



Parental expectations of their children’s development: A Validation Study

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INTRODUCTION

- Parental expectations of their children’s development, based on their knowldege of child development, are linked with later child outcomes (Baroody & Dobbs-Oates, 2011; Savage & Gauvin, 1998).
- Parents who are aware of their children’s current capacities and abilities could provide activities within their child’s zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978).

OBJECTIVE

- This study aims to describe the conception and validation of a questionnaire designed to capture parental expectations of their children.

METHODS

Sample

- This study took place within the context of a larger study on young children’s living environments.
- The participants were 363 parents (204 mothers, 159 fathers) of 4 and 5 years-old children.

Procedures

- Recruitment from 2009 to 2010 in Montreal & Montérégie (QC, Canada)
- Data collection took place when children were 4 and 5 years-old children:
 - Trained observers evaluated children’s development;
 - Parents completed a questionnaire.

Measures

Table 1. Measures

Variable	Instrument
Parental expectations of child development	Parental expectations of their children’s development questionnaire (PECD) (Tremblay, Bigras & Blain-Brière, 2008). <ul style="list-style-type: none">• An original questionnaire containing 51 items developed in French• Capture parental knowledge about their children’s abilities to complete tasks related to child development.• Higher score = overestimation of child’s abilities
	Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence- Third edition (WPPSI-III) (Wechsler, 2002). <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Capture the general cognitive functioning.• Containing 4 subscales: Verbal IQ (VQI), Performance IQ (PQI), General language composite (GLC), Full Scale IQ (EGQI).• Higher score = better cognitive functioning

Table 2. Principal Components Analysis With Varimax Rotation for the PECD Items (N= 363)

Items	Loadings
Factor 1 : Sociocognitive (α = .90)	
6. to describe the difference or the similarity between two objects?	.642
10. to ask for the definition of a word?	.634
18. to memorize 12-syllable sentences and repeat them?	.609
31. to count to 5 on their own?	.601
32. to distinguish between ‘acceptable’ and ‘inacceptable’ behaviours?	.607
40. to name a circle or a square when looking at shapes?	.609
37. to distinguish between thick and thin?	.586
44. to express a preference for a particular friend?	.591
46. to classify geometric shapes?	.586
5. to memorize 8-syllable sentences and repeat them?	.584
13. to understand a clock’s function? (e.g., to tell time)	.583
15. to retain and repeat sequences of 4 numbers (e.g., 5, 8, 2, 7) ?	.579
7. to take pleasure in helping others?	.528
16. to answer questions beginning with when?	.531
36. to correctly answer the question “where should we go if we want to see animals like tigers?	.568
43. to name the word “wrist” when shown that body part?	.526
51. to decode common signs, such as a stop sign, toilets, or police?	.448
14. to hold a pencil like an adult, with fingers near the tip?	.428
11. to correctly use the terms “tomorrow” and “yesterday” when speaking?	.412
Factor 2 : Motor (α = .82)	
29. to unbutton the buttons of clothes on his or her back?	.674
20. to catch a tennis ball in one hand?	.661
33. to unzip a zipper on his or her back?	.596
30. to dry off after the bath using a towel without any help?	.564
35. to clean his or her nails, with your help for the hand he uses most ?	.559
19. to jump backwards with two feet touching 4 times in a row?	.541
34. to use a knife correctly to cut his or her food?	.488
4. to stand on one foot for 10 seconds without help?	.483
12. to make a bow with his or her shoelaces?	.447
38. to clean his or her shoes when they are dirty?	.441
17. to brush his or her teeth without help?	.427
2. to throw a tennis ball 5 metres?	.420
39. to take a bath and wash herself without help?	.404
Factor 3 : Literacy and Numeracy (α = .83)	
48. to print his first and last name?	.634
22. to print 5 lower and 5 upper case letters in order?	.623
45. to name any letter of the alphabet when shown?	.618
23. to recite the entire alphabet?	.614
41. to count to 40?	.612
26. to say the day, month and year of his or her birthday?	.606
42. to write his or her address correctly?	.605
25. to correctly answer the question “what’s your telephone number?”	.583
27. to draw a complete person with shoulders, a neck, and hands?	.439

Table 3. Correlations of PECD with WPPSI-III subscales (VQI, PQI, EGQI, GLC) at 4 and 5-years-old.

	VQI	PQI	EGQI	GLC
4 years-old: Mother rating (N = 237)				
Factor 1 : Socio-cognitive	.47**	.29**	.47**	.38**
Factor 2 : Motor	.02	-.08	-.02	-.07
Factor 3 : Literacy and Numeracy	.30**	.28**	.36**	.25**
4 years-old Father rating (N = 192)				
Factor 1 : Socio-cognitive	.53**	.31**	.52**	.44**
Factor 2 : Motor	.10	.087	.14	.04
Factor 3 : Literacy and Numeracy	.24**	.32**	.36**	.21**
5 years-old Mother rating (N = 204)				
Factor 1 : Socio-cognitive	.56**	.34**	.54**	.38**
Factor 2 : Motor	.17*	.04	.11	.01*
Factor 3 : Literacy and Numeracy	.32**	.32**	.39**	.19**
5 years-old Father rating (N = 162)				
Factor 1 : Socio-cognitive	.51**	.39**	.55**	.44
Factor 2 : Motor	-.02	.04	.02	-.07
Factor 3 : Literacy and Numeracy	.26**	.33**	.39**	.30**

p* < .05, *p* <.01

RESULTS

- Exploratory factor analysis identified **three factors** (table 2) :
 - factor 1: expectations about socio-cognitive development (19 items);
 - factor 2: expectations about motor development (13 items);
 - factor 3: expectations about literacy and numeracy development (9 items).
- **Internal consistency** analysis showed respectable Cronbach’s alphas (table 2).
- High level of **test-retest validity** between the four and five years-old measures:
 - factor 1 *r*(363) = .672, *p* < .01;
 - factor 2 *r*(363) = .572, *p* < .01;
 - factor 3 *r*(363) = .659, *p* < .01.
- Moderate (factor 1 and 3) to low (factor 2) **interrater agreement** between parents:
 - factor 1, *r*(363) = .415, *p* < .01;
 - factor 2, *r*(363) = .301, *p* < .05;
 - factor 3 : *r*(363) = .520, *p* < .01.
- **Concurrent validity** between the PECD factors and the WPPSI-III subscales (table 3).
 - When parents had higher expectations of their children socio-cognitive or numeracy-literacy development, children had higher scores on the WPPSI-III scales.

CONCLUSION

- This study identified 3 factors within the PECD and revealed acceptable validity and reliability.
- Concurrent validity analysis suggests that parents who have higher expectations about their child’s development could set tasks that are a little bit harder for children to perform.
 - Parents could scaffold the child’s learning (Bruner, 1978) by offering him activities situated within his proximal zone of development (Vygotsky, 1978).
- These results could be helpful to support intervention and research related to parental expectations and their children’s later development.

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