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ABSTRACT
        Psychometric information was determined for two
scales commonly used in early intervention programs and research, the
Family Support Scale (FSS) (C. J. Dunst and others, 1984) and the
Family Resource Scale (FRS) (C. J. Dunst and H. E. Leet, 1985). These
questionnaires measure the perceptions of support for families with
children with disabilities and the adequacy of resources for families
with young children in general. Data come from longitudinal efficacy
studies conducted at 17 sites nationwide with a combined sample of
nearly 1,000 families. Reliability, validity, and factor structure
were investigated for these measures with 990 families. Both
classical and confirmatory methodologies were used in the analyses.
Results suggest that the FSS and FRS are stable, internally
consistent measures that appear to measure familial perceptions of
support and resources adequately. The factor structure of each is
probably more accurately represented by these studies than previous
analyses. Twelve tables contain details of the analyses. (SLD)

Measuring Family Support and Resources:

Psychometric Investigation of the FSS and FRS

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Measuring Family Support and Resources:

Psychometric Investigation of the FSS and FRS

Introduction

One of the shortcomings of early intervention research to date has been the lack of information about the families of the children involved in efficacy studies. Historically, only brief demographic information has been collected. These data clearly lacked the ability to describe salient aspects of family functioning identified in the literature as important, such as parental stress, family cohesiveness, and available support and resources (Casto & Mastropieri, 1986). As such, much of the information potentially pertinent to intervention and outcome evaluation were not assessed (Dunst, Snyder, & Mankinen, 1989).

In response to the increased emphasis in early intervention on assessing family functioning more generally, a plethora of family measures were developed. Measures such as the Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales (FACES; Olson, Portner, & Lavee, 1985) and the Comprehensive Evaluation of Family Functioning (CEFF; McLinden, 1990) attempted to measure global family functioning. Other measures have focused on specific aspects of familial and parental functioning. These include the Parenting Stress Index (PSI; Abidin, 1990), the Family Inventory of Life Events and Changes (FILE; McCubbin, Patterson, & Wilson, 1983) the

Family Support Scale (FSS; Dunst, Jenkins, & Trivette, 1984), the Family Resource Scale (FRS; Dunst & Leet, 1985), among others.

The multitude of family measures developed in the last decade give researchers and clinicians a wide variety of existing instruments from which to choose. Unfortunately, there is limited psychometric information available on many of the newer instruments. What validity information is available has been based on extremely small, non-representative samples. Consequently, the utility of these instruments and confidence in the resulting data are somewhat tenuous. Considering the importance of the variables being assessed, further investigation of psychometric properties of these newer instruments is clearly required.

The purpose of this research was to provide this much needed psychometric information about two scales commonly used in early intervention programs and research, the FSS and the FRS. These questionnaires measure the perceptions of support for families with children with disabilities, and the adequacy of resources for families with young children in general. Research to date suggests that these variables are critical to early intervention if family variables are targeted by the intervention.

Data for this research comes from longitudinal efficacy studies conducted by the Early Intervention Research Institute (for further information see White et al., 1987). The

longitudinal studies were conducted at 17 sites nationwide and addressed a variety of questions regarding the efficacy of early intervention for children with disabilities. The combined sample consists of nearly 1,000 families representing a variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Using information from these studies, a tremendous amount of critical information regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the FSS and FRS can be gained.

Objective

The objective of this study was to provide researchers and clinicians with more psychometric information necessary for the appropriate and ethical use of the FSS and FRS. More specifically, the following questions were addressed about each instrument:

1. What are the internal consistency and test-retest reliabilities?

2. What is the correlation between scores derived from this instrument and other family measures including the PSI, FILE, and FACES?

3. What is the underlying factor structure of the items?

4. What is the stability (invariance) of this factor structure?

5. How does the factor structure identified in these analyses compare to the factor structure reported in the literature?

6. What is the relationship between child functioning and demographic information and the score on the measure.

Measures

The Family Support Scale (FSS) is an 18 item questionnaire that measurer the amount of perceived support given to the parents of young children with disabilities. The FSS uses a Likert scale with responses ranging from "not at all helpful" to "extremely helpful." If an item, such as "Parent Groups," is not applicable for the respondent then nothing is marked and the response is judged "not applicable." The FSS measures support from family, friends, social groups, and professional service providers. Higher scores indicate greater amounts of support.

The Family Resources Scale is a 30 item questionnaire that measures the adequacy of time and economic resources for families with small children. Responses uses a Likert scale ranging from "not at all adequate" to "almost always adequate." The FRS has four subscales: general resources, time availability, physical resources, and external support. The FRS yields scores for each of the subscales and a total score, with higher scores indicating more resources for the respondent's family.

Methods

Both classical and confirmatory psychometric methodologies were employed in this analysis. An initial

exploratory factor analysis of each scale was performed to establish the subscale structures. This structure was confirmed using a split sample confirmatory path analysis. The model, established by the exploratory factor analysis, was analyzed with LISREL by first holding the two group measurement and structure models invariant, and then freeing the paths between groups. Invariance was then measured using the difference in chi-squares and degrees of freedom.

Classical reliability coefficients were computed for both internal consistency (coefficient alpha) and test/retest stability. Bivariate product-moment correlations were computed between the FRS and FSS and each of the PSI, FACES and FILE for concurrent and discriminant validity. Child functioning and demographic data were also analyzed using correlational techniques to establish possible relationships to the FSS and FRS.

Subjects and Procedure

For this analysis 990 subject families from the 17 longitudinal studies conducted by the Early Intervention Research Institute were used. Table 1 gives a demographic description of the sample. Subjects were administered the FSS and FRS during the same time period using standard instructions. Approximately 97% of the questionnaires were completed by mothers of children with some form of disability or developmental delay. The remaining 3 percent were completed by the fathers or other primary caretakers of

children with disabilities. Each subject parent
simultaneously completed the PSI, FILE, and FACES.

Demographic information was also available for a large
portion of these subjects. The children ranged in age from
birth to four, and exhibited a variety of disabilities of
every level of severity. The families represented a spectrum
of socioeconomic, ethnic, geographical, and cultural
backgrounds (see Table 1). In addition, child functioning, as
measured by the Battelle Developmental Inventory (Newborg,
Stock, Wnek, Guidubaldi, & Svinicki, 1984), was available for
each child in this study.

Results and Discussion

The results of the factor analyses indicate that both the
FSS and FRS can be described by relatively simple subscale
structures that meet both statistical and logical scrutiny.
Tables 2 and 3 show the factor loadings and factor correlation
matrices for each measure. These factor structures are
different in some ways from those reported in the literature
(Dunst, Jenkins, & Trivette, 1984; Dunst & Leet, 1985). For
the FSS, the difference in structures can best be explained by
the small sample used in the original study (n=139). For the
FRS, the difference in structure is less pronounced, and is
probably a result of the small sample used in the original
study (n=52). The structures reported here are based on a
much larger sample and seem to make better use of the items.

In only one case was an item dropped from either scale. The school support item from the FSS displayed a very low communality (c < .20) and was thus dropped from all further analyses. This is understandable as most of these families did not have any children who were school age. The only surprise in these factor analyses was the familial scale of the FSS. Notice that the factor loadings are opposite for relatives and parents versus spouse and children. This may indicate that as support from spouse and children increase, there is a perception that support decreases with the respondent's parents and other relatives.

From additional correlational analyses it can be seen that 1) marital status of the mother is highly correlated with the spouse support item (r=.60), and 2) the number of children in the home is highly related to the child support item (r=.38). This is helpful, not only in terms of understanding this scale, but also in terms of understanding the low internal consistency reliability coefficient found in Table 4. When the analyses are restricted to married mothers with other children are considered, the alpha goes from .35 to .52. These data suggest that this scale is most interpretable with married respondents with children other than the one with disabilities.

Table 4 shows all of the total score and subscale score internal consistency reliabilities. Those for the FSS are moderate and range from .35 to .76 for the subscales and .80

for the total FSS. Those for the FRS are relatively high for this type of measure and indicate strong internal consistency. One year test/retest reliabilities for the FSS and FRS total scores were .59 and .69 respectively. These data suggest that the underlying constructs for both measures are faily stable adn the measures of these constructs are also stable.

The last measure of test stability was in the form of a test of invariance. The results showed a chi-square of difference of 17.52 (df=38, p=.998) for the FSS and a chi-square of difference of 58.58 (df=64, p=.668) for the FRS. These indicate that the measures are very stable across samples.

Tables 5 and 6 present normative data in the form of means, standard deviations, and range. The means for the FSS indicate that the most amount of perceived support comes from the respondents' spouses, and the least amount comes from social groups in general. The means for the FRS indicate that the financial resources for necessities are usually perceived as being adequate, and that other resources are almost always adequate. Table 7 shows how the scores for each subscale and total fall into percentiles.

Tables 8, 9, and 10 show the concurrent validity information. With the exception of spousal relationships as measured by the PSI, the FSS does not correlate with many of the other family measures. This may indicate that the FSS measures a quite different set of constructs than the other

measures used in this study. The FRS, however, correlates well with family cohesion, life events, and a variety of parent stressors. This indicates that the FRS, although a measure of specific constructs, does overlap in its assessment of family variables.

Tables 11 and 12 show how the FSS and FRS correlate with some demographic and child functioning variables. Again, with the exception of marital status of the mother, and to some degree family income, the FSS does not correlate well with these demographic variables. The two FRS monetary resource scales correlate to some degree with all of the family variables. This is because these family variables are all interrelated.

These results suggest that the FSS and FRS are stable, internally consistent measures that appear to adequately measure familial perceptions of support and resources. However, the factor structure of both instruments are probably more accurately represented by these analyses than what has previously been reported (because of the sample size available for these anslyses and the rigorous methodologies employed).

Since the passing of Public Law 99-457, the use of family measures has become a required component to assessing the efficacy of early intervention. Both of these measures provide researchers with valuable information that can be used to better understand and intervene with families of children with disabilities.

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Table 1

Description of Sample

Demographic Characteristics

Ethnicity of Child
Caucasian	84%	Asian American	1%
African American	10%	Hispanic American	2%
Native American	2%		

Maternal Age   Mean = 29 SD = 7   Range = 13 to 50
Maternal Education (yrs) Mean = 12.8 Range = 4 to 17
Maternal Marital Status
Married	80%	Widowed	1%
Separated	5%	Divorced	4%
Single	9%		

Paternal Age   Mean = 31 SD = 7   Range = 14 to 61
Paternal Education (yrs) Mean = 13.2 Range = 4 to 19
Paternal Occupation
Unemployed	11%	Technical	21%
Unskilled	23%	Professional	15%
Blue Collar	31%		

Income ($)   Mean = 23,000 SD = 16,000
Number of Siblings   Mean = 1.6 SD = 1.4 Range = 0 to 10

Characteristics of Children

Age of Children at Assessment (months)   Mean = 29 SD = 19
Gender of Children   Male = 58% Female = 42%
Type of Disability
Hearing Impaired	7%	Develop Delay	24%
Visually Impaired	5%	Multihandicapped	6%
Motor Impaired	4%	IVH	11%
Cognitively Impaired	7%	Down Syndrome	15%
Language Impaired	10%	Cerebral Palsy	5%
Health Impaired	4%	Other	2%

Developmental Functioning(DQ)
40 and below	16%	56 - 70	33%
41 - 55	20%	70 and above	31%

Nature of Early Intervention Programs

Frequency of Contact   Type of Intervention
Once per month	22%	Home-based	41%
Once per month -		Center-based	41%
once per week	25%	Combined home-	
More than once a week	53%	& center-based	18%

Region of Country
East	6%	Southeast	36%
Midwest	27%	West	31%

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Table 2

Factor loadings and factor correlation matrix for the FSS using Principle components extraction with an oblique rotation

	Familial	Spousal	Social	Professional
My parents	-.726			
My relatives	-.642			
My own children	.427			
Spouse's parents		-.810		
Spouse's relatives		-.778		
Spouse	.392	-.723		
Spouse's friends		-.520	.439	
Other parents			.757	
Social groups			.663	
My friends			.661	
Church			.601	
Parent groups			.569	
Co-workers			.520	
Professional helpers				.781
Early intervention services				.748
Professional agencies				.616
Family or child's physician				.401

	Familial	Spousal	Social	Professional
Familial	1.000			
Spousal	.041	1.000		
Social	-.092	-.337	1.000	
Professional	-.064	-.104	.310	1.000

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Table 3

Factor loadings and factor correlation matrix for the FRS using Principle components extraction with an oblique rotation

	Time	Necessities	Extras
Time for spouse	-.802		
Time for family	-.780		
Time to keep in shape	-.720		
Time to socialize	-.710		
Time for children	-.676		
Time for self	-.667		
Time for sleep/rest	-.630		
Someone to talk to	-.548		
Plumbing		.720	
Heat		.668	
House or apartment		.581	
Food		.557	
Furniture		.520	
Clothes		.426	.383
Telephone		.323	
Money to save			.775
Travel/vacation			.739
Money for entertainment			.723
Money for self			.712
Money for special equipment			.679
Dental care			.657
Money for necessities		.320	.610
Medical care			.600
Money for monthly bills			.584
Good job for self or spouse			.549
Dependable transportation		.318	.470
Public assistance			.463
Child care/day care			.385
Toys for children			.380
Babysitting	-.310		.377

	Time	Necessities	Extras
Time	1.000		
Necessities	-.182	1.000	
Extras	-.417	.373	1.000

Table 4

Internal consistency reliability coefficients for the FSS and the FRS

<u>Family Support Scale</u>

Familial Support	(4 items)	.35
Spousal Support	(4 items)	.74
Social Support	(7 items)	.76
Professional Support	(4 items)	.62
Total FSS	**(17 items)**	**.80**

<u>Family Resource Scale</u>

Time Resources	(9 items)	.88
Resources for Necessities	(9 items)	.82
Resources for Extras	(16 items)	.91
Total FRS	**(30 items)**	**.93**

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Table 5

Normative information for the FSS

	Mean	(SD)	Minimum	Maximum
Familial	8.72	(3.3)	0	16
My parents	2.41	(1.4)	0	4
My relatives	1.79	(1.3)	0	4
My own children	1.81	(1.5)	0	4
Spouse	2.71	(1.5)	0	4
Spousal	6.77	(4.2)	0	16
Spouse's parents	1.61	(1.5)	0	4
Spouse's relatives	1.28	(1.3)	0	4
Spouse	2.71	(1.5)	0	4
Spouse's friends	1.16	(1.3)	0	4
Social	7.72	(5.5)	0	28
Other parents	1.18	(1.2)	0	4
Social groups	0.63	(1.1)	0	4
My friends	1.94	(1.2)	0	4
Church	1.28	(1.3)	0	4
Parent groups	0.74	(1.2)	0	4
Co-workers	0.79	(1.2)	0	4
Spouse's friends	1.16	(1.3)	0	4
Professional	7.91	(4.0)	0	16
Professional helpers	2.58	(1.4)	0	4
Early intervention services	1.92	(1.7)	0	4
Professional agencies	1.17	(1.4)	0	4
Family or child's physician	2.23	(1.3)	0	4
FSS Total	27.25	(11.2)	1	68

Table 6

Normative information for the FRS

	Mean	(SD)	Minimum	Maximum
Time Resources	32.71	(7.3)	9	45
Time for spouse	3.36	(1.2)	1	5
Time for family	3.90	(1.0)	1	5
Time to keep in shape	3.29	(1.2)	1	5
Time to socialize	3.30	(1.2)	1	5
Time for children	4.21	(0.9)	1	5
Time for self	3.08	(1.3)	1	5
Time for sleep/rest	3.80	(1.1)	1	5
Someone to talk to	3.92	(1.1)	1	5
Babysitting	3.85	(1.2)	1	5
Necessities	41.14	(4.7)	21	45
Plumbing	4.83	(0.5)	1	5
Heat	4.73	(0.6)	1	5
House or apartment	4.75	(0.7)	1	5
Food	4.76	(0.6)	1	5
Furniture	4.55	(0.8)	1	5
Clothes	4.38	(0.9)	1	5
Telephone	4.65	(0.9)	1	5
Necessities	4.11	(1.0)	1	5
Transportation	4.38	(1.0)	1	5
Extras	62.29	(12.3)	23	80
Money to save	2.59	(1.4)	1	5
Travel/vacation	2.63	(1.5)	1	5
Money for entertainment	3.34	(1.2)	1	5
Money for self	3.27	(1.3)	1	5
Money for special equipment	3.80	(1.3)	1	5
Dental care	4.00	(1.3)	1	5
Money for necessities	4.11	(1.0)	1	5
Medical care	4.34	(1.1)	1	5
Money for monthly bills	4.12	(1.0)	1	5
Good job for self or spouse	4.22	(1.2)	1	5
Dependable transportation	4.38	(1.0)	1	5
Public assistance	4.55	(0.8)	1	5
Child care/day care	4.37	(1.2)	1	5
Clothes	4.38	(0.9)	1	5
Toys for children	4.33	(0.9)	1	5
Babysitting	3.85	(1.2)	1	5
FRS Total	119.42	(18.9)	51	150

Table 7

Percentile scores for the FSS and FRS

Family Support Scale

Percentiles	10----20----30----40----50----60----70----80----90----99
Familial	-4----5----6----7----8----9----10----11----12----16
Spousal	--1----3----4----5----6----7----8----9----10----12----16
Social	1----3----4----5----6----8----9----11----15----24
Professional	2----4----5----6----7----8----9----10----11----12----16
FSS Total	13----17----20----23----26----29----32----36----41----59

Family Resource Scale

Percentiles	10----20----30----40----50----60----70----80----90----99
Time	22----26----29----31----33----35----37----39----42----45
Necessities	34----37----40----41--42----43----44----45
Extras	44----51----56----60----63----67----70----73----77----80
FRS Total	92----103----110----116----121----126----131----136----143----150

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Table 8

Concurrent validity correlations for the FSS and the FRS

	Family Support	Spousal Support	Social Support	Pro Support	Total Support
Time Resources	.26	.25	.24	.07	.27
Necessities	.19	.24	.17	.05	.19
Extras	.24	.29	.24	.08	.27
Total	.27	.30	.26	.09	.29

Table 9

Concurrent validity correlations for the FSS with other measures of family functioning

	Family Support	Spousal Support	Social Support	Pro Support	Total Support
FACES					
Cohesion	.26	.28	.23	.13	.27
Adaptability	.21	.14	.22	.11	.22
FILE					
Total	-.09	-.14	-.04	.04	-.05
PSI					
Child Domain					
Total	-.16	-.18	-.17	-.02	-.17
Adaptability	-.11	-.16	-.13	.00	-.13
Acceptability	-.11	-.13	-.11	.04	-.10
Demandingness	-.13	-.14	-.13	.04	-.12
Mood	-.13	-.09	-.14	-.07	-.15
Distractibility	-.11	-.14	-.12	-.01	-.12
Reinforces Parent	-.14	-.12	-.12	-.13	-.16
Parent Domain					
Total	-.28	-.25	-.25	-.10	-.28
Depression	-.18	-.14	-.14	-.06	-.16
Attachment	-.17	-.16	-.15	-.17	-.21
Restrictions of Role	-.16	-.13	-.16	.00	-.15
Sense of Competence	-.19	-.16	-.18	-.06	-.18
Social Isolation	-.27	-.23	-.31	-.15	-.32
Relationship with Spouse	-.34	-.37	-.22	-.07	-.28
Parent Health	-.16	-.12	-.12	-.04	-.14
PSI Total	-.26	-.25	-.24	-.07	-.26

Table 10

Concurrent validity correlations for the FRS with other measures of family functioning

	Time Resources	Necessities	Extras	Total Resources
FACES				
Cohesion	.32	.34	.35	.38
Adaptability	.04	.05	.04	.05
FILE				
Total	-.43	-.20	-.36	-.40
PSI				
Child Domain				
Total	-.30	-.21	-.25	-.29
Adaptability	-.23	-.18	-.21	-.24
Acceptability	-.26	-.13	-.16	-.21
Demandingness	-.28	-.13	-.19	-.23
Mood	-.17	-.12	-.12	-.15
Distractibility	-.20	-.21	-.22	-.24
Reinforces Parent	-.14	-.17	-.14	-.16
Parent Domain				
Total	-.51	-.32	-.39	-.47
Depression	-.35	-.23	-.26	-.32
Attachment	-.16	-.23	-.17	-.20
Restrictions of Role	-.44	-.20	-.29	-.36
Sense of Competence	-.35	-.29	-.31	-.36
Social Isolation	-.46	-.27	-.35	-.42
Relationship with Spouse	-.44	-.22	-.35	-.40
Parent Health	-.41	-.17	-.27	-.34
PSI Total	-.46	-.30	-.37	-.43

Table 11

Concurrent validity correlations for the FSS with other measures of family functioning

	Family Support	Spousal Support	Social Support	Pro Support	Total Support
<u>Child Variables</u>					
Child Gender	.04	.03	.00	.05	.04
Child Age	-.04	-.13	-.09	-.04	-.10
Child Functioning					
Battelle Total Raw Score	-.02	-.09	-.09	-.07	-.10
Developmental Quotient	.03	.04	.03	-.07	.00
<u>Family Variables</u>					
Number of children in the home	.07	-.05	-.05	-.09	-.06
Marital Status of the mother	.23	.46	.08	-.04	.16
Father's Education	.14	.19	.23	.07	.21
Mother's Education	.12	.20	.27	.06	.22
Family Income	.21	.31	.23	.05	.23

Table 12

Concurrent validity correlations for the FRS with other measures of
family functioning

	Time Resources	Necessities	Extras	Total Resources
Child Variables				
Child Gender	.07	.03	.05	.06
Child Age	-.05	-.01	-.03	-.04
Child Functioning				
Battelle Total Raw Score	-.02	.02	.00	.00
Developmental Quotient	.06	.05	.05	.07
Family Variables				
Number of children in the home	-.14	-.08	-.10	-.12
Marital Status of the mother	.01	.28	.22	.18
Father's Education	.06	.31	.32	.26
Mother's Education	.02	.28	.28	.21
Family Income	.10	.44	.48	.39