

# Parental Responsiveness Rating Scale (PaRRiS): Scoring Manual

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Unpublished Manuscript

December 2019

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**Suggested citation:** Levickis, P. (2019) Parental Responsiveness Rating Scale (PaRRiS): Scoring Manual [unpublished manuscript]. Melbourne: The University of Melbourne, Melbourne Graduate School of Education, REEdCh Centre.

## Background

Preliminary work was conducted by Levickis and colleagues<sup>1</sup> to develop an observational rating scale of parent-child interaction, specifically a measure of parental responsiveness. The Parental Responsiveness Rating Scale (PaRRiS) was adapted from Marfo's<sup>2</sup> global rating scale of responsiveness. In this previous work, video clips of mother-toddler dyads during free-play were blindly rated on the PaRRiS tool at age 2 years and language outcomes were assessed using a standardised measure at age 3 and 4 years. PaRRiS ratings were shown to strongly predict expressive, receptive and total language scores at ages 3 and 4 years. A high level of inter-rater reliability was achieved on the PaRRiS tool. Findings showed that it is feasible to train staff to use PaRRiS efficiently and reliably in a large community-based sample of mother-child dyads.<sup>3</sup> Levickis et al.<sup>4</sup> then tested the feasibility of training community child health nurses to use PaRRiS at child age 24-30 months to reliably measure the quality of parent-child interactions in practice.

**Responsiveness** is defined as parenting that is contingent, developmentally appropriate and prompt in response to a child's initiations.<sup>5</sup> Responsiveness that is associated with child language development includes adult behaviours that occur immediately after a child's behaviour (action or vocalisation/verbalisation) and are related to the child's focus of attention. For example, a child is pretending to cook on a toy stove, the parent asks, 'what are you cooking?'

## Responsiveness Rating Definitions

**1 = very low** Parent rarely responds in a developmentally appropriate way either verbally or non-verbally to any of Child's gestures or verbalisations AND Parent attempts to redirect Child's behaviour, rather than following Child's interest

*Example of very low rating:* Throughout the play sessions, the parent misses opportunities to respond in a contingent and appropriate way to child's verbalisations (e.g., child is playing with toy horse and says 'horse', but parent does not respond or might nod or say 'uh-huh'). The parent spends all/almost all of the play session redirecting the child, for example, the parent is reading a book to the child and the child wanders over and starts playing with a puzzle, the parent attempts to draw the child's attention away from the puzzle and back to the book. *It is important to note that if it is appropriate for a parent to redirect a child, for example, due to safety concerns, this would not be counted as redirecting.*

**2 = low** Parent responds occasionally in a developmentally appropriate way either verbally or non-verbally to Child's gestures or verbalisations AND/OR Parent spends more time attempting to redirect Child's behaviour than following Child's interest

*Example of low rating:* Parent spends more time during the play session attempting to redirect the child's attention rather than following the child's interest. The parent labels (e.g., child picks up doll's dummy and parent says, 'dummy') a few times in response to the child's behaviour during the session, but the parent also misses many opportunities to respond to the child's verbalisations. As the parent uses labels a few times (contingent responsive behaviours) but also misses opportunities to provide linguistic input and is redirecting more than following the child's interest, a rating of 2 is assigned rather than a 3.

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<sup>1</sup> Hudson S, Levickis P, Down K, Nicholls R & Wake M. Maternal responsiveness predicts child language at ages 3 and 4 in a community-based sample of slow-to-talk toddlers. *International Journal of Language & Communication Disorders*. 2015;50: 136–142

<sup>2</sup> Marfo K., Correlates of maternal directiveness with children who are developmentally delayed. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*. 1992;62(2), 219–233.

<sup>3</sup> Down et al 2014 Measuring maternal responsiveness in a community-based sample of slow-to-talk toddlers. *Child Care Health and Development*. 2015;41:329–333.

<sup>4</sup> Levickis, P., McKean, C., Walls, E., & Law, J. (2019). Training community health nurses to measure parent-child interaction: a mixed-methods study. *The European Journal of Public Health*.

<sup>5</sup> Bornstein MH, Tamis-LeMonda CS. Maternal responsiveness and cognitive development in children. *New Directions in Child & Adolescent Development*. 1989;43:49-61.

**3 = moderate** Parent spends some time responding in a developmentally appropriate way either verbally or non-verbally to Child's gestures or verbalisations, and some time ignoring them AND/OR Parent spends equal time following Child's interest and redirecting Child's behaviour

Example of moderate rating: Mum responds some of the time in a contingent and developmentally appropriate way, e.g., with labels, but misses opportunities to imitate or expand child's vocalisations. Parent follows the child's interest about half the time, while redirecting half the time.

**4 = high** Parent often responds in a developmentally appropriate way either verbally or non-verbally to Child's gestures or verbalisations AND/OR Parent spends more time following Child's interest than redirecting Child's behaviour

Example of high rating: Parent responds in a contingent and developmentally appropriate way to child's behaviours, e.g., child says 'horsey', parent says 'a horsey, what noise does a horsey make?' The parent asks developmentally appropriate questions in response to the child's focus of attention and responds to child's verbalisations. The parent does attempt to redirect the child's attention from one activity to another but spends more time following the child's interest than redirecting their behaviour.

**5 = very high** Parent frequently responds in a developmentally appropriate way either verbally or non-verbally to Child's gestures or verbalisations AND Parent rarely attempts to redirect Child's focus from the current activity, but follows Child's interests

Example of very high rating: Throughout the play session, the parent follows the child's interest (e.g., the parent is reading a book to the child, the child moves away to start doing a puzzle, so rather than try to encourage the child to come back to the book, the parent focuses on what the child is now doing). The parent frequently and consistently responds in a contingent way to the child's vocalisations (e.g., child is playing with a toy horse and says 'horse', the parent imitates and says 'horse' or expands and says 'it's a big, brown horse').

*Note: Specification of extent of parental directiveness: 'redirecting the child's behaviour' refers to redirecting the child's attention away from their current play and interests at that point in time.*

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### **PaRRiS Scoring**

Please rate the observed parent-child dyad based on the ratings of parental responsiveness below (circle one only):

Very low	Low	Moderate	High	Very high
1	2	3	4	5

Additional comments/notes about observation:

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