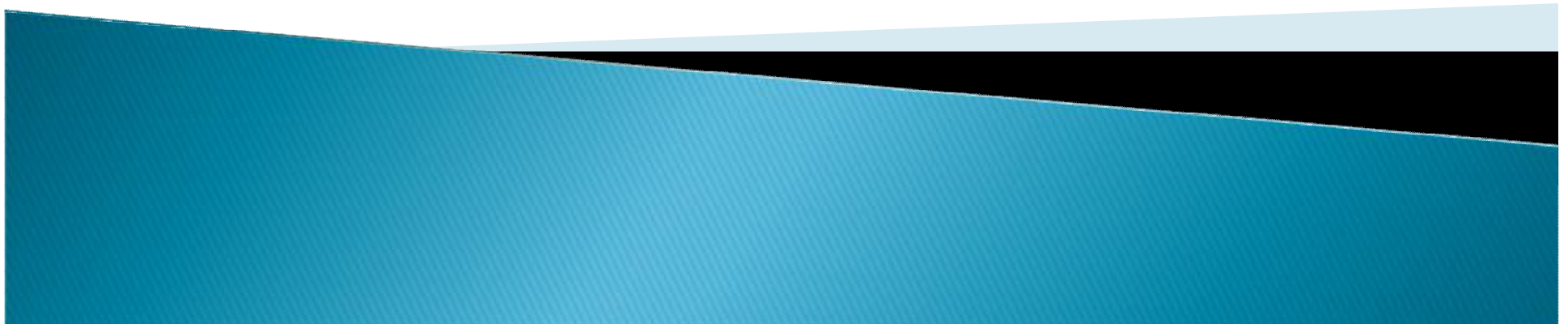


Mixed Methods Example

The Hurried Child: Myth vs. Reality

Sandra Hofferth

July 14, 2010



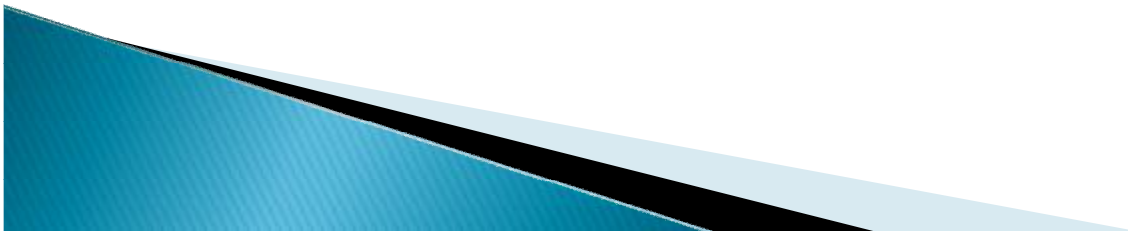
Mixed Methods

- Differences in the two methods
 - Quantitative is deductive
 - The scientific process
 - Allows us to weed through our hypotheses and theories, throwing out some and keeping other at least temporarily
 - Ideally, start with hypothesis
 - Test hypothesis
 - Reject or accept for the time being
 - Qualitative is inductive
 - Start with data
 - Develop constructs, questions, measures – improve measures!
 - Serendipity – unanticipated findings
 - Diametrically opposed methods



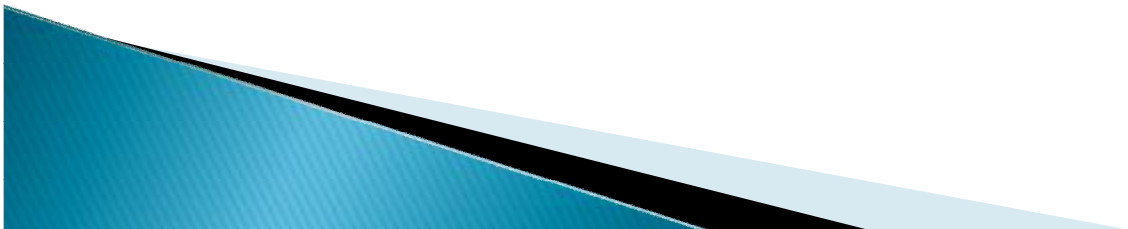
The Hurried Child

- } Are children so busy such that they are overly stressed and pressured (AAP)?
 - 1) are children too “busy”?
 - How do we define hurriedness/busy-ness?
 - What proportion of children are busy?
 - 2) are “busy” children stressed?
 - How do we define “stress?”
 - Is being busy associated with increased stress?



The Hurried Child

- In this mixed method project (published in 2009) we conducted two parallel analyses
- First, qualitative interviews of 43 families with children 9-12 in Michigan. Limited to White families with a mom with at least a high school education, though some family structure variation.
- Second, used data from time diary interviews with a nationally representative sample of same age children across the U.S. (PSID-CDS) to obtain actual number of activities and length of time (330 White children, though also tested among Black children and all)



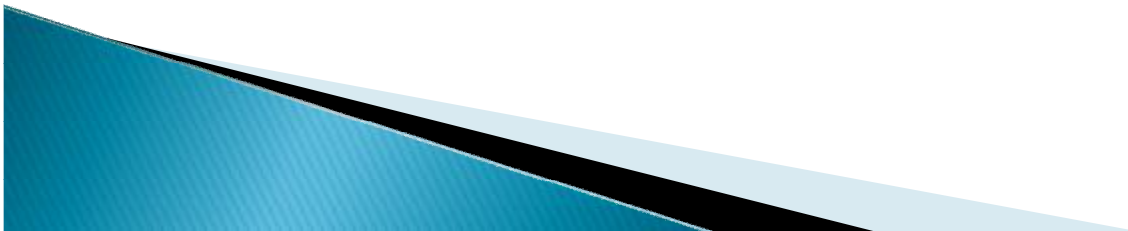
Qualitative interviews

- We asked parents about children's activities
- We asked children about their activities
- Whether they had too many activities, whether they wanted to change, and what allowed them to manage their lives
- From the qualitative interviews we determined what parents meant by saying their child had too many activities – multiple activities and/or a lot of time
- Stress: crying, sick, tired, does not want to go



Quantitative method

- From the PSID-CDS we obtained what we thought were comparable measures of the number of activities and the time spent in them. We created 4 categories: hurried, balanced, focused, and inactive.
- We used both quantitative and qualitative data to say how many children were in each category and
- Then associated the categories with measures of stress obtained from the Behavior Problems scale (internalizing) using multivariate methods



Analysis

- Descriptives from both data sets – an enormous amount of space to describe the two studies
- Analysis primarily from the quantitative data set
- Results:
 - Only one-quarter of kids are hurried
 - Kids who are inactive have higher levels of stress
- Results can be interpreted through parental and child responses. Parents make changes when stresses occur – we see an equilibrium state after changes have been made.
- Inactive children are of great concern to parents



Major problems

- Had lots of trouble getting this published
 - Strikes at strongly held stereotypes and beliefs; many refused to believe the results **IN SPITE OF THE FACT** that **PARENTAL INTERVIEWS CONFIRMED THEM**
 - Very difficult to get such research published
 - Journal Editor expressed interest in mixed method but no go in practice
- Eventually published in an edited volume

