

Baby Care Questionnaire

About this file

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About the Baby Care Questionnaire

The Baby Care Questionnaire (BCQ) is a parent-report measure of parenting principles and practices during infancy (Gattis, Winstanley, & Bristow, 2022; Mascheroni et al., 2022; Winstanley & Gattis, 2013; Winstanley et al., 2014). The BCQ contains three sections, Sleeping, Feeding and Soothing, each focused on a specific caregiving context. The BCQ measures parenting practices through checklists and quantitative questions (such as estimated durations). The BCQ measures parenting principles through ratings of statements.

How to use the Baby Care Questionnaire

If you would like to use the Baby Care Questionnaire in a study, contact Merideth Gattis (GattisM@cardiff.ac.uk) to discuss your study and appropriate use of the measure based on current evidence. All publications reporting BCQ data should cite the initial development and validation paper (Winstanley & Gattis, 2013).

The parenting principles of structure and attunement are validated based on all of the items listed in the scoresheet (as reported in Winstanley & Gattis, 2013). It is therefore **not** appropriate to use individual items to measure structure or attunement, or to use items from only one of the caregiving contexts.

The Baby Care Questionnaire is currently validated in English only. Do **not** translate the Baby Care Questionnaire into another language for your research project. We are currently developing and evaluating the Baby Care Questionnaire in multiple languages. For more information, please contact Merideth Gattis (GattisM@cardiff.ac.uk).

References

Gattis, M., Winstanley, A., & Bristow, F. (2022). Parenting beliefs about attunement and structure are related to observed parenting behaviours. *Cogent Psychology*, 9 (1), 2082675. DOI: 10.1080/23311908.2022.2082675

Mascheroni, E., Grassi, M., Bonanomi, A., Sperotto, R., Deeg, S., Hung, S., Xia, R., Ionio, C., Au, T. K. F., & Gattis, M. (2022). The role of experience in parenting beliefs of British and Italian women during pregnancy. *Infant Mental Health Journal*, 43(6), 835-848. <https://doi.org/10.1002/imhj.22014>

Winstanley, A. & Gattis, M. (2013). The Baby Care Questionnaire: A measure of parenting principles and practices during infancy. *Infant Behavior and Development*, 36, 762-775.

Winstanley, A., Sperotto, R. G., Putnick, D. L., Cherian, S., Bornstein, M. H. & Gattis, M. (2014). Consistency of maternal cognitions and principles across the first five months following preterm and term deliveries. *Infant Behavior and Development*, 37, 760-771.

The BCQ begins on the next page.

Baby Care Questionnaire

This questionnaire asks for your opinions about different aspects of child rearing. Please give your own opinions and do not worry about what others may think. You will probably agree with some statements and disagree with others. There are no right or wrong answers. Your opinions may have changed over time. Please answer based on your feelings now. You will be given an opportunity to comment on questions at the end of questionnaire.

A. Sleeping

1. How many nights in the last 3 days do the following descriptions apply? Please write a number between 0 and 3 next to each item based on where your baby was when they were sleeping.

Number of nights

- | | |
|--|--|
| a) My baby is not yet born | _____ |
| b) My baby is currently in hospital | _____ |
| c) My baby slept in a cot | _____ |
| d) My baby slept in a cot and then in my bed | _____ |
| e) My baby slept in my bed and then in a cot | _____ |
| f) My baby slept in my bed | _____ |
| g) My baby slept somewhere other than a bedroom and then slept in a cot | _____ |
| h) My baby slept somewhere other than a bedroom and then slept in my bed | _____ |
| i) My baby slept somewhere other than a cot or my bed | _____ |
| Total nights (should equal 3) | <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 150px; height: 25px;"></div> |

2. Please read each statement carefully. Circle the item that most expresses your feelings about the statement: strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D), or strongly disagree (SD).

- | | | | | |
|--|----|---|---|----|
| 1. Babies can have a good night's sleep regardless of scheduling | SA | A | D | SD |
| 2. Strict sleeping routines prevent parent(s) from enjoying their child | SA | A | D | SD |
| 3. Sleeping schedules make babies unhappy | SA | A | D | SD |
| 4. It is important to introduce a sleeping schedule as early as possible | SA | A | D | SD |
| 5. Babies benefit from a quiet room to sleep | SA | A | D | SD |
| 6. Babies benefit from a fixed napping/sleeping schedule | SA | A | D | SD |

- | | | | | |
|--|----|---|---|----|
| 7. Some days, babies need more or less sleep than other days | SA | A | D | SD |
| 8. Babies benefit from physical contact with parent(s) when they wake during the night | SA | A | D | SD |
| 9. When babies cry in the night to check if someone is near, it is best to leave them | SA | A | D | SD |

B. Feeding

1a. How are you feeding your baby? Please tick all that apply.

My baby is not yet born	Expressed breast milk
My baby is in hospital	Milk-bank
Breast	Solid food
Formula	

1b. For each day in the last 3 days, please estimate how long you fed your baby for in total when you were around (do not include times when your baby was at, for example, childcare).

	Estimated time
My baby is not yet born	
My baby is in hospital	
Day 1 (yesterday)	
Day 2 (2 days ago)	
Day 3 (3 days ago)	
Units (please circle)	minutes/hours

2. Please read each statement carefully. Circle the item that most expresses your feelings about the statement: strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D), or strongly disagree (SD).

- | | | | | |
|--|----|---|---|----|
| 1. Implementing feeding/eating schedules leads to a calm and content baby | SA | A | D | SD |
| 2. Feeding/eating routines are difficult to follow | SA | A | D | SD |
| 3. One danger of feeding/eating schedules is that babies might not get enough to eat | SA | A | D | SD |
| 4. Parent(s) should find a pattern of feeding/eating that suits the baby | SA | A | D | SD |
| 5. Baby-led feeding leads to behavioural and sleep problems | SA | A | D | SD |

- | | | | | |
|--|----|---|---|----|
| 6. Following feeding/eating routines prevents parent(s) from enjoying parenthood to the full | SA | A | D | SD |
| 7. It is important to introduce a feeding/eating schedule as early as possible | SA | A | D | SD |
| 8. Offering milk/food to a baby is a good way to test whether she/he is hungry | SA | A | D | SD |
| 9. Babies will eat whenever milk/food is offered even if they are not hungry | SA | A | D | SD |
| 10. Babies will not follow feeding/eating schedules | SA | A | D | SD |

C. Soothing

1a. For each day in the last 3 days, please estimate how long your baby cried for in total when you were around (do not include times when your baby was at, for example, childcare).

	Estimated time
My baby is not yet born	_____
My baby is in hospital	_____
Day 1 (yesterday)	_____
Day 2 (2 days ago)	_____
Day 3 (3 days ago)	_____
Units (please circle)	minutes/hours

1b. For each day in the last 3 days, please estimate how long you held/carried your baby for in total when you were around (do not include times when your baby was at, for example, childcare).

	Estimated time
My baby is not yet born	_____
My baby is in hospital	_____
Day 1 (yesterday)	_____
Day 2 (2 days ago)	_____
Day 3 (3 days ago)	_____
Units (please circle)	minutes/hours

2. Please read each statement carefully. Circle the item that most expresses your feelings about the statement: strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D), or strongly disagree (SD).

- | | | | | |
|---|----|---|---|----|
| 1. Babies with regular schedules spend less time crying | SA | A | D | SD |
| 2. Babies cry no matter what their routines | SA | A | D | SD |
| 3. Parent(s) should delay responding to a crying baby | SA | A | D | SD |
| 4. Routines lead to more crying | SA | A | D | SD |
| 5. It is a good idea to have a set time you leave a baby to calm herself/himself down, and increase this amount of time each week | SA | A | D | SD |
| 6. Physical contact such as stroking or rocking helps a baby to be calm | SA | A | D | SD |
| 7. Holding babies frequently during the day makes them more demanding | SA | A | D | SD |
| 8. Responding quickly to a crying baby leads to less crying in the long run | SA | A | D | SD |
| 9. Having a set routine helps an upset baby calm down | SA | A | D | SD |
| 10. Babies with regular schedules cry just as much as babies without regular schedules | SA | A | D | SD |
| 11. Leaving a baby to cry can cause emotional insecurity | SA | A | D | SD |

Scoring Instructions for the Baby Care Questionnaire (2013)

Parenting Practices

The BCQ measures parenting practices through quantitative responses to four items.

In the sleeping section, the practice item asks parents to indicate their child's sleeping location. Winstanley and Gattis (2013) used the sleeping practice item to evaluate bed-sharing. Bed-sharing items were: slept in a parent's bed all night; moved from parent's bed to a cot; moved from a cot to a parent's bed; and moved from somewhere other than a parent's bed or cot to a parent's bed. Bed-sharing items for each respondent were summed to create a bed-sharing variable, based on the overall number of nights of bed-sharing.

In the feeding section, the practice item asks parents to indicate what their child is fed. Winstanley and Gattis (2013) used the feeding practice item to evaluate breastfeeding. Breastfeeding was defined as when parents fed their child any form of breast milk, including milk bank, whether exclusively or in combination with formula or solids.

In the soothing section, one practice item asks parents to report duration of infant crying, and one practice item asks parents to report duration of holding their infant. Winstanley and Gattis (2013) calculated average duration of crying and holding in minutes based on the daily estimates across three days.

Parenting Principles

The BCQ measures parenting principles through ratings of statements on a 4-point Likert-type scale ranging from strongly agree (4) to strongly disagree (1). Some of the statements measure parental support for the principle of structure and some of the statements measure parental support for the principle of attunement. Below is a list of items by scale.

Items marked with R need to be reversed during scoring. After reversal the R becomes part of the item code, to indicate clearly that it has been reversed. Please see the factor loadings reported in Table 2 of Winstanley and Gattis (2013) for further information.

Scale	Caregiving Context	Item Code	R	Statement
Structure	Sleeping	S1	R	Babies can have a good night's sleep regardless of scheduling
		S2	R	Strict sleeping routines prevent parent(s) from enjoying their child
		S3	R	Sleeping schedules make babies unhappy
		S4		It is important to introduce a sleeping schedule as early as possible
		S5		Babies benefit from a quiet room to sleep
		S6		Babies benefit from a fixed napping/sleeping schedule

	Feeding	E1		Implementing feeding/eating schedules leads to a calm and content baby
		E2	R	Feeding/eating routines are difficult to follow
		E3	R	One danger of feeding/eating schedules is that babies might not get enough to eat
		E6	R	Following feeding/eating routines prevents parent(s) from enjoying parenthood to the full
		E7		It is important to introduce a feeding/eating schedule as early as possible
	Soothing	E10	R	Babies will not follow feeding/eating schedules
		So1		Babies with regular schedules spend less time crying
		So2	R	Babies cry no matter what their routines
		S04	R	Routines lead to more crying
		So9		Having a set routine helps an upset baby calm down
		So10	R	Babies with regular schedules cry just as much as babies without regular schedules
Attunement	Sleeping	S7		Some days, babies need more or less sleep than other days
		S8		Babies benefit from physical contact with parent(s) when they wake during the night
		S9	R	When babies cry in the night to check if someone is near, it is best to leave them
	Feeding	E4		Parent(s) should find a pattern of feeding/eating that suits the baby
		E5	R	Baby-led feeding leads to behavioural and sleep problems
		E8		Offering milk/food to a baby is a good way to test whether she/he is hungry
		E9	R	Babies will eat whenever milk/food is offered even if they are not hungry
	Soothing	So3	R	Parent(s) should delay responding to a crying baby
		So5	R	It is a good idea to have a set time you leave a baby to calm herself/himself down, and increase this amount of time each week
		So6		Physical contact such as stroking or rocking helps a baby to be calm
		So7	R	Holding babies frequently during the day makes them more demanding
		So8		Responding quickly to a crying baby leads to less crying in the long run
		So11		Leaving a baby to cry can cause emotional insecurity

Instructions for calculating scale scores begin on the next page.

How to Calculate Scale Scores for Structure and Attunement

Scale scores for the parenting principles of structure and attunement represent the mean score of all scale items. Calculate scale scores for structure and attunement by the following method:

1. Assign all ratings a numeric response, as shown below. Your survey software may assign numeric values to responses automatically. If so, check to ensure that the assigned values are the same as below.
 $SD = 1$ $D = 2$ $A = 3$ $SA = 4$
2. Reverse items. Items indicated with an R in the above table are reverse items and must be scored in the following way:
4 becomes 1 3 becomes 2 2 becomes 3 1 becomes 4
3. Calculate a *raw scale score* by summing all numeric item responses for a given scale. Note that if a caregiver omitted an item, that item receives no score.
4. Calculate an *adjusted scale score* by dividing the raw scale score by the number of items that received a response. Do not include items that received no response.

For example, given a sum of 47 for a scale of 18 items, with 3 items receiving no response and 15 items receiving a response, $47/15 = 3.13$ for the scale score.

SPSS Syntax to Calculate Scale Scores for Structure and Attunement

SPSS users can copy the following commands into a syntax file to reverse items and calculate scale scores. The syntax assumes that sleeping items are titled “S1”, “S2”, etc., feeding items are titled “E1”, “E2”, etc., and soothing items are titled “So1”, “So2”, etc. If your survey software has assigned numeric values to responses, you will need to check to ensure that the direction of scoring is appropriate to the scale. The highest value (4) should be assigned to “Strongly Agree” responses, and the lowest value (1) should be assigned to “Strongly Disagree” responses. The syntax also assumes that no score was entered when caregivers omitted an item.

```
COMPUTE S1r = (5-S1).  
COMPUTE S2r = (5-S2).  
COMPUTE S3r = (5-S3).  
COMPUTE S9r = (5-S9).  
COMPUTE E2r = (5-E2).  
COMPUTE E3r = (5-E3).  
COMPUTE E5r = (5-E5).  
COMPUTE E6r = (5-E6).  
COMPUTE E9r = (5-E9).  
COMPUTE E10r = (5-E10).  
COMPUTE So2r = (5-So2).  
COMPUTE So3r = (5-So3).  
COMPUTE So4r = (5-So4).  
COMPUTE So5r = (5-So5).  
COMPUTE So7r = (5-So7).  
COMPUTE So10r = (5-So10).
```

```
COMPUTE structure = mean (S1r, S2r, S3r, S4, S5, S6, E1, E2r, E3r, E6r, E7, E10r, So1, So2r, So4r,  
So9, So10r).  
COMPUTE attunement = mean (S7, S8, S9r, E4, E5r, E8, E9r, So3r, So5r, So6, So7r, So8, So11).  
  
EXECUTE.
```