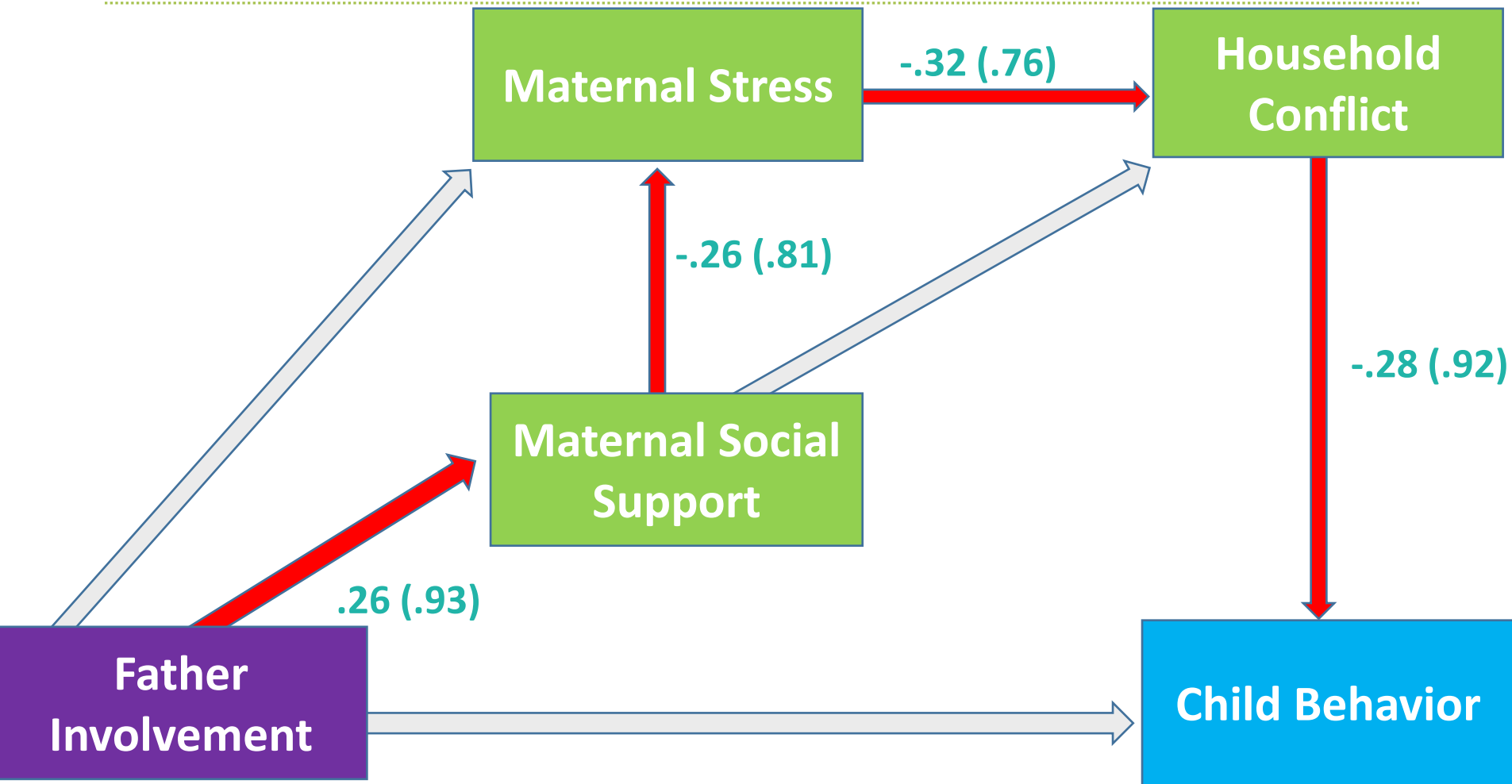
Does family functioning mediate the relationship between father involvement and child behavior?



$(B = -.02, Z = -3.15, p = .002)$

Indirect Path #2

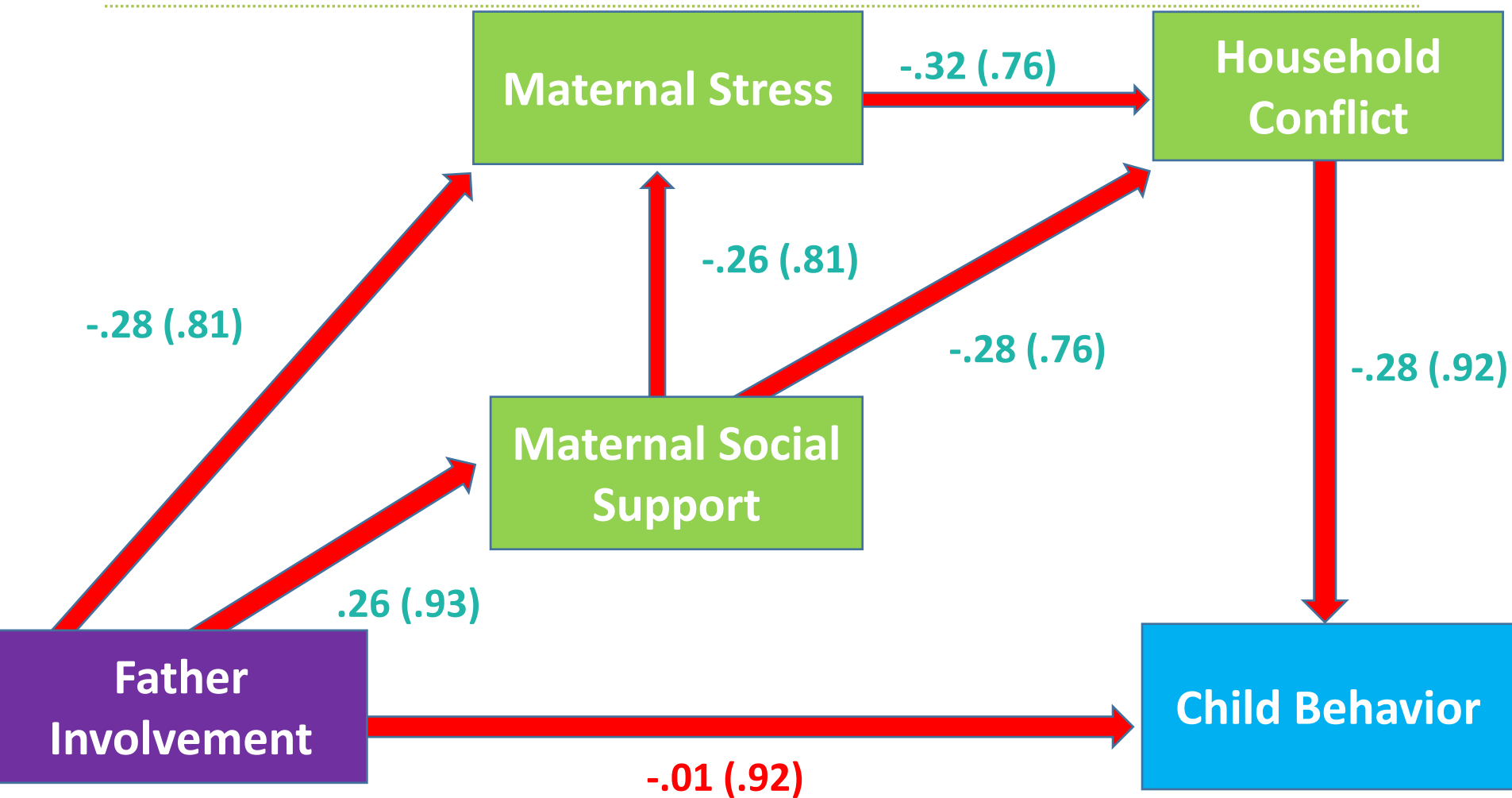
Does family functioning mediate the relationship between father involvement and child behavior?



$(B = .01, Z = -2.81, p = .005)$

Indirect Path #3

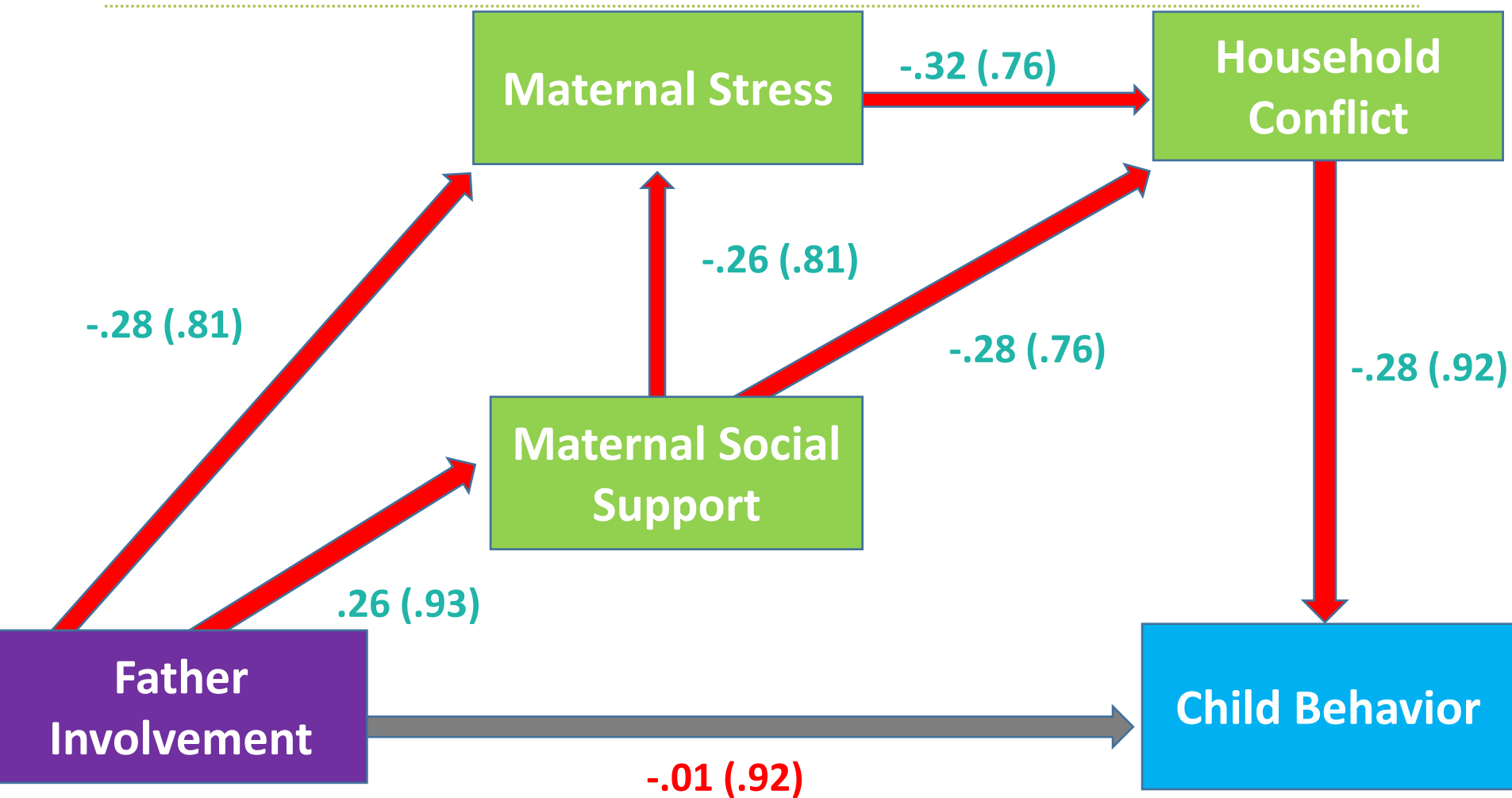
Comparison of Total Effects and Total Indirect Effects Models



Total Effects ($B = -.06, Z = -1.29, p = .19$)

Total Indirect Effects ($B = .05, Z = -4.24, 56, p = .00$)

Comparison of Total Effects and Total Indirect Effects Models



Total Effects ($B = -.06$, $Z = -1.29$, $p = .19$)

Total Indirect Effects ($B = .05$, $Z = -4.24$, $p = .00$)

Conclusions

Father Involvement did not have a significant **direct effect** on child behavior

- TimeCross-sectional study

Significant **indirect effects** of father involvement on child behavior were found

➤ Maternal stress

➤ Maternal social support

➤ Household conflict

Path Coefficients were relatively small, indicating only **small effects** of predictors on outcomes

➤ Neighborhood factors

➤ Intimate partner violence

➤ Spirituality

Study Limitations

- **No father-reported data**
- **Generalizability**