

Conflict Tactics Scales

Study Year 28

Fast Track Project Technical Report

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Citation

Instrument

Strassberg, Z., Dodge, K.A., Bates, J.E., & Pettit, G.S. (1992). The longitudinal relation between parental conflict strategies and children's sociometric standing in kindergarten. *Merrill Palmer Quarterly*, 38, 477-493.

Strassberg, Z., Dodge, K.A., Pettit, G.S., & Bates, J.E. (1994). Spanking in the home and children's subsequent aggression toward kindergarten peers. *Development and Psychopathology*, 6, 445-461.

Straus, M. (1979). Measuring intrafamily conflict and violence: The Conflict Tactics Scales. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 41, 75-88.

Report

McCabe, G. and Godwin, J. (2022). Conflict Tactics Scales (Fast Track Project Technical Report). Available from the Fast Track Project website: <http://www.fasttrackproject.org>

Measure Description

The original Conflict Tactics Scales measure consists of 80 items developed by Straus (1979) to explore intrafamily conflict and violence, focusing particularly on the adults in the family. The first 20 items are administered to the respondent about his/her relationship with the child. The measure assesses how the parent reacts in a conflict with the child, such as trying to discuss an issue calmly, yelling at or insulting the child, stomping out of the room or house, threatening to spank the child, and hitting or trying to hit the child. The items gradually become more coercive and aggressive as they progress. The items are rated on a seven-point scale, ranging from 0=never to 6=almost every day. The second 20 items capture the respondent's report of his/her partner's interaction with the child. The last 40 questions of the original measure address the interactions between the respondent and the respondent's partner using the same questions. If the respondent did not have a partner in the last year, only the first 20 items are given.

In year 28, Fast Track participants who reported actively parenting a child completed the 20 items capturing the respondent's own relationship with his/her child.

Criteria for Selecting the Child whom the Respondent Reports

Since Fast Track participants have various numbers and types of children, a criterion was used to select one specific child whom the respondent reports. The child was selected based on the biological/non-biological status, child's age, and the amount of time the child lived with the participant. When possible, the oldest biological child under the age of 18 with whom the respondent lived 50% or more of the year was selected. If the respondent did not have a child that met this criterion, the oldest biological child under the age of 18 with whom the respondent lived 20-40% of the year was selected. If the respondent did not have a child that met either criterion, the oldest biological child under the age of 18 with whom the respondent lived less than 20% of the year was selected. If the respondent did not have a child that met any of these criteria, the oldest non-biological child under the age of 18 was selected.

<u>Unscored Dataset Name</u>	c28ec
<u>Score Data Name</u>	CTO28

Report Sample

This report provides descriptive statistics for the cohort 1 normative sample (original $n=387$). In addition, this report compares the means and frequencies for two additional samples: the high-risk control sample from cohort 1 ($n=155$) and the non-high-risk normative sample from cohort 1 ($n=308$). The non-high-risk normative sample excludes the high-risk normative participants who are also a part of the high-risk control sample ($n=79$). In year 28, 288 cohort 1 normative participants, 104 high-risk-control cohort 1 participants and 234 non-high-risk normative participants completed at least part of the survey. In year 28, the Control Tactics measure was completed only by respondents who reported actively parenting at least one child including 190 normative parents, 69 high-risk control parents, and 150 non-high-risk normative parents.

Scaling

The respondent's interactions with his/her child can be divided into five domains: verbal discussion ($n = 4$; items 1-3), verbal aggression ($n = 6$, items 5, 6, 10, 13, 16, 19), hostile-indirect withdrawal ($n = 4$, items 7-9, 11), physical aggression ($n = 4$, items 12, 17, 18, 20), and spanking ($n = 2$, items 14-15). The items are scored on a seven-point scale from 0 (never) to 6 (almost every day), with higher scores indicating more coercive and aggressive behavior.

c28ec01	CT: Tried to discuss an issue calmly.
c28ec02	CT: Did discuss an issue calmly.
c28ec03	CT: Got information to back up your side of things.
c28ec04	CT: Brought in or tried to bring in someone to help settle things.
c28ec05	CT: Argued angrily, but didn't yell.
c28ec06	CT: Yelled, insulted or swore at your child.
c28ec07	CT: Sulked or refused to talk about it.
c28ec08	CT: Stomped out of the room or house.
c28ec09	CT: Threw, smashed, hit, or kicked something.
c28ec10	CT: Threatened to throw something at your child.
c28ec11	CT: Threw something at your child.
c28ec12	CT: Pushed, grabbed, or shoved your child.
c28ec13	CT: Threatened to spank your child.
c28ec14	CT: Spanked your child.
c28ec15	CT: Spanked your child with something.
c28ec16	CT: Threatened to hit your child.
c28ec17	CT: Hit or tried to hit your child.
c28ec18	CT: Hit or tried to hit your child with something.
c28ec19	CT: Threatened to beat up your child.
c28ec20	CT: Had a physical altercation with your child.

Five sub-scales were also created by averaging the scores across the items within each of the 5 domains (cto28dis, cto28hos, cto28phy, cto28spk, cto28vag).

Scales	Items	Description
CTO28dis	c28ec01-04	Conflict Tactics: Verbal Discussion
CTO28hos	c28ec07, 08, 09, 11	Conflict Tactics: Hostile-Indirect
CTO28phy	c28ec12, 17, 18, 20	Conflict Tactics: Physical Aggression
CTO28spk	c28ec14-15	Conflict Tactics: Spanking
CTO28vag	c28ec05, 06, 10, 13, 16, 19	Conflict Tactics: Verbal Aggression

Descriptive Statistics

Full Normative Sample:

It should be noted that the reliability/internal consistency of the Spanking and Verbal Aggression sub-scales in normative sample of parents is questionable based on Cronbach's alpha coefficient (0.50 and 0.53, respectively).

		Full Normative Sample					
		Cronbach's alpha	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
cto28dis	Conflict Tactics: Verbal Discussion	0.80	190	3.35	1.63	0	6
cto28hos	Conflict Tactics: Hostile-Indirect	0.73	190	0.18	0.58	0	4.5
cto28phy	Conflict Tactics: Physical Aggression	0.69	190	0.05	0.23	0	2.5
cto28spk	Conflict Tactics: Spanking	0.50	190	0.35	0.76	0	5
cto28vag	Conflict Tactics: Verbal Aggression	0.53	190	0.48	0.59	0	3

Comparison of Non-High Risk Normative and High Risk Control Samples

There is no evidence of statistically significant differences between the high-risk control sample and the non-high-risk normative sample across the Conflict Tactic scales.

		Non-High Risk Normative			High Risk Control			t-test*/Chi Sq Results**		
		N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	DF	t /chi sq	pval
cto28dis	Conflict Tactics: Verbal Discussion	150	3.50	1.62	69	3.14	1.62	217	1.52	0.13
cto28hos	Conflict Tactics: Hostile-Indirect	150	0.21	0.65	69	0.10	0.30	217	1.80	0.07
cto28phy	Conflict Tactics: Physical Aggression	148	0.05	0.25	69	0.03	0.14	207	0.95	0.34
cto28spk	Conflict Tactics: Spanking	149	0.34	0.79	69	0.28	0.55	184	0.73	0.47
cto28vag	Conflict Tactics: Verbal Aggression	149	0.50	0.61	69	0.40	0.54	216	1.15	0.25

*If the null hypothesis of equal variances is rejected, the t-test estimates shown in the table assume unequal variances, otherwise the t-test results shown assume equal variances.