Parenting Vignette
Observational Coding Scale Manual

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Observational coding is the gold standard for measuring parenting skills and behaviors. However, collecting observational data is often expensive to both researchers and participants in time and transportation. We are testing a novel approach to observational coding by embedding audio-recorded responses to vignettes into online surveys. This approach holds the potential to capture participant tone and realistic responses, without substantial time or administration burden.

Coding Method Development

Initial Vignettes and Pilot Data

Responses to vignettes were collected as part of a pilot randomized control trial (RCT) of a clinician referral process and parenting intervention. Participants (n = 42) included parents of a child ages 3-8 who had a concern about their child's behavior and were referred to a parenting intervention. Participants completed surveys pre- and post-intervention, as well as at 8 week follow-up. The online survey presented participants with three brief vignettes and asked them to record themselves as if they were responding to their child. Vignettes addressed a child refusing to leave the playground, hitting a friend, and saying something disrespectful, followed by the prompt "How do you respond? *Please click the "Record audio" button below, then click the red circle and talk as if you are talking to your child."* The majority (72%) of all parents completed the vignettes.

Initial Codebook Development

Development of the Clinician Parent Support Coding Scale occurred in phases, beginning with review of the conceptual and empirical literature on parenting observational measures, vignette data, and cultural considerations in parenting skills and measurement. The authors then listened to all vignette responses, and generated a list of the behaviors captured in the vignettes, to assess the scope of behaviors commonly referenced. The Parenting Style Observation Rating Scale (PSORS) was identified as a tool grounded in the GenerationPMTO core and supporting parenting skills, with many items capturing commonly observed responses. Seven items drawn from the PSORS were used in initial coding, including removing privileges, showing interest in child, being responsive to child, encouraging child to talk about their troubles, giving comfort, conveying positive feelings, and being easy going and relaxed with child. An additional 5 items were drafted by the researchers to include common responses that also reflected GenerationPMTO skills, including addressing giving clear directions, labeling negative behavior, scolding, brainstorming options, and suggesting alternatives (examples of each type of response are within each code table in the Parent Vignette Coding Sheet, below).

A small pool of vignettes was then coded by the full team using a present/absent scale, sequence scale, and a 0-3 scale. After group discussion, a 0-3 scale was deemed appropriate

to the data. Two items were removed, as they were deemed difficult to code within the vignette format, including: encouraging child to talk about their troubles and being easy going and relaxed with the child. The team then coded an additional small pool to refine the descriptions in 0-3 differentiations.

Establishing Reliability

The PI and project manager coded five benchmark vignettes, and then all team members coded to verify that they reached an acceptable level of reliability (absolute agreement of 70% or more). Team members then independently coded vignettes in five batches, meeting after each batch to discuss areas of disagreement. Although no changes were made to the codes after this point, additional examples and reference were added. To assess reliability, 20% of the videos were randomly assigned to be coded by two coders chosen at random from the pool of 7 coders. The coders' scores were compared and any discrepancies were resolved by both coders working together. Intraclass correlations ranged from .64-.82.

Codebook Category Revisions

After coding all vignettes, frequency counts and ranges of all responses were reviewed. "Uses privilege removal" was dropped as it was infrequently used as a response (occurring in only 17% of vignette responses). Three related items with low individual frequencies were combined into 'collaborating with child'; items combined included giving comfort, brainstorming options, and showing interest in the child.

Vignette Revisions

The resulting vignettes and scale missed a key component of GenerationPMTO: encouraging positive behavior. The study team generated a pool of 11 vignettes that reflected a child performing a desirable behavior to capture the possibility of encouragement.

Additionally, the previous vignettes were appropriate for giving a direction, but they did not require providing one. This made it challenging to rate the quality of good directions, as some parents appropriately never provided one. The study team generated a pool of 8 vignettes that required giving directions to a child. When generating the vignettes, the team considered multiple cultural contexts to ensure the vignette options were clear and widely understandable. For example, we intentionally included a vignette about respecting elders since this carries importance across many cultures.

The vignettes were reviewed by the study team and two additional cultural consultants for broad cultural relevance and ability to capture encouragement or giving directions within a short vignette response. A pool of 11 parents, representative of our participant pool, each responded to the vignettes and also rated which were easiest to answer. The results were coded by presence or absence of encouragement. The vignettes that elicited a high proportion of responses and were rated easy to answer were selected. By asking parents to respond and rate the vignettes, we were able to identify the vignettes with the strongest face validity.

The updated vignettes include:

- "You need your child to put away their shoes. What do you say?
- "You see your child get frustrated and hit a friend. What do you say?
- "You see your child show respect to one of their elders. What do you say to them?

New codes for measuring encouragement were added to the codebook, for testing in the next stage.

Parenting Vignette Code Sheet

	0 - Does not appear	1 - Unclear	2 - Characteristic	3 - Very characteristic
Parent gives clear directions to the child	Parent does not give any direction to the child.	Parent gives a vague direction.	Parent gives a direction with some specificity. It misses some components of a clear direction.	Parent gives a specific, active direction of what the child should do.
		It is unclear what the child should be doing.	*It may be too general, phrased as a question, and/or may not include positive terms.*	*Direction is positive, including "please", the child's name, or positive physical touch, and includes 'now'*
Parent encourages positive behavior.	Parent does not give any encouragement to the child.	Parent gives a vague encouragement.	Parent shows one instance of encouragement.	Parent shows two instances of encouragement
		It is unclear what the child has done well.	*This could be verbal praise, high-five, smile, etc.*	
Parent labels or identifies a negative behavior	Parent does not label or identify any child negative behavior(s).	Parent acknowledges a negative behavior without specifically labelling it		Parent specifically labels or names a negative behavior
				Matter-of-fact statement
Parent scolds, lectures, or guilts the child	Parent does not scold.	It is not clear whether parent is scolding.	Parent has one mild instance of scolding behavior.	Parent has one strongly negative example or persistent examples of raising voice, scolding, giving a lecture, blaming or giving guilt trip.
	Parent does not use harsh language to explain to their child what they are doing wrong. Note: Just identifying a negative behavior is not scolding, unless it is unnecessarily repeated	*It may be unclear if a question is shaming or earnest, or it may be unclear if tone or slight repetition is scolding*		

Parenting Vignette Code Sheet (continued)

	0 - Does not appear	1 - Unclear	2 - Characteristic	3 - Very characteristic
Parent collaborates with child	Parent does not collaborate with the child in any way.	It is not clear whether the parent is collaborating.	Parent shows one instance of collaborating (e.g., reflecting child's feelings, brainstorming options, giving child a choice, asking a question about child's experience)	Parent shows two or more instances of collaborating (e.g., reflecting child's feelings, giving comfort, brainstorming options, giving child a choice, asking a question about child's experience)
		May be dismissing or barely acknowledge child's feeling, or a question that may be rhetorical		
Parent's voice conveys positive feeling when speaking to the child (e.g., warm tone, saying 'please')	Parent's tone or words are negative	Parents tone is neutral	Parent's tone is somewhat warm	Parents' words are positive and tone is warm
	Angry or attacking	*Neither negative nor positive words or feelings are present*	*Parent may have either positive words (e.g., please) or pleasant tone, but not both, or tone may vary from neutral to warm*	*Intentional, regulated, calm*

Examples of responses with each code

	0 - Does not appear	1 - Unclear	2 - Characteristic	3 - Very characteristic
Parent gives clear directions to the child		Stop that	Time to go now	Rosie, put your shoes on now, please.
		Come On!	Will you stand up?	Stand up now, please
			Stop hitting!	I would hold their hand and say, "Walk with me to the car now, Tom"
Parent encourages positive behavior.		Thanks	You were very respectful	"Thanks for putting them away! High five!"
		Good job	"Thanks for putting them away."	"Thanks for doing that, you just earned a sticker for your chart!"
			"High five, buddy!"	
Parent labels or identifies a negative behavior		Stop that		We don't hit
		We don't do that		Hitting is never okay
Parent scolds, lectures, or guilts the child		Was that nice?	You should know better	How dare you treat your friend like that.
				You should feel terrible
				I'm ashamed I raised you this way.
Parent collaborates with child		I know you think life is hard	What was happening before you hit your friend?	"Please tell me what happened. How can we help your friend feel better?"
		Why would you think that was okay?	I see you're sad	"I would give her a hug and say, 'I know this is hard'"
			"Put your shoes away now, or go on time out"	
			How could we make your friend feel better?	

Benchmark Example

“We do not ever hit. Go say sorry to your friend now, please.” (Clear Directions - 3, Encourage - 0, Label Native Behavior - 3, Scold - 0, Collaborate - 0)