

# Parenting Alliance Measure (PAM)

20-item self-report measure

The Parenting Alliance Measure (PAM), originally called the Parenting Alliance Inventory (PAI), is a 20-item measure designed to assess the strength of the parenting alliance. This original version of the measure is for parents of children aged 1–19 years, and includes items aimed at assessing how cooperative, communicative and mutually respectful parents are when caring for their children.

	Internal consistency		Test-retest reliability	Validity	Sensitivity to change
Psychometric features	✓ (Scale)	✓ (Subscale)	?	?	✓

	Brevity	Availability	Ease of Scoring	Used in the UK
Implementation features	✓	✗	✓	✓

\*Please note that our assessment of this measure is based solely on the English version of the PAM. Translated versions of this measure were not assessed and therefore it should not be assumed that they would receive the same rating.

## What is this document?

This assessment of the Parenting Alliance Measure (PAM) has been produced by the Early Intervention Foundation (EIF) as part of guidance on selecting measures relating to parental conflict and its impact on children. To read the full guidance report and download assessments of other measures, visit: <https://www.eif.org.uk/resource/measuring-parental-conflict-and-its-impact-on-child-outcomes>



We found insufficient evidence to establish that the PAM is a valid measure with good test-retest reliability over short periods of time.

## About the measure

 <p><b>Author(s)/ developer(s)</b></p> <p>Abidin, R.R., &amp; Brunner, J.F.</p>	 <p><b>Publication year for the original version of the measure</b></p> <p>1995</p>	 <p><b>Type of measure</b></p> <p>Self-report.</p>
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<b>Outcome(s) assessed</b>	This measure has been designed to assess the perceived strength of the parenting alliance.
<b>Subscales</b>	There are two subscales: Respect; Communication and Teamwork.
<b>Purpose/primary use</b>	According to the official website, the PAM can be used as a screening and diagnostic instrument for family counselling, evaluating joint custody, identifying dysfunctional parenting skills, and assessing the impact of interventions.
<b>Mode of administration</b>	This measure can be completed in person.
<b>Example item</b>	'When there is a problem with our child, we work out a good solution together.'
<b>Target population</b>	This measure was originally developed for intact couples (married or cohabiting) with children (1–19 years old). According to the official website, the measure is appropriate for a variety of other co-parents, including those that are separated or divorced.
<b>Response format</b>	5-point Likert scale (from 1 = 'Strongly Disagree' to 5 = 'Strongly Agree').

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**Strengths & limitations****Strengths:**

- The PAM has good internal consistency and is sensitive to change in short interventions.
- The PAM is a short (20-item) measure that is easy to score.

**Limitations:**

- We found insufficient evidence to establish that the PAM is a valid measure with good test-retest reliability over short periods of time.
- There is a cost associated with the use of the PAM.

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**Link**

<https://www.parinc.com/Products/Pkey/304>

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**Contact details**

N/A

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**Copyright**

The measure is copyrighted and can be purchased at: <https://www.parinc.com/Products/Pkey/304>

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**Key reference(s)**

Abidin, R.R., & Brunner, J.F. (1995). Development of a parenting alliance inventory. *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology, 24*(1), 31–40.

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## Psychometric features in detail

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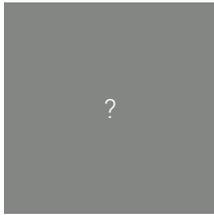
**Internal consistency**

Konold & Abidin (2001) reported that the Respect subscale had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.83 among mothers and 0.81 among fathers. Similarly, the Communication subscale had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.95 among mothers and 0.97 among fathers. This study was conducted with a sample of 1,224 parents of children aged 1–19 years, primarily Caucasian (80.5%).

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**Test-retest reliability**

From our review of the evidence, we did not find information about the test-retest reliability of the PAM.



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**Validity**

Although the available evidence we found on the validity of the PAM is reassuring, we did not consider it sufficient to establish that the measure is valid.



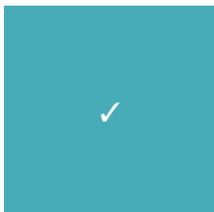
Abidin & Brunner (1995) tested the validity of the PAM against the Revised Marital Adjustment Test (RMAT) and the Parenting Stress Index (PSI). The authors reported that the PAM showed moderate and good correlations with both the RMAT (mothers:  $r = 0.20$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ; fathers:  $r = 0.44$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and the PSI (mothers:  $r$  ranged between  $-0.24$  and  $-0.45$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ; fathers:  $r = -0.29$  and  $-0.39$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This study was conducted with a sample of 99 mothers and 61 fathers.

Bearss & Eyberg (1998) reported that the PAM was strongly correlated with the Marital Adjustment Test (MAT) ( $r = 0.57$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and the Eyberg Child Behavior Inventory (ECBI), a measure that assesses child conduct problems ( $r = 0.58$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This study was conducted in the US with a sample of 53 women with children aged 2–15.

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**Sensitivity to change**

There is evidence that the PAM can detect changes after participation in short and long parenting interventions.



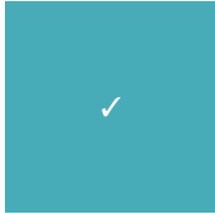
Scott & Lishak (2012) reported that the PAM was sensitive to change over time between pre-test and a 17-week follow-up (PAM total:  $t(73) = -0.77$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ; PAM communication subscale:  $t(73) = -3.29$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ; PAM respect subscale:  $t(72) = -4.22$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This study was a one-group pre/post-test design conducted in Canada on the Caring Dads: Helping Fathers Value their Children programme, designed to address and reduce risk factors in fathers that could lead to abuse. This study was conducted with a sample of 98 fathers (mean age = 36.27, on average 2.5 children with a mean age of 7.5). 46% of men were living with at least one child and others were having regular contact with their child.

Tompkins et al. (2014) reported that the PAM captured changes from pre-test to a 12-month follow-up (PAM:  $r = -0.36$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). This study employed a one-group pre/post-test design evaluating the Making Parenting a Pleasure (MPAP) programme ran in the US. MPAP is a group-based parenting education programme for parents with children up to eight years old aimed at improving stress management, confidence and discipline skills. This study was conducted with a sample of 744 participants (mean age = 32.45, 80.50% were female, 54.10% Hispanic, 59.10% unemployed, 40.40% married).

# Implementation features in detail

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## Brevity



This measure has 20 items and according to the developers, it can be completed in 10 minutes.

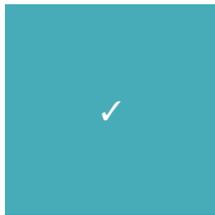
## Availability



This measure is available for a fee of \$194 per PAM introductory kit, which includes the PAM professional manual and 50 hand-scorable test forms. A package of 25 PAM hand-scorable test forms can also be bought for \$74. To be used, the measure also requires a clinical licence.

Further details can be found at <https://www.parinc.com/Products/Pkey/304>.

## Ease of scoring

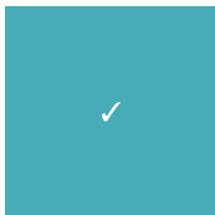


The measure has simple scoring instructions involving basic calculations. It does not need to be scored by someone with specific training or qualifications.

The resultant score ranges from 20 to 100, with higher scores indicating a stronger and more positive parenting alliance.

From our review of the evidence, it is unclear if there are UK cut-offs.

## Used in the UK



The measure has been used in several UK impact evaluations to assess programmes such as the Mentalization-based therapy (Hertzmann et al., 2016), and Caring Dads (Hood, Lindsay, & Muleya, 2015).

## Language(s)

The PAM is available in English but as far as we are aware, the developers did not translate the PAM into other languages. The measure has, however, been translated into Italian by people other than the developers (Camisasca et al., 2015).

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# References

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