Do Booster Emails Improve Learning Transfer Among Parenting Professionals?

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DO BOOSTER EMAILS IMPROVE LEARNING TRANSFER AMONG PARENTING PROFESSIONALS?

by

Benjamin C. Stout

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

Human Development and Family Studies

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UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY
Logan, Utah

2018
ABSTRACT

Do Booster Emails Improve Learning Transfer Among Parenting Professionals?

by

Benjamin C. Stout, Master of Science

Utah State University, 2018

Major Professor: Dr. David Schramm
Department: Human Development and Family Studies

The purpose of this study was to examine whether parenting professionals improve their learning transfer at 2 months post training if they received reflective email surveys post training. Specifically, we assessed professionals’ improved abilities and knowledge about parenting, the Five Protective Factors, how often they use the training with families, minutes reviewing the training materials, whether they shared the training with coworkers and relatives, and the number of tools and guide-sheets they shared with parents.

Parenting professionals from Utah and Missouri attended a 4-hour, *Strong Parents, Stable Children* training. After the training, half of the participants were randomly assigned to an experimental group who received an email at 1 week and 1 month following the training, while the other half were assigned to a control group. The email consisted of a booster reflection survey that asked participants to spend time reviewing the training materials, report what they learned from the training, what they
have implemented from the training, and how they plan to implement the training in the future. Both groups were invited to complete a 2-month follow-up survey to assess learning transfer.

Each of the variables was measured using a single, self-report question on a 5-point Likert-type scale, a yes/no question, or as continuous number in minutes, at the 2-month follow-up. The 2-month surveys, as well as the 1-week and 1-month booster reflection emails, were sent out using Surveymonkey.com.

Independent samples \( t \) tests and chi-square analyses were used to test if participants in the experimental group reported more time spent reviewing materials, higher levels of abilities/knowledge, use of training with families, whether they shared information with coworkers and others, and number of tools/guide-sheets shared with parents based on whether or not they received a booster reflection survey.

Results showed that booster emails may have increased the amount of time parenting professionals (a) spent reviewing training materials, (b) shared training information with parents, and (c) shared training handouts with parents. However, booster emails did not appear to increase how much parenting professionals improved in abilities and knowledge or shared information from the training with colleagues and others.
Do Booster Emails Improve Learning Transfer Among Parenting Professionals?

Benjamin C. Stout

Parenting professionals play a key role in helping parents have a positive influence on their children, which is why it is important to ensure that professionals have and use research-based information and materials. Using data from 96 parenting professionals from Utah and Missouri, who completed a 4-hour Strong Parents, Stable Children training, we examined the effects (at 2-months post training) of reflective reminder emails on parenting professionals’ utilization and learning transfer of training materials. Results from independent samples t tests show that participants who received “booster” emails at 1-week and 1-month post training shared some information and some materials with parents more frequently, and spent more time reviewing training materials and making further notes than did a control group. Implications for improving training implementation for parenting professionals are discussed.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. David Schramm for allowing me to spearhead this preliminary study on the effects of booster emails toward improving learning transfer among parenting professionals. It has been a great experience that has taught me a great appreciation for doing research in the social sciences. Dave has also been a great mentor throughout my experience as a master’s graduate—both in helping me to complete my thesis and in helping me prepare for my career as a family life educator. His help has been priceless. I would also like to give special thanks to my committee members, Drs. Kay Bradford and Aryn Dotterer, for their assistance and support throughout the entire process. I am truly grateful for my opportunity to work with each of these three professors, as well as the other members of the Human Development and Family Studies Department, who have made getting this degree a very worthwhile experience.

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Study design
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

When it comes to training specialists who work with individuals and families, the application of trainings in client-delivery is an important part of disseminating research to the public (Schramm, Galovan, Futris, & Kanter, in press). This application of content from trainings when working with clients is referred to as learning transfer (Antle, Barbee, & van Zyl, 2008). However, not all professionals fully apply trainings, or continue to use them in their work (Futris, Schramm, Richardson, & Lee, 2015), thus implying a loss of training benefits. This is especially seen with shorter, one-time trainings (Lyon, Stirman, Kerns, & Bruns, 2011). This raises the question of how to improve the likelihood that learning transfer will occur?

A growing body of research centers on improving knowledge retention and utilization following trainings (Beidas, Edmunds, Marcus, & Kendall, 2012; Pololi & Frankel, 2005; Ross, Freed, Edwards, Phillips, & Ball, 2017; Schlup, Munsch, Meyer, Margraf, & Wilhelm, 2009), as well as a need to improve learning transfer (Antle et al., B2008). Alliger, Tannenbaum, Gennett, Traver, and Shotland (1997) found that when professionals view trainings as relevant to their work (utility reaction) it is more predictive of learning transfer. While utility reaction becomes an important part of improving the prospect that learning transfer will occur, there is still a need for improvement (Futris, Schramm, Lee, Thurston, & Barton, 2014).

Some programs utilize extensive booster sessions postintervention or training to improve knowledge retention and learning transfer. These programs ranged from weekly
consultations about the training (Beidas et al., 2012), to follow-up trainings and training review sessions during the year following the training (Schlup et al., 2009), as well as monthly follow-up trainings and separate monthly discussion meetings focused on topics from the trainings (Pololi & Frankel, 2005). Antle and colleagues (2013) found increased transfer of skills from a program that utilized discussions and reviewing materials. The findings from these studies suggest that regular discussions, and reviewing material may help improve learning transfer. On the other hand, since these extensive and often time-consuming programs are not always affordable or viable for all training programs and participants, 1-day trainings can be utilized. However, 1-day trainings are known for being limited when it comes to long-term impact for training recipients (Futris et al., 2015; Lyon et al., 2011). Reminders (Lyon et al., 2011) and reflection (Bennett-Levy & Padesky, 2014) could be utilized, via emails and reflection worksheets, to improve learning transfer for shorter, one-time trainings, while still allowing such trainings to remain as a less expensive and more versatile option.

Bennett-Levy and Padesky (2014) found that of therapists who attended a 2-day workshop on cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), the participants who received an email reminder were over twice as likely to use the reflection worksheets (at 1, 4, and 8 weeks post workshop) compared to those who did not receive email reminders, and those who used the reflection worksheets were more likely to report using the training in their work with clients 9-10 weeks post workshop. While this provides initial evidence that reflection worksheets and reminder emails may improve learning transfer, the current study hopes to build on these findings and provide additional support for the use of reminder emails and reflection worksheets as means for improving learning transfer.
Replication with different populations, including parenting professionals, would provide stronger support related to the benefits of booster sessions and reminders following trainings.

Parenting professionals are a critical group of educators to reach because the programs they help provide show some evidence of subsequent improved parenting (Leijten et al., 2018; Vlahovicova, Melendez-Torres, Leijten, Knerr, & Gardner, 2017) and child outcomes such as increased cognitive and language stimulation (Chang, Park, & Kim, 2009), greater academic competence and psychosocial maturity (Steinberg, Blatt-Eisengart, & Cuaffman, 2006), as well as higher self-esteem scores and lower depression and anxiety scores (Steinberg, 2001). These findings are worth noting because the major positive influence that parents can have in their children’s lives (Olson, DeFrain, & Skogrand, 2014) can be disrupted by many factors such as stress (Hakvoort, Bos, Balen, & Hermanns, 2012; Pereira et al., 2012; Pluess & Belsky, 2010) and negative relationships within families (Cheung et al., 2018; Kouros, Papp, Goeke-Morey, & Cummings, 2014). Thus, improving learning transfer of parenting professionals can potentially have an immeasurable positive impact on parents and families. The purpose of this study is to determine whether trained parenting professionals who receive reflection reminder emails shortly after a training are more likely to utilize curriculum compared to a control group of trained parenting professionals who do not receive booster email reminders.
While the purpose of this study is to explore whether booster emails help professionals improve learning transfer (applying trainings in their work), the broader impact is helping parents build stronger relationships with their children and provide skills and information that may increase positive outcomes. The following literature review provides an overview of parental influence, programs for helping parents, trainings for professionals, deterioration effects after interventions and trainings, knowledge maintenance strategies, and finally the importance of reflection in knowledge retention and use after trainings.

**Parental Influence**

The role parents have in shaping their children is one of the most dominant influences on their child(ren)’s life (Olson et al., 2014). Parents influence both short-term outcomes for children, such as self-regulation and control of emotions (Kim-Spoon, Haskett, Longo, & Nice, 2012; Miller, Dunsmore, & Smith, 2015) as well as long-term outcomes such as adolescent depressive symptoms (O’Neal et al., 2017), self-control (Meldrum, Young, & Lehmann, 2015), and alcohol consumption and binge drinking as young adults (Pedersen & von Soest, 2013). Parents also influence what coping strategies, goals, values, communication and social skills their children have and use (Olson et al., 2014). However, many parents deal with stress that inhibits their parenting (Hutchison, Feder, Abar, & Winsler, 2016) and can lead to poor child outcomes such as
maltreatment (Pereira et al., 2012), lower levels of child social competence (Crum & Moreland, 2017), and child internal and externalizing problems (Hakvoort et al., 2012). Research has also found that unhealthy relationships within the family, particularly the parent-parent dyad (Kouros et al., 2014; Stroud, Meyers, Wilson, & Durbin, 2015), and parent-child dyad (Cheung et al., 2018; Crouch, Strompolis, Radcliff, & Srivastav, 2018), may also lead to negative outcomes through spillover or from witnessing unhealthy adult parent relationships. From this body of research we can see the negative child-outcomes that can result from poor parenting situations, which emphasizes the importance of helping parents.

**Parenting Programs**

Quality parenting programs have the ability to help parents improve the way they parent (Leijten et al., 2018; McVittie & Best, 2009) and how they interact with their children (Chang et al., 2009; Vlahovicova et al., 2017), as well as improving outcomes for children (Chang et al., 2009). McVittie and Best (2009) found that while the parenting classes they evaluated did not cause parents to completely change their parenting style, they did make significant adjustments toward being more warm and patient parents. Chang and colleagues (2009) found that parents with children in Early Head Start who went to parenting classes, had children with increased cognitive and language stimulation. They also found that these parents were more engaged in parent-child activities such as reading bedtime routines, reading daily, reading frequency and parent-child play. A meta-analysis of 14 trials of the Incredible Years parenting program, which aims to treat and prevent child conduct problems, also showed decreases in negative
parenting behaviors such as corporal punishment, threats and shouting, and increased use of parents praising their children (Leijten et al., 2018). Parenting programs for incarcerated mothers also show reductions in parenting stress and child abuse potential (Scudder, McNeil, Chengappa, & Costello, 2014), both of which can lead to negative child outcomes. Vlahovicova and colleagues (2017) performed a meta-analysis looking at the effects of parenting programs for reducing child re-abuse, showing that overall these programs showed an 11% reduction in child abuse recidivism risk rates.

In sum, there is a large body of research showing the effectiveness of an assortment of parenting programs with various audiences, which shows the impact that professionals can have when learning transfer occurs. Most of these studies focused on face-to-face programs that consisted of multiple sessions over consecutive weeks. However, other approaches include train-the-trainer methods, which often center on trainers providing one-on-one direct services, in-home visits, skills, and other tools to parents. These models are more common among child welfare professionals, social workers, home-visiting programs, and therapists. There is a body of research that examines these models of delivery, which will be examined below.

A specific framework that many parenting programs utilize is the Strengthening Families framework, which has specific aims to “increase family strengths, enhance child development and reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect” (Center for Study of Social Policy, 2018b). This framework was built on research where five protective factors were identified as important to obtaining the noted objectives. These five protective factors are parent resilience (Kim-Spoon et al., 2012; Kolko, 1996; Pereira et al., 2012), social connections (Farineau & McWey, 2011; Hawkins & Bland, 2002; Pecora, 2012;

While these five factors are not the only ones that influence families and can prevent child abuse and neglect, they are the main factors they found with research support (Center for Study of Social Policy, 2018c). An extensive process, including a national advisory committee, was used to create this framework with a research grounding and flexibility to be implemented into several successful programs throughout the United States (Center for Study of Social Policy, 2018c). As of 2016, 34 states were implementing Strengthening Families programs, with 8 more implementing some activities related to Strengthening Families (Center for Study of Social Policy, 2018a). An example of one program is Strong Parents, Stable Children, which is a 4-hour training program for professionals who work with families (Missouri Children’s Trust Fund, 2018). Strong Parents, Stable Children trainings have been offered across Utah and Missouri, and these trainings were the focus of this study.

**Train-the-Trainer Models**

An important aspect of providing parenting programs is training the educators and practitioners who work directly with parents in their communities. This is particularly
relevant because the overarching aim is to improve learning transfer for specialists following a parent-focused training. Research indicates that train-the-trainer models have been effective in helping professionals in their work with a specified population. Nakamura and colleagues (2014) found that observed skills had significantly improved following a youth-focused behavioral cognitive therapy training. Shire and Kasari (2014) used a systematic review of previous research and found that train-the-trainer programs for specialists (e.g. job trainers, therapists, clinicians, etc.) working with individuals diagnosed with Asperger’s, autism, or generic pervasive developmental disorder, led to positive outcomes.

Trainings specifically for parent educators have also been found to improve educator knowledge (Dadiz, Spear, & Denney-Koelsch, 2017; Fox & Hennick, 1996) and comfort in their teaching (Fox & Hennick, 1996; Olin et al., 2010). Other research on family specialists have found that trainings improve skills and competency in facilitating and teaching (Dadiz et al., 2017). Even when train-the-trainer programs do not increase knowledge, some research indicates that skill level and confidence still improve post-training among participants (Olin et al., 2010). However, perhaps the most important indicator of a training’s effectiveness for family specialists is whether participants transfer the learning into practice (Antle et al., 2008).

To understand the degree of learning transfer from a particular training, it is helpful to have an evaluation model to compare it to. One highly used model is provided in Kirkpatrick’s (1959) taxonomy for training evaluation, which provides four linear levels: reactions, learning, transfer/behavior, and results. Building upon Kirkpatrick’s work, Alliger and colleagues (1997) differentiated between affective reactions (i.e.,
degree to which trainees liked the training) and utility reactions (i.e., relevance of training to the professionals’ work). They found this differentiation to be important since their meta-analysis of the training literature found that affective reactions without utility reactions, did not predict immediate learning (Alliger et al., 1997). However, Antle and colleagues (2008) found that gains in knowledge were more predictive of learning transfer. Although more recent evidence supports Alliger and colleagues’ (1997) findings that learning transfer was more strongly predicted by utility reaction (Futris et al., 2014). There is also research to support that self-efficacy and confidence may also contribute to learning transfer (Burke & Hutchins, 2007), though their impact may be limited (Chiaburu & Lindsay, 2008).

**Longitudinal/Deteriorating Effects**

One concern that can arise with any program, whether it is a direct intervention or training for specialists, is that of deterioration effects and use of information and skills from the program. As discussed above, many programs show initial improvements for both family interventions (Chang et al., 2009; Leijten et al., 2018; Vlahovicova et al., 2017), and trainings for specialists shortly after class completion (Dadiz et al., 2017; Olin et al., 2010), however, as time goes on, effects can deteriorate. In looking at a marital distress prevention program, Bodenmann, Pihet, Shantinath, Cina and Widmer (2006) found significant improvements after the intervention, but by the 2-year follow-up most effects had deteriorated. Hogstrom, Olofsson, Ozdemir, Enebrink, and Stattin (2017), found that at a 2-year follow-up, the Comet parenting program showed a significant deterioration of parenting skills in the observed domains compared to right after the
program finished. However, even though this program experienced a deterioration effect, two of the other programs in their study maintained changes at 2 years and the fourth program showed continued improvements 2 years later. While this could be taken as an indication that deterioration effects are rare, it is important to note that each of these programs were completed over the process of weeks (Hogstrom et al., 2017). Salari, Ralph, and Sanders (2014) found maintained effects of the Standard Teen Triple P program at 3 months postintervention, and Day and Sanders (2018) found improvements still present at a 5-month follow-up. However, both of these programs also involved weekly involvement over the course of several weeks (Day & Sanders, 2018; Salari et al., 2014). Even the improvements found 2 years after enrolling in Early Head Start were found in parents who attended multiple parenting classes over the 26 months following their child’s enrollment (Chang et al., 2009), thus supporting the finding that extensive programs (trainings for specialists or community interventions) can be effective. While it is difficult to find reported deterioration effects for such programs, likely do to the lack of desirability to publish negative findings, it could be that the length of these programs helps provide an explanation for their maintained effects. The organizations and companies that employed the trainees implemented these lengthy trainings, which indicate high organizational support for implementation of training knowledge, skills and materials. Futris and colleagues (2015) found that perceived organizational support increased the probability of training materials being applied by professionals. Discussions on continued benefits from trainings have also indicated that more than just a single day of training may be necessary to improve long-term effects and use of trainings (Futris et al., 2015; Lyon et al., 2011). While a simplistic deduction of the aforementioned research
could be to simply provide trainings that are lengthy, this is not always an affordable or viable option, particularly when the trainees work for different organizations.

**Intervention Retention/Maintenance Strategies**

**Booster Meetings**

There are multiple ways professionals could provide a “booster” to improve the utility of their programs or trainings after they have finished. One simple method is to provide a brochure or handout. However, only providing educational reading materials after a teen parent program did not prevent participants from regressing to baseline in knowledge at a 2-week follow-up (Logsdon et al., 2015). Holding extra “booster” meetings has been more successful. One extensive program for medical school faculty consisted of a single day-long training, with reflection groups meeting monthly for one year following the training (Pololi & Frankel, 2005). In between their monthly trainings, they also included lunch discussion “booster” sessions to allow participants to discuss what they were learning and videos from the trainings were reviewed. Faculty reported greater skills mastery, as well as renewed enthusiasm and energy for teaching (Pololi & Frankel, 2005). Schlup and colleagues (2009) found significant decreases in binge eating at the 12-month follow-up for individuals with Binge Eating Disorder who went through a Cognitive Therapy Program with five postintervention booster sessions that reviewed previously covered information. However, they did not have a nonbooster session comparison group, which limits a complete understanding of the effects of their booster sessions above and beyond the treatment (Schlup et al., 2009).
Booster Telephone Calls

Telephone booster sessions are another method that could be both more affordable and more versatile for various programs and trainings that are not restricted to one institution and location. Metz and colleagues (2007) found that participants who received five 10-minute booster phone calls appeared to reduce relapse for quitters and helped continuing smokers to quit. These phone calls happened within the first 10 weeks after participants were dismissed from rehabilitation centers, and were tailored to their stage of recovery. Beidas and colleagues (2012) similarly found that the number of tailored group booster sessions attended, via phone or online video, predicted higher therapist adherence and skill in cognitive behavioral therapy beyond what the training alone predicted. However, phone call booster sessions still take time and money that may not be available.

Reflection Booster Sessions

Reflection booster sessions could provide a viable option to help improve knowledge retention and learning transfer, while also being less expensive and adaptable (Bennett-Levy & Padesky, 2014). In social cognitive theory, reflection plays an important part of learning (Bandura, 1989). According to Bandura, people use reflection to learn from both personal experience as well as the observed experiences of others. Reflection allows participants to analyze experiences and knowledge, and it allows people to evaluate and adjust their thinking, as well as to gain and understand knowledge and how to apply it (Bandura, 1989). Schon (1983) discussed the importance of reflection in helping professionals to understand their own knowledge and understanding in their field.
and practice, as well as its role in changing and improving their actions as practitioners. This feeds back into Bandura’s theory, where a behavior must first be observed, and then retained before it can be reproduced (Crain, 2011). The more an individual observes or rehearses information, the more salient it becomes and the more easily the individual can retain it (Bandura, 1989). This can include the process of reflecting and thinking about behavior and information, in that the individual experiences it again in their mind.

Bandura’s theory helps to tie in the important role that reflection plays in the learning process, and allows for practical use of improving the effectiveness of trainings and interventions. Self-efficacy, an individual’s knowledge and judgment about whether or not they can perform an action, is argued to be a product of reflection and influences whether the individual will be motivated to reproduce an action or use information (Bandura, 1989). This is supported by research showing that self-efficacy does help predict learning transfer (Schramm et al., in press). Thus, one could reason that reflecting on ways to incorporate and utilize gained information from trainings would increase utility reaction to the training, which predicts learning transfer (Alliger et al., 1997; Futris et al., 2014). This very effect can be seen in Bennett-Levy and Padesky’s (2014) study on cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) trainings for therapists, where participants who used a reflection worksheet were more likely to use skills gained from the CBT trainings. Together, this suggests the importance of reflection in trainings and interventions aimed at helping individuals, families and professionals to gain knowledge and skills, and improve their actions, behaviors and practices, or in other words, to improve learning transfer.
A low-cost aid to reflection is the use of reminders, which can be used to help instigate reflection and improve learning. After seeing no significant improvements, at a 2-week follow-up, from an intervention to teach teen mothers about infant care, postpartum depression, breastfeeding, and the mother-infant relationship, Logsdon and colleagues (2015) discussed the possible benefits of booster reminders for improving information retention. Lyon and colleagues (2011) also argue that reminders are a low-cost, supplemental method to improve training effectiveness for professionals. This suggests that reflective reminders can act as boosters to supplement trainings for professionals and can provide an effective, low-cost way to improve retention and learning transfer. Bennett-Levy and Padesky (2014) provided reflection booster sessions to an experimental sample of therapists attending a cognitive behavioral therapy workshop, and compared them to their control group counterparts. They sent out booster reminder emails to remind randomly assigned participants to use reflection worksheets about the workshop. Compared to those who were not given reflection worksheets and those who had them but did not use them, those who used them at 1 and 4 weeks post-workshop were more likely to use strategies and knowledge gained from the workshop at a 10-week follow-up (Bennett-Levy & Padesky, 2014). Schramm and colleagues (in press) found that applying principles and skills from trainings (learning transfer) at 2 months was most predictive of their use at 6 months. These findings are the basis for our current study, which aims to assess whether booster reflection emails improve retention and learning transfer at 2 months post training for professionals following a 4-hour parenting training. Using information gathered from participants of the Strong Parents,
Stable Children trainings for family specialists, and utilizing an experimental booster email, and a no-booster control group, the following hypotheses are put forth:

H1: Providing a 1-week and 1-month booster email (which consists of reflection prompts) to an experimental group of participants will result in greater amounts of time spent reviewing training materials, the training binder and handouts, thinking about the training, and making further notes about the training at 2 months post training, compared to a control group that does not receive those reminders.

H2: Participants who receive a 1-week and 1-month booster email will report greater frequency of sharing information from the Strong Parents, Stable Children training (concrete support in times of need, parent resilience, knowledge of parenting and child development, social and emotional competence, and social connections), with parents at 2 months post training, than participants in a control group.

H3: Providing a 1-week and 1-month booster email to an experimental group of participants will increase the utilization of training materials/handouts with parents at 2 months post training, compared to a control group. Specifically, it is hypothesized that the experimental group of participants will share more bookmarks, text-tip cards, and tools compared to the control group.

H4: Members of an experimental group of participants who receive a 1-week and 1-month booster email will be more likely to report sharing training materials with coworkers and relatives, and spend more time talking about the training with colleagues at 2 months post training, compared to a control group.
H5: Parenting professionals who receive a 1-week and 1-month booster email will report greater improvements to abilities and knowledge at 2 months post training, compared to a control group.


CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Current Study

The purpose of the current study was to examine the extent to which following a parenting training, reflective email reminders acted as a “booster session,” thereby increasing application of the training in their work with parents (i.e. learning transfer). Specifically, the booster reminder emails had the dual purpose to both remind and encourage professionals who work with parents (i.e. educators, case workers, crisis center employees, etc.) to spend additional time reviewing the binder and materials and reflecting on how they can use the information gained from the Strong Parents, Stable Children trainings.

The Strong Parents, Stable Children trainings are based on the Five Protective Factors from the Strengthening Families Framework (see https://www.cssp.org/young-children-their-families/strengtheningfamilies/about). These trainings were facilitated by Dr. David Schramm at Utah State University who developed the training and is responsible for conducting the trainings across the state of Utah. Trainings consisted of one-time 4-hour sessions conducted in both Utah and Missouri, in which professionals who work with parents were invited to participate.

Procedures

At the end of each training session, participants were asked to complete a post-program survey (see Appendix A) and provide their email for follow-up contact. After all
the surveys were collected, they were randomly separated into an experimental group and a control group. The experimental group was sent two booster reflection surveys at 1 week and 1 month following the training. Those who did not respond by completing the booster surveys were sent a reminder 3 days after the initial survey was emailed out. The other group was used as a control group, and did not receive any booster reminder emails. Both groups received a 2-month follow-up survey to assess time spent reviewing and reflecting on the training, abilities/knowledge, use of training materials and principles with families, whether participants shared information with coworkers and/or relatives, and the number of tools/guide-sheets shared with parents. Participants who did not complete the 2-month follow-up survey were also sent a reminder after 3 days, as well as a second reminder 7 days after the initial survey email was sent. Data for the 2-month follow-up surveys and booster session surveys were gathered via Surveymonkey.com.

Participants were asked to provide the last four digits of their phone numbers on each survey. This was used to link each participant’s survey with additional surveys over time, while also maintaining anonymity. The questions from the booster reflections and 2-month follow-up surveys are included in Appendix B and Appendix C, respectively.

Sample

The sample for our study includes professionals from Utah and Missouri, who work with parents to improve parenting relationships and practices (i.e. social workers, educators, etc.). Our sample consisted of professionals in Utah and Missouri who chose to attend the Strong Parents, Stable Children training as part of their continuing education and professional development. Participants were provided the opportunity to opt out of
participating in this research. Out of the 373 professionals who were invited to participate in our study (194 in the experimental group and 179 in the control group), a total of 114 participants (30.5%) completed the 2-month survey. Upon cleaning the data, 11 cases (7 in the control group and 4 in the experimental group) were removed because participants did not work directly with parents and 4 participants indicated in the comments section that they did not work with parents (3 in the control group and 1 in the experimental group). Additionally, 3 cases were removed due to incomplete data (2 in the control group and 1 in the experimental group). The final sample consisted of 96 participants (25.7%; 55 in the control group and 41 in the experimental group) who completed at least one of the two boosters. Of the 41 participants in the experimental group, 26 completed the 1-week booster survey, 23 completed the 1-month booster survey, 14 completed both the 1-week and 1-month booster surveys, and 3 only completed the 2-month follow-up without completing either booster survey (see Figure 1).

Independent samples $t$ tests were run to check for significant differences between groups on the questions from the post survey (see justification under Data Analysis on page 24). Only one significant difference between the control and experimental groups was found using the post training survey. The control group scored higher ($M = 4.83$, $SD$

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Post</th>
<th>1 Week</th>
<th>1 Month</th>
<th>2 Month</th>
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<td>Experimental</td>
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<td>X(26)</td>
<td>X(23)</td>
<td>X(41)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>X(55)</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>X(55)</td>
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</table>

*Figure 1*. Study design. Survey participation by group with sample ($n$) for each survey. The “X” indicates that participants received the survey, “O” indicates they did not.
than the experimental group ($M = 4.64, SD = .49, t(76.59) = 1.93, p = .057$, two-tailed, mean difference $= -0.19, 95\% CI: -0.39$ to $0.01$) on the question: “My knowledge and understanding of the Social and Emotional Competence of Children information, after the program.” This question was answered on a Likert scale ranging from (1) “Poor”, to (5) “Excellent.” Levene’s test indicated unequal variances ($F = 10.26, p = .002$), so degrees of freedom were adjusted from 85 to 76.59.

Of the remaining 96 participants (55 control, 41 experimental), 93.1% were Female, 80.5% were Caucasian/White, 5.7% were African-American, 4.6% were Hispanic/Latino, 2.3% were Asian, 2.3% were Native American or Alaskan Native, and 2.3% were of another race. The average age of our sample was 42 ($M = 41.78, SD = 12.32$), with an age range of 21-66-years old. The average participant had worked in the field for 12.5 years ($M = 12.56, SD = 10.88$), with a range of less than one year to 41 years as a professional in the field, and 72.4% of participants were parents. We checked for demographic differences between groups using independent samples $t$ tests and did not find any significant differences between the experimental and control groups. Specific demographics about the sample (state and company) are available upon request. This information was gathered from a post survey that participants completed immediately following the training.

**Measures**

Both the 1-week and 1-month booster surveys (see Appendix B) were sent only to the experimental group. These booster surveys requested that participants review their notes and materials from the training before answering the survey questions. The 1-week
booster reflection included open-ended questions and asked what they learned from the training, what stood out to them from the training and how they plan to practice/implement what they learned. The 1-month booster reflection asked what they had already practiced and used from the training, how the implementation went, what they implemented, what improvements they could make and a plan to accomplish the improvements. Questions from the 1-week and 1-month booster surveys will not be analyzed in this study.

The 2-month follow-up survey (see Appendix C) primarily consisted of questions relating to learning transfer, including time spent reflecting and reviewing the training, use of training information with families, frequency of sharing tools with parents, talked/shared with coworkers and others, and improved abilities/knowledge.

**Reviewing and Reflecting on Training Materials**

Participants were asked five questions to estimate how much time they spent thinking about and reviewing materials from the training. For the first two questions they were asked to “please ESTIMATE the amount of time (in MINUTES) you have given to reviewing the materials from the Strong Parents, Stable Children training. In the first 2 weeks after the workshop? In weeks 3-8 after the workshop?” For the other three questions participants were asked to “please ESTIMATE, since the training, the amount of time (in MINUTES) you have spent… Thinking about the workshop”, “Reviewing the binder/handouts”, and “Making further notes.” Respondents typed in their responses to each of these five questions as a number in minutes, with each question being analyzed separately.
**Shared Training Information with Parents**

Six questions were asked to assess how frequently participants used information from the training with parents. The first of these questions was: “In your work with families and others, which ONE of the following best represents what you have done with the training materials thus far?” Possible answers ranged on a 5-point Likert scale from (1) “I have not used any information from the training and I do not plan to” to (5) “I have used a lot of the information from the training.” The other five questions related to specific areas of information that correspond with the five protective factors (concrete support in times of need, parent resilience, knowledge of parenting and child development, social and emotional competence, and social connections) of the Strengthening Families framework. Each of the protective factors questions was formatted as follows: “I have provided information to others from the Concrete Support in Times of Need section”, and was answered using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Never) to 5 (Very Frequently), with each question being analyzed separately.

**Use of Training Materials/Handouts with Parents**

To assess how frequently participants used training materials and handouts with parents, four questions were used. Three of the questions related to how frequently participants shared training materials such as bookmarks, text-tip cards, and tools/guidesheets, with parents. Each of these three questions was formatted as follows: “How often have you used the Strong Parents, Stable Children BOOKMARKS with those you work with?” Each of these questions was answered using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Never) to 5 (Very Frequently). A fourth question sought an estimate of the number of
tools/guide-sheets that participants used with parents: “To get a better idea of the approximate number of tools/guidesheets you have given to parents you work with, please provide an estimate below.” Six answer options were provided for this question, ranging from (1) “I have not used any of the tools/guidesheets with parents” to (5) “I have used more than 10 tools/guidesheets with parents.” The sixth option “I do not work directly with parents” was used (as mentioned above) to remove participants that do not work with parents (and thus do not belong to our sample) so as to avoid skewing the data. Each of these questions was analyzed separately.

**Shared Information with Coworkers/Relatives**

Three questions related to sharing information with coworkers and others, and these were assessed to find evidence for our fourth hypothesis. Two questions were dichotomous (yes/no) questions as follows: “Have you shared the information and/or tools you received from the training with other coworkers?” and “Have you shared the information and/or tools you received from the training with relatives or family members?” The third question asked participants to “please ESTIMATE, since the training, the amount of time (in MINUTES) you have spent… talking about it with colleagues or other.” Participants answered this question with a number in minutes.

**Improved Ability and Knowledge**

We assessed participants improved ability and knowledge with the following question: “Looking back, please indicate how much your abilities or knowledge improved because of the workshop.” Participants then chose one answer on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from “No change” to “Improved a lot.”
Data Analysis

Independent-samples \( t \) tests were used to compare the two groups (reflection booster recipients and control), on each individual question, to test for differences on each of the dependent variables noted previously, with two exceptions. For the questions, “shared information with coworkers” and “shared information with relatives”, chi-square tests were used due to their dichotomous nature (Cohen, 2013). This study uses an alpha of .10 rather than .05 as our criteria for significance. Reasoning behind this use of .10 is justifiable with smaller sample sizes when there is a relatively high risk of having type II statistical errors (a false negative), an argument made by various scholars as cited by Schumm, Pratt, Hartenstein, Jenkins, and Johnson (2013). Schumm and his colleagues also mentioned that multiple scholars have pointed out that an alpha of .05 is “not better or inherently more correct than other criteria, nor is it more sacred” (Schumm et al., 2013, p. 1). Finally, the argument that an alpha of .10 has not been used recently or by “credible scholars” is simply not true (Schumm et al., 2013).
CHAPTER IV
RESULTS

Results from this study are grouped according to the hypothesis that each question related to and aimed to support. Questions were analyzed separately at the .10 level, with full results reported in Table 1 on page 26. To check for normality of distribution for each independent samples t test, two researchers reviewed distribution graphs. Most of the data was deemed to be normally distributed so analyses were carried out using independent samples t tests.

**Booster Impact: (H1) Reflection and Review**

At the 2-month follow-up, participants who received the booster emails reported having spent more time ($M = 80.98, SD = 97.62$), in minutes, reviewing training materials in the first 2 weeks post workshop, compared to the control group ($M = 46.00, SD = 35.56$). Levene’s test for equal variance was significant ($F = 13.56, p = .000$) and adjustments were made to the analysis. An independent samples t test showed a significant difference between groups, $t(47.96) = 2.19, p = .034$, two-tailed, mean difference $= 34.98, 95\% CI: 6.65$ to $63.31, d = 0.48$, which shows support for H1.

Participants in the experimental group ($M = 61.10, SD = 63.82$) also reported higher amounts of time (in minutes) spent reviewing training materials during weeks 3-8 post training, compared to the control group ($M = 26.16, SD = 40.95$). Due to unequal variance, the analysis was again adjusted according to Levene’s test ($F = 7.76, p = .006$). Using an independent samples t test, a significant result was found between groups,
Table 1
Results of Independent Samples t Tests and Descriptive Statistics for Experimental Versus Control Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>95% CI for Mean Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Cohen’s d</th>
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<td>97.62</td>
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<td>46.00</td>
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<td>55</td>
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<td>2.19**</td>
<td>47.96</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Control</td>
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<td>55</td>
<td>26.16</td>
<td>40.95</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>12.17, 57.7</td>
<td>3.07**</td>
<td>63.87</td>
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<td>10.75</td>
<td>18.03</td>
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<td>1.07</td>
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<td>0.76</td>
<td>55</td>
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<td>53</td>
<td>-0.13, 0.70</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>93.00</td>
<td>0.28</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*p < .10, **p < .05, ***p < .01
\[ t(63.87) = 3.07, p = .003, \text{ two-tailed, mean diff.} = 34.93, \text{ 95\% CI: 12.17 to 57.7, } d = 0.65, \]
showing support for H1.

Time spent in minutes reviewing the binder and handouts from the training also differed between the experiment \((M = 73.46, SD = 100.08)\), and control groups \((M = 31.62, SD = 37.09)\). Adjustments were made after the Levene’s test showed unequal variances \((F = 10.93, p = .001)\). An independent samples \(t\) test found a statistically significant difference between groups, \(t(48.24) = 2.55, p = .014, \text{ two-tailed, mean diff.} = 41.85, \text{ 95\% CI: 8.85 to 74.84, } d = 0.55, \) supporting H1.

An independent samples \(t\) test was used to analyze potential differences in the total amount of time (in minutes) thinking about the workshop, which showed a non-statistically significant difference between the experimental group \((M = 102.85, SD = 150.15)\), and the control group \((M = 67.69, SD = 52.35)\). Although the experimental group reported more minutes thinking about the workshop, after adjusting for unequal variance \((\text{Levene } F = 5.98, p = .016)\), the analysis showed a nonsignificant result, \(t(47.29) = 1.44, p = .158, \text{ two-tailed, mean diff.} = 35.16, \text{ 95\% CI: -14.10 to 84.42, } d = 0.31, \) which failed to support H1.

Finally, those who received booster emails reported spending significantly more time (in minutes) making further notes \((M = 33.05, SD = 44.54)\), compared to the control group \((M = 10.75, SD = 18.03)\). The Levene’s test was significant \((F = 13.78, p = .000)\), unequal variance, so adjustments were made. By using an independent samples \(t\) test, statistical significance, \(t(49.61) = 2.97, p = .005, \text{ two-tailed, mean diff.} = 22.3, \text{ 95\% CI: 7.22 to 37.38, } d = 0.65, \) was found between the experimental and control groups, which shows additional support for H1 (see Table
Booster Impact: (H2) Shared Information with Parents

Next, when asked about how much they used information from the training with parents (on a 5-point Likert scale), participants who received booster emails ($M = 3.80, SD = 0.89$) reported similarly to participants in the control group ($M = 3.56, SD = 0.92$). The Levene’s test ($F = 1.16, p = .284$) suggested equal variance between groups, so no adjustments were made. An independent samples $t$ test did not show statistical significance, $t(94) = 1.42, p = .159$, two-tailed, mean diff. $0.27$, 95% CI: -0.11 to 0.64, $d = 0.29$, and it failed to find support for H2 using this question. However, more specific questions regarding use of training information and materials related to the Five Protective Factors did find differences between groups.

Those who received the booster emails reported providing information on “concrete support in times of need” ($M = 3.20, SD = 1.08$) more than the control group ($M = 2.78, SD = 1.08$) on a 5-point Likert scale. The Levene’s test suggested equal variance ($F = 0.18, p = .676$), so no adjustments were made. Analysis, using an independent samples $t$ test showed there was a significant difference between groups, $t(94) = 1.85, p = .067$, two-tailed, mean diff. = 0.41, 95% CI: -0.03 to 0.86, $d = 0.38$, which provides evidence in support of H2.

Responses on a 5-point Likert scale indicated that the experimental group ($M = 3.83, SD = 1.00$) provided information on “parent resilience” more frequently than the control group ($M = 3.09, SD = 0.85$). The Levene’s test failed to find unequal variance ($F = 2.61, p = .11$), so no adjustments were made. An independent samples $t$ test showed there was a statistically significant difference, $t(93) = 3.88, p = .000$, two-tailed, mean
diff. = 0.74, 95% CI: 0.36 to 1.11, $d = 0.79$, between groups on providing information on “parent resilience,” thus supporting H2.

There was little difference in the responses between the experimental ($M = 3.38$, $SD = 1.10$) and control groups ($M = 3.09$, $SD = 0.95$) when it came to providing information on “knowledge of parenting and child development.” The Levene’s test indicated equal variance between groups ($F = 1.96$, $p = .165$), so no adjustments were made to the analysis. An independent samples $t$ test showed that there was not a significant difference, $t(93) = 1.35$, $p = .182$, two-tailed, mean diff. = 0.28, 95% CI: -0.13 to 0.70, $d = 0.28$, between groups on sharing information related to “knowledge of parenting and child development”, and thus failing to show support for H2.

Results from an independent samples $t$ test indicated the experimental group ($M = 3.46$, $SD = 1.05$) provided more information on “social and emotional competence” than the control group ($M = 3.07$, $SD = 1.07$; $t[94] = 1.78$, $p = .078$, two-tailed, mean diff. = 0.39, 95% CI: -0.04 to 0.83, $d = 0.37$). Using Levene’s test ($F = 0.03$, $p = .873$), equal variances were assumed, and no adjustments were made to the analysis. Hence, these results provide support for H2.

Results from an independent samples $t$ test on the frequency of professionals sharing information on “social connections” to parents did not show statistically significant differences between the experimental ($M = 3.34$, $SD = 1.04$) and control groups ($M = 3.02$, $SD = 1.05$). The Levene’s test suggested equal variances ($F = 0.02$, $p = .88$), so no adjustments were made to the degrees of freedom. There was not a significant difference, $t(94) = 1.50$, $p = .136$, two-tailed, mean diff. = 0.32, 95% CI: -0.10 to 0.75, $d = 0.31$, between groups’ answers (5-point Likert scale) on providing information about
“social connections.” From these results there is partial support for the second hypothesis – that booster emails would increase the frequency with which professionals share information from the training with parents generally and on the Five Protective Factors, from three of the six questions (see Table 1).

**Booster Impact: (H3) Shared Materials/Handouts with Parents**

Reports on a 5-point Likert scale showed that the frequency of using bookmarks from the training was similar between those who received the booster emails ($M = 3.07$, $SD = 1.31$), compared to the control group ($M = 2.62$, $SD = 1.37$). The Levene’s test failed to show unequal variances ($F = 2.26, p = .136$) so no adjustments were made. However, results from the independent samples $t$ test approached statistical significance regarding the difference between groups, $t(94) = 1.64, p = .104$, two-tailed, mean diff. = 0.45, 95% CI: -0.10 to 1.00, $d = 0.34$, showing that both used bookmarks occasionally, but with the experimental group using them slightly more than the control group.

The experimental group did report sharing text-tip cards ($M = 2.71$, $SD = 1.38$) more frequently compared to the control group participants ($M = 2.18$, $SD = 1.17$). The Levene’s test failed to find unequal variance ($F = 1.63, p = .205$), so no adjustments were made to the analysis. Results of an independent samples $t$ test showed support for H3 by identifying a significant difference between groups, $t(94) = 2.01, p = .047$, two-tailed, mean diff. = 0.53, 95% CI: 0.01 to 1.04, $d = 0.41$, with the experimental group using text-tip cards more than the control group.

Two questions looked at sharing tools/guide-sheets with parents. The first looked at frequency on a 5-point Likert scale, while the second asked for an estimated range for
the total number of guide-sheets shared. Participants who received the booster emails shared tools/guide-sheets ($M = 3.22, SD = 1.29$) more frequently than did the control group ($M = 2.50, SD = 1.15$). The Levene’s test was not significant ($F = 0.21, p = .645$), so it failed to find unequal variance. The analysis found a significant difference between groups, $t(93) = 2.87, p = .005$, two-tailed, mean diff. = 0.72, 95% CI: 0.22 to 1.22, $d = 0.59$, suggesting that the experimental group shared tools and guide-sheets more frequently than the control group.

The estimated number of shared guide-sheets with parents reported by the experiment ($M = 2.66, SD = 1.17$), and control ($M = 2.43, SD = 1.07$) groups were similar. The Levene’s test failed to find unequal variance ($F = .367, p = .546$), and there was not a significant difference $t(92) = 0.97, p = .335$, two-tailed, mean diff. = .22, 95% CI: -0.24 to 0.69, $d = 0.20$) on the estimated number of shared guide-sheets with parents (see Table 1).

**Booster Impact: (H4) Talked/Shared with Coworkers/Relatives**

When asked whether or not participants shared information or tools from the training with coworkers, the majority in both the experimental (yes = 36, no = 5) and control (yes = 46, no = 8) groups reported that they did. A chi-square test of independence found a nonsignificant difference between groups $\chi^2(2, N = 95) = .135, p = .713$.

Similarly, when asked whether or not participants shared information or tools from the training with relatives, the experimental (yes = 35, no = 6) and control (yes = 42, no = 12) groups both tended to answer “yes.” Once again, a chi-square test of
independence was run and a nonsignificant result was found, $\chi^2(2, N = 95) = .87, p = .350$.

Differences between the experimental group ($M = 61.90, SD = 70.72$), and the control group ($M = 43.04, SD = 42.42$) on minutes spent talking about the training with colleagues or others, also showed a similarity between groups. Results of an independent samples $t$ test showed a nonsignificant, $t(61.08) = 1.52, p = .134$, two-tailed, mean diff. = 18.87, 95% CI: -6.00 to 43.73, $d = 0.32$, difference between groups. Levene’s test indicated unequal variances ($F = 4.11, p = .045$), and the degrees of freedom were adjusted from 94 to 61.08. Thus no support was found for H4 (see Table 1).

**Booster Impact: (H5) Improved Abilities/Knowledge**

There was little difference regarding improved abilities or knowledge between the experiment ($M = 3.22, SD = 0.69$) and control groups ($M = 3.20, SD = 0.76$), as reported on a 4-point Likert scale. Levene’s test indicated equal variance between groups ($F = 0.22, p = 0.64$), and no adjustments were made to the analysis. By using an independent samples $t$ test, no significant difference was found between groups, $t(94) = 0.13, p = .900$, two-tailed, mean diff. = 0.02, 95% CI: -0.28 to 0.32, $d = 0.03$, suggesting no support for H5 (see Table 1).
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION

Parenting professionals have an important role in the bigger picture of helping parents to have a positive influence on their children (Chang et al., 2009; Leijten et al., 2018; Vlahovicova et al., 2017). To assist them in this role, a host of trainings are offered to them, frequently as a requirement (Schramm et al., in press). However, many of these trainings include 1-day workshops, which have proven to have limited long-term effects (Lyon et al., 2007). In response to this concern, booster reminders and reflection worksheets have been discussed as possible solutions (Bennett-Levy & Padesky, 2014; Lyon et al. 2011). Using Bandura’s theory as a foundation (Bandura, 1989; Crain, 2011), along with research on learning transfer (Alliger et al., 1997; Antle et al., 2008; Schramm et al., in press), the purpose of this study was to test the effect of booster emails on reflection and learning transfer among parenting professionals at 2 months post training.

To improve understanding related to the effect of booster emails on reflection and learning transfer, this study sought to answer the following research questions (RQs). RQ1: Does receiving a 1-week and 1-month booster email increase time spent reviewing and reflecting on training materials? RQ2: Do booster emails increase how much information, from the training, that parenting professionals share with parents? RQ3: Does receiving booster emails increase the use of training materials and handouts by parenting professionals? RQ4: Do booster emails increase how much professionals share training materials and information with colleagues and others? RQ5: Does receiving booster emails lead to greater increases of abilities and knowledge from trainings?
The results of this study largely indicate that professionals who spend structured time reflecting on the learning and utility of training at 1-week and 1-month post workshop, report increased learning transfer in areas related to some of the hypotheses. Furthermore, compared to those who did not receive an email survey, participants who received booster emails at 1 and 4 weeks tended to report higher amounts of time spent reviewing materials and using information and materials from the training in their work with parents (see Table 1).

Regarding RQ1, professionals who received reflection booster emails at 1 and 4 weeks, reported having spent more time reviewing materials and making further notes in the 2 months following the training, compared to the participants in a control group. This suggests that the booster emails may have increased the amount of time that professionals spent reviewing materials and making further notes from the training, which shows support for our first hypothesis (H1). This finding is important because professionals who spend more time reviewing and making notes are more exposed to the materials from the training, thus increasing the salience of the material and training. According to Bandura’s social cognitive theory, the more salient a stimuli or behavior is, the more they attend to it, which is the first step in reproducing a behavior (Crain, 2011), or in this case utilizing information from a training in their work with parents.

Taking further notes relates to Bandura’s retention processes, where information is restructured and recoded in order to improve retention (Bandura, 1989). Along with the restructuring of the information for retention purposes, another important aspect of retention processes is timely rehearsal of information (Bandura 1989). In other words,
repeating and reviewing information soon after attending to it improves retention of information. This is another way that booster emails 1 week and 1 month after the training may increase learning transfer.

Also, while there was not a statistically significant difference on time spent thinking about the training, those who received the booster emails did average 35 minutes more time spent thinking about the training than the control group. However, it is important to understand the role that thinking about the training played in relation to learning transfer. In the paradigm of Bandura’s theory (Bandura, 1989), time spent thinking about the training can relate to retention processes, one of the four required steps to learning and reproducing behavior or information. However, self-efficacy also plays an important role in reproduction (e.g. the use of information learned) in the future. Since self-efficacy refers to how capable an individual feels they are at reproducing behavior/information, it is easy to see how self-efficacy could affect the level of motivation an individual has to reproduce information learned (Bandura, 1989). In the case where reproduction includes the use of training materials and information, reproduction indicates that learning transfer is occurring. From this context of Bandura’s theory, we can see that while time spent thinking about the training can increase retention of learned information, it may not be enough by itself.

From this perspective one can understand why time spent reviewing materials and making further notes may increase learning transfer, while just thinking about a training may not. Professionals who merely think about the training may notice that they are missing information from what they remember or that it may be inaccurate, thus lowering their self-efficacy or confidence in using (a.k.a. reproducing) the information in their
work with clients. On the other hand, participants who received the booster emails were encouraged to review the materials, which may increase confidence in using the information, and to think about how they plan to implement the information and tools in their work. This may have led to increased confidence (self-efficacy) in using the information, which could have increased their motivation to use it (Bandura, 1989). From there, the motivation could have increased how often they use it in their work with parents (i.e. learning transfer). This is supported by Antle and colleagues’ (2013) findings where knowledge increases were predictive of learning transfer, and Bennett-Levy and Padesky’s (2014) findings that reviewing information (part of increasing knowledge) was predictive of learning transfer.

This theoretical line of reasoning is also supported by analyses from the current study, where those who received the booster emails (and thus also spent more time reviewing training materials), tended to use information more frequently with parents in their work. Initially, when parenting professionals were asked about sharing information from the training with parents, there was not a statistically significant difference between those who received booster emails and those who did not. However, once parenting professionals were asked more specific questions about sharing the training information with parents, some differences were found. Specifically, professionals were more likely to share information about some of the Five Protective Factors (concrete support in times of need, parent resilience, and social and emotional competence), if they received booster emails. It should also be noted that the only significant difference found between the groups at the onset of this study, was that the control group reported greater knowledge of social and emotional competence of children after the training. This difference
emphasizes the importance of the experimental group sharing knowledge in this area significantly more than the control group. There were two areas (knowledge of parenting and child development, and social connections) where the groups did not differ significantly on sharing information with parents. However, group average scores on these two content areas were not low, which may imply previous familiarity and confidence for both groups in sharing this information with parents. Together, these results provide some support for H2, that booster emails would increase parenting professionals use of the training information with parents. This matches up with extant literature where reminders appear to improve use of information and techniques (Bennett-Levy & Padesky, 2014; Lyon et al., 2011).

Professionals who received the booster emails also reported greater use of text-tip cards, and other tools and guide-sheets with parents, which show support for H3. This also supports the idea that those who spent more time reviewing the training materials, due to the booster emails, also increased the number of handouts provided to parents following the training. This could have led to an increase in their motivation to use the handouts, and thus improve learning transfer with the use of handouts in their work with parents. Even when it came to using the bookmarks from the training, the difference neared statistical significance, but professionals who did not receive the booster emails, reported distributing bookmarks slightly more frequently than the other handouts. This could partially be explained by the possibility that bookmarks are a more common type of handout that parenting professionals are already familiar with, and thus already more confident in using.

When asked whether or not they shared information from the training with
coworkers and relatives, there was not a significant difference between groups. This may be explained by most parenting professionals already sharing information from trainings with their colleagues and relatives. Since this would leave little room for improvement (36 of 41 in the experimental and 46 of 54 in the control said “Yes” to sharing with colleagues; 35 of 41 in the experimental and 42 of 54 in the control said “Yes” to sharing with relatives and family members), it is easy to see why booster emails would have little to no impact in encouraging professionals to share the information with colleagues and relatives. However, even when examining the amount of time that professionals reported spending in conversation with colleagues and others, those who received booster emails did not report statistically significant higher amounts of time talking with colleagues than participants in the control group. This could partially be due to participants in each group working together as colleagues, which would mean that an increase in time spent talking to colleagues within the experimental group would also produce an increase in time spent talking to colleagues within the control group. However, even with this possible confounding factor, the experimental group did report more time spent, on average, talking to “colleagues and others” about the training. This extra time might be partially accounted for if those who received booster emails spent more time talking to their families and relatives about the training. However, this is something that a future study will have to examine in greater detail in order to fully assess possible group differences. While more specific questions may have been able to find significant differences between groups on sharing training information with colleagues and others, we found no evidence to support our fourth hypothesis (H4) in this study. This does not match up with other literature where booster session meetings for participants to discuss the training materials
(with their colleagues) were predictive of learning transfer (Pololi & Frankel, 2005). An explanation for this difference could be that participants in this study likely only spoke with colleagues informally about the training.

The fifth and final research question examined potential differences between groups on reports of improved abilities and knowledge. The similarity in responses on “improved abilities and knowledge” from professionals in each group suggests a lack of effect from the booster emails. Thus, we did not find any support for our final hypothesis (H5), that professionals who receive a 1-week and 1-month booster email would report greater improvements in knowledge and abilities. However, it may be that while booster emails did not increase abilities and knowledge, they may have increased motivation as discussed above. This aligns with Bandura’s paradigm, in that behavior (or knowledge) may be learned, retained, and be reproducible by an individual, but without proper motivation it will not be replicated (Crain, 2011), or in this case, used in their work. Thus booster emails may increase learning transfer via increased motivation through some of the various areas discussed above.

Overall, our analyses showed mixed results regarding our hypotheses. Nine of our analyses showed significance with 10 showing nonsignificance (see Table 1 for results of independent samples t tests). We found support from four out of five related questions for our first hypothesis (H1), showing that the experimental group tended to spend more time reviewing and reflecting on the training materials than the control group. Three of six related questions found support for our second hypothesis (H2), suggesting that booster emails increased the frequency that participants shared information from the training with parents. Partial support was found from two of the questions related to our third
hypothesis (H3), suggesting that booster emails increased participants sharing of some training materials and handouts with parents. No support was found for our fourth hypothesis (H4; participants who receive a booster email will share materials and information with others more than the control group), or for our fifth hypothesis (H5; receiving a booster email would increase abilities and knowledge of professionals).

**Limitations**

While there are notable strengths in this study there are also important caveats to consider. First, the results are not objective measures but self-report measures of parenting professionals’ use and reflection of the training. Also, the results were based on answers that consisted of estimates based on memory, 2 months after the training, rather than being tracked all along. These caveats limit our study since actual behavior (increasing learning transfer) was the goal, and it is difficult to know to what extent professionals in this study provided accurate reports. However, the design of this study ensured that these biases affected both groups.

Another limitation of this study relates to the risk of running multiple pairs of independent sample t tests, which produces the risk of erroneous findings by chance (Cohen, 2013). However, given that over half (9 out of 17) of our t tests were significant, and that an alpha of .10 with multiple t tests risks only 1 out of 10 erroneous results being significant, we have greater confidence that our significant findings were not due to chance. Our small sample size can also be considered a weakness of our study, though this mainly risks a lack of power at being able to detect actual significant results, though several were still found.
The attrition rate in this study was also relatively high, going from 373 training attendees who were invited to participate, to only 96 participants with usable responses. This is due, in part, to the difficulty of reading some of the email addresses, all of which were handwritten. However, our attrition is mostly due to training participants’ failure to complete the surveys online. Therefore, the generalizability of this study is limited, given the possibility of distinct differences that could be present between those who completed the surveys and those who did not.

**Implications**

Within these limitations, this study still holds some practical implications for parenting professionals, organizations, and specialists who train professionals. First, a growing body of research suggests important value in using reflective and goal oriented worksheets in follow-up for trainings (Bennett-Levy & Padesky, 2014). This may be especially important for professionals and organizations where attending multiple one-day trainings each year are the norm, particularly where funding is limited for many family-centered organizations. Even where organizations can afford more expensive and lengthy training programs, reflective worksheets and reminders can help provide an extra boost toward the occurrence of learning transfer (Bennet-Levy & Padesky, 2014; Lyon et al., 2011), as was described using Bandura’s theory (Bandura, 1989). With this in mind, it may be helpful for organizations and agencies to begin or continue to use reflective worksheets and reminder emails following trainings, especially since said organizations often already have access to email lists for the professionals they employ and pay to train.

Second, this study builds upon existing literature that relates to the impact booster
emails and reminders can have, via encouraging trainees to review and use training materials, on learning transfer during the 2 months following a workshop (Bennett-Levy & Padesky, 2014; Futris et al., 2015). This is important since Schramm and colleagues (in press), found that greater application and use of training materials at 2 months was predictive of use of materials 6 months following the training.

Third, this study provides some evidence that gaining information, thinking about information, and talking about it with colleagues is not enough by itself. Instead, training programs need to seek ways (e.g. reflective worksheets and booster emails) to increase time spent reviewing training materials and information, as well as time spent planning how to use them. In this way, training programs may be able to improve learning transfer using relatively inexpensive and simple methods.

Conclusion

In summary, the findings of this study provide empirical support for reminders and reflection as part of improving learning transfer among professionals who work with parents. It is suggested that training specialists and organizations implement methods of reminding and encouraging parenting professionals following trainings as they seek to continually improve the ways in which they help and serve parents in the community. Looking at the bigger picture of helping parents in their important roles, this recommendation should be highly considered.

Future studies should seek to extend research through replication of these findings with other populations and larger samples in order to improve generalizability and understanding of reflection, reminders, self-efficacy, and learning transfer. The overall
conclusion of this study is that incorporating reflection worksheets through reminder emails may be an important element in successful dissemination of empirically-based trainings and resources for parenting professionals as they seek to serve parents in the community.
REFERENCES


APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

Posttest Survey
Strong Parents, Stable Children: Building Protective Factors to Strengthen Families

Date: ______ - ______ Last 4 digits of your phone # _____________ Training Location (city) ____________

Participant Survey: Please select the response that best describes your opinion as a result of attending this training...

| 1. What is your overall evaluation of this training? | Very Negative 1 | 2 | Neutral 3 | 4 | Very Positive 5 |
| 2. What is your overall rating of the facilitator(s)? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. How do you rate the binder/materials? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. The topics were relevant to my work with children/parents | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. I am very likely to recommend this training to others | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. I will implement this information in my work with families | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

The following questions ask about your knowledge and understanding of the information presented about the 5 protective factors Before the training compared to After the training.

| 7. My knowledge and understanding of the Concrete Support in Times of Need information. | Poor 1 | Fair 2 | Good 3 | Very Good 4 | Excellent 5 |
| 1) Before the program | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2) After the program | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| 8. My knowledge and understanding of the Parent Resilience information. | Poor 1 | Fair 2 | Good 3 | Very Good 4 | Excellent 5 |
| 1) Before the program | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2) After the program | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| 9. My knowledge and understanding of the Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development information. | Poor 1 | Fair 2 | Good 3 | Very Good 4 | Excellent 5 |
| 1) Before the program | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2) After the program | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| 10. My knowledge and understanding of the Social and Emotional Competence of Children information. | Poor 1 | Fair 2 | Good 3 | Very Good 4 | Excellent 5 |
| 1) Before the program | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2) After the program | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| 11. My knowledge and understanding of the Social Connections information. | Poor 1 | Fair 2 | Good 3 | Very Good 4 | Excellent 5 |
| 1) Before the program | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2) After the program | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

(turn over)
Strong Parents, Stable Children: Building Protective Factors to Strengthen Families

Please respond to the following questions regarding this training:

12. What were the main things you learned today?

13. How will this be useful to you?

14. What difference will it make in your work?

15. What will you do to derive maximum benefit from the workshop over the next few months?

16. Please list 3 actions that you will take in the upcoming months as a result of the training:
   a)
   b)
   c)

17. Other comments and reactions:

Participant Demographic Information: Please select the response that best describes you?

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<th>Gender (check one):</th>
<th>□ Male</th>
<th>□ Female</th>
<th>□ Other</th>
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<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity (check all that apply):</th>
<th>□ Caucasian/White</th>
<th>□ Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander</th>
<th>□ Native American or Alaskan Native</th>
<th>□ Hispanic/Latino</th>
<th>□ Other (specify)</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>□ African American/Black</td>
<td>□ Asian</td>
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Do you have children? □ Yes □ No

Number of years as a professional? ________ Your age ________

Agency/Employer you are affiliated with:

We will be conducting follow-up evaluations at 2- and 6-months following the workshop. Please provide your email so we may send you a follow-up survey to see how and what you might be using:

Email address: ________________________________________________
APPENDIX B

Booster Surveys
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPSC 1-week follow up</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strong Parents Stable Children Quick Follow-Up</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Will you take just a few minutes to answer 3 questions from the Strong Parents, Stable Children training you just recently participated in?

You haven't reviewed your notes from the training, please take a few minutes to do so now.

attended? (if
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPSC 1-week follow up</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anything else you felt was important?</td>
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</table>

...re anything else that was important that stood out? If so, please take some time to elaborate below:
<table>
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<tr>
<th>SPSC 1-week follow up</th>
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<tr>
<td>Practice and Implementation</td>
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s of?)
e, what guidesheets have you used? Bookmarks/cards? What principles have you taught, etc.?
<table>
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<tr>
<th>SPSC 4-week survey</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4-week Reflection</td>
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?
APPENDIX C

2-Month Follow-Up Survey
Strong Parents, Stable Children 2-month follow-up survey

MINUTES you have spent... me (type a number in
## Strong Parents, Stable Children 2-month follow-up survey

4. Looking back, please indicate how much your abilities or knowledge improved because of the workshop:

- No change
- Improved a little
- Improved somewhat
- Improved a lot

5. In your work with families and others, which ONE of the following best represents what you have done with the training materials thus far?

- I have not used any information from the training and I do not plan to
- I have not used any information from the training, but I DO plan to
- I have used very little information from the training
- I have used some information from the training
- I have used a lot of the information from the training

6. Have you shared the information and/or tools you received from the training with other co-workers?

- Yes
- No

7. Have you shared the information and/or tools you received from the training with relatives or family members?

- Yes
- No
### Strong Parents. Stable Children 2-month follow-up survey

#### Please select ONE answer that best reflects your opinion for each question

8. Please select ONE answer that best reflects your opinion for each question

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The content of the training is relevant to my work with families</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The content of the training has been relevant to my personal life</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>My ability to provide support to others in strengthening their parenting skills has increased as a result of attending the training</td>
<td>○</td>
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</table>
9. Please select ONE answer that best reflects your opinion for each question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Very Frequently</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have provided information to others</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>from the Concrete Support in Times of Need section</td>
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<tr>
<td>I have provided information to others</td>
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<tr>
<td>from the Parent Resilience section</td>
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<td>I have provided information to others</td>
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<tr>
<td>from the Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development section</td>
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<tr>
<td>I have provided information to others</td>
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<tr>
<td>from the Social and Emotional Competence section</td>
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<tr>
<td>I have provided information to others</td>
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<tr>
<td>from the Social Connections section</td>
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<tr>
<td>How often have you used the Strong Parents, Stable Children BOOKMARKS with those you work with?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How often have you used the Strong Parents, Stable Children TEXT-TIP CARDS with those you work with?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How often have you used the Strong Parents, Stable Children TOOLS/GUIDESHEETS with those you work with?</td>
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<td>Strong Parents, Stable Children 2-month follow-up survey</td>
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<td>Final Questions</td>
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arents, Stable Children workshop