



The Effect of a Brief Parenting Assessment on Parents' Plans to Discipline

Jacqueline Antoun, Victoria Lawson, Anna Whitney, Kate Carlson MD, Merrill Stoppelbein APRN, Seth Scholer MD, MPH
 Division of General Pediatrics, Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Nashville, TN, USA



Background

- Parenting is a social determinant of health - for example, physical punishment is predictive of antisocial behavior and child abuse.
- The Quick Parenting Assessment (QPA) is a validated 13-item parent support tool that identifies children exposed to unhealthy parenting including excessive use of punitive discipline, yelling, threatening, physical punishment, and humiliating language (Figure 1).
- The QPA takes one minute for parents to complete and, after training, 1-3 minutes for health care providers to review with parents.
- Elevated QPAs (scores >2) indicate exposure to unhealthy discipline.
- The QPA was integrated into the well child visit in our clinic.
- It is not clear whether the QPA, if reviewed by health care providers, affects parents' plans to discipline.

Study Aims

To determine the effect of a parenting assessment, integrated into the well child visit, on parents' plans to discipline their child at home.

Methods

- In an academic pediatric primary care clinic serving a diverse, low-income population, English, Spanish, or Arabic versions of the QPA were administered to parents of children at the 15-month, 30-month, 5-year, and 8-year well-child visits. Healthcare providers were encouraged to review the QPA with parents.
- 538 parents were invited to complete a brief questionnaire and 493 parents agreed to the participate. For this study, we focused on 186 parents who reported that their health care provider reviewed the QPA with them.
- Key measures were:
 - QPA scores
 - Parents' report of whether the QPA review affected their plans to discipline their child at home
 - For parents who planned to change how they discipline, an open-ended question was used to determine what parents planned to do differently..
- Analysis: We used bivariate analyses to explore associations between the proportion of parents who planned to change how they discipline and sociodemographic factors.

Quick Parenting Assessment (QPA)

Parents use many options to discipline their children and no parent does it right 100% of the time. To support you and your child, please let us know what YOU and OTHER CAREGIVERS do, not what you think you should do.

In the past month, what have YOU done when your child needed to be disciplined?

1. You redirected your child toward a good behavior. For example, you said something like: "Don't bite people, use your teeth to eat food" or "Don't kick the dog, let's go kick a ball!"	Yes	No
2. In general, more than once per day, you used time-out or took away privileges	Yes	No
3. In general, more than once per day, you spoke angrily or raised your voice	Yes	No
4. You told your child that he/she is going to be spanked, smacked, popped, or slapped	Yes	No
5. You gave your child a spanking, smack, pop, or slap	Yes	No
6. You told your child something like "You are a bad boy" or "You are a naughty girl!"	Yes	No
7. You spent more time with your child to talk about or show them how to improve behavior.	Yes	No

In the past month, what have your child's OTHER CAREGIVERS done when your child needed to be disciplined? SKIP questions 8-12 if you are the only caregiver.

8. In general, more than once per day, they used time-out or took away privileges	Yes	No
9. In general, more than once per day, they spoke angrily or raised their voice	Yes	No
10. They told your child that they are going to be spanked, smacked, popped, or slapped	Yes	No
11. They gave your child a spanking, smack, pop, or slap	Yes	No
12. They told your child something like "You are a bad boy" or "You are a naughty girl!"	Yes	No

Your health care provider wants to support you.

13. I would like to discuss healthy ways to respond to my child's behavior.

Yes No

Scoring: Q1 and 7 should be "Yes". However, score only q 2-6, 8-12; all should be "No".
 *I would like to review the form you completed about how you discipline your child. Thank you for filling it out. This form is important because how you discipline can affect your child's behavioral and emotional health.

Low Risk (0-2)
 "You are using healthy discipline strategies. Keep it up!"

Medium Risk (3-4)
 "Parenting can be challenging and humbling. No parent does it right 100% of the time."
 Provide healthy discipline education, first building on strengths (q 1 and 7). A one-minute option is the Play Nicey program.
 Consider follow up in 1-3 months
 If parent does not return in 1-3 months, repeat QPA at the next well visit.

High Risk (>4)
 Similar script as "Medium Risk" except consider a stronger recommendation to follow-up in 1-3 months.
 If parent does not return in 1-3 months, repeat QPA at the next well visit.

Figure 1: QPA items, scoring, and algorithm.

Results

Table 1: QPA Scores and Demographics

	N (%)
All parents	186
QPA Score*	
0-2	116 (78%)
>2	33 (22%)
Education level	
Less than high school graduate	33 (18%)
High school graduate	67 (37%)
Some college or associate degree	54 (30%)
Bachelor's or graduate degree	27 (15%)
Race/Ethnicity	
White	35 (18%)
Black	90 (47%)
Hispanic/Latino	57 (30%)
Other	9 (5%)
Number of children at home	
1	49 (27%)
2 or more	134 (73%)

*QPA forms, collected separately, were available for 149 (80%) of the 186 participants.

Figure 3: Frequencies of parents' planned change in how they will discipline (N= 44)

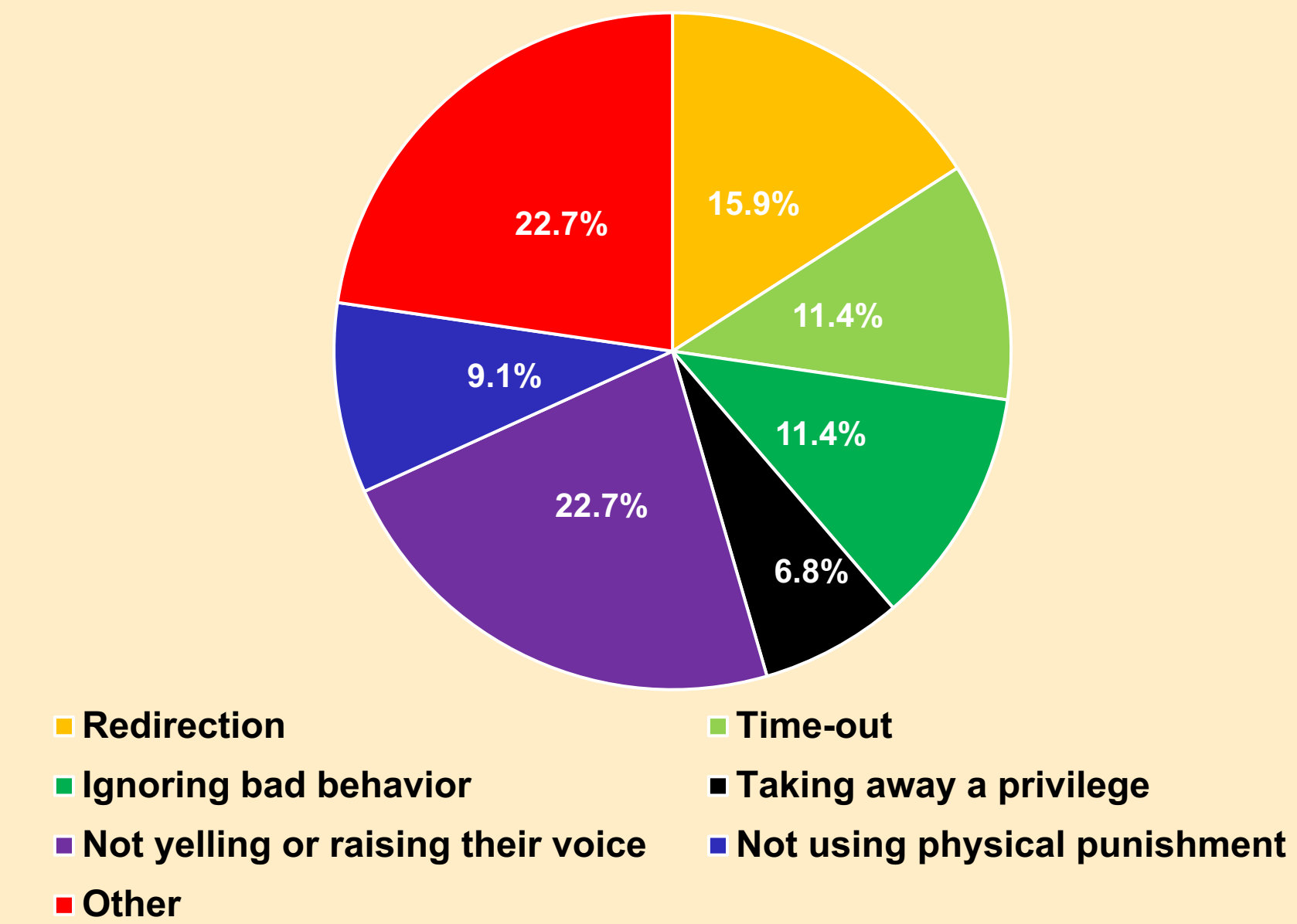
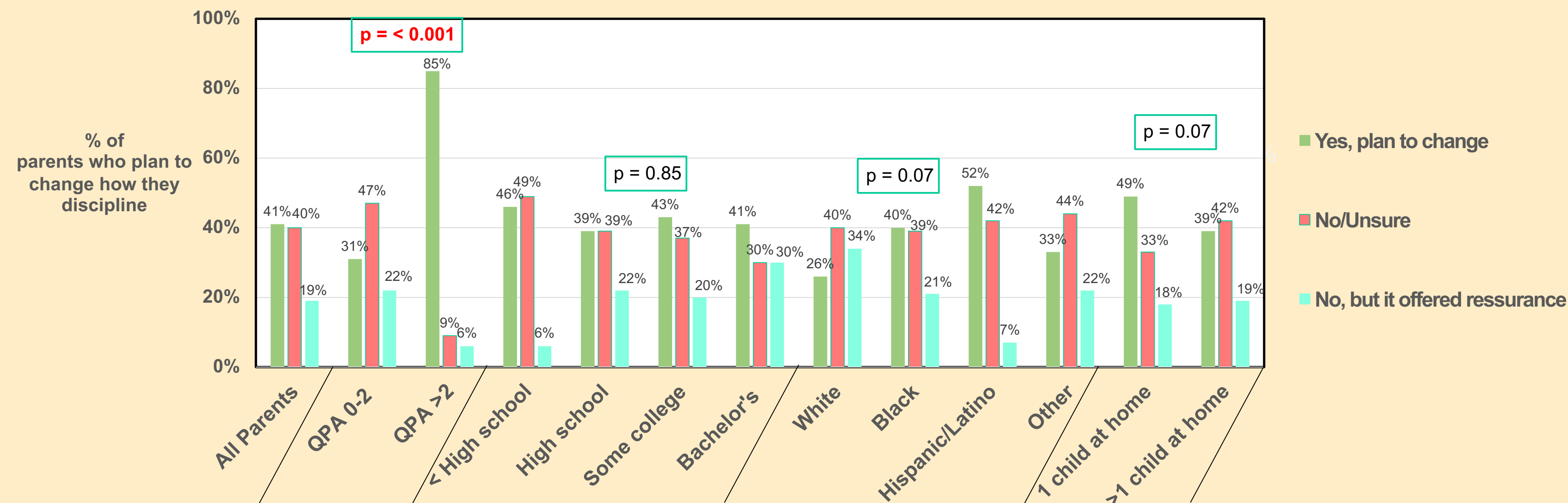


Figure 2: The Effect of the QPA Review on Parents' Plans to Discipline



Conclusions

For parents who reviewed the QPA with their health care provider as an integrated part of the well child visit, 40% planned to change how they discipline their child at home. Approximately 20% of parents were reassured by the QPA review. Parents were over twice as likely to report a planned change if the QPA was elevated. Sociodemographic factors were not associated with parents' plans to change how they discipline. Of parents who planned to change how they discipline, 9% reported that they planned to use less spanking.

Limitations

Data was collected in one clinic site serving low-income parents.

Participation bias. However, a large proportion of parents agreed to be in the study and whether the QPA was reviewed was determined by the health care provider, not the parent.

Implications

The data has implications for child abuse prevention, mitigating ACEs, and enhancing the pediatric primary care visit.

Next Steps

Trial the QPA in other clinic sites.
 Other validation studies (e.g. predictive validity).