

Strength-based Parenting

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“Ideally, psychology should be able to help document what kind of families result in the healthiest children.”

(American Psychologist, 1999 , 54, p.560)

“Raising children...is about identifying and nurturing their strongest qualities, what they own and are best at.”

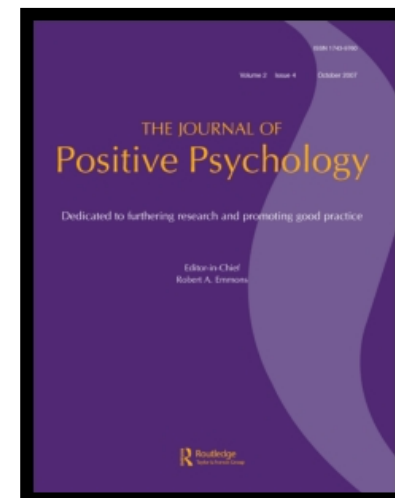
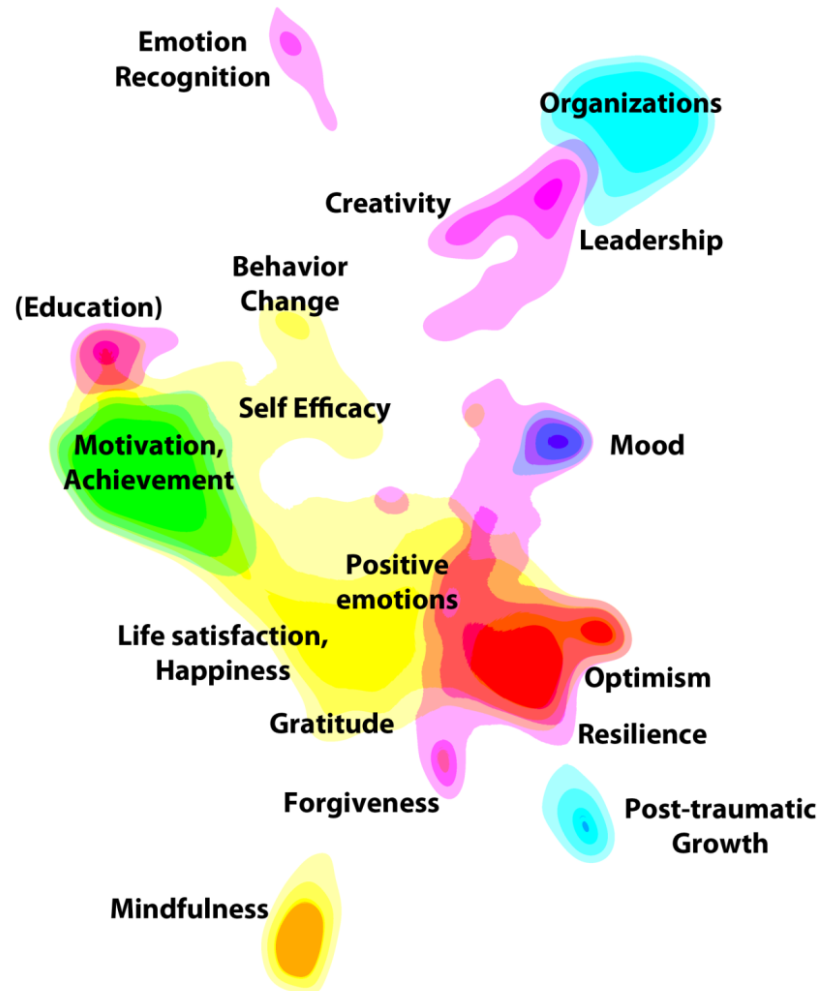
(Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p. 6)

“The study of the strengths that
foster better communities, such
as justice, responsibility, civility,
parenting, nurturance”

(IPPA website)

Parenting is neglected in PP

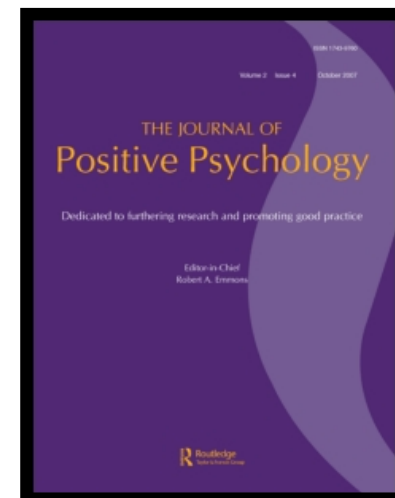
Rusk, R., & Waters, L. (2013). Tracing the size, reach, impact and breadth of positive psychology. *Journal of Positive Psychology* 8(3), 207-221



Parenting is neglected in PP

Donaldson, S., Dollwet, M., & Rao., M. (2015) Happiness, excellence, and optimal human functioning revisited: Examining the peer-reviewed literature linked to positive psychology. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 10(3), 185-195.

- Conducted an extensive review of the positive psychology movement.
- Parenting = absent.



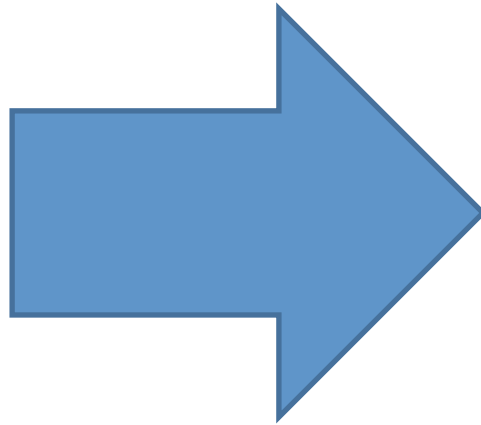
Year	Total number articles published	% published on parenting
2014	51 (6 editions)	2%
2013	49 (6 editions)	0%
2012	42 (6 editions)	5%
2011	49 (6 editions)	0%
2010	36 (6 editions)	0%
2009	50 (6 editions)	4%
2008	20 (4 editions)	0%
2007	24 (4 editions)	0%
2006	19 (4 editions)	5%

A missing piece of the PP puzzle



Parenting

- Authoritarian
- Aggressive
- Hostile
- Neglectful
- Mentally ill
- Parental conflict
- Parental stress



Children

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Low esteem
- Risk taking
- Substance abuse
- Poor relationships
- Heart attacks
- Disease

Research has shown
parents what we
should not do?

“Raising children...is about identifying and nurturing their strongest qualities, what they own and are best at.”

(Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p. 6)

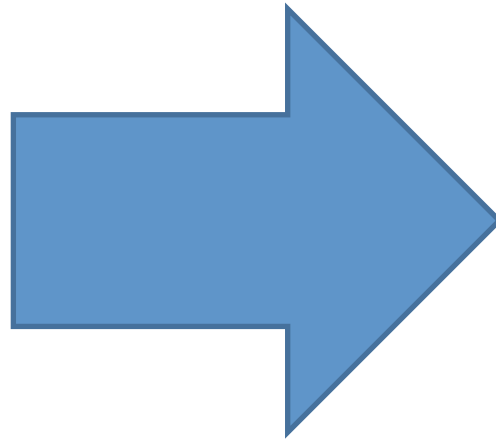
“Raising children...is vastly more than fixing what is wrong with them. It is about identifying and nurturing their strongest qualities, what they own and are best at, and helping them find niches in which they can best live out these strengths.”

(Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p. 6)

What do we already know about positive parenting?

Parenting

- Authoritative
- Responsive
- Autonomy granting



Children

- Secure attachment
- Life satisfaction
- Self esteem
- Education success
- Career outcomes

“Raising children...is about identifying and nurturing their strongest qualities, what they own and are best at.”

(Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p. 6)

Strength-based parenting: A new research program



Your child is stronger than you think



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Personality – Talents – Capacities



What is strength-based parenting?

“A style of parenting that seeks to deliberately identify and cultivate positive states, positive processes and positive qualities in children”
(Waters , 2015)



Two-factor Theory of Strengths

Strengths
knowledge

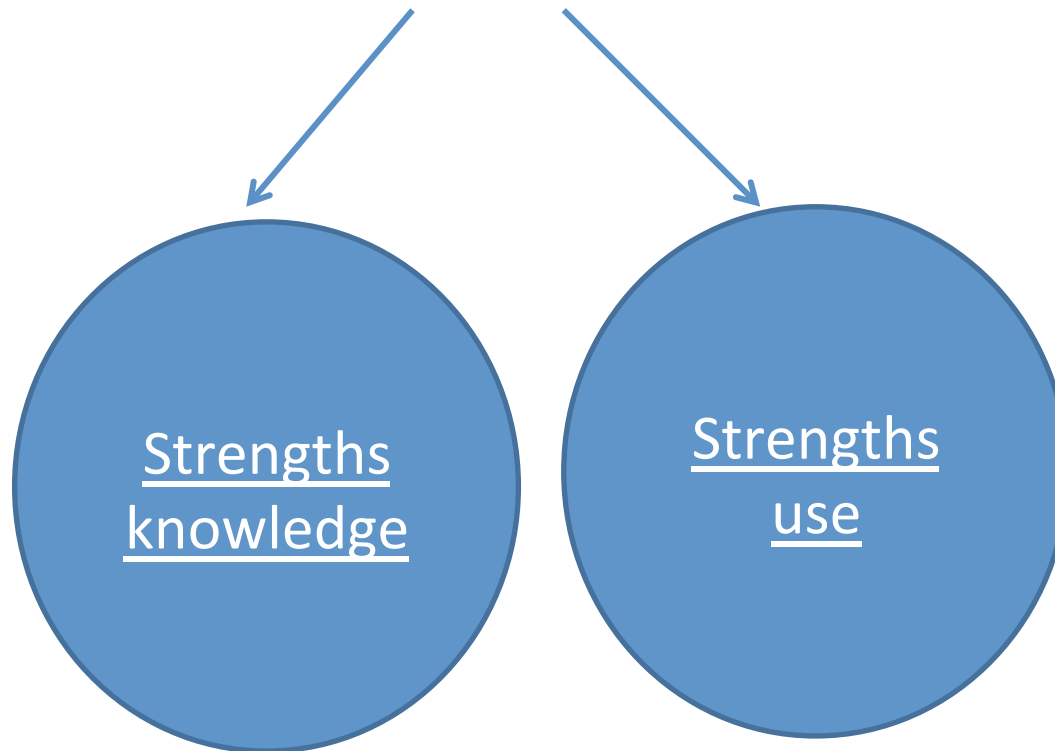
A person's
awareness and
recognition of
their strengths

Strengths use

How much a
person uses
their strengths in
a variety of
settings

Govindji and Linley (2007)

A style of parenting that seeks to deliberately
identify & cultivate strengths



What happens when parents help their kids to see and use their strengths?

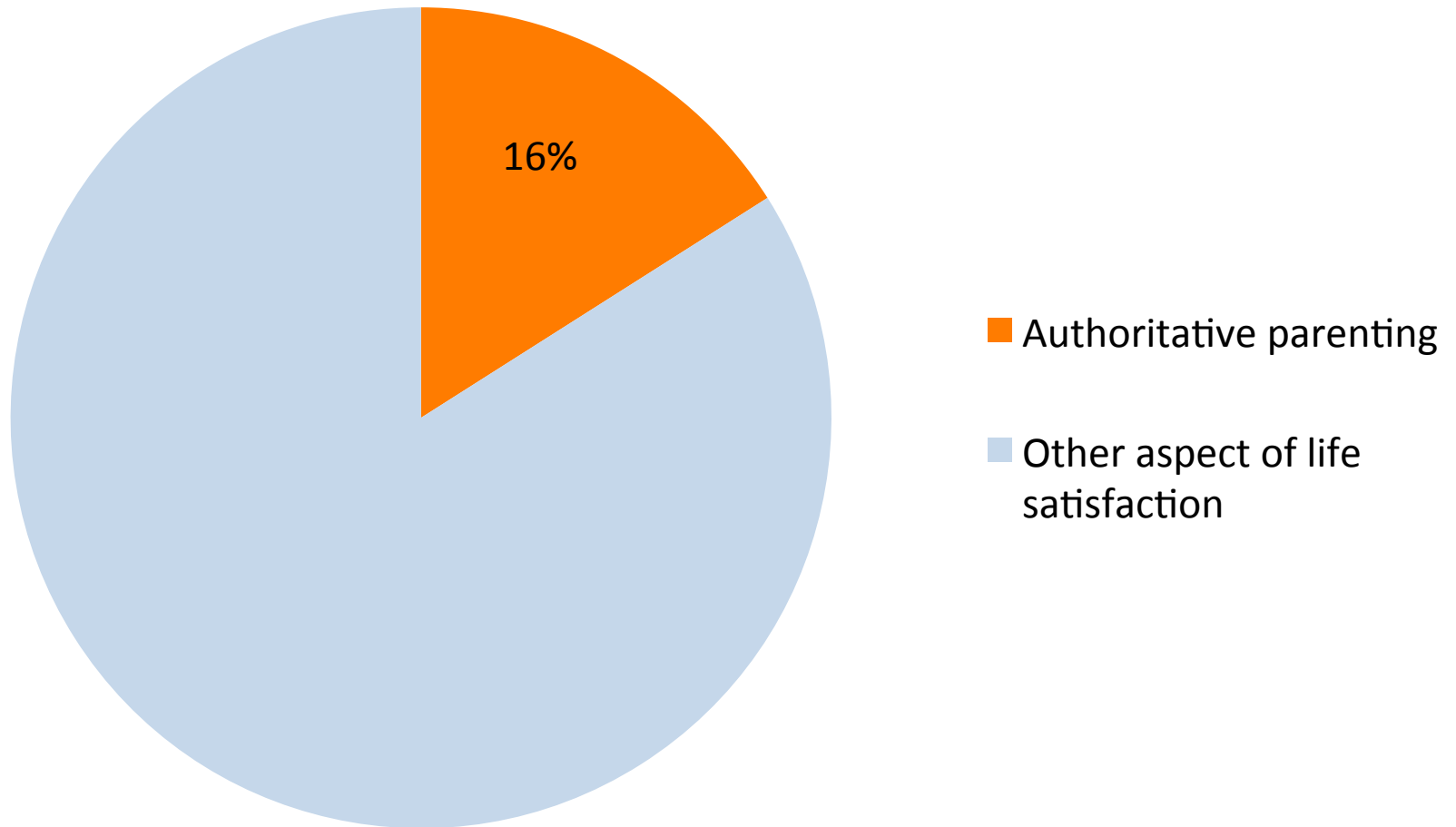


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Waters, L. (2015). Strength-Based Parenting and Life Satisfaction in Teenagers, *Advances in Social Sciences*, 2, 158-173.



Explaining Teenager Life Satisfaction



Strengths Knowledge

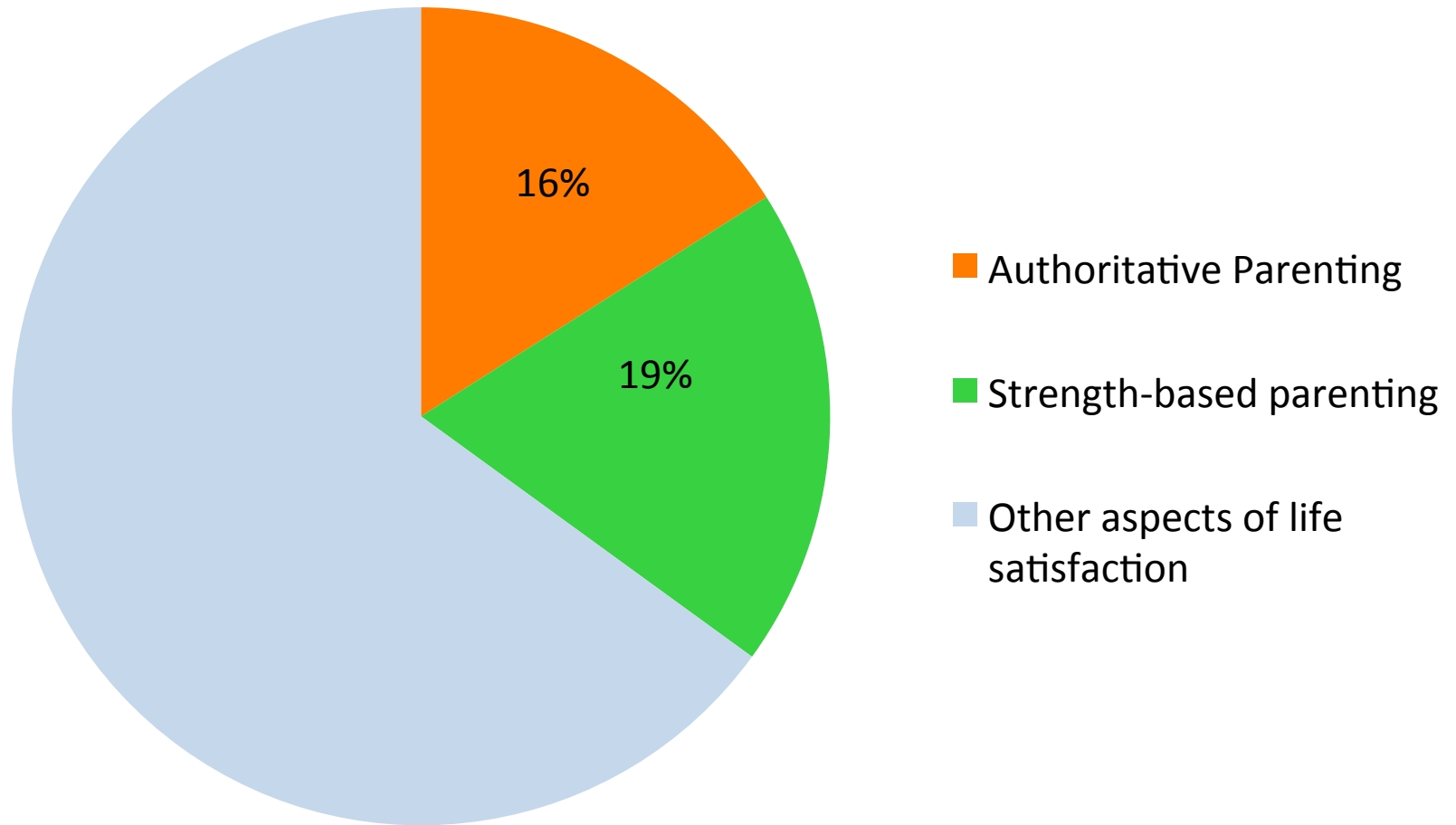
“My parents easily see the strengths in me (my personality, abilities, talents, and skills).”

Strengths Use

“My parents show me how to use my strengths in different situations.”



Explaining Teenager Life Satisfaction



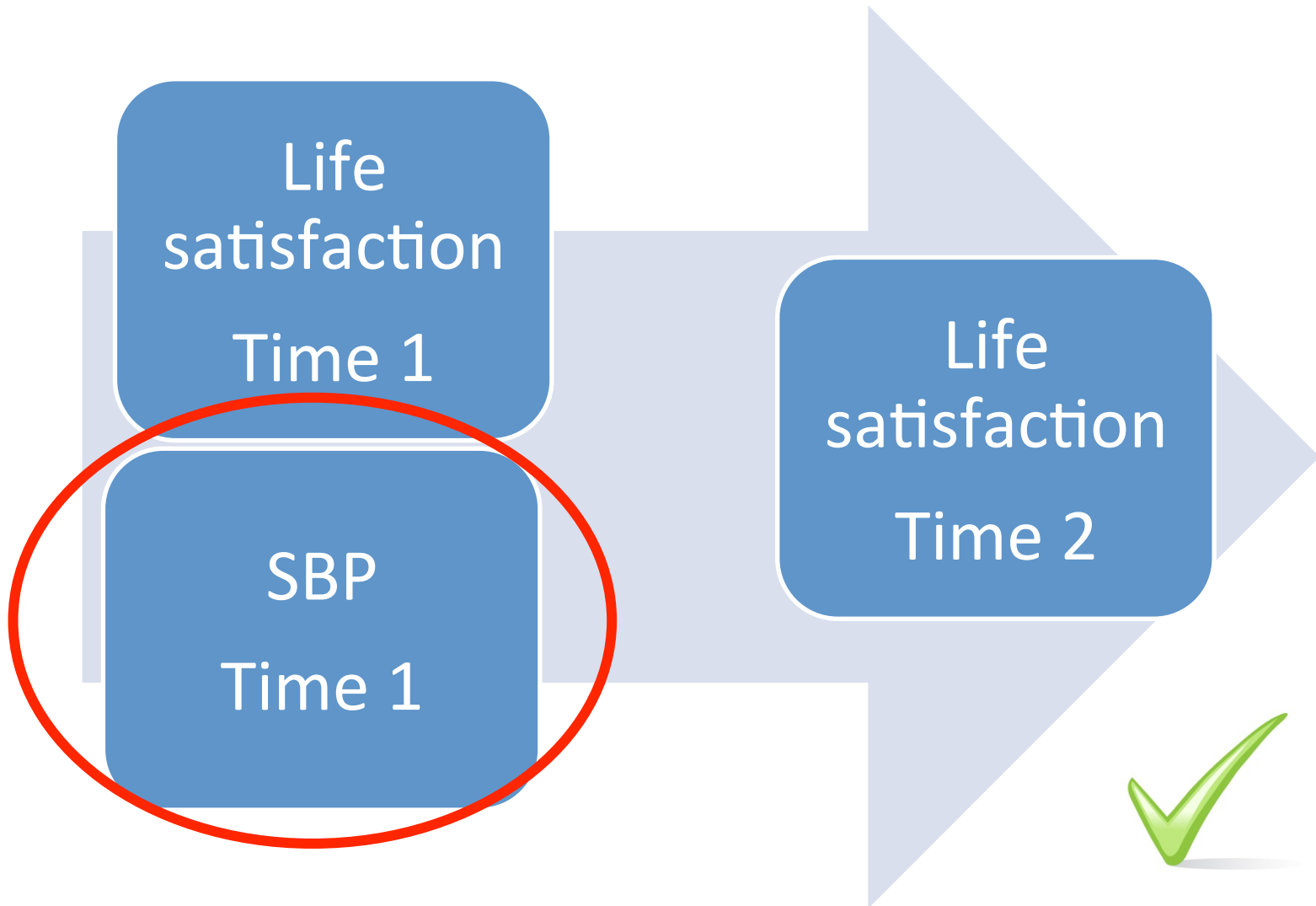
SBP predicts life satisfaction one year later



Life
satisfaction
Time 1

Life
Satisfaction
Time 2

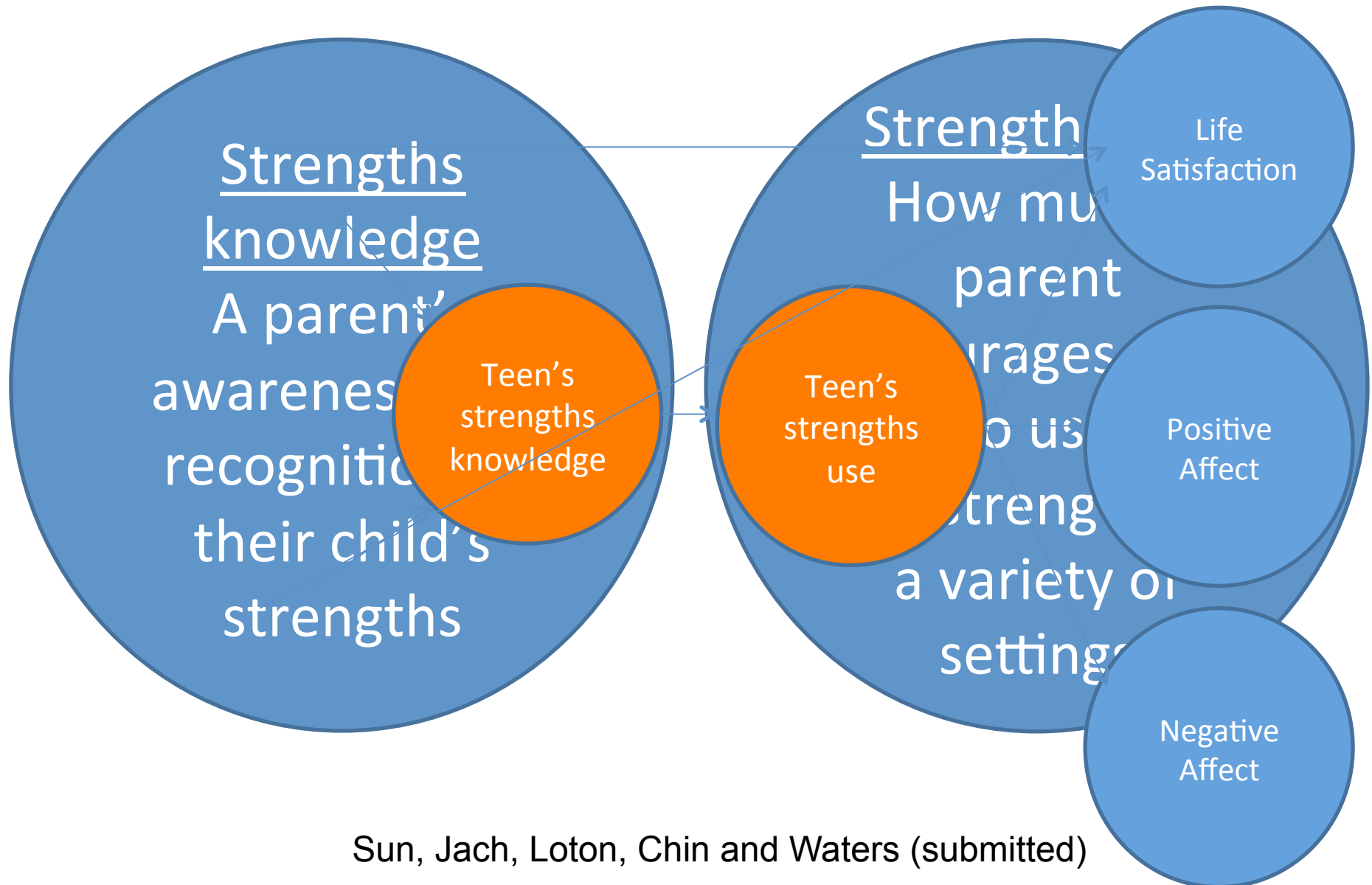
SBP predicts life satisfaction one year later



Why does SBP increase life satisfaction?



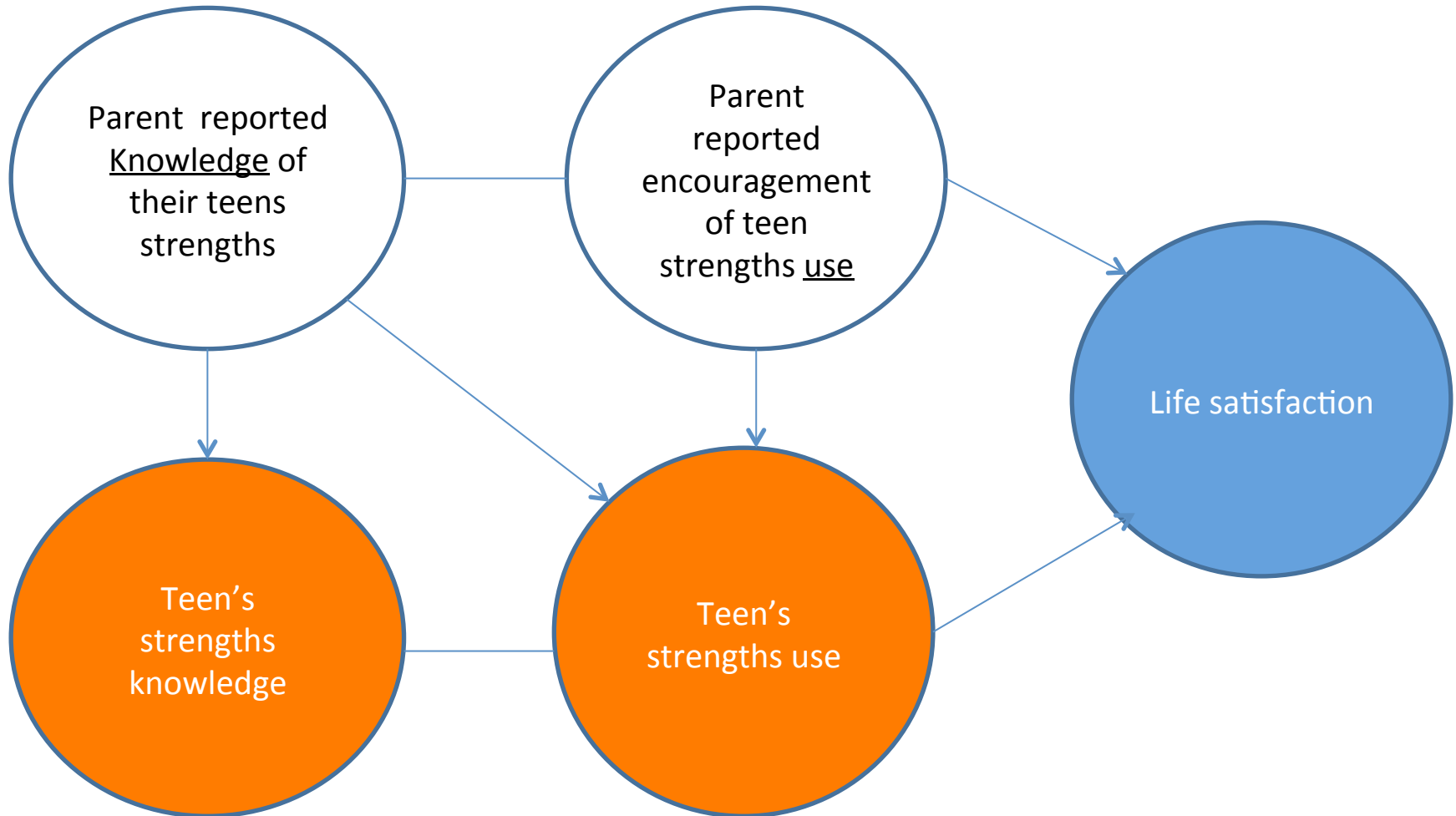
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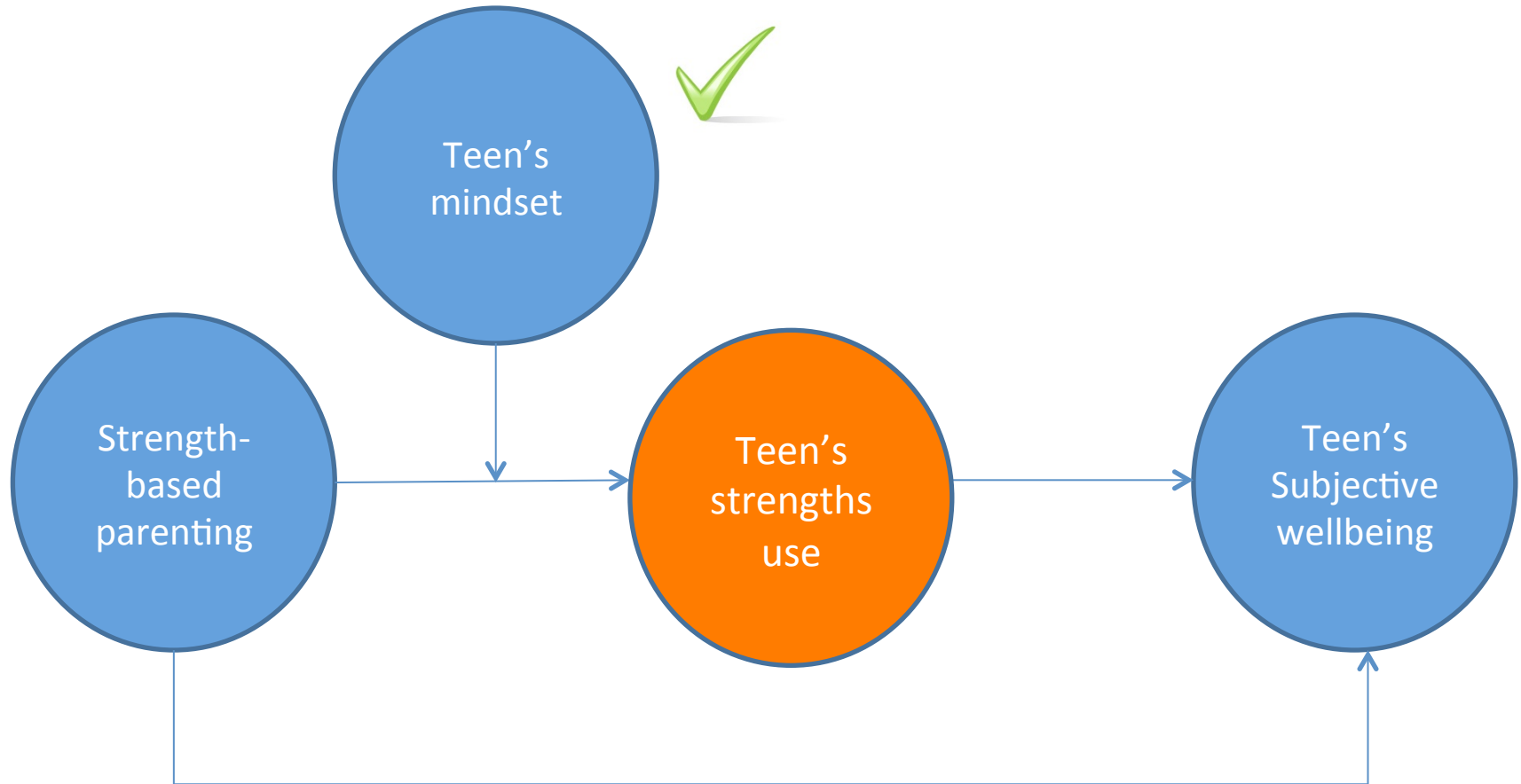


Matched parent-teen dyad



Waters, L. (2015). Strength-Based Parenting and Life Satisfaction in Teenagers, *Advances in Social Sciences*, 2, 158-173.

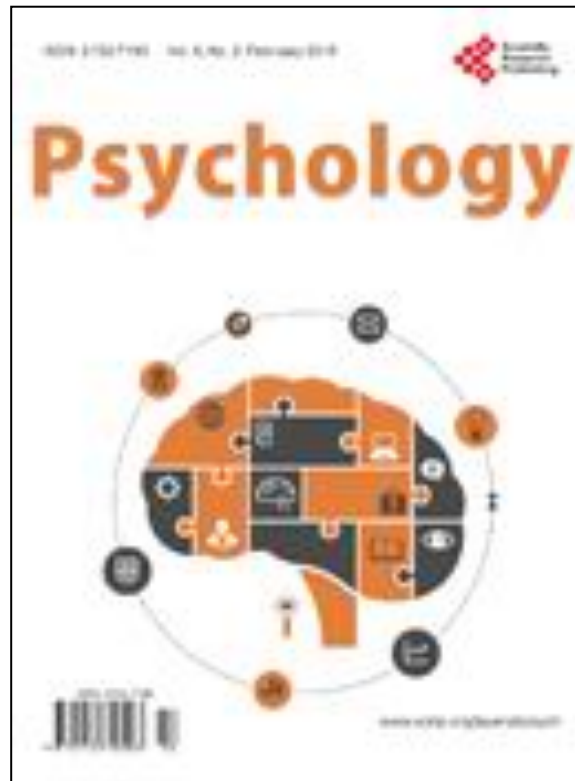
Does mindset matter?



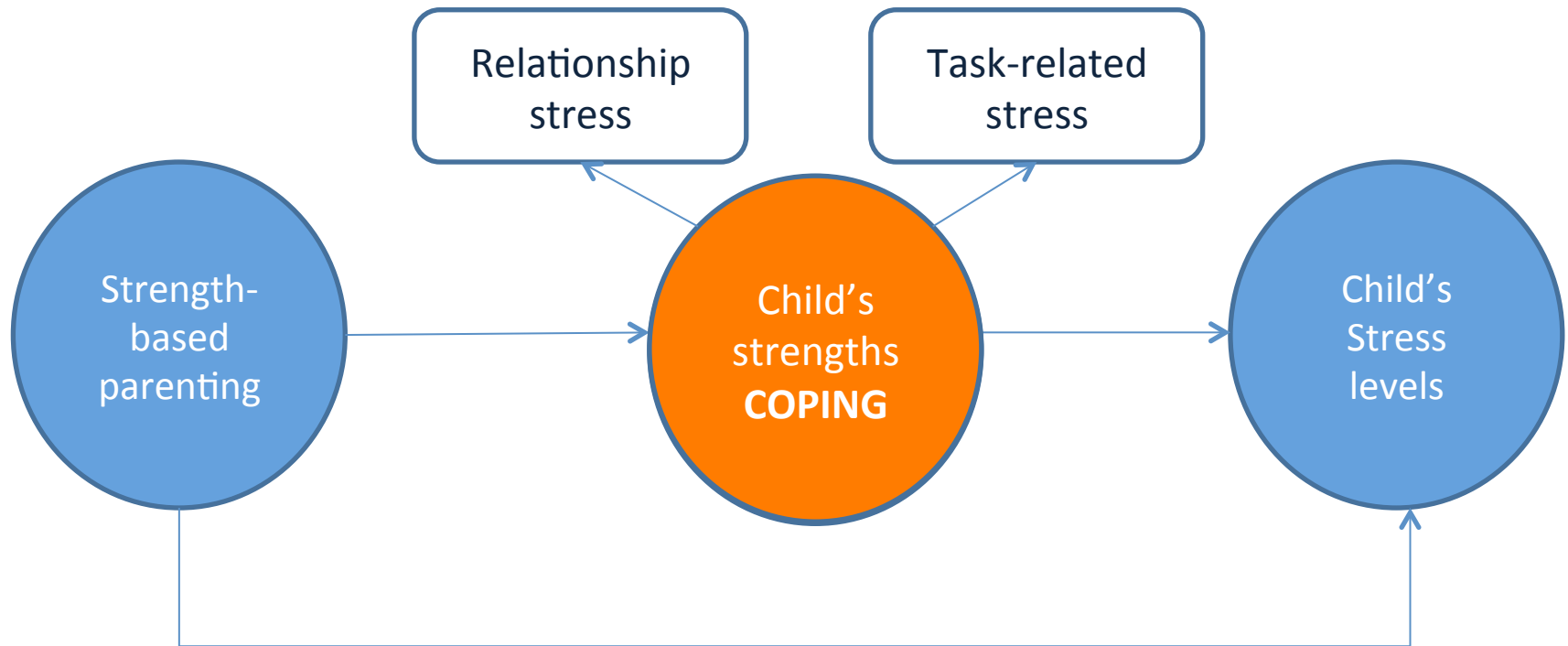
Jach, Sun, Loton, Chin and Waters (submitted)

What about SBP for younger kids?

Waters, L. (2015). The Relationship between Strength-Based Parenting with Children's Stress Levels and Strength-Based Coping Approaches, *Psychology*, 6, 689-699



SBP and stress in children

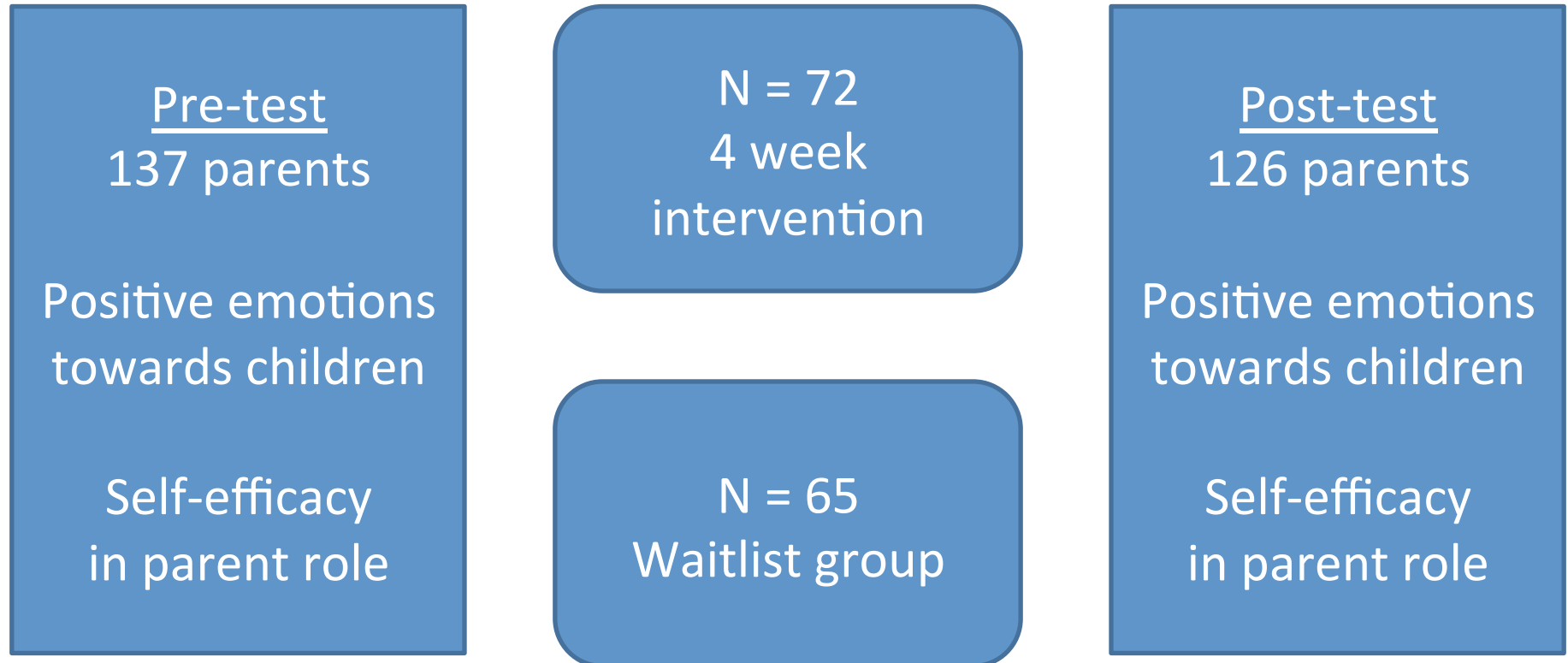


Waters, L. (2015). The Relationship between Strength-Based Parenting with Children's Stress Levels and Strength-Based Coping Approaches, *Psychology*, 6, 689-699

What about the parents themselves?



Quasi-experimental, waitlist-control design



SBP changes the way parents see themselves and their kids



Action steps for parents

Strengths surveys

Strengths spotting

Strengths role models

Strengths letter

The Strengths Exchange website

The Strong Child:

Building Optimism, Resilience & Achievement



Thanks!



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