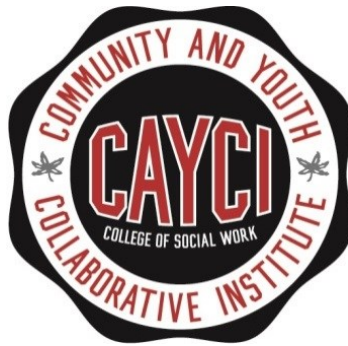


Community and Youth Collaborative Institute  
School Experience Surveys

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**Technical Report: Perceived  
Family History  
Teacher/Staff Version**

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## **PERCEIVED FAMILY HISTORY**

Teacher/Staff Version

### **I. Definition of Construct**

The *Family History* scale assesses the extent to which teachers and staff perceive their students' families or caregivers experience mental health or behavioral issues.

### **II. Relevance for Practice**

As front line workers who interact daily with students, school personnel have a gatekeeping role in linking students and families to social services. In addition, teachers and other school personnel are legally-obligated to report suspicions of child abuse and neglect (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2013). Identifying the frequency or intensity of mental health problem behaviors among students' families may help a school or district determine what supports to provide to their students and their families.

### **III. Scale Description and Instructions**

#### **A. Items**

1. My students' families or caregivers have a history of mental health problems.
2. My students' families or caregivers have a history of problem behaviors.
3. My students' families or caregivers are suspected of abuse and/or neglect.
4. My students' families or caregivers are involved in the child welfare system.

#### **B. Response Options**

Response options for each item include the following:

- 1 = Almost Always
- 2 = Frequently
- 3 = As Often As Not
- 4 = Sometimes
- 5 = Almost Never
- \* "Do Not Know"

#### **C. Instructions for Respondents**

We are interested in learning about your perceptions of the mental health issues or behavioral problems experienced by your students' families. For each of the following statements, please fill in the ONE circle that best represents your answer.

#### **D. Instructions for Scale Administrators**

Surveys can be self-administered or administered to teachers/staff in person or online. Explain that the purpose of the survey is to learn more about their perceptions about their students, school, and 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 teachers/staff 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 personnel.

### **IV. Scoring Procedures**

An average of the response scores from the 4 items should be calculated and used as an indicator of perceived family history, with higher scores representing the perception by the school staff that students have more positive family histories.

## V. Psychometric Properties of the Scale

### A. Description of Sample

Participants used to explore the psychometric properties of the scale included 390 school staff members from various elementary schools (54.4%), middle/junior high school (17.4%) and high school (28.2%) around the state of Ohio. The majority of participants indicated at least part of their duties at the school included teaching (84.9%), with the remainder reporting non-teaching duties (e.g., support staff, administration). The amount of experience working at the school ranged from 1-10 (55.1%) or 11-20 (26.4%) to over 20 years (18.5%). Both female (72.1%) and males (21.9%) were represented, and almost all identified themselves as Caucasian (94.9%). The participants varied in age with 10.8% reporting they were under 30 years of age, 44.4% indicated they were 30-44, and 44.9% were 45 years or older. Data on these staff members were collected as part of a needs assessment within each school's improvement planning process. Some data were collected using an online instrument, whereas others were collected via paper/pencil survey. School administrators informed teachers and school staff of the survey and distributed the surveys in a meeting or through mailboxes or provided the staff with a link to the online survey. All completed paper/pencil surveys were returned to a specified location in the building or to a person who was identified as the lead. All versions of the survey were anonymous.

The final sample described above includes only those who answered all items, meaning that 346 staff members responded to one or more of the items with "Do Not Know." This included 43.8% of the staff members selected "Do Not Know" for the item "My students' families or caregivers have a history of mental health problems", 38.2% for the item "... have a history of problem behaviors", 35.5% for the item "...are suspected of abuse and/or neglect", and 32.1% for the item "...are involved in the child welfare system".

### B. Basic Descriptive Statistics and Relevant Group Differences

Sample	Mean	SD	Range	$\alpha$
Full Sample (N = 390)	3.83	.70	1.00-5.00	.87
Gender				
Males (n = 85)	3.85	.83	1.00-5.00	.92
Females (n = 281)	3.81	.74	1.25-5.00	.86
Age				
Less than 30 years (n = 42)	3.59	1.03	1.00-5.00	.95
30-44 years (n = 173)	3.85	.72	1.50-5.00	.86
45 years and above (n = 175)	3.87	.70	1.25-5.00	.85
Amount of Experience at the School				
1-10 years (n = 215)	3.73	.84	1.00-5.00	.90
11-20 years (n = 103)	3.99	.61	1.75-5.00	.79
More than 20 years (n = 72)	3.92	.58	2.25-5.00	.82
Role as Staff Member				
Teaching (n = 331)	3.83	.74	1.00-5.00	.87
Non-Teaching (e.g., support staff, administrators) (n = 59)	3.86	.81	1.25-5.00	.89
School Level				
Elementary (n = 212)	3.80	.80	1.00-5.00	.87
Middles School/Junior High (n = 68)	3.85	.67	1.25-5.00	.89
High School (n = 110)	3.88	.69	1.25-5.00	.87

*Notes. Group specific data omits staff who did not indicate their status. All group comparisons were non-significant ( $p < .05$ ), with the exception of amount of experience at the school. Effect sizes ( $\eta^2$ ) indicated that group membership differences accounted for 2.4% or less of the variance in the scores. Follow-up comparisons showed that school staff with 10 years or less experience at the school reported lower scores than staff reporting more than 20 years experience. Staff with 11-20 years experience did not differ for either of the other groups.*

### C. Maximum Value Percentages and Classification of Scores

Percentages		Classification of Scores		
Maximum Value	½ SD	Excelling	Emerging	Needs Improvement
76.6%	7.0%	> 84	84 - 70	<70

*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 staffs' 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 staffs' perceptions of students' family/caregiver histories relative to normed data.*

### D. Relationships between Perceived Family History Scale Score and Other Staff Perception Constructs

Construct <sup>a</sup>	r =
Student Academic Motivation	.301
Student School Connectedness	.175
Student Academic Press	.148
Student Internalizing Behaviors	.371
Student Psychological Well-Being	.550
Student Externalizing Behaviors	.563
Perceived Social Skills	.413
Perceived Student Safety	.425
Support for Students' Basic Needs	.510
Families and Caregivers' Support for of Learning	.404
Family Support for Prosocial Activities	.405
Services and Supports	.043
Community Supports for Positive Youth Development	.176
Learning Supports	.129
Student Physical Activity and Nutrition	.292

*Notes. <sup>a</sup> Average score on the respective subscale scores from the CAYCI surveys (Anderson-Butcher, Amorose, Iachini, & Ball, 2013). All relationship are significant ( $p < .05$ ), with the exception of Services and Supports which was non-significant ( $p > .05$ ).*

### E. Factorial Validity

A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted using robust maximum likelihood estimation procedures in LISREL 8.80 (Scientific Software International, Inc., Chicago). The CFA model specified that the 4 items loaded on a single latent Perceived Family History 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.

The overall fit of the model to the data was reasonably good based on commonly recommended cut off values for evaluating model fit (see Hu & Bentler, 1999), S-B  $\chi^2 = 7.58$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p = .023$ ; RMSEA = .085 (90% CI = .027-. 15), SRMR = .024; CFI = .99, TLI = .98. The table below presents the completely standardized factor loadings and uniquenesses for each item. Squared multiple correlations averaged .68.

Item	Loading	Uniqueness
My students' families or caregivers have a history of mental health problems.	.92	.15
My students' families or caregivers have a history of problem behaviors.	.93	.13
My students' families or caregivers are suspected of abuse and/or neglect.	.76	.42
My students' families or caregivers are involved in the child welfare system.	.63	.60

## **VII. Past and Future Scale Development**

An initial version of the Perceived Family History scale included 1 additional item: “My students' families or caregivers engage in anti-social behaviors (alcohol, crime, etc.)” Results from preliminary analyses indicated that this item did not fit well with the other scale items. Thus, the current recommendation is to use the 4-item version of the measure as described in this report. Future scale development work should involve testing the psychometric properties of the scale with a larger sample of non-teaching staff (e.g., school administrators, support staff). Further work also is needed to validate the Spanish version of the tool.

## **VII. Summary**

Overall, the results of the psychometric testing indicate initial support for the reliability and validity of the Perceived Family History scale. The use of this measure could provide valuable information about the families' social service needs within a school or district.

## **VIII. References**

- Anderson-Butcher, D., Amorose, A. J., Iachini, A., & Ball, A. (2013). Community and Youth Collaborative Initiative School Community Surveys. Columbus, OH: College of Social Work, The Ohio State University.
- Child Welfare Information Gateway (2013). Mandated reporting. Retrieved from <https://www.childwelfare.gov/responding/mandated.cfm>
- 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.

## **IX. Recommended Citation of Scale**

When using the 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 Initiative School Community Surveys: Teacher/School Staff Perceived Family History Scale. Columbus, OH: College of Social Work, The Ohio State University.

If this scale is used along with additional Community and Youth Collaborative Initiative School Community 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 Initiative School Community Surveys. Columbus, OH: College of Social Work, The Ohio State University.