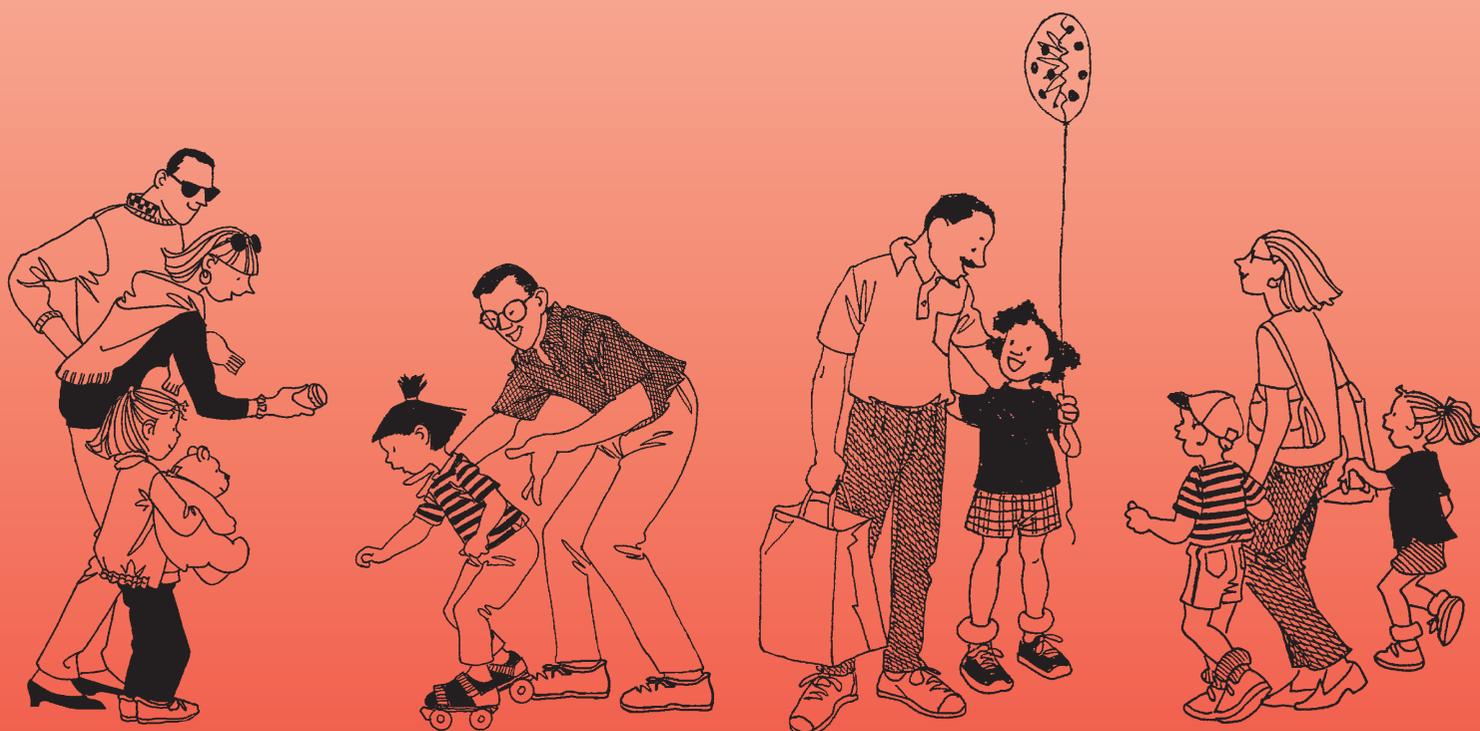


Parent-Child Relationship Inventory (PCRI)

Manual

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INTRODUCTION

The Parent-Child Relationship Inventory (PCRI) assesses parents' attitudes toward parenting and toward their children. The PCRI yields a quantified description of the parent-child relationship that complements other assessment procedures used in clinical evaluations of children and families. Rather than replacing qualitative evaluation of parent-child interactions, the PCRI helps to put qualitative impressions in perspective by making normative comparisons possible.

Standardized on more than 1,100 parents across the United States, the PCRI identifies specific aspects of the parent-child relationship that may cause problems, as well as giving an overall picture of the quality of the relationship. In an era when fathers are increasingly expected to take an active role in parenting, the PCRI explicitly measures the attitudes and behaviors of both mothers and fathers. It is assumed that the PCRI will often be administered to couples, and there are separate norms for mothers and fathers.

Recent increases in child custody litigation and divorce mediation have created a demand for sophisticated assessment of the relationships between parents and children, and the PCRI may prove especially useful in child custody settings and in other institutions that specifically address the needs of children. Used in conjunction with interviews and other forms of clinical assessment, the PCRI can be an important element in the making of custody recommendations and in evaluating the possibility that a parent is abusive.

General Description

The PCRI is a 78-item, self-report questionnaire that can be administered to either an individual or a group in about 15 minutes. It has a fourth-grade reading level.

The items were selected to measure a wide range of parenting dispositions and behaviors. Some of the items present general attitudes toward being a parent, and others are intended to elicit responses specific to a parent's relationship with a particular child. All of the items have a Likert-type, 4-point response format: *strongly agree*, *agree*, *disagree*, and *strongly disagree*. Rather than providing a single score representing an individual's overall ability in and satisfaction with parenting, items are arranged in scales that

reflect major features of parenting and the parent-child relationship. Consistent with the idea that parenting skills define a positive dimension, high scores on the PCRI scales indicate good parenting skills and low scores indicate poor parenting skills.

PCRI Scales and Validity Indicators

The PCRI has seven content scales and two validity indicators. Each of the content scales explores a specific aspect of the parent-child relationship. These scales were developed using a combination of empirical and rational approaches, as described in the section of chapter 4 entitled "Item Analysis and Selection." One of the two validity indicators gauges the client's tendency to give socially desirable responses. The other validity indicator, which is based on agreement between answers on select pairs of items, measures the tendency to give inconsistent responses. A listing of the items in the content scales and the Social Desirability scale appears in Appendix A.

Content scales. Of the 73 items included in the content scales, 26 are keyed positively and 47 are keyed negatively. If an item is positively keyed, a response of *agree* or *strongly agree* increases the score for the scale on which that item appears; conversely, if an item is negatively keyed, a response of *disagree* or *strongly disagree* increases the scale score. High scores indicate positive parenting characteristics.

The Parental Support scale (SUP), which has 9 items, assesses the level of emotional and social support a parent receives.

The Satisfaction With Parenting scale (SAT) consists of 10 items measuring the amount of pleasure and fulfillment an individual derives from being a parent.

The 14-item Involvement scale (INV) examines the level of a parent's interaction with and knowledge of his or her child.

The Communication scale (COM) consists of 9 positively keyed items that assess a parent's perception of how effectively he or she communicates with a child.

The Limit Setting scale (LIM) contains 12 items, all negatively keyed, that focus on a parent's experience disciplining a child.

The 10-item Autonomy scale (AUT) assesses the ability of a parent to promote a child's independence.

The Role Orientation scale (ROL), comprising 9 items, examines parents' attitudes about gender roles in parenting.

Protocol validity. The PCRI has two validity indicators: Social Desirability (SOC) and Inconsistency (INC).

The Social Desirability indicator consists of five items that are rarely endorsed in the positive direction. A low SOC score suggests that the parent is giving distorted responses intended to portray the parent-child relationship in an unrealistically positive light.

The Inconsistency indicator comprises 10 pairs of highly correlated items. The response to one item in the pair in effect predicts the response to the other item. High scores on this indicator suggest inattentive or random responding.

Applications

The PCRI is intended for use in a wide range of contexts, including both clinical and research settings. Because it is multidimensional, the PCRI identifies specific areas of

difficulty between parents and children. By quantifying aspects of parent-child interactions, the instrument makes it possible to verify clinical hypotheses about individual and family disturbances against a background of objective data.

Limitations

Assessment of parent-child relationships requires clinical sensitivity and a thorough knowledge of the research on parent-child interaction. Moreover, relationships between parents and their children do not exist in a vacuum. They are embedded in a matrix of family, cultural, and socioeconomic factors, all of which influence parental attitudes and behaviors. Designed for use by individuals with a background in psychological assessment, the PCRI is intended to be one measure of the characteristics of the parent-child relationship. Given the complexity of parent-child interactions, the inventory must never be used in isolation as the sole basis for clinical diagnoses, treatment decisions, or custody recommendations.