

# Assessing the Parenting Attitudes of Professional Parent Educators

## The Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory (AAPI-2)

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## INTRODUCTION

Parenting attitudes are expressions of the morals and values individuals have about raising children. These attitudes begin to form very early in life during the process of growing up, and continue to develop throughout childhood. The experiences children have and the parent models they witness are two primary influences in helping children formulate their own parenting beliefs. When experienced over time, these beliefs form into attitudes and become the guidelines that influence their own parenting style. There is no question that parenting attitudes are the foundation of parenting patterns and behaviors.

The Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory (AAPI-2) is a valid and reliable inventory designed to assess parenting and child-rearing attitudes. Responses to the AAPI-2 provide a profile of the parenting attitudes expressed by individuals in five areas:

### Parenting Constructs of the AAPI-2

- A. Expectations of Children
- B. Empathy Towards Children's Needs
- C. The Value of Corporal Punishment in Establishing Discipline
- D. Family Role Responsibilities
- E. Encouraging Children's Power and Independence

Responses to the AAPI-2 provide levels of risk for child maltreatment in each of the five assessed parenting areas. Years of research with the AAPI-2 have shown:

- Parents identified as abusive and neglecting are significantly more abusive in their parenting attitudes than parents not identified as abusive (non-abusive) in each of the five Parenting Constructs of the AAPI-2.
- Females express significantly more nurturing parenting attitudes than males.
- Adult parents express significantly more nurturing parenting attitudes than teen parents.
- Adolescents with histories of child abuse and neglect (abused adolescents) express significantly more abusive parenting attitudes than adolescents without known histories of abuse and neglect (non-abusive adolescents).
- Cultural parenting attitudes are significantly different among Black, White, and Hispanic male and female adult parents.

## PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

The purpose of this study is to assess the parenting and child-rearing attitudes of professionals working in the fields of parent education, social work, and child abuse prevention. The rationale for the study is based on three factors:

1. It is widely acknowledged that education in appropriate parenting is viewed as a primary strategy for the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect.
2. Recent efforts by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) and the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) have focused on identifying parenting programs with proven histories of success. The underlying rationale to this endeavor is that proven programs increase the probability in treating and preventing child abuse and neglect.

3. The parenting attitudes of professionals delivering the interventions and their competence to effectively implement home-based and group-based interventions are critical factors in the success of parent education programs. Parent educators serve as a role model of appropriate parenting and facilitate the growth and development of the families who are struggling to replace old, abusive patterns with newer, more nurturing patterns. The expression of positive parenting attitudes and practices by parent educators is imperative for the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect.

## METHODS

The AAPI-2 was administered to professionals attending one and two-day workshops on the AAPI-2 and the Nurturing Parenting Programs. The workshops were conducted throughout the country from the Fall of 1999 to the Summer of 2001.

Participants were asked to complete Form A or Form B of the AAPI-2 and submit the inventory for scoring and analyses. Scored and analyzed AAPI-2s were returned to the participant via the mail. All analyzed and scored inventories were kept confidential.

The AAPI-2s gathered during this time period were scored and analyzed on two standards:

1. The Parent Standard: The Parent Standard consists of the attitudes of parents nationwide who have not attended parenting programs and who form the norms for the AAPI-2. Parent norms exist for male and female parents.
2. The Professional Standard: This standard was created from professionals nationwide who attended workshops and conferences on the AAPI-2 and the Nurturing Parenting Programs. A total of 1,070 professionals completed AAPI-2s to form the "professional standards" or norms. Separate norms were created for male and female professionals.

## RESULTS

### Demographics

The data in Table 1 presents the demographics of the professionals participating in the AAPI-2 study.

	Female	Male
1. Gender	92%	8%
2. Adults	100%	100%
Teens	0	0
3. Race		
a. Asian	1%	0
b. Black	19%	19%
c. Hispanic	10%	4%
d. Native American	1%	1%
e. Pacific Islanders	<1%	0
f. White	69%	72%
g. Other	1%	4%

N = 1,070

A review of the data indicate the following:

- A total of 1,070 adult professionals completed AAPI-2 inventories. Of this total, 998 (92%) were females and 82 (8%) were males.
- Participants were predominantly White (69% female; 72% male). Blacks comprised the second largest population (19% females; 19% males). Hispanics comprised the third largest group (10% female; 4% male).

The data presented in Tables 2 and 3 show the AAPI-2 distribution scores for female (Table 2) and male (Table 3) professionals. The top half of each table presents the distribution of AAPI-2 scores for professionals using parent norms. Comparing the AAPI-2 scores of professionals to the norms of parents answers the question: *When compared to parents, what percentage of the AAPI-2 scores for professionals fall into the high risk range?*

The bottom half of each table presents the distribution of AAPI-2 scores for professionals using professional norms. Comparing the AAPI-2 scores of professionals to the norms of professionals answers the question: *When compared to other professionals, what percentage of the AAPI-2 scores fall into the high risk range?*

### Determining High Risk

Norm tables are designed to allow comparison of an individual's score on any measure to the scores of a group. Raw scores are converted into Sten (standard) scores which allow for this comparison to occur on an equal basis. Sten scores range from 1 to 10. The average of any population comprising a norm table is roughly between 4 (low average), 5 and 6 (average) and 7 (high average). The lower the score falls below 4, the more unlike the score is below the average. The higher the scores fall above 7, the more unlike the score is above the average. The figure below presents the percentage of scores that fall within a normal distribution of sten scores.

A sten of	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	is obtained by
about ...	2.3	4.4	9.2	15	19.1	19.1	15	9.2	4.4	2.3	percent of the population.
A sten of	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	is obtained by
about ...	2.3	6.7	15.9	30.9	50	69.1	84.1	93.3	97.8	100	percent of the population.

A review of this distribution shows that scores that fall into the 1 to 3 range are achieved by approximately 16% of the population. The same is true for scores that fall into the 8 to 10 range. In essence, only 16% of the population score that low or that high. Nearly 68% of the population fall into the 4 to 7 sten range.

To determine "high risk parenting attitudes," scores that fall into the 1 to 3 range clearly represent the bottom 16% of the population. Sten scores falling between 1 to 3 are attitudes associated with child abuse and neglect.

For comparison of the AAPI-2 scores of professionals, interest exists in identifying the percentage of AAPI-2 scores that fall into the 1 to 4 sten range when compared to parents and when compared to other professionals. The 1 to 4 sten range was established as a standard for professionals due to their role as parent educators. Ideally, parent educators need to represent the highest standard of parenting, not a marginal level.

### AAPI-2 Distribution of Scores

The data in Tables 2 and 3 provide the AAPI-2 distribution of scores for female and male professionals for each of the five AAPI-2 Parenting Constructs and the Family Index Score. The Family Index Score (FIS) is a composite score of all five AAPI-2 Constructs established for the purposes of determining risk for child abuse and neglect. The

FIS has a mean (average) of 50. Scores below 50 indicate risk for child abuse and neglect. The lower the score, the higher the risk. Scores above 50 indicate positive parenting attitudes. The higher the score, the lower the risk for child maltreatment.

**Table 2**  
**FEMALE Parent and Professional Norms**

AAPI-2 Results												
Female PARENT Norms												
	Sten										Mean	n
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Construct A	<1%	<1%	1%	6%	10%	23%	21%	18%	13%	8%	7.0	988
Construct B	1%	1%	2%	3%	10%	20%	22%	10%	14%	17%	7.3	988
Construct C	1%	1%	3%	6%	11%	20%	22%	14%	12%	11%	6.9	988
Construct D	1%	1%	3%	5%	13%	24%	23%	9%	12%	10%	6.8	988
Construct E	1%	1%	2%	3%	5%	15%	12%	14%	20%	28%	7.9	988
Family Index Score	<1%	<1%	1%	2%	5%	10%	21%	28%	24%	9%	67.2	988

  

AAPI-2 Results												
Female PROFESSIONAL Norms												
	Sten										Mean	n
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Construct A	2%	4%	8%	18%	15%	23%	14%	9%	4%	1%	5.5	988
Construct B	2%	4%	10%	15%	17%	16%	19%	17%	----	----	5.5	988
Construct C	2%	4%	8%	16%	18%	19%	22%	11%	----	----	5.4	988
Construct D	3%	4%	10%	12%	23%	17%	17%	10%	4%	----	5.4	988
Construct E	2%	4%	10%	15%	14%	18%	30%	7%	----	----	5.4	988

----- No statistical differences were measured

- A = Construct A: Inappropriate Expectations
- B = Construct B: Empathy
- C = Construct C: Belief in the use of Spanking
- D = Construct D: Role Reversal
- E = Construct E: Power & Independence
- FIS = Family Index Composite Score

A review of Table 2: Female Parent and Professional Norms indicates the following:

- When compared to female parents, approximately 3% to 5% of the attitudes expressed by female professionals fall into the high risk range of 1 to 3. If scores are considered that fall into the 1 to 4 range, approximately 7% to 11% fall into the high risk range.
- When compared to other professionals, approximately 14% to 17% of the expressed parenting attitudes of female professionals would be considered "high risk." When the range is increased to 1 to 4, the percentage doubles to 29% to 32%.
- A review of the mean scores (average scores) for each of the Parenting Constructs shows above average means when compared to parents, but average means when compared to other professionals.
- The Family Index Score using Female Parent Norms is 67, well above the average score of 50. There is no established FIS norm for Female Professionals.

**Table 3  
MALE Parent and Professional Norms**

AAPI-2 Results												
Male PARENT Norms												
	Sten										Mean	n
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Construct A	----	----	1%	2%	7%	15%	21%	11%	16%	27%	7.8	82
Construct B	----	2%	1%	1%	6%	7%	28%	20%	18%	16%	7.6	82
Construct C	----	----	4%	6%	6%	11%	23%	31%	7%	12%	7.3	82
Construct D	----	----	----	8%	6%	9%	27%	13%	17%	20%	7.6	82
Construct E	1%	----	1%	1%	5%	9%	33%	16%	17%	17%	7.7	82
Family Index Score	----	----	5%	2%	9%	16%	30%	26%	6%	6	60.6	82

  

AAPI-2 Results												
Male PROFESSIONAL Norms												
	Sten										Mean	n
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Construct A	2%	2%	11%	11%	22%	24%	11%	7%	4%	5%	5.6	82
Construct B	2%	2%	10%	16%	25%	10%	21%	9%	4%	1%	5.5	82
Construct C	2%	4%	8%	17%	19%	21%	9%	12%	4%	4%	5.5	82
Construct D	5%	2%	9%	12%	22%	19%	13%	9%	5%	4%	5.5	82
Construct E	2%	4%	5%	16%	23%	22%	17%	11%	----	----	5.4	82

----- No statistical differences were measured

- A = Construct A: Inappropriate Expectations
- B = Construct B: Empathy
- C = Construct C: Belief in the use of Spanking
- D = Construct D: Role Reversal
- E = Construct E: Power & Independence
- FIS = Family Index Composite Score

A review of Table 3: Male Parent and Professional Norms indicates the following:

- When compared to male parents, approximately 1% to 5% of the attitudes expressed by male professionals fall into the high risk role range of 1 to 3. If scores are considered that fall into the 1 to 4 range, 1% to 10% would fall into the high risk range.
- When compared to other male professionals, approximately 11% to 16% of the expressed attitudes of male professionals would be considered "high risk." When the range is increased to 1 to 4, the percentages of "high risk parenting attitudes" nearly doubles from 26% to 31%, similar to the female professionals
- A review of the mean scores (average scores) for each of the Parenting Constructs shows above average means when compared to parents but average means when compared to other professionals.
- The Family Index Score using Male Parent Norms is 61 (approximately), which is above the expected average of 50. There is no established FIS norm for male professionals.

## Cultural Parenting Patterns

The data generated from the administration of the AAPI-2 to professionals allowed for additional intergroup (between groups) comparisons on two variables: gender and race/culture. Two questions formed the basis of the analyses:

1. Are there significant differences between the parenting attitudes of male and female professionals?
2. Are there significant differences between the parenting attitudes of Black, White, and Hispanic professionals?

The rationale for examining these issues is established from research conducted on nearly 10,000 parents in Florida who are part of a state-wide study in examining parenting attitudes. When gender and race/culture are examined in relationship to parenting attitudes, several significant differences surface:

1. Gender definitely has a role in parenting. The parenting attitudes of female parents are significantly more nurturing than the parenting attitudes of male parents.
2. Culture also plays a role. Significant differences exist between Black, White, and Hispanic male and female parents. These differences are most pronounced between Black and White female parents and Black and White male parents. These parenting differences in gender and race/culture have great implications for the effectiveness of intervention and prevention programs.

## Cultural Parenting Patterns of Professionals

***Question #1: Are there significant differences in the parenting attitudes of male and female professional parent educators?***

**Answer:** Yes. These differences are significant at the  $p < .01$  level in all five AAPI-2 Constructs and the Family Index Score. Female professionals express significantly more nurturing parenting attitudes than male professionals.

***Question #2: Are there significant differences between the parenting attitudes of Black, White, and Hispanic professionals?***

**Answer:** An examination of the parenting attitudes of female professionals indicates significant differences exist between Black, White and Hispanic female professionals. The data in Table 4 lists the commonalities and differences in parenting attitudes. Due to the limited number of responses from Black and Hispanic male professionals, analyses were conducted with only female professionals.

A review of the data in Table 4 indicate the following:

- Significant ( $p < .001$ ) parenting differences exist between Black and White female professionals in all five AAPI-2 Construct areas.
- Significant ( $p < .001$ ) parenting differences exist between White and Hispanic female professionals in all five AAPI-2 Construct areas.
- Black and Hispanic female professionals express similar parenting attitudes in four of the five AAPI-2 Construct areas.

There is a significant ( $p < .001$ ) difference in the parenting attitudes of Black and Hispanic female professionals in their attitudes regarding the use of corporal punishment.

**Table 4**  
**Parenting Attitudes of Female Professionals**

	AAPI-2 Constructs				
	A	B	C	D	E
Black & White	p<.001	p<.001	p<.001	p<.001	p<.001
Black & Hispanic	-----	-----	p<.001	-----	-----
Hispanic & White	p<.001	p<.001	p<.001	p<.001	p<.001

----- No statistical differences were measured

- A = Construct A: Inappropriate Expectations
- B = Construct B: Empathy
- C = Construct C: Belief in the use of Spanking
- D = Construct D: Role Reversal
- E = Construct E: Power & Independence
- FIS = Family Index Composite Score

## SUMMARY OF NATIONAL DATA

1. On a national level, when compared to female parents who have not received parent education, approximately 10% of the female professionals who serve as parent educators fall into the high risk range for child abuse and neglect. When compared to each other, approximately 30% of the female professional parent educators fall into the high risk range.
2. When male professional parent educators are compared to male parents who have not received parent education, approximately 5% of the male parent educators fall into the high risk range for child abuse and neglect. When compared to each other, the high risk percentage rises to approximately 30%, similar to the percentage of female parent educators.
3. Significant differences in expressed parenting attitudes exist between female and male professionals. These differences are significant in all five AAPI-2 Constructs. Males express less nurturing parenting attitudes than females. When the parenting attitudes of male professional parent educators are compared to the parenting attitudes of female professional parent educators, approximately 45% of the male respondents fall into the high risk range for child maltreatment.
4. Cultural parenting differences exist between Black and White female professionals. These differences mirror the cultural differences that exist between Black and White parents who have not attended parent education programs.
5. No significant differences in parenting attitudes were found between Black and Hispanic female professionals in four of the five AAPI-2 parenting Constructs. However, Black and Hispanic female professionals expressed significant differences regarding the use of corporal punishment.