

# Quality of Co-parental Communication Scale (QCCS)

10-item self-report measure

The Quality of Co-parental Communication Scale (QCCS), sometimes referred to as the Discuss and Share Decision-Making Scale, is a 10-item measure designed to assess co-parental communication in separated or divorced couples. This original version of the measure includes two subscales aimed at assessing conflict and support.

	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 QCCS. 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 Quality of Co-parental Communication Scale (QCCS) 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 QCCS has good test-retest reliability over short periods of time and is sensitive to change in short interventions.

# About the measure

 <p><b>Author(s)/ developer(s)</b></p> <p>Ahrons, C.</p>	 <p><b>Publication year for the original version of the measure</b></p> <p>1981</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 co-parental communication in separated and divorced couples with children.
<b>Subscales</b>	The measure has two subscales: Conflict and Support
<b>Purpose/primary use</b>	This measure was originally developed within a study aimed at assessing the relationship between parents one year following divorce.
<b>Mode of administration</b>	This measure can be completed in person.
<b>Example item</b>	'When you and your former spouse discuss parenting issues, how often does an argument result?'
<b>Target population</b>	This measure was originally developed for separated and divorced couples.
<b>Response format</b>	A 5-point Likert scale (from 1 = 'Never' to 5 = 'Always').
<b>Strengths &amp; limitations</b>	<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The QCCS is a valid measure with good internal consistency.</li> <li>• It is a short (10-item) measure, which is freely available and easy to score.</li> </ul> <p>Limitations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We found insufficient evidence to establish that the QCCS is sensitive to change in short interventions and has good test-retest reliability over short periods of time.</li> <li>• According to our review, there is limited evidence that the QCCS has been substantially used in the UK.</li> </ul>

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<b>Link</b>	N/A
<b>Contact details</b>	Dan Lainer-Vos: <a href="mailto:lainer-vos@usc.edu">lainer-vos@usc.edu</a>
<b>Copyright</b>	Based on our review of the evidence, it appears that the developer did not provide information on copyright. The key reference (included below) should be cited when using the measure.
<b>Key reference(s)</b>	Ahrons, C.R. (1981). The continuing coparental relationship between divorced spouses. <i>American Journal of Orthopsychiatry</i> , 51, 415–428.

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# Psychometric features in detail

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## Internal consistency



We found a number of papers (Ahrons, 1981; Ferraro, Lucier-Greer, & Oehme, 2018; Madden-Derdich & Leonard, 2017; McKenry, Clark, & Stone, 1999) reporting good internal consistency for the QCCS total scale and subscales, with Cronbach’s alpha values ranging from 0.75 to 0.94.

McKenry, Clark, & Stone (1999) reported that the QCCS had a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of 0.85. This study was an impact evaluation of the PEACE programme (Parents’ Education About Children’s Emotions) conducted in the US with a sample of 236 divorced parents. Most of the subjects were Caucasian, divorced for approximately four years and had one child on average.



Ahrons (1981) reported that the QCCS Conflict subscale had a mean Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of 0.88 for women and 0.89 for men, and that the QCCS Support subscale had a mean Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of 0.74 for women and 0.75 for men. This study was conducted in the US with a sample of 108 divorced parents (54 former couples) randomly selected from the 1977 divorce court records in Dane County, Wisconsin. All subjects were Caucasian and all mothers had court-awarded custody, the mean age of parents was 34 (the age ranged from 19–60). Education ranged from high school diploma to graduate degrees, with two years of college or technical school as the mean educational level for both men and women.

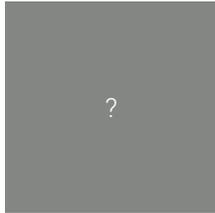
Madden-Derdich & Leonard (2017) reported that the QCCS Conflict subscale had a mean Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of 0.86. This study was conducted in the US with a sample of 62 fathers (mean age = 38.2 years) who had divorced during a specified three-month period in 1996 and who had at least one child under the age of 12 at the time of the divorce. The average marital length was 12.1 years, 89.6% of the fathers were White, and 88% had continued their education beyond high school.

Ferraro, Lucier-Greer, & Oehme (2018) reported that the QCCS Conflict subscale had a mean Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of 0.94, and that the QCCS Support subscale had a mean Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of 0.87. This study was conducted in the US with a sample of 569 divorced parents participating in the Successful Co-parenting After Divorce programme, divided into two groups (mean ages = 36.16 in the first group and 35.91 in the second group). In both groups, parents were predominantly White (82.6% in the first group, 85.3% in the second group).

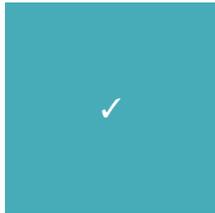
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**Test-retest reliability**

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



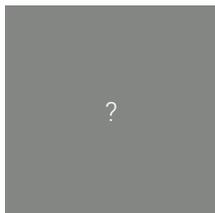
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**Validity**

In Ahrons's original study (1981) validity of the scale was assessed by examining the correlation between the QCCS and the clinicians' rating of the subjects on the quality of their co-parental relationships. The developer reported a significant correlation between them and concluded that the clinicians perceived the quality of the subjects' relationships in a similar fashion as the subjects ( $r = 0.43$  for men,  $r = 0.58$  for women,  $p < .001$ ). This study was conducted in the US with a sample of 108 divorced parents (54 former couples) randomly selected from the 1977 divorce court records in Dane County, Wisconsin. All subjects were Caucasian and all mothers had court-awarded custody, the mean age of parents was 34 (the age ranged from 19–60). Education ranged from high school diploma to graduate degrees, with two years of college or technical school as the mean educational level for both men and women.

The QCCS has been used to assess the validity of new coparenting measures such as the Multidimensional Coparenting Scale for Dissolved Relationships (Ferraro, Lucier-Greer, & Oehme 2018).

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**Sensitivity to change**

From our review of the evidence, we found partial evidence from one study showing that the QCCS can detect changes after participation in short couple interventions. Although this evidence is promising, we did not consider it sufficient to establish that the QCCS is sensitive to change.

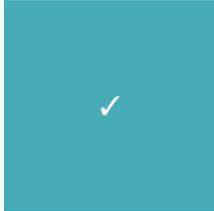
Keating et al. (2016) conducted an RCT to test the effectiveness of Parents Plus, a six-week programme aimed at addressing the needs of separated parents in an Irish context. The authors reported that QCCS detected changes from pre-test to follow-up ( $F = 7.48$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This study was conducted with a sample of 161 divorced parents (86.5% female, 71.4% custodial parents and 79.2% single).

# Implementation features in detail

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## Brevity

This measure has 10 items.



## Availability

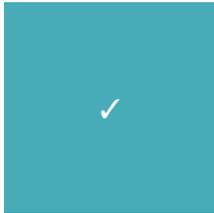
From the papers we have assessed it appears that this measure is free to use and does not require a clinical licence.



## Ease of scoring

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

The total scores can range from 0 to 50, with a high score indicating low conflict and high support.



## Used in the UK

From our review, it appears that the QCCS has been used in at least one UK study.

Keating et al. (2016) conducted an RCT in Ireland to test the effectiveness of Parents Plus, a programme aimed at addressing the needs of separated parents in an Irish context.



## Language(s)

The QCCS is available in English but as far as we are aware, the developers did not translate the QCCS into other languages. The measure has, however, been translated into Japanese by people other than the developers (Hosokawa & Katsura, 2017).

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# References

- Ahrons, C.R. (1981). The continuing coparental relationship between divorced spouses. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 51, 415–428.
- Ferraro, A.J., Lucier-Greer, M., & Oehme, K. (2018). Psychometric evaluation of the multidimensional co-parenting scale for dissolved relationships. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 27(9), 2780–2796.
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- Madden-Derdich, D.A., & Leonard, S.A. (2000). Parental role identity and fathers' involvement in coparental interaction after divorce: Fathers' perspectives. *Family Relations*, 49(3), 311–318.
- McKenry, P.C., Clark, K.A., & Stone, G. (1999). Evaluation of a parent education program for divorcing parents. *Family Relations*, 48(2) 129–137.



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