



Parent-Child Relationship Program: Parent-Child Interaction Scales (An Overview)*

In the Healthy Babies Healthy Children (HBHC) and Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) programs in Ontario, determination of the parent-child relationship strengths and areas for concern are identified through completion of the NCAST Parent-Child Interaction Feeding and Teaching Scales.¹ All public health nurses employed to deliver services to families enrolled in either the HBHC or NFP programs are required to be competent and reliable in their administration of these scales. The purpose of this document is to provide a brief overview describing components of the Parent-Child Interaction Scales.

What are the NCAST Parent-Child Interaction Scales?²

- Valid and reliable assessments for measuring parent-child interaction³
- A set of observable behaviours that describe the quality of parent (or caregiver)-child interactions in either a feeding or teaching situation
- Comprehensive clinical tools that reveal the infant or young child's changing needs as well as the parent's ability to adapt to those changes

*NOTE

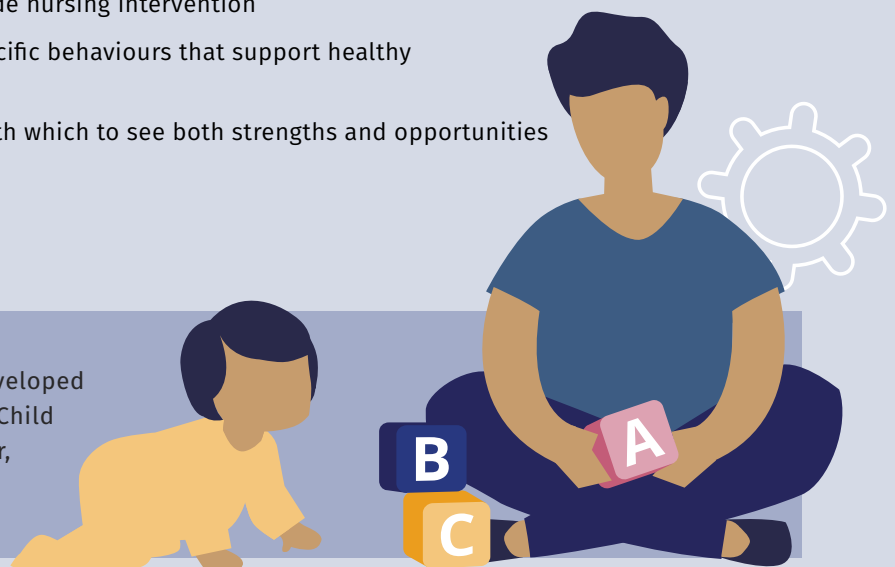
This document updates and replaces the HBHC resource document titled: *NCAST Parent-Child Assessment: Feeding/Teaching Scale*

How do the Parent-Child Interaction Scales Benefit Caregiver/Parent-Child Interactions?²

- Assessment information informs areas to guide nursing intervention
- Helps both the nurse and parent identify specific behaviours that support healthy parent-child relationships
- Gives the nurse and the parent a new lens with which to see both strengths and opportunities for growth in the parent-child relationship



The Parent-Child Interaction Scales were developed and evaluated by researchers at the Parent-Child Relationship Programs at the Barnard Center, University of Washington.



Characteristics of the Parent-Child Interaction Feeding and Teaching Scales

Characteristics	Feeding Scale	Teaching Scale
Use with children from...	Birth to 12 months	Birth to 36 months
Description	Feeding is a routine activity for both the parent and the child. Observing this interactive event provides insight into caregiving patterns that extend throughout the parent-child relationship.	The way a parent teaches and the amount of time they devote to providing this kind of stimulation are predictive of the child's later intellectual growth.
Number of observable behaviours that describe parent-child communication and interaction during either a feeding or teaching task	76	73

Parent-Child Interaction Scales: Sub-scales

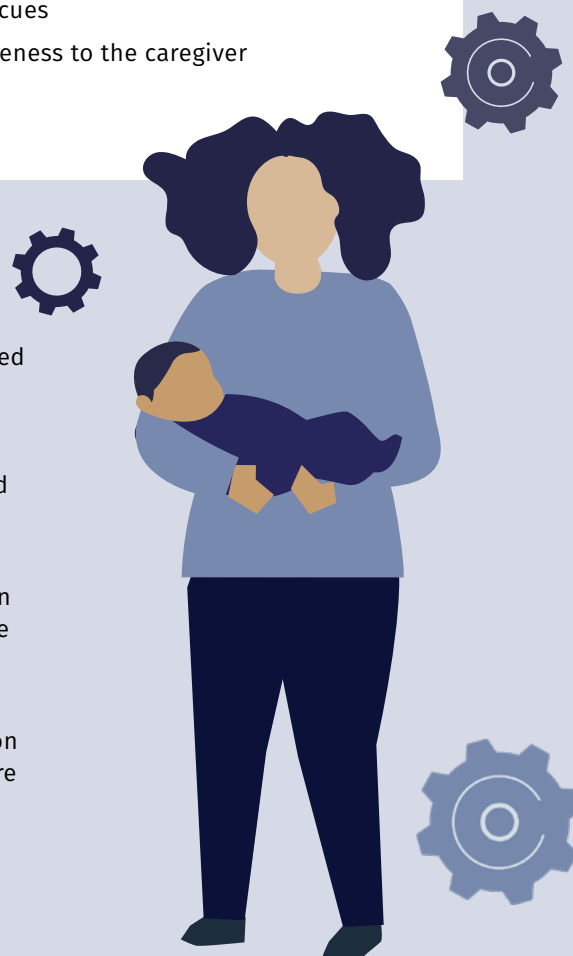
The Parent-Child Interaction Feeding and Teaching Scales are both organized into six sub-scales, with four describing the parent's behaviours and two describing the child's behaviours.

Parent/Caregiver Behaviour Sub-Scales	Child Behaviour Sub-Scales
Caregiver's sensitivity to cues Caregiver's response to distress Caregiver's social-emotional growth fostering Caregiver's cognitive growth fostering	Child's clarity of cues Child's responsiveness to the caregiver

Parent-Child Interaction Scales: Contingency Score

Following the completion of either scale, an overall contingency score is provided for the observed interaction.

- Contingency is the driving force behind positive caregiving behaviours and adaptive parent-child interactions, it is the "dance" between the parent and the child.
- In order for synchronous parent-child interactions to occur, which allows the infant/child to receive the necessary quantity and quality of stimulation needed for optimum development, both the parent and the child must have a sufficient repertoire of behaviours so that interlocking sequences are possible.
- Parents (or caregivers) who understand this reciprocity tend to score high on the items in this assessment and their children are likely to do well in future measurements of cognitive skills and language development.





Evidence-Informed Practice

Although the Parent-Child Interaction Scales were developed and tested with samples of families in the United States, evidence has been established to confirm that the NCAST Database can be reliably used for assessing parent-child interactions in normative and high-risk Canadian families.³

¹Ministry of Children and Youth Services (2012). Healthy Babies Healthy Children Guidance Document. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario.

²Parent-Child Relationship Programs (2022). Parent-Child Interaction (PCI) Feeding and Teaching Scales. Accessed online: <https://www.pcrprograms.org/parent-child-interaction-pci-feeding-teaching-scales/>

³Letourneau, N.L., Tryphonopoulos, P.D., Novick, J., Hart, J.M., Giesbrecht, G., & Oxford, M.L. (2018). Nursing Child Assessment Satellite Training Parent-Child Interaction Scales: Comparing American and Canadian normative and high-risk samples. *Journal of Pediatric Nursing*, 40, 47-57.

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