



At-a-Glance: Measures of Father-Child Relationship Quality for Fatherhood Programs

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Research with fathers enrolled in fatherhood programs is often limited to measuring the amount of child involvement, since there are few existing quality measures that have been rigorously tested for use with low-income, nonresident fathers who are primarily unmarried.

In the present study, we examined two short measures assessing the quality of father-child relationships to determine what measures are most appropriate for use in fatherhood programs. The first scale, the short version of The Child-Parent Relationship Scale (CPRS-SF) (Driscoll & Pianata, 2011) is a self-report measure that assesses parents' perceptions of their relationship with their child (1992). The second scale, Stattin and Kerr's (2000) Parent-Child Relationship Scale (PCRS), was modified to obtain parents' perceptions of their relationships with their children. Each measure contains two constructs: items related to relationship closeness and items related to relationship conflict. To date, neither scale has been tested with low-income, nonresident fathers who are primarily unmarried.

For this measurement validation process we tested both convergent and predictive validity of the quality

measures. Both concepts, convergent and predictive validity, are related to the reliability of measurement tools. The measure of closeness in the CPRS-SF shows excellent reliability as well as convergent and predictive validity. Both measures of conflict in the CPRS-SF and PCRS showed good reliability and validity (particularly with older children). However, these measures appeared to function differently potentially due to the difference in the focus of each scale.

Implications for Programs and Researchers

The CPRS-SF measure of closeness is highly recommended for use with non-resident fathers with children between 2 and 18 years of age.

The CPRS-SF measure of conflict is recommended if the focus of evaluation is on the fatherhood role (e.g., satisfaction with parenting, parenting self-efficacy) or child behavior problems, particularly among older children.

The PCRS measure of conflict is recommended if the focus of evaluation is on father-child contact.