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# The Persistence of Conduct Difficulties in Children with Intellectual Limitations

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# Background

- The persistence of conduct difficulties across childhood is strongly associated with later violent and anti-social behaviour, incarceration, poor health and social exclusion (Farrington & Welsh, 2007; Tremblay, 2006)
- Children with 'intellectual limitations' are at high risk of
  - conduct difficulties in childhood (Emerson & Einfeld, in press; Emerson et al in press)
  - and youth offending (Farrington & Welsh, 2007)
- We know little about the predictors of different trajectories of conduct difficulties among this 'high risk' group

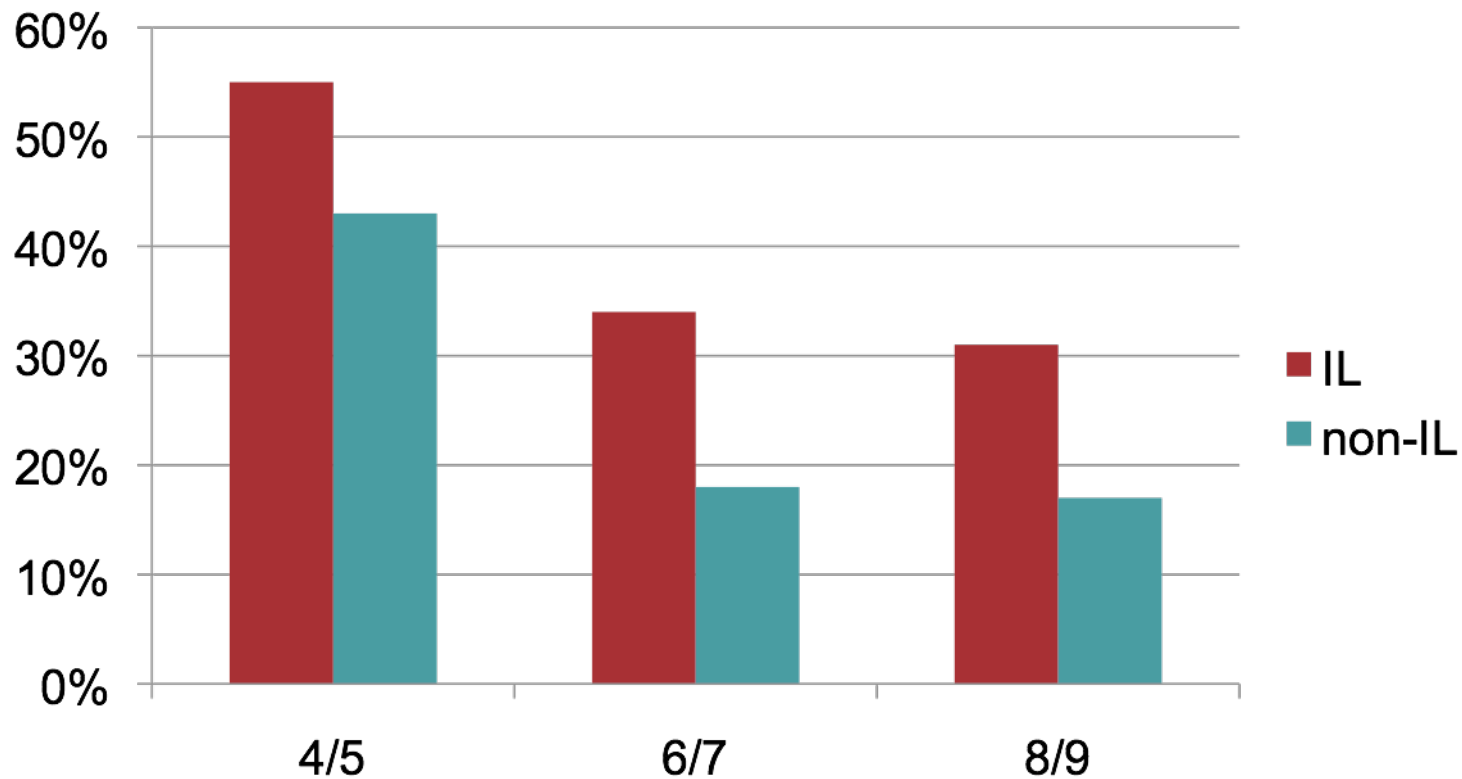


## Method

- LSAC K w1-3
- Intellectual limitation: <1 s.d. below population mean on *Learning Outcome Index* at age 4/5
- Conduct difficulty: scoring in 'borderline' or 'abnormal' range on maternal-completed Conduct Difficulties subscale of SDQ
- Complete data available for 3,585 children (444, 12% with intellectual limitation)

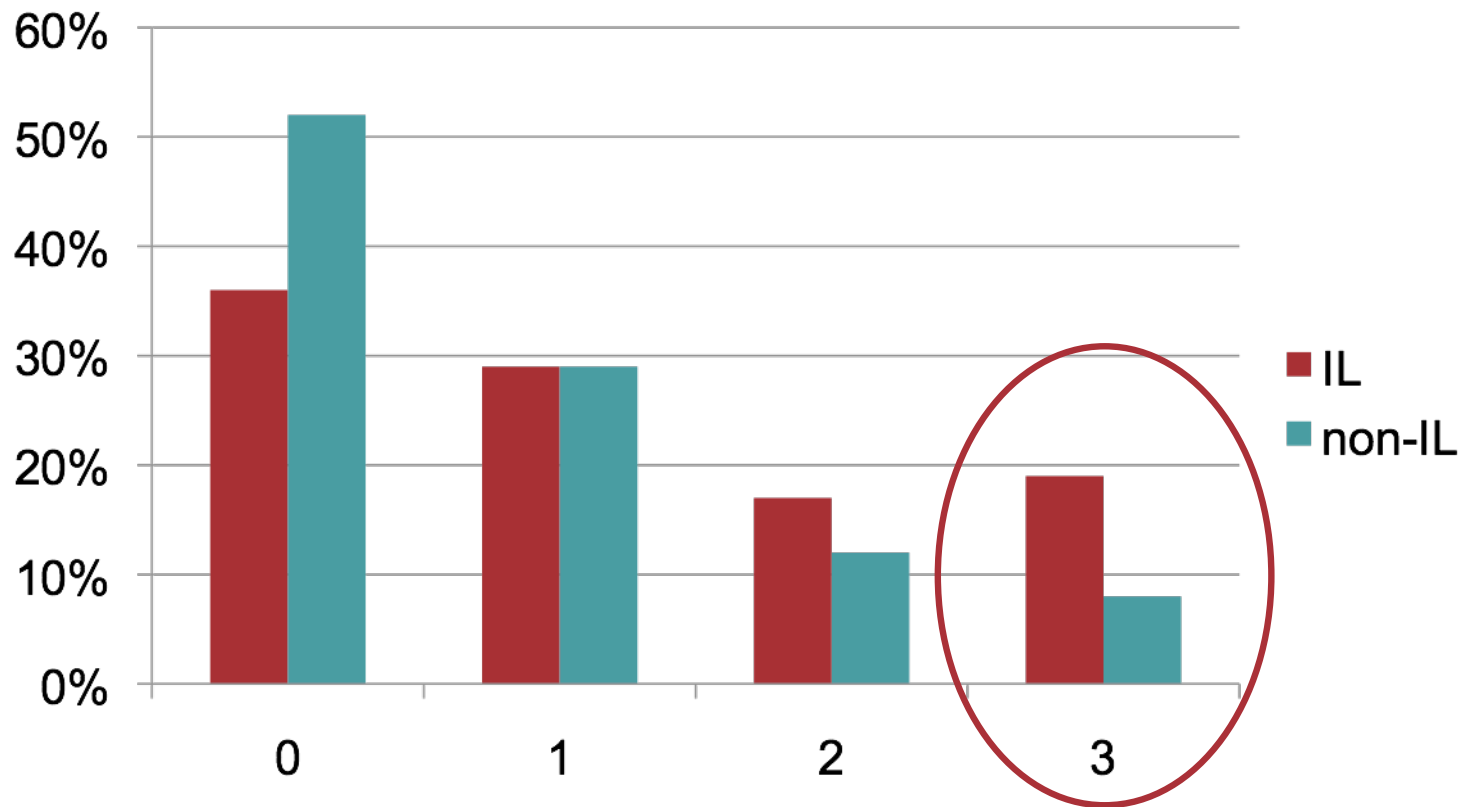


## Cross-Sectional Prevalence of Conduct Difficulties





## Number of Waves Showing Conduct Difficulties





## Key Comparisons

- Persistent CD (n=78; %) compared with
  - ‘early only’ CD (n=103; %)
  - no CD at any Wave (n=168; %)



# Cross Validation

	Persistent	Early Only	No	
Child self-report (age 8/9) 'getting into fights'	40%	21%	20%	p=0.002
Teacher completed SDQ subscale (age 8/9) normalised subscale mean score	1.1	0.05	-0.05	p<0.001



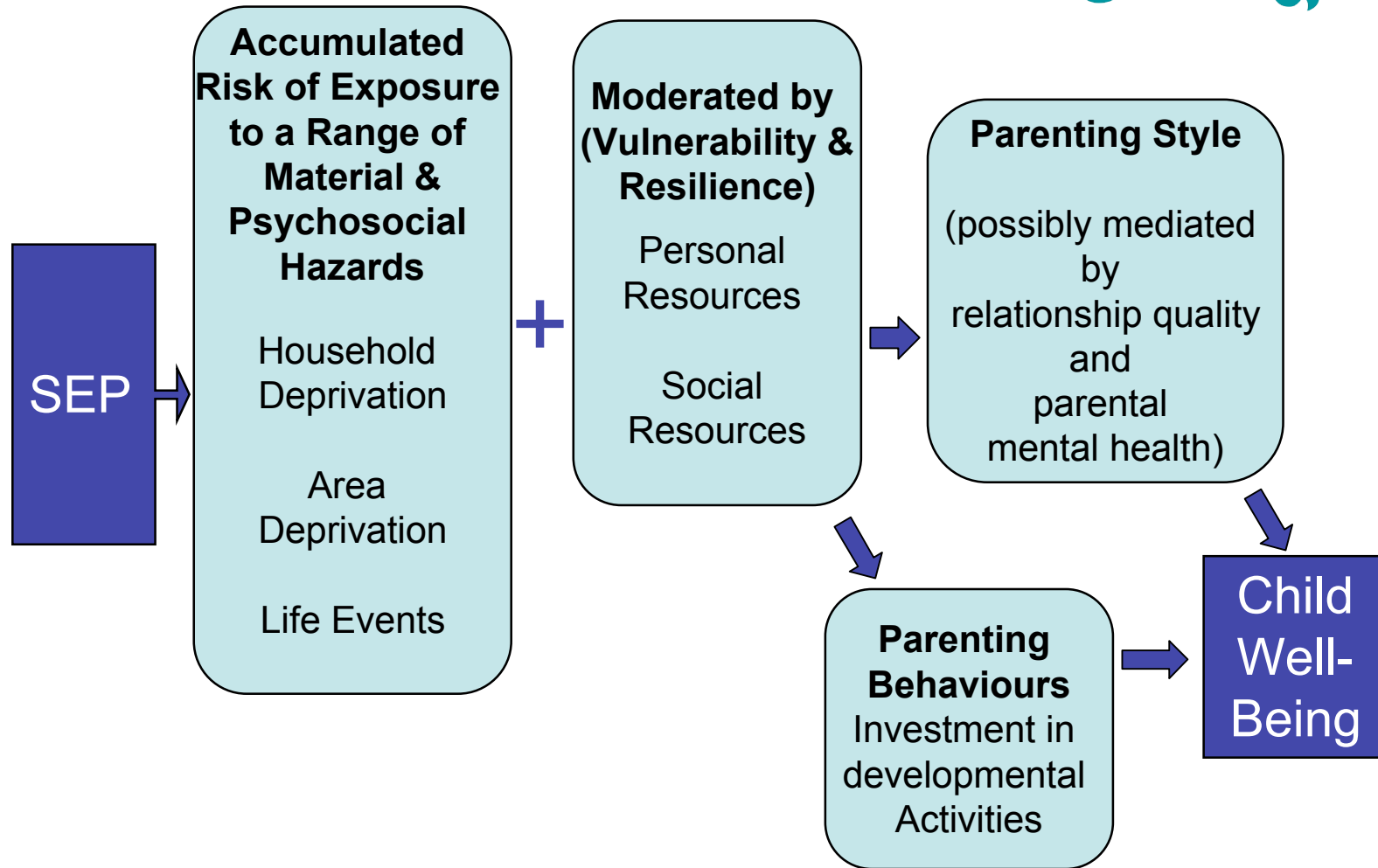
# Bivariate Associations: Persistence Associated with

- Child characteristics

- Male gender
- Poorer physical development
- More receptive and expressive communication difficulties at age 4/5

- Environmental risk

- Lower parental education
- Single parent household
- Poorer maternal health and mental health
- Greater household and area disadvantage
- More adverse life events
- More hostile parenting
- More inconsistent parenting
- Reduced access to extra cost and out of home activities



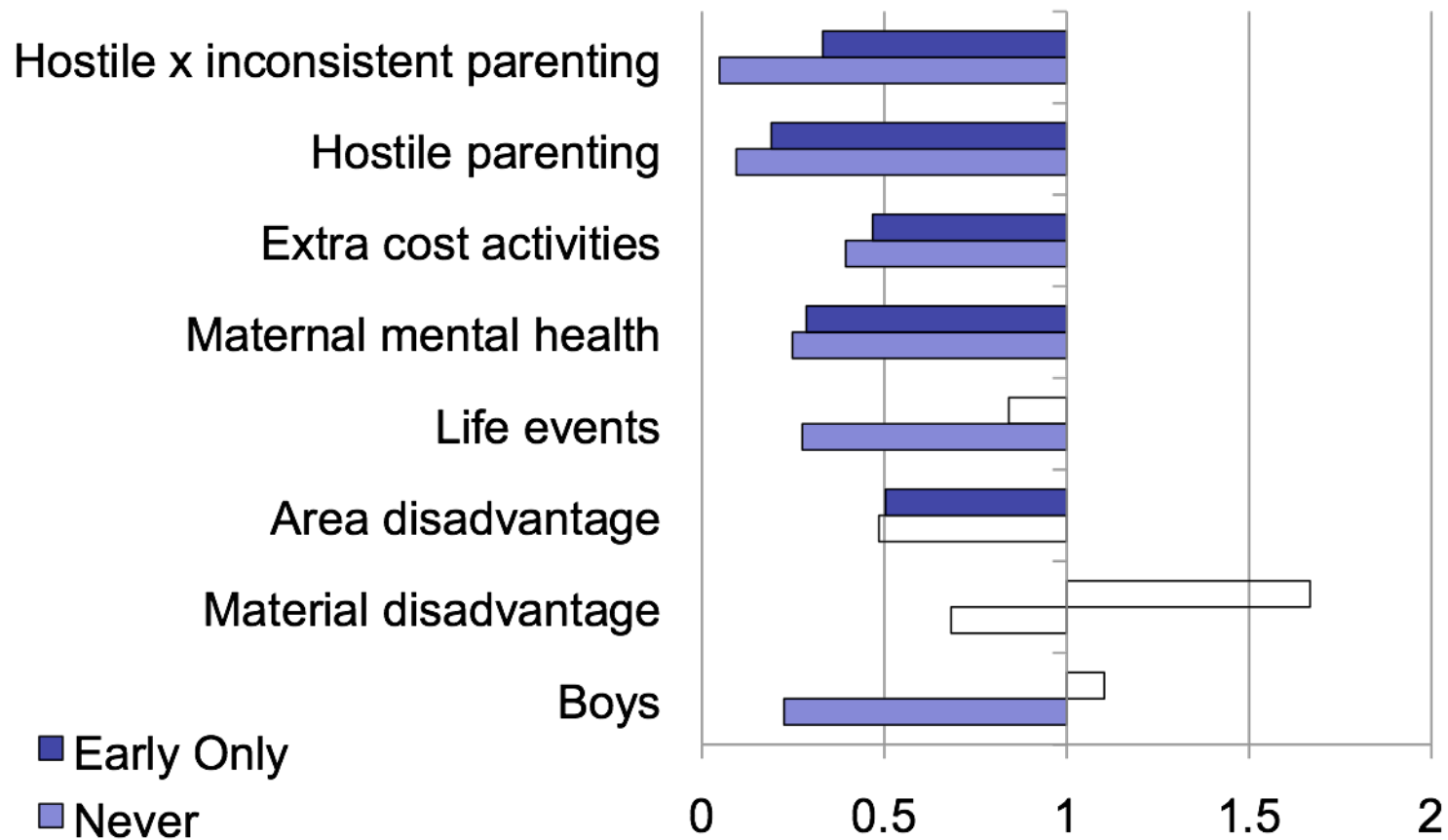


# Multivariate Model

1. Socio-economic and environmental hazards
  - Household disadvantage W1-2 (income poverty, hardship, subjective poverty, workless household, rented housing)
  - Area disadvantage W1-2 (SEIFA, neighbourhood perceptions)
  - Life Events W1-2
2. Resources W1
  - Single parent, maternal mental health, maternal health, social support, maternal education
3. Parenting W1
  - warm, consistent, hostile, inductive
  - In/out home & extra cost activities

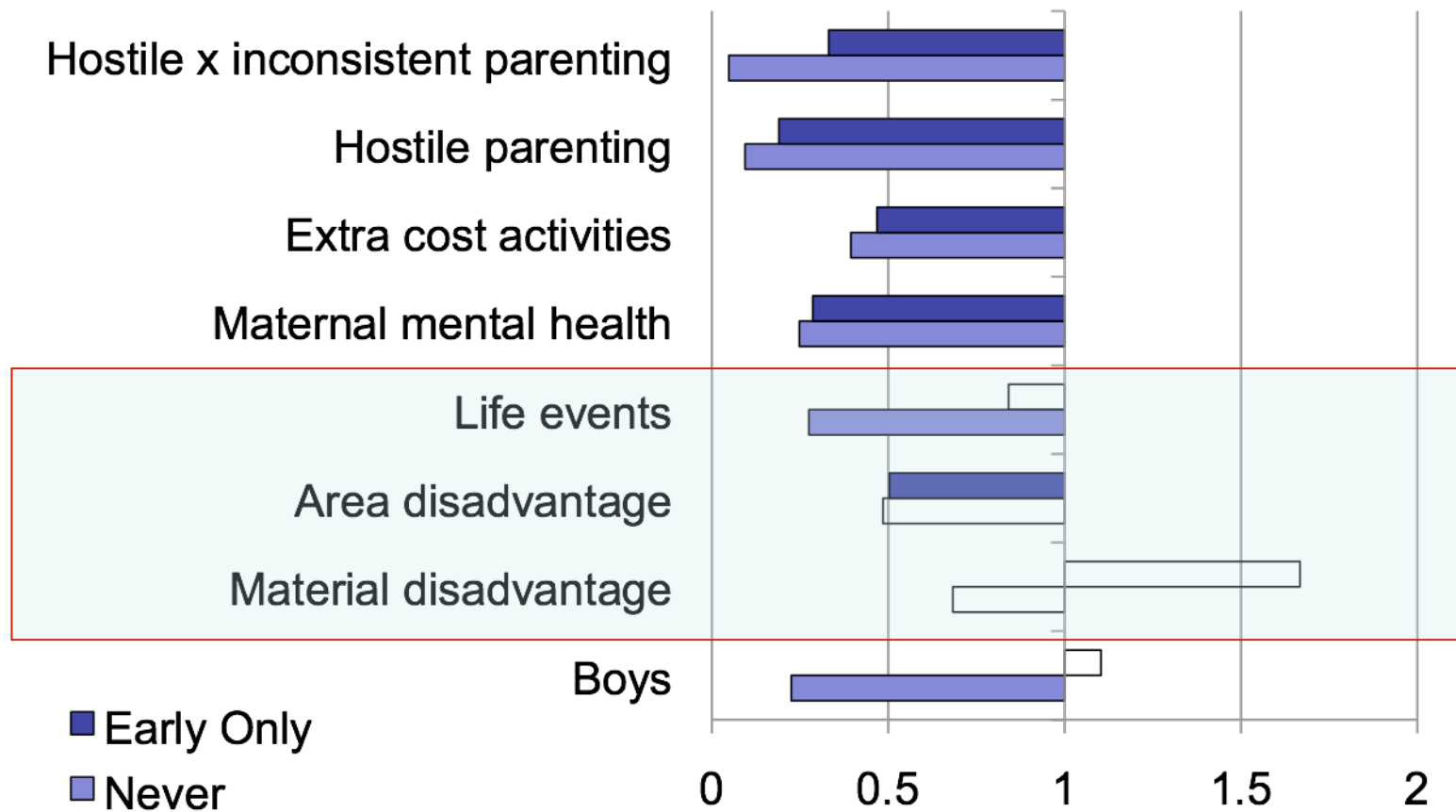


# Final Model (Reference Group = Persistent CD)



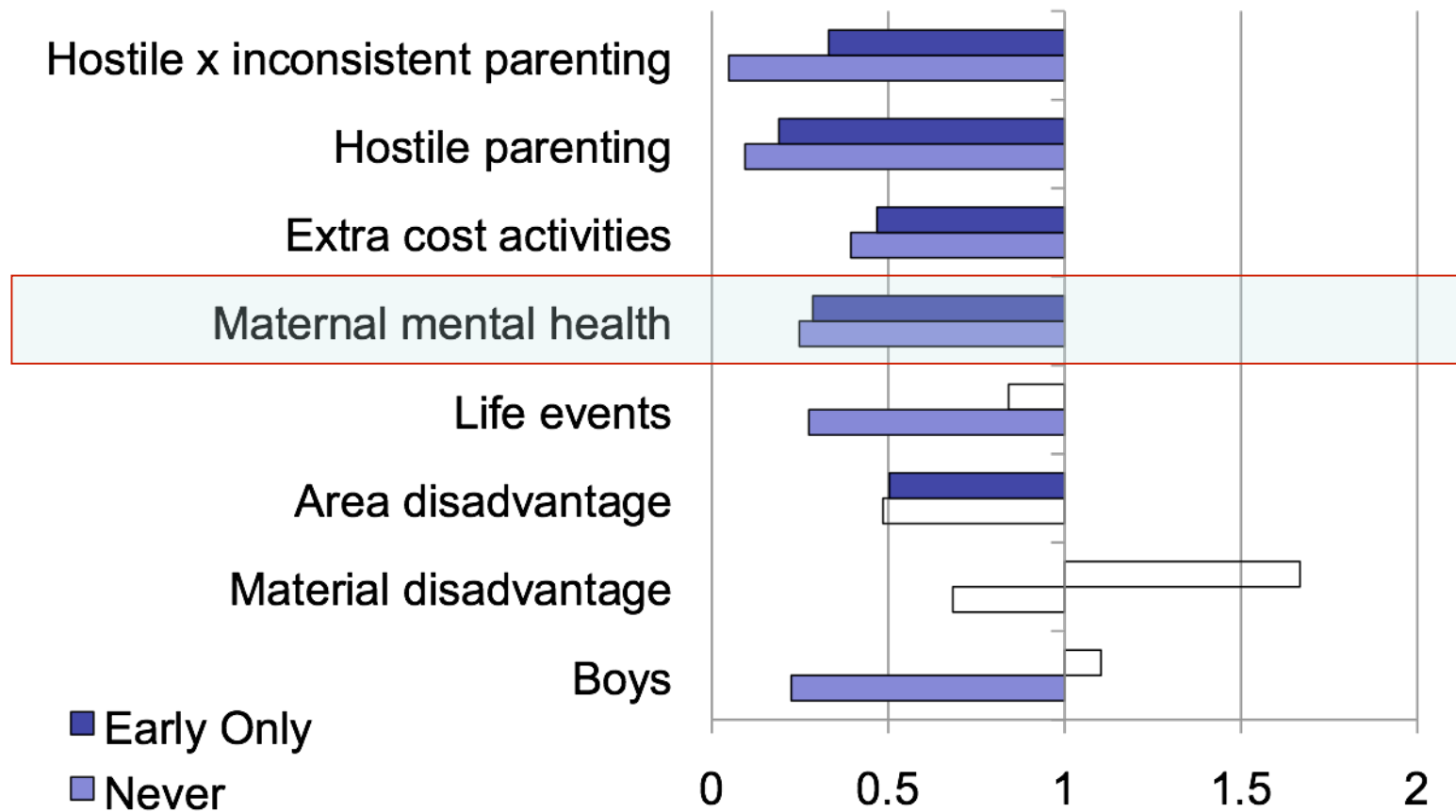


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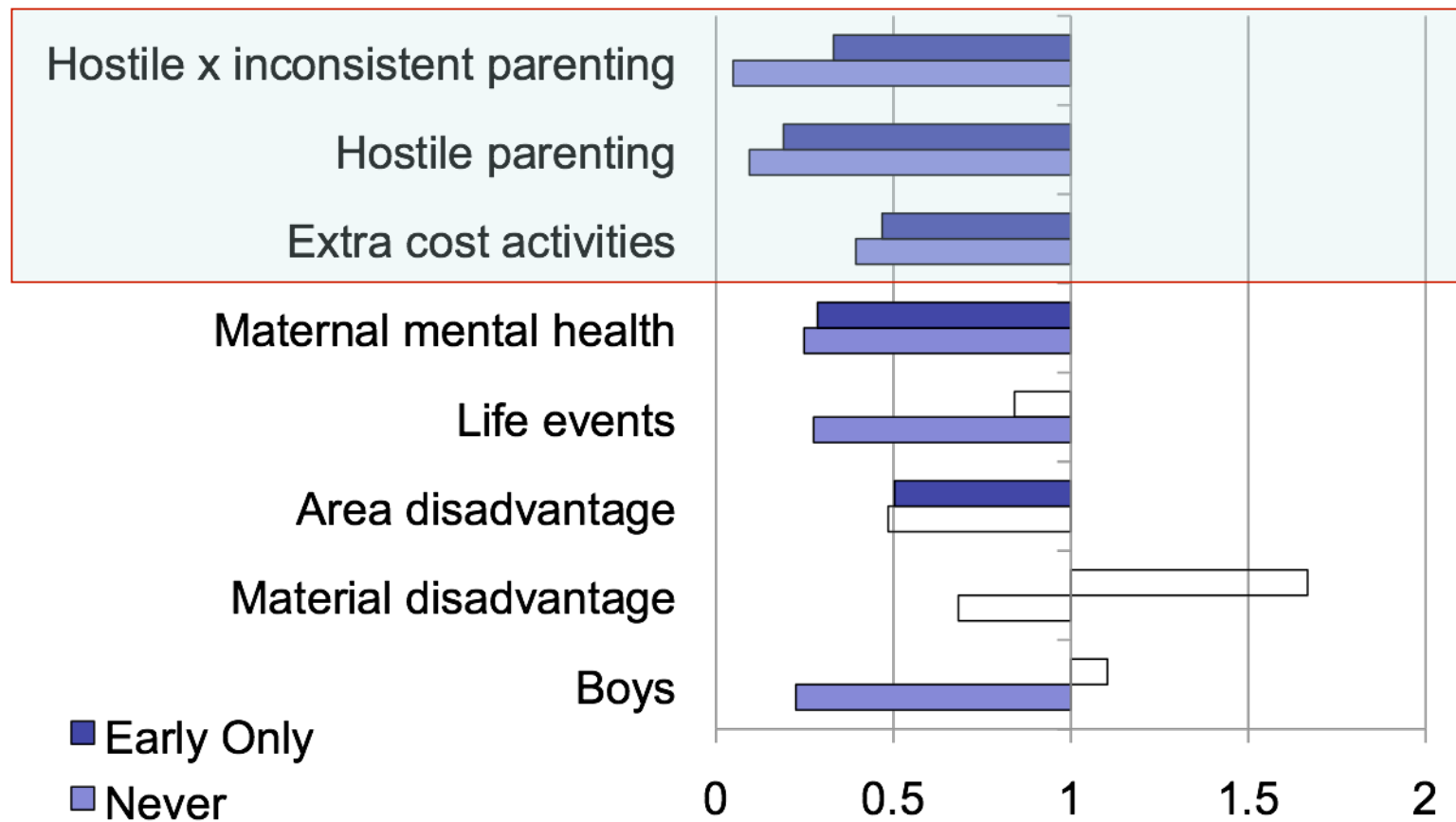


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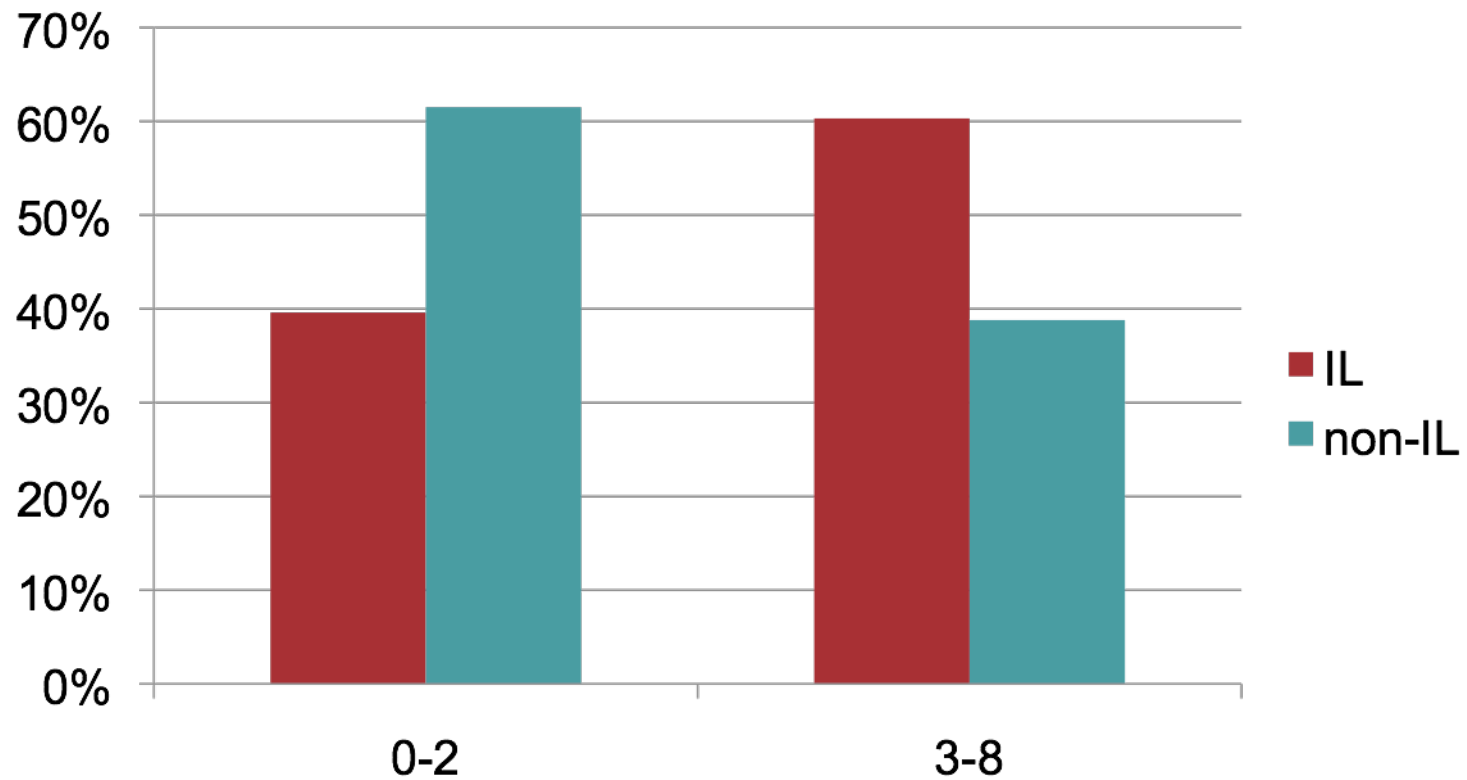


## Comparison with non-IL Group

- Risk index
    - 8 environmental risk indicators independently associated (for either group) with risk of persistent conduct difficulties
- Household deprivation
  - Area deprivation
  - Life events
  - Maternal mental health problem
  - Single parent household
  - Hostile parenting
  - Hostile and inconsistent parenting
  - Reduced access to extra cost activities

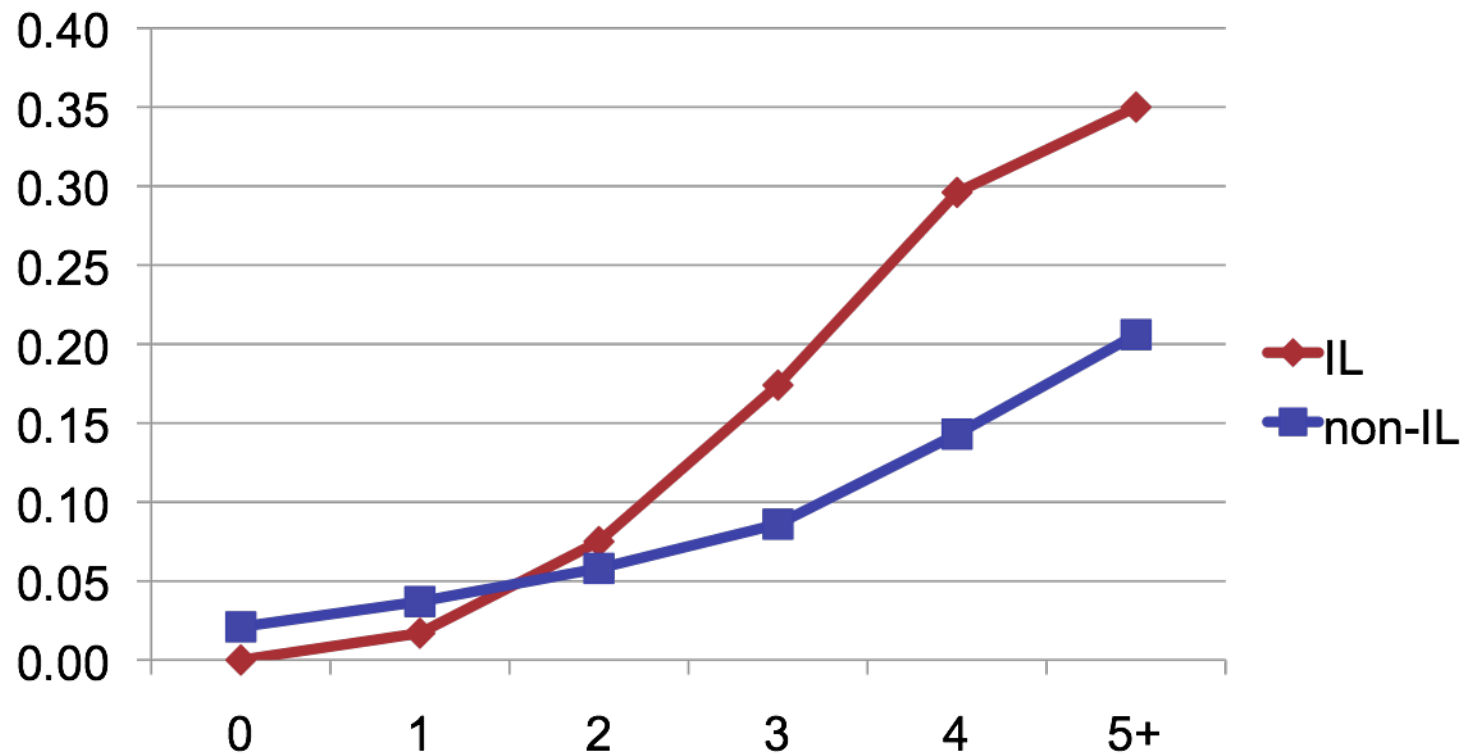


## Exposure to Risk





## Risk Exposure and Probability of Persistent Conduct Difficulties





# Summary

- Children with intellectual limitations are at significantly greater risk of persistent conduct difficulties
- They are more likely to be exposed to environmental risk factors
- They appear less resilient when exposed
- Upstream/distal risk factors (socio-economic disadvantage) appear to be partially mediated by maternal mental health and parenting



## References

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