Community and Youth Collaborative Institute
School Experience Surveys

Technical Report: Perceived Parent/ Caregiver Support

Parent Version

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PERCEIVED PARENT/CAREGIVER SUPPORT

Parent Version

I. Definition of Construct

The *Parental/Caregiver Support* scale explores parent/caregiver perceptions of the degree to which parent and caregivers support each other within the school community.

II. Relevance for Practice

Researchers cite parent-family-community involvement as a key to addressing the school dropout crisis (Belfield & Levin, 2007). Strong school-family-community partnerships foster higher educational aspirations and more motivated students (Barton, 2003). Support from other parents in the caregiving role can be critical to parents' feelings of self-efficacy, capacity for coping, and decreases social isolation as a parent (see Nicolas & Keilty, 2007 for information on parent peer support groups). Understanding the degree to which parents and caregivers feel a network of support among parents exists may provide direction to schools looking to enhance parent/caregiver supports and parent-family-community partnerships.

III. Scale Description and Instructions

A. Items

1. In this school, parents/caregivers treat other parents/caregivers with respect.
2. Parents/caregivers help other parents/caregivers at this school.
3. I feel supported by other parents/caregivers at this school.

B. Response Options

Response options for each item include the following:

1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Neither Disagree or Agree
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly Agree

C. Instructions for Respondents

We are interested in learning about your perceptions of the relationships among parents and caregivers at your child's school. For each statement, please fill in the ONE circle that best represents your answer.

D. Instructions for Scale Administers

Surveys can be self-administered or administered to parents in person or online. Explain that the purpose of the survey is to learn more about their perceptions about their student's school and their community. They should select one answer per request, and make a choice based on the answer that best reflects how they feel. They may submit the survey when they have completed it.

If administered in person, look through the finished surveys to make sure that parents didn't miss any items or questions. Please remember that they do not have to answer every question, but do encourage them to complete as much of the survey as possible, reminding them their answers will help the school know how to best support its students and families.

IV. Scoring Procedures

An average of the response scores from the 3 items should be calculated and used as an indicator of parent/caregiver perceptions of the support that exists among parents/caregivers, with higher scores reflecting more favorable perceptions of this support.

V. Psychometric Properties of the Scale

A. Description of Sample

Participants used to test the psychometric properties of the scale included 1,545 parents or caregivers of elementary school students from around the state of Utah. This sample included 1,208 mothers, 233 fathers, 24 grandmothers, 7 grandfathers, 12 legal guardians (not parents), 2 foster parents, and 13 others. More specifically, 41.9 percent had earned a high school diploma as their highest levels of education, 18.9 percent an associate's degree, 15.1 percent a bachelor's degree, 2.4 percent a master's degree, and 1.0 percent doctoral degree. The remaining 16.8 percent indicated that they had not completed high school. The respondents identified themselves as White/Non-Hispanic (45.8%), Latino/Latina (42.6%), Mixed/Multi-Racial (4.6%), African American (1.7%), or Asian (1.2%). Data on these parents/caregivers were collected as part of a needs assessment within each school's improvement planning process. All data were collected using paper/pencil surveys.

B. Basic Descriptive Statistics and Relevant Group Differences

Sample	Mean	SD	Range	α
Full Sample (*N* = 1545)	3.77	.78	1-5	.84
Gender				
Males (*n* = 318)	3.76	.77	1-5	.83
Females (*n* = 1182)	3.78	.78	1-5	.84
Education Level				
Less than High School (*n* = 233)	3.89	.79	1-5	.81
High School Degree (*n* = 594)	3.76	.79	1-5	.85
Post-Secondary Degree (*n* =582)	3.73	.78	1-5	.84
Race/Ethnicity				
White/Non-Hispanic (*n* = 657)	3.62	.76	1-5	.85
Latino/Latina (*n*=593)	3.97	.79	1-5	.82
Other (*n* = 159)	3.68	.74	1-5	.83
Language Version				
English (*n*= 928)	3.64	.76	1-5	.85
Spanish (*n*= 481)	4.03	.78	1-5	.81

Note. Group specific data omits respondents who did not indicate their status. Analyses indicated significant group differences (p<.01) based on race/ethnicity and language version of the scale, whereas gender and education level were non-significant (p>.05). Follow-up tests revealed that the Latino/Latina group reported significantly higher scores than the other race/ethnicity groups, which did not differ from each other. Those completing the Spanish version of the scale reported higher scores than those completing the English version. The effect size (η^2) indicated that race/ethnicity group membership accounted for 5% of the variance in the scores and language version accounted for 6% of the variance in the scores.

C. Maximum Value Percentages and Classification of Scores

Percentages		Classification of Scores		
Maximum Value	½ *SD*	Excelling	Emerging	Needs Improvement
75.4%	7.8%	83+	82-67	<67

Note. The max value percentages reflect the scale mean divided by the number of response options in the scale. This value allows the subscale to be compared with other measured constructs measured in the CAYCI surveys, thereby providing relative information regarding the extent to which respondents' perceptions are favorable across constructs. The classification of scores provides ranges of values based on the maximum value percentage plus or minus ½ SD percentage. Based on these cut points, schools may determine where they stand on experience of parental support relative to normed data.

D. Relationship between Parent/Caregiver Support Scores and Other Parent/Caregiver Experience Constructs

Construct [a]	*r* =
School Support for Parent/Caregiver Engagement	.58*
Engagement Efficacy	.41*
School and Community Support Services for Parent/Caregivers	.60*
Overall School Experience	.28*
Parents/Caregivers' Experience of Teacher and School Support	.58*

*Notes. [a] Average score on the respective subscale scores from the CAYCI surveys (Anderson-Butcher, Amorose, Iachini & Ball, 2013). * relationship significant (p<.01).*

E. Factorial Validity

A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducting using robust maximum likelihood estimation procedures in LISREL 8.71 (Scientific Software International, Inc., Chicago). The CFA model specified that the 3 items loaded on a single latent Parental Support factor. The factor variance was freely estimated, as was the uniqueness for each item. No covariances between uniquenesses were modeled. The data were input using the asymptotic covariance matrix.

Given this model was just identified, the overall fit of the model to the data was perfect, S-B $\chi 2 = 0$, df = 0, p = 1.00. The table below presents the completely standardized factor loadings and uniquenesses for each item. Squared multiple correlations averaged .66.

Item	*Loading*	*Uniqueness*
1. In this school, parents/caregivers treat other parents/caregivers with respect.	.64	.59
2. Parents/caregivers help other parents/caregivers at this school.	.93	.13
3. I feel supported by other parents/caregivers at this school.	.84	.30

We also tested factorial invariance of the scale across language version using multigroup CFA procedures (Marsh, 1994; Vandenberg & Lance, 2000). Specifically, we first tested a baseline model with the 3 items loaded on the same latent factor across groups to test configural invariance. Next we tested for metric invariance by constraining the factor loading to be invariant across groups. This is typically considered the minimal criterion for establishing measurement invariance across groups (Marsh, 1994). Results did not provide support for metric invariance across versions. While model fit for configural invariance was adequate, results revealed a significant (p <.01) difference in the Satorra-Bentler Scaled Difference in χ^2 Test (SDCS; see Brown, 2006) when the factor loadings were constrained to be equal across language versions in the metric invariance test. Further testing revealed that relaxing the invariance constraints on item #1 resulted in non-significant SDCS test. Thus, only partial support for metric invariance is observed in the data.

VII. Past and Future Scale Development

Earlier versions of the CAYCI parent/caregiver survey established initial reliabilities for various parent experience subscales (e.g., experience of value placed on parental input, academic involvement and support, parental involvement at school, and communication with parents). New data were collected in 2011 that were used to test further psychometric properties of the entire survey. This 3-item *Parental/Caregiver Support Scale* was one of the new scales tested at that time.

After data were collected and psychometrics tested, two further modifications were made to the scale based on expert consultation. Specifically, the midpoint response option (originally "undecided") has been changed

to "neither disagree or agree" " given that this response option seemed a more appropriate midpoint and because this response option improved the direct translation of the Spanish version. In addition, items were modified to explicitly mention "caregivers" as well as parents. In the sample used for this report, less than 7% of the respondents were not biological parents. While this is a relatively small amount, we feel that referring to parents and other caregivers would be more inclusive and representative of how school children's families are structured. It is important to note this is the term the population prefers and self-identifies with. Future scale development work should confirm that the psychometric properties are upheld given this slight modification.

We suggest that future work consider the possibility of revising item #1 given it related to the latent parent support construct differently across the current English and Spanish versions of the scale. Based on the lack of language invariance found, we caution against pooling or comparing scores collected using the English and the Spanish versions until changes in the items support the matric invariance of the scales.

Finally, we suggest that future work explore the validity of the measure using parents/caregivers of secondary school students. Adding additional items may also be a way to attempt to capture a greater breath of parental support indicators.

VII. Summary

Overall, the results of the psychometric testing indicate initial support for the reliability and validity of the *Parental/Caregiver Support* scale with parents/caregivers of elementary school students. Strong school-family-community partnerships foster higher educational aspirations and more motivated students so schools could use the information collected with this scale to better inform school improvement efforts (Barton, 2003).

VIII. References

Anderson-Butcher, D., Amorose, A. J., Iachini, A. & Ball, A. (2013). Community and Youth Collaborative Institute School Experience Surveys. Columbus, OH: College of Social Work, The Ohio State University.

Barton, P.E. (2003). Parsing the Achievement Gap: Baselines for Tracking Progress. Princeton, NJ: Policy Information Report, Educational Testing Service.

Belfield, C. R. and H.M. Levin, H.M. (2007). *The Price We Pay: Economic and Social Consequences of Inadequate Education.* Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.

Brown, T.A. (2006). *Confirmatory factor analysis for applied research.* New York: Guilford Press.

Hu, L. & Bentler, P. M. (1999). Cutoff criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis: Conventional criteria versus new alternatives. *Structural Equation Modeling, 6,* 1-55.

Marsh, H.W. (1994). Confirmatory factor analysis models of factorial invariance: A multifaceted approach. *Structural Equation Modeling, 1,* 5-34.

Nicholas, D.B. & Krista, K. (2007). An evaluation of dyadic peer support for caregiving parents of children with chronic lung disease requiring technology assistance. *Social Work in Health Care 44*(3), 245–259.

Vandenberg, R. J., & Lance, C. E. (2000). A review and synthesis of the measurement invariance literature: Suggestions, practices, and recommendations for organizational research. *Organizational Research Methods, 3,* 4-70.

IX. Recommended Citation of Scale

When using the *Parental/Caregiver Support scale* for program evaluation or research purposes, we recommend using the following citation:

Anderson-Butcher, D., Amorose, A. J., Iachini, A., & Ball, A. (2013). *Community and Youth Collaborative Institute School Experience Surveys: Parental/Caregiver Support scale.* Columbus, OH: College of Social Work, The Ohio State University.

If this scale is used along with additional Community and Youth Collaborative Institute School Experience Surveys, then the following citation would be appropriate to cover all scales:

Anderson-Butcher, D., Amorose, A. J., Iachini, A., & Ball, A. (2013*). Community and Youth Collaborative Institute School Experience Surveys.* Columbus, OH: College of Social Work, The Ohio State University.