Challenges and Successes in Conducting Assessments in a Longitudinal Parenting Study

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Retaining Participants in Longitudinal Research

- Scant attention in research literature on effective strategies for retaining low-income, ethnically diverse mothers in longitudinal research.

- Available research emphasizes:
  - Tangible resources (e.g., incentives)
  - Developing relationships with participants

Legacy for Children™ Assessment

- Assessment Sites
  - Los Angeles, CA
  - Miami, FL

- Assessment Staff
  - Assessment Assistant
  - Child Development Assessors and Mother Interviewers
  - Evaluation Coordinator

- Auxiliary Support from Intervention Staff

Overview of Assessment Visits

- Maternal Interviews
  - CAPI
- Observational
- Direct child assessments
- Duration: 45 minutes to 2 ½ hours
- Incentives/Supports
  - Transportation (reimbursement; taxi service)
  - Child Care
  - Financial
    - $100 for in-office assessment
    - $125 for in-office assessment that also includes a home visit component

Challenges

Barriers

Timing

What Do We Know about Situational Barriers?

- Mothers are busy! Scheduling Issues
- Limited transportation
- Language/literacy barriers
- Need for child care

"YOU'LL HAVE TO WAIT A MINUTE.... I'VE ONLY GOT FOUR PAIRS OF HANDS!"

When Timing is of the Essence…

- Relevance to MCH research and practice:
  – Timely, regular prenatal care
  – Routine well child care

- Crucial to research following the developmental trajectories of young children

Legacy for Children™
Timing of Assessments

Assessment Time Point	Assessment Window
6 months	5.5 to 8 Months
1 Year	11.5 to 12.5 Months
2 Year	24 to 26 Months

Procedures and Strategies

Staff-Level Strategies

- Master's level, experience

- Bilingual language proficiency preferred

- Comprehensive training

- Regular supervision

- Monitoring of assessment rates and assessor drift

- Efforts to reduce staff turnover

- Prioritizing flexible schedules

Specific Contact Procedures

- Close oversight of contact documentation

- Use documentation as a tool
  - Record anecdotal information from previous contact for a more individualized approach.

- Regularly updating contact information

- Regular letter correspondence

- Telephone contact

Fostering a Sense of Safety and Trust among Participants

- Staff are responsive to the logistical and other challenges facing low-income, ethnically diverse mothers of young children

- Non-threatening study procedures

- Use every opportunity to build rapport

Building Rapport During the Assessment Visit

- Arrival of mother and child

- Office set up

- Greeting

- Obtaining consent

- One-on-one with mother and/or child

- Wrapping up

After the Appointment and Before the Next Appointment

- Changes in contact information
  - Asking about anticipated moves
  - Updating information about and obtaining additional contacts
  - Addressed stamped envelope for address and phone changes
  - Reminder for next assessment visit, calls and letters
  - Working with trackers/intervention staff when updates/changes occur
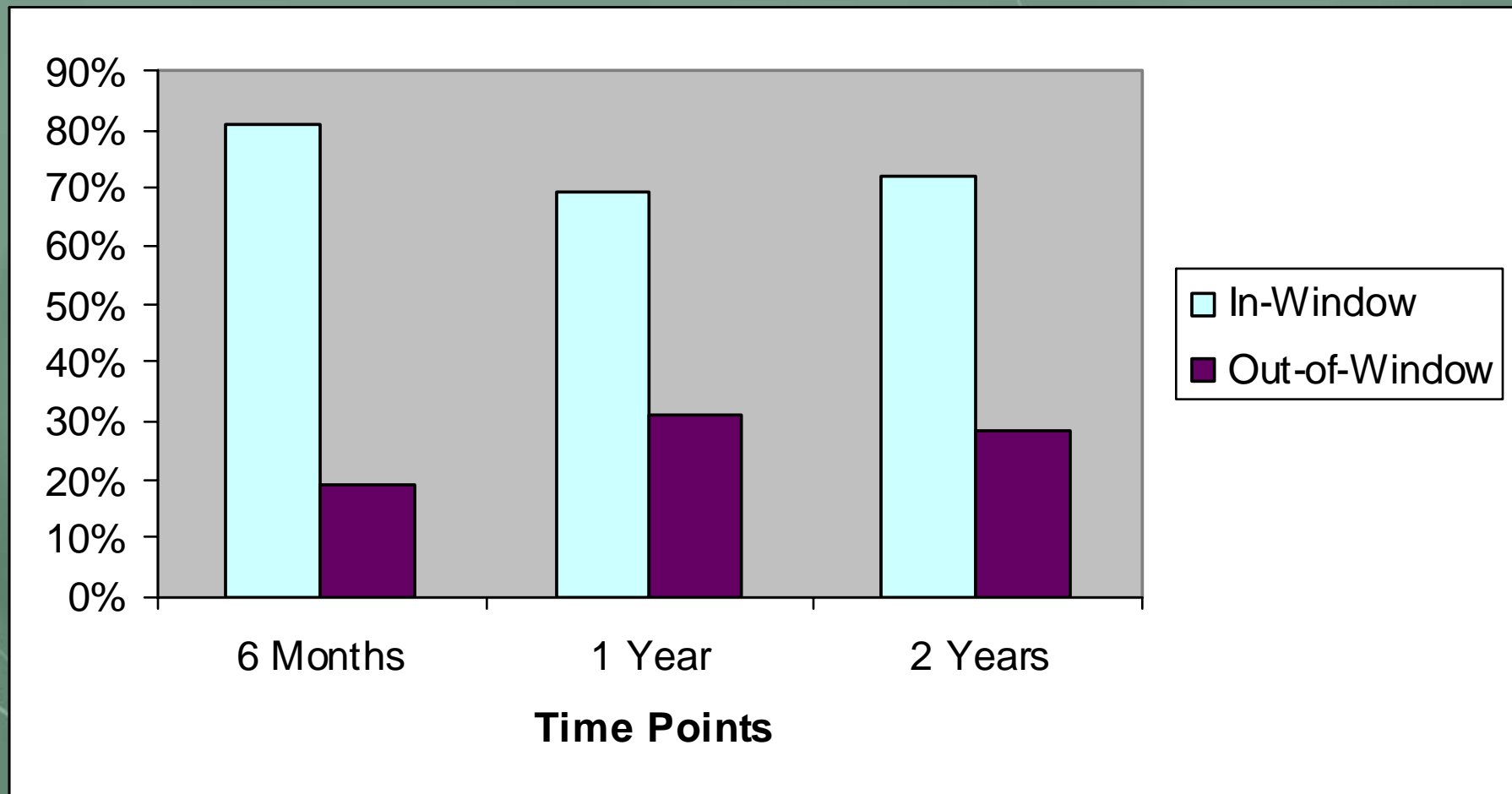
Our "Best Practices"

- Vigilant and immediate response to returned letters
- Quality of voice when talking with mothers
- Caller ID
- "Drive by's"
- Best alternative contacts
  - Siblings, Grandparents, Godparents
- Documenting individualized information about interaction
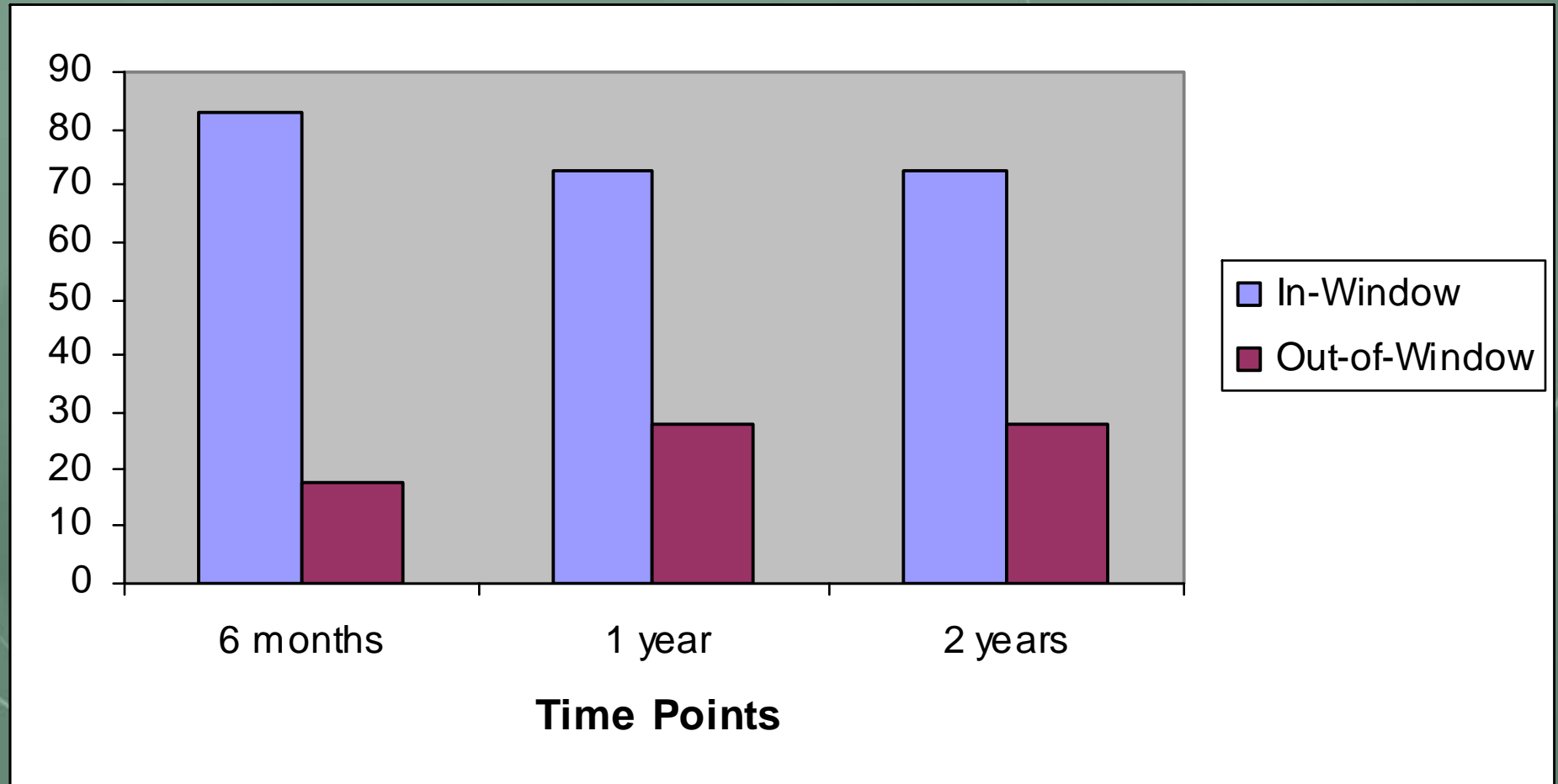- Anticipating language issues

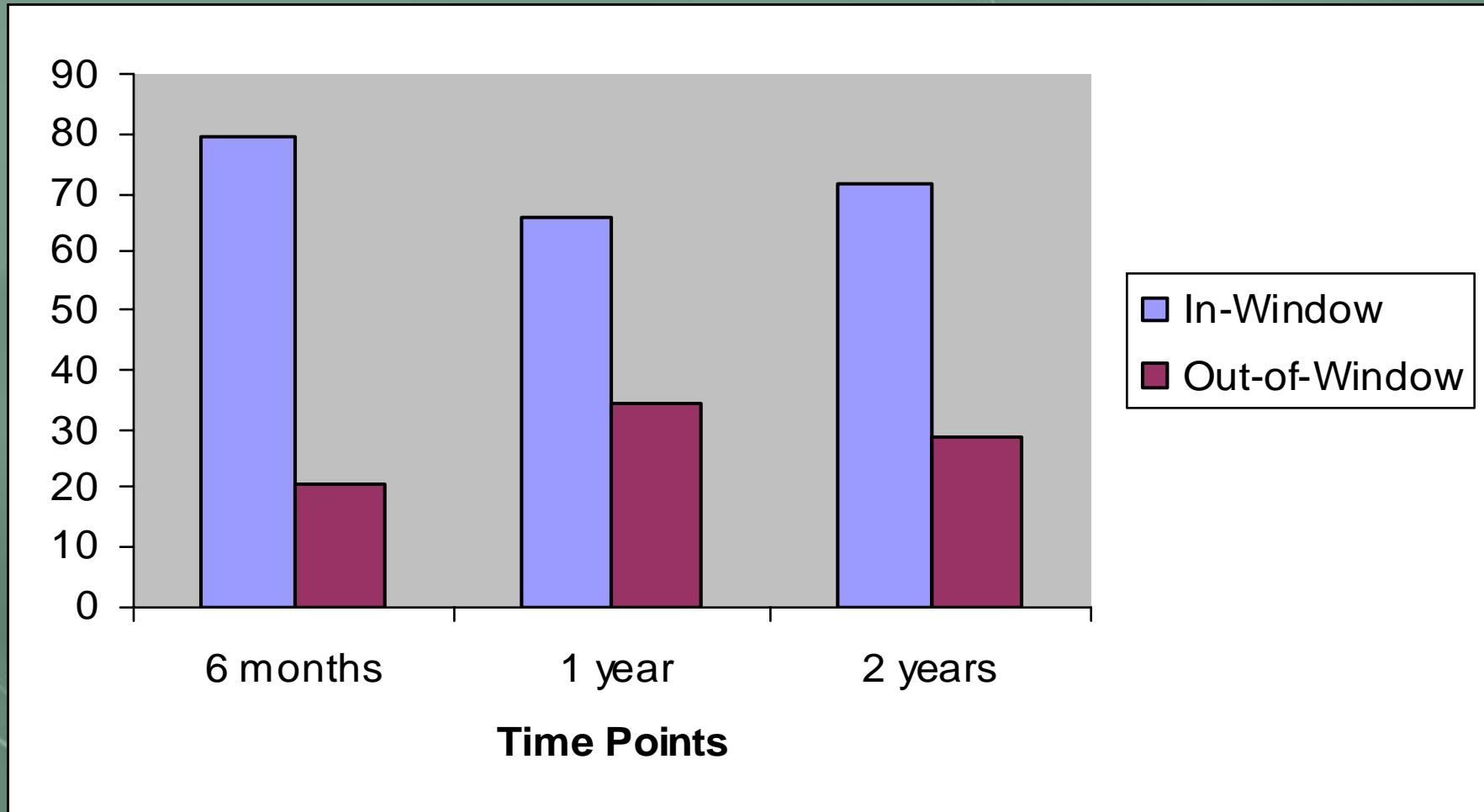# Timeliness of Assessments
- Overall -

Timeliness of Assessment: Los Angeles

Timeliness of Assessment: Miami

Did mothers' sociodemographic characteristics predict timeliness of assessments?

Mothers who attended In- or Out-of-Window did not differ on any sociodemographic characteristics including:

- Age at Baseline
- Race/Ethnicity
- Multilingual Status
- Household Size
- Total Household Income

Key Retention Strategies

- Intensity of Tracking
  - Number of letters sent to families
  - Number of phone updates

- Heightened flexibility in scheduling
  - Number of Times Appointments were Rescheduled

- Transportation
  - how much did mothers need this support?

Did our retention efforts influence the timeliness of assessments?

- **6 Month Assessment**
  - Number of Additional Letters Sent
  - Number of Additional Phone Contacts/Calls Used
  - Total Number of Appointments Rescheduled
- **1 Year Assessment**
  - Number of Additional Letters Sent
  - Number of Additional Phone Contacts/Calls Used
  - Total Number of Appointments Rescheduled
- **2 Year Assessment**
  - Number of Additional Letters Sent
  - Number of Additional Phone Contacts/Calls Used
 - Total Number of Appointments Rescheduled

- **6 Month Assessment**
  - Number of Additional Letters Sent
  - **Number of Additional Phone Contacts/Calls Used**
  - Total Number of Appointments Rescheduled
- **1 Year Assessment**
  - **Number of Additional Letters Sent**
  - **Number of Additional Phone Contacts/Calls Used**
  - Total Number of Appointments Rescheduled
- **2 Year Assessment**
  - **Number of Additional Letters Sent**
  - **Number of Additional Phone Contacts/Calls Used**
  - **Total Number of Appointments Rescheduled**
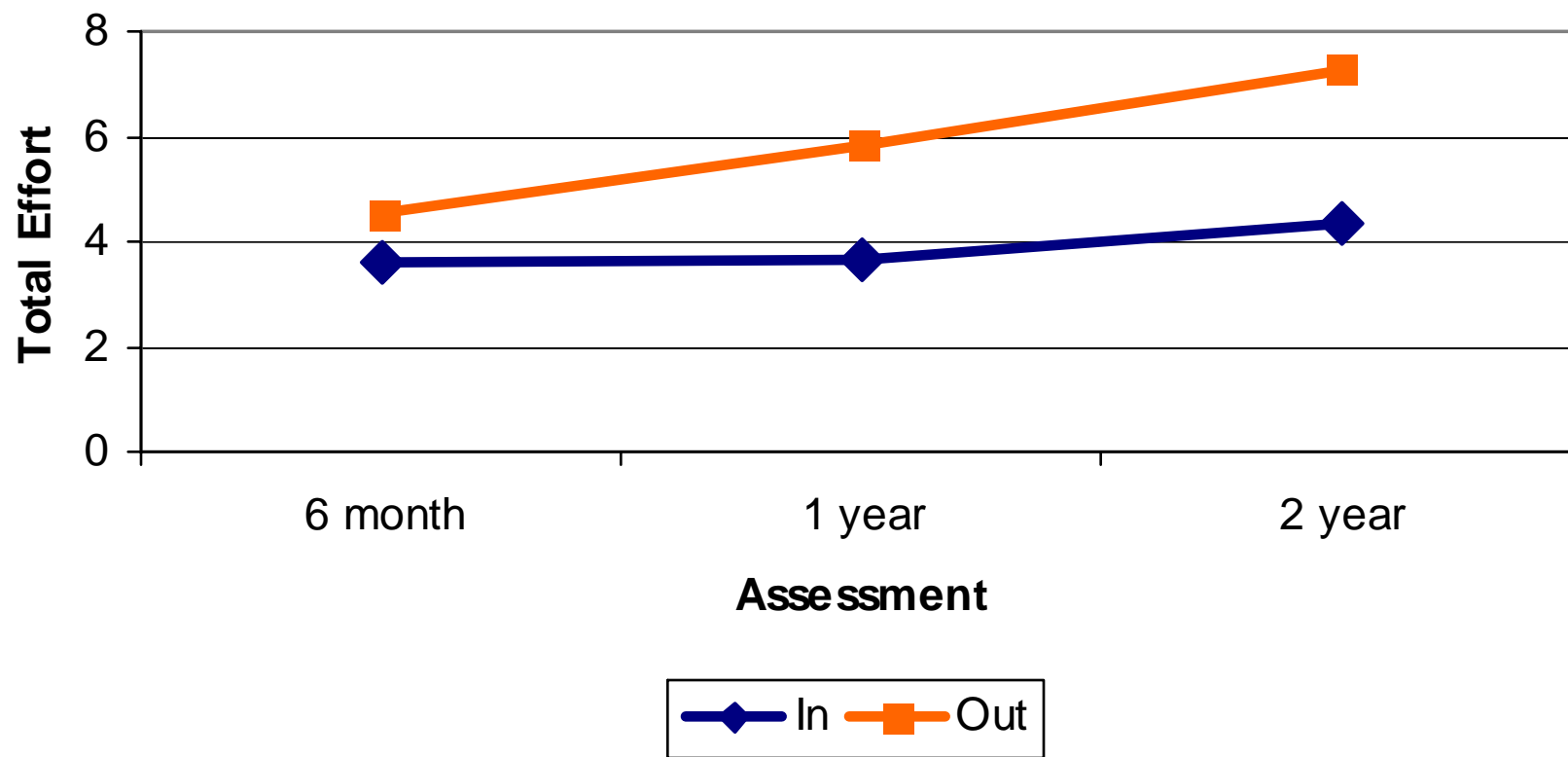
A Closer Look at Level of Effort

	In-Window	Out-of-Window
6 Month		
Letters	0-6	0-3
Contacts/Calls	1-7	1-8
Rescheduled Appointments	1-4	0-2
Total Effort	2-12	2-13
1 Year		
Letters	0-2	0-3
Contacts/Calls	0-6	0-20
Reschedule Appointments	0-4	0-3
Total Effort	2-9	2-29
2 Years		
Letters	0-2	0-3
Contacts/Calls	0-11	0-11
Reschedule Appointments	1-4	1-5
Total Effort	2-15	2-28

Core Ingredients of Timely Assessment

- Staff flexibility, availability, and respect for participants

- Energetic and vigilant contact efforts

- Constant and close documentation & monitoring of in- and out-of-window rates

- Transportation and child care

Selected Research Articles

Bell LS, Butler TL, Herring P, Yancey AK, Fraser GE. Recruiting Blacks to the Adventist Health Study: Do follow-up phone calls increase response rates? *Ann Epid*. 2005;15:667-672.

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Cotter RB, Burke JD, Loeber R, Navatil JL. Innovative retention methods in longitudinal research: A case study of the Developmental Trends Study. *J Child & Fam Studies*. 2002; 11:485-298.

Ness RB, Nelson DB, Kumanyika SK, Grisso JA. Evaluating minority recruitment into clinical studies: How good are the data? *Ann Epidemiol.* 1997;7:472-478.

Williams IC, Corbie-Smith G. Investigator beliefs and reported success in recruiting minority participants. *Cont Clin Trials*. 2006;27:580-586.

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Thank You