

PARENTING SCALE

At one time or another, all children misbehave or do things that could be harmful, that are “wrong”, or that parents don’t like. Examples include: hitting someone, whining, throwing food, forgetting homework, not picking up toys, lying, having a tantrum, refusing to go to bed, wanting a cookie before dinner, running into the street, arguing back, coming home late.

Parents have many different ways or styles of dealing with these types of problems. Below are items that describe some styles of parenting. For each item, circle the number that best describes your style of parenting during the past 2 months with your child.

Sample Item

At meal time...

I let my child decide how much to eat.

1 **2** 3 4 5 6 7

I decide how much my child eats.

1. When my child misbehaves...

I do something right away.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I do something about it later.

2. Before I do something about a problem...

I give my child several reminders or warnings.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I use only one reminder or warning.

3. When I'm upset or under stress...

I am picky and on my child's back.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I am no more picky than usual.

4. When I tell my child not to do something...

I say very little.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I say a lot.

5. When my child pesters me...

I can ignore the pestering.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I can't ignore the pestering.

6. When my child misbehaves...

I usually get into a long argument with my child.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I don't get into an argument.

7. I threaten to do things that...

I am sure I can carry out.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I know I won't actually do.

Note. From “The Parenting Scale: A Measure of Dysfunctional Parenting in Discipline Situations,” by D.S. Arnold, S.G. O’Leary, L.S. Wolff and M.M. Acker, 1993, *Psychological Assessment*, 5, p. 140. Copyright 1993 by the American Psychological Association, Inc. Adapted with permission.

8. I am the kind of parent that...
 sets limits on what my child is allowed to do. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 lets my child do whatever he or she wants.
9. When my child misbehaves...
 I give my child a long lecture. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 I keep my talks short and to the point.
10. When my child misbehaves...
 I raise my voice or yell. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 I speak to my child calmly.
11. If saying no doesn't work right away...
 I take some other kind of action. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 I keep talking and trying to get through to my child.
12. When I want my child to stop doing something...
 I firmly tell my child to stop. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 I coax or beg my child to stop.
13. When my child is out of my sight...
 I often don't know what my child is doing. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 I always have a good idea of what my child is doing.
14. After there's been a problem with my child...
 I often hold a grudge. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 things get back to normal quickly.
15. When we're not at home...
 I handle my child the way I do at home. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 I let my child get away with a lot more.
16. When my child does something I don't like...
 I do something about it every time it happens. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 I often let it go.
17. When there's a problem with my child...
 things build up and I do things I don't mean to do. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 things don't get out of hand.
18. When my child misbehaves, I spank, slap, grab, or hit my child...
 never or rarely. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 most of the time.

19. When my child doesn't do what I ask...

I often let it go or end up doing it myself. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 I take some other action.

20. When I give a fair threat or warning...

I often don't carry it out. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 I always do what I said.

21. If saying "No" doesn't work...

I take some other kind of action. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 I offer my child something nice so he/she will behave.

22. When my child misbehaves...

I handle it without getting upset. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 I get so frustrated or angry that my child can see I'm upset.

23. When my child misbehaves...

I make my child tell me why he/she did it. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 I say "No" or take some other action.

24. If my child misbehaves and then acts sorry...

I handle the problem like I usually would. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 I let it go that time.

25. When my child misbehaves...

I rarely use bad language or curse. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 I almost always use bad language.

26. When I say my child can't do something...

I let my child do it anyway. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 I stick to what I said.

27. When I have to handle a problem...

I tell my child I am sorry about it. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 I don't say I'm sorry.

28. When my child does something I don't like, I insult my child, say mean things, or call my child names...

never or rarely. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 most of the time.

29. If my child talks back or complains when I handle a problem...

I ignore the complaining and stick to what I said. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 I give my child a talk about not complaining.

30. If my child gets upset when I say "No"...

I back down and give in to my child. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 I stick to what I said.

SCORING KEY FOR THE PARENTING SCALE

All 30 items are scored on a 7 point scale, with low scores indicating good parenting and high scores indicating dysfunctional parenting. There are three factors on the Parenting Scale: Laxness (LX), Over-reactivity (OR), and Hostility (HS). There are several items that are not on a factor (NF). Items are listed below by factor and it is noted whether the “ideal” anchor is on the left (L) or the right-hand (R) side. If the “ideal” anchor is on the left, the left anchor is scored 1. If the “ideal” anchor is on the right, scoring is reversed and the right anchor is scored 1 rather than 7. The total score is the sum of all items divided by 30. To achieve a factor score, sum the items in that factor and divide by the number of items in that factor.

LX (Laxness)

12-L

16-L

19-R

21-L

30-R

LX SUM

Factor Score

(Sum ÷ 5)

OR (Over-reactivity)

3-R

6-R

10-R

14-R

17-R

OR SUM

Factor Score

(Sum ÷ 5)

HS (Hostility)

18-L

25-L

28-L

HS SUM

Factor Score

(Sum ÷ 3)

NF (No Factor)

1-L

2-R

4-L

5-L

7-L

8-L

9-R

11-L

13-R

15-L

20-R

22-L

23-R

24-L

26-R

27-R

29-L

NF SUM

TOTAL (LX + OR + HS + NF)

TOTAL SCALE SCORE (Total ÷ 30)