

Analyzing the Relationship Between Children’s Schooling Modality and Parenting Stress During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Compared to parents of children who are physically attending school, parents of children who are learning remotely feel more confident in being able to keep their children safe during the pandemic, and they face lower levels of COVID-Related Family Safety/Stability Stress.

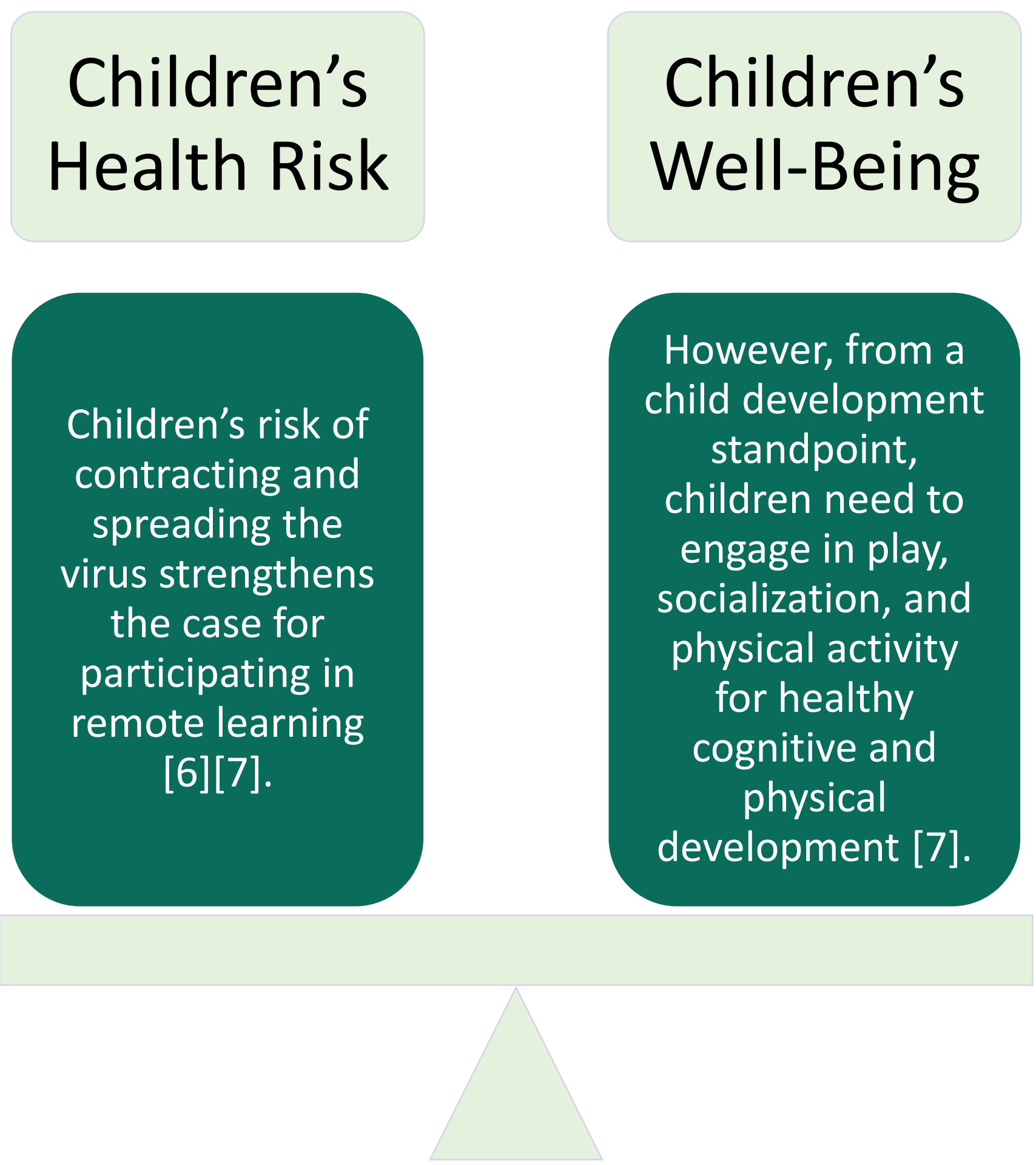
BACKGROUND

In March of 2020, the nation shut down to mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, thus leading to school closures across the country [1].

- Stress impacts parenting, parent-child interactions [2], and parent mental health [3].
 - Throughout the spring and summer of 2020, we developed and disseminated a novel measure to assess the impact of COVID-Related Parenting Stress (CRPS).

The country’s response to COVID-19 has evolved over time and has changed the way that children are being educated in the 2020/2021 academic year [4][5].

- Many parents have been given the option for their children to either physically learn in the classroom or participate in remote learning [4][5].

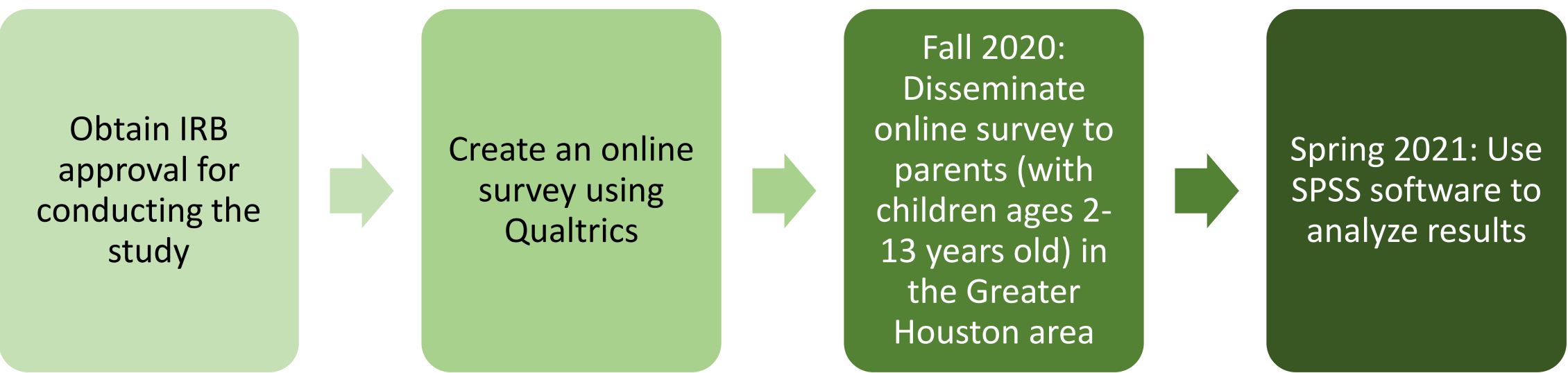


Parents have been facing an immense dilemma regarding whether it is best for children to learn remotely or physically in the classroom [4].

PURPOSE

To assess the current differences in CRPS between parents of children who are physically attending school versus remotely learning.

METHODS



Measurement: COVID-Related Parenting Stress (CRPS) and children’s different learning modalities

- The CRPS scale consists of 14 items and is a 5-point Likert-scale that ranges from 1 (Extremely) to 5 (Not at all).
- Within the CRPS scale, the “COVID-Related Family Safety/Stability Stress” (8 items) subscale focuses on the stress that parents are experiencing due to the pandemic’s impact on parents’ ability to
 - obtain necessary essentials
 - provide for their family
 - keep their children safe and healthy
 - keep their children occupied and educated

Statistical Analysis Method:

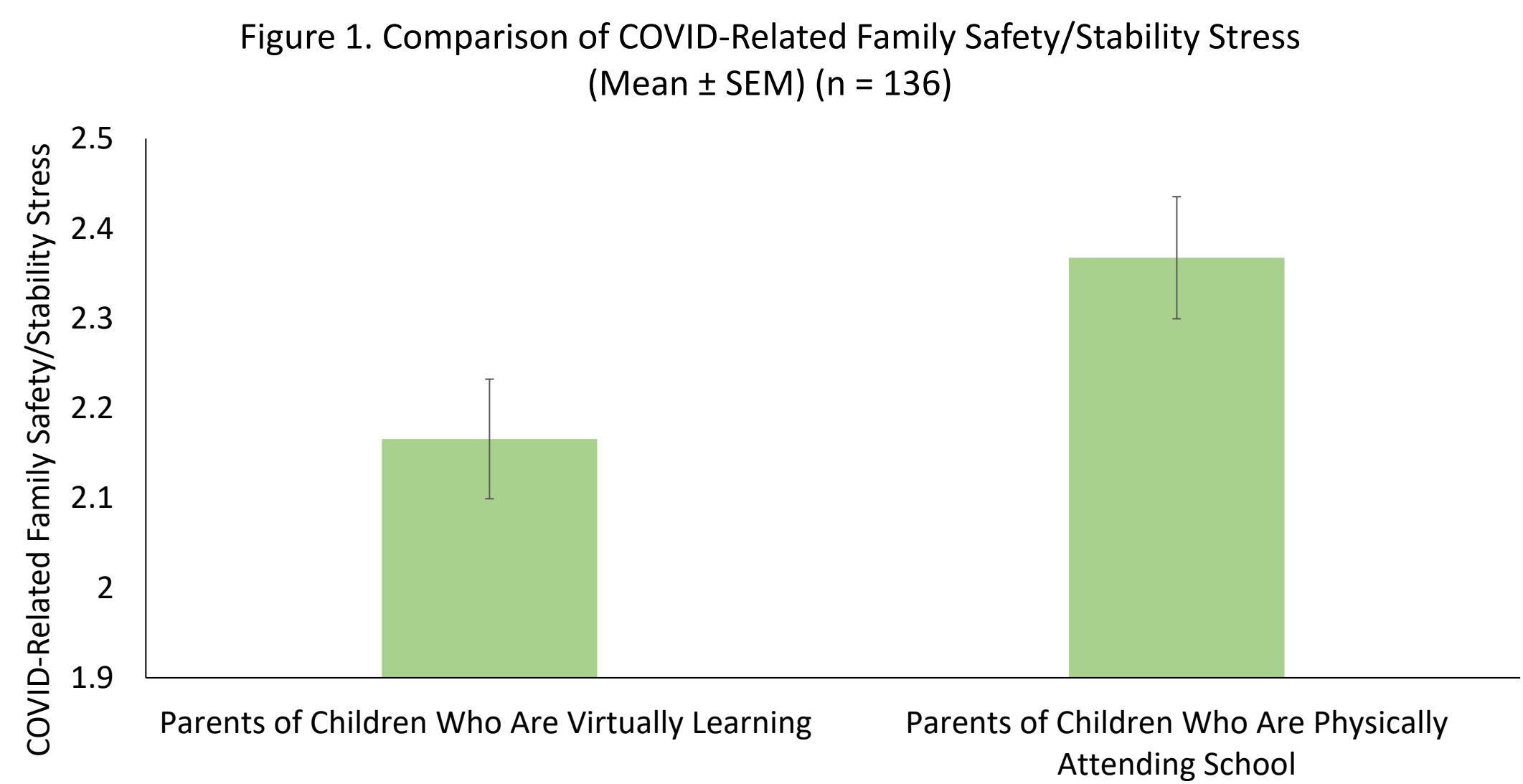
- ANOVA – to evaluate differences in CRPS between parents of children who are learning in school and learning remotely.
- Pearson Chi-Square test – to identify the presence of a relationship between children’s learning modality and parents’ CRPS.

RESULTS

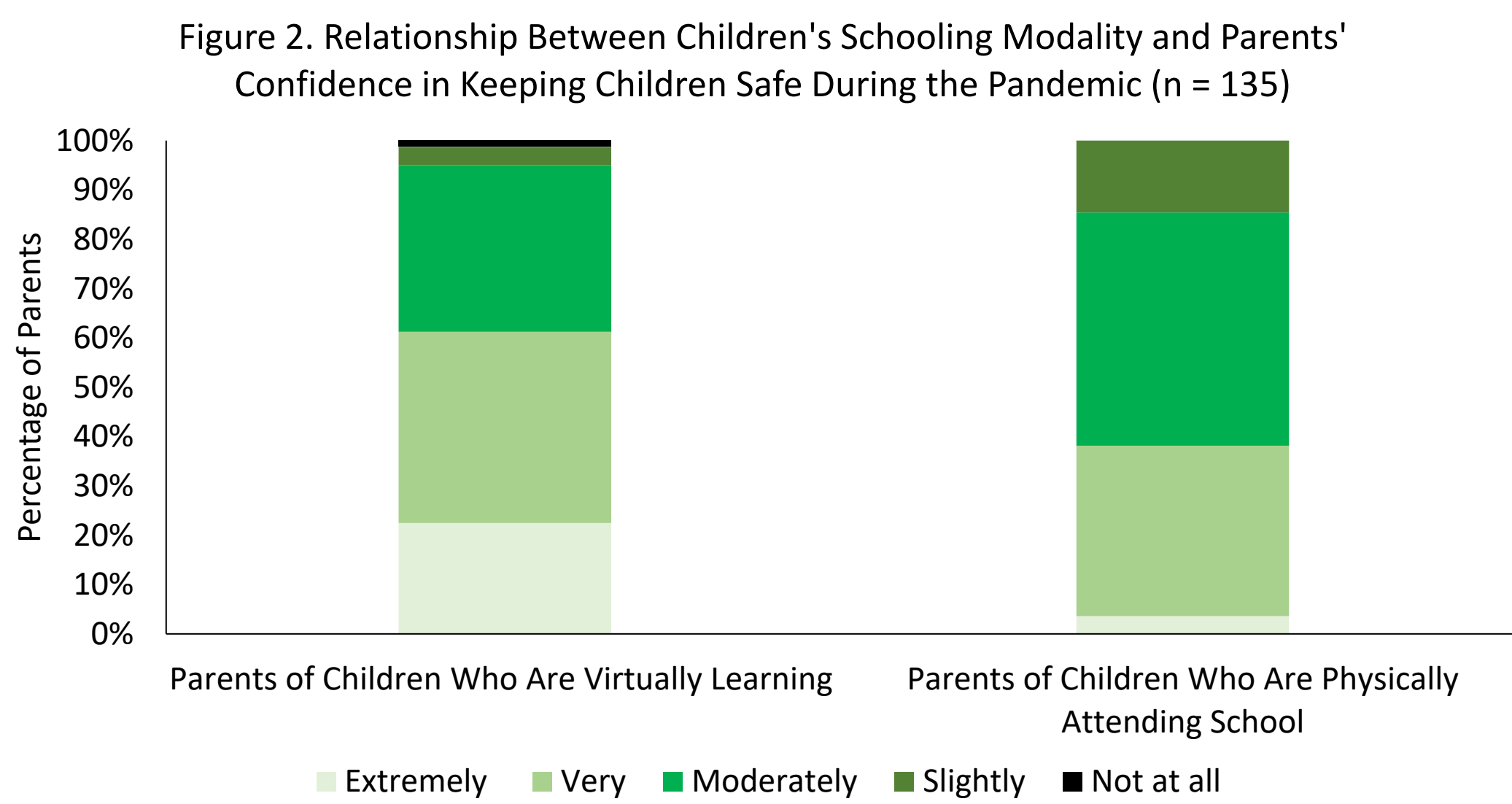
Descriptive Statistics:

- Total Valid Cases: n = 145 parents
- Parent Gender: 95.2% Female, 4.8% Male
- Parent Race: 64.1% White, 24.1% multiracial, 7.6% African American/Black, 2.8% Asian/Asian American, 1.4% Latinx/Hispanic/Hispanic American

The COVID-Related Family Safety/Stability Stress had a Cronbach’s alpha value of 0.750, thus indicating acceptable internal consistency.



ANOVA test results (Figure 1) reveal that parents of children who are physically learning in school reported statistically significantly higher levels of COVID-Related Family Safety/Stability Stress than parents of children who are virtually learning, $F(1, 134) = 4.255, p = 0.041$.



A Pearson Chi-Square test (Figure 2) shows that there is a significant relationship between children’s learning modalities and parents’ belief regarding how confident they are in keeping their children safe during the pandemic, $\chi^2(4) = 14.851, p = 0.005$.

DISCUSSION

- There is greater COVID-Related Family Safety/Stability Stress among parents of children are physically in school.
 - Parents may feel that there is a greater risk for child/family disease contraction when children are spending time away from home.
- A greater percentage of parents of children who are remotely learning feel “very to extremely” confident about keeping their children safe during the pandemic compared to the percentage of parents of children who are physically learning at school.
 - For parents of children who are remotely learning, confidence in keeping their children safe is likely contributing to their lower COVID-Related Family Safety/Stability Stress.

Future Directions: To examine parent mental health beyond CRPS and child mental health status across different learning modalities and to examine the sample of parents whose children are participating in both in-person and remote learning.

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