

# Parent Practice Quality

## PROTOTYPICAL PROFILES

### Exemplary

Parents characterized by *exemplary parenting quality* were marked by the highest possible scores on all four of the cluster-input variables, indicating that they “always” (i.e., “every home visit”) demonstrated warmth, responsiveness, scaffolding, and gaining the child’s attention. These parents are very skilled at providing their child with the kinds of developmentally-appropriate experiences that promote secure attachment styles (e.g., feelings of safety), exploratory behavior (e.g., curiosity), and SEL skill growth (e.g., adaptive basic regulation skills). The proportion of parents in this skill profile changed from 0% to 54% during the PC+ program.

### Moderate

Parents characterized by moderate-quality parenting practices scored relatively-highly on warmth and scaffolding but slightly lower on responsiveness and gaining the child’s attention. This pattern suggests parents who are loving and present for their child but may not have yet developed the skills necessary to provide the most timely and specific feedback related to the child’s current needs (e.g., the child has trouble retrieving a toy and begins to cry, and rather than helping to make the toy more accessible the parent lifts and hugs the child while saying “you poor baby, everything’s ok”). The proportion of parents in this skill profile changed from 56% to 30% during the PC+ program.

### Low

Children characterized by *low SEL Skill* were characterized by relatively-low scores on all three of the cluster-input variables, indicating that they “rarely” demonstrated the basic regulation and belief skills, and almost “never” demonstrated the sustained attention skills, necessary to cope with and learn from most average-expectable social environments. This maladaptive pattern of child SEL skills suggests that these children are in desperate need of a high-quality socialization environment and have substantial room for growth in developing the kinds of SEL skills associated with healthy child development. The proportion of children in the this skill profile changed from 7% to 0% during the PC+ program.

### High

Parents characterized by *high-quality* parenting practices were marked by very-high scores on three out of the four cluster-input variables, indicating that they are quite skilled at providing their child with the kinds of developmentally-appropriate experiences that promote secure attachment styles, exploratory behavior, and SEL skill growth. The proportion of parents in this skill profile changed from 25% to 13% during the PC+ program.

### Moderate-Low

Parents characterized by moderate-low quality parenting practices were marked by moderate (i.e., slightly more than half of the home visits) scores on three out of the four cluster-input variables, with gaining the child’s attention occurring during less than half of the home visits. This less-than-optimal pattern of parenting practice suggests that these parents have substantial room for growth in developing the kinds of parenting skills likely to promote healthy child development. The proportion of parents in this skill profile changed from 15% to 3% during the PC+ program.

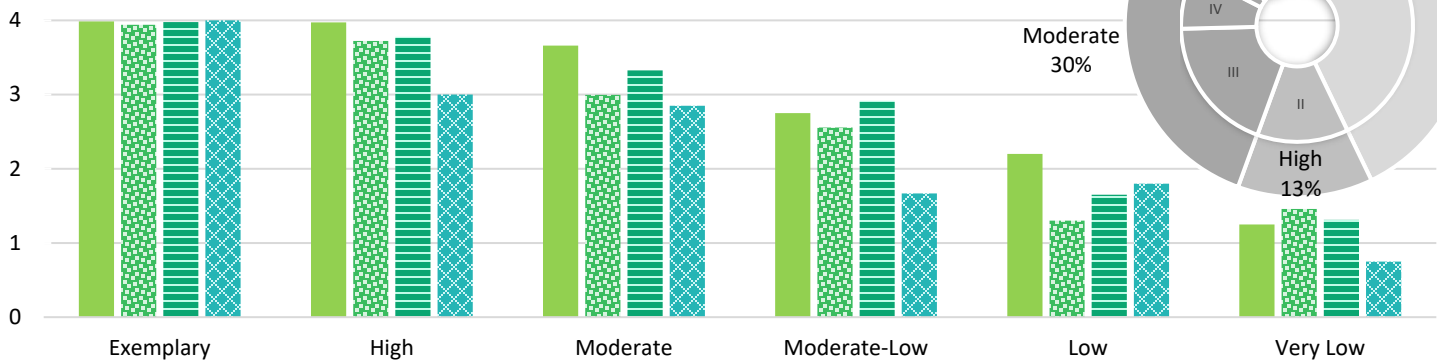
### Very Low

Parents characterized by very low quality parenting practices were marked by very low scores on all four of the cluster-input variables, indicating that they “rarely” (i.e., “less than half of the home visits”) demonstrated warmth, responsiveness, and scaffolding and almost never gained the child’s attention. This maladaptive pattern of parenting practice indicates that these parents are in need of substantial help in developing the kinds of parenting skills likely to promote healthy child development. The proportion of parents in the very low skill profile changed from 4% to 0% during the PC+ program.

The figure below presents standardized parenting quality skill profiles for parents in the PC+ program. Note that there are no children in the low and very low profiles at the end of the PC+ program. The exemplary profile emerged at the second data point. Most parents grew in a stepwise fashion from their baseline profile to the adjacent successive higher profiles.

### PC+ Parenting Quality Practice Profiles

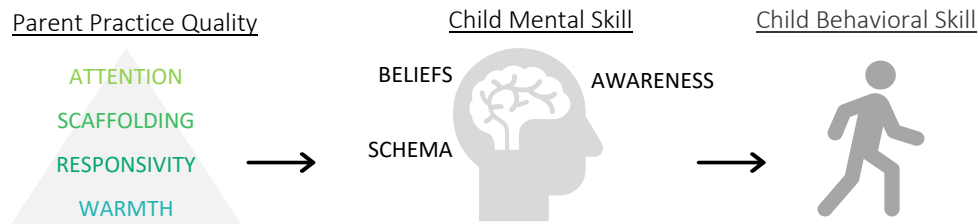
■ Warmth ■ Responsivity ■ Scaffolding ■ Attention



# Parent Practice Quality

## EXPLANATION OF MEASURES

QTurn’s Multilevel Person-in-Context~neuroperson (MPCn) model (Smith, Peck, & McNeil, 2019) was used to select PACT items corresponding to four different kinds of parenting practices that promote children’s SEL skill growth. As described below in more detail, we use the terms Warmth, Responsivity, Scaffolding, and Attention because they reflect the core aspects of parenting practice necessary for calibrating socialization environments to the current skill levels of participating children. Although the basic idea is that parenting practices that combine moderate difficulty, positive affect, adult modeling, and co-participation in the learning task promote child engagement in the learning process, hence SEL skill development and integration. The following figure shows how aspects of parenting quality and child SEL skills interact dynamically within the integrated MPCn system.



The term warmth, as an aspect of parenting quality, refers to the perceived intent of caregiver behavior, as experienced by the child. The perceived intent of caregivers can be described in terms of “friendliness, helpfulness, sincerity, trustworthiness and morality” (Fiske et al., 2007, p. 77). When the perceived intent of a caregiver is experienced by the child as generally positive (e.g., sincere, friendly, and helpful), it puts the child at emotional ease (e.g., actively, lovingly engaged or resting). As defined by the available PACT items, caregiver warmth is inferred (by both children and external observers) from parenting behaviors such as tone of voice, body language, positive verbal engagement, and access to emotional comfort in moments of difficulty. Caregiver warmth puts children’s emotions at ease, helping them form secure attachment schemas that provide the foundation for higher levels engagement with skill learning opportunities. If caregiver warmth helps children feel secure, caregiver responsiveness and scaffolding more fully promote children’s SEL skill growth.

The term responsiveness – sometimes termed maternal sensitivity or contingent responding – refers to a caregiver’s in-the-moment responsiveness to the child (e.g., being available in the moment of need) which promotes “children’s social-emotional, cognitive, and language outcomes” (Lanrdy et al., 2006, p. 627). As defined by the available PACT items, caregiver responsiveness is inferred from parenting behaviors such as listening, smiling, and conversing.

The term scaffolding refers to “processes by which a more expert individual assists a child by performing a part of the task for the child or otherwise directing or supporting the child’s actions throughout the course of task activity” (Mascolo, 2005, p. 185). As defined by the available PACT items, caregiver scaffolding is inferred from parenting behaviors such as verbalizing expectations, giving directions, and providing verbal encouragement.

The term attention, as an aspect of parenting quality, refers to caregiver practices that help children focus and hold their attention on activities while experiencing warmth, responsiveness, and scaffolding practices in the learning environment. As defined by the available PACT items, caregiver attention is inferred from their ability to gain the child’s attention.

The following table provides descriptions of the parent behaviors used to measure parenting quality in the NTE PC+ impact evaluation.

### Parent Practice Quality

#### Attention

Parent’s directions gain the child’s attention

#### Scaffolding

Parent gives child directions and encourages child to follow them

Parent clearly verbalizes expectations to the child

Parent encourages child to perform activities that the child can do independently

Parent is persistent and consistent in enforcing directions

Parent is firm with child

Parent provides a verbal rationale for obedience

#### Responsivity

Parent explains rationale for directions/expectations to the child

Parent tries to converse with child

Parent listens to child’s reaction to a directive and reacts appropriately

Parent smiles, nods, or shows approval in some way when child acts positively

#### Warmth

Parent shows warmth for child

Parent verbalizes affection toward the child

Parent verbalizes approval of the child

Parent comforts Child