

Preschool Behavior Q-sort

Baumrind, 1968

(As modified for use in Roberts, 1986, 1999; Roberts & Strayer, 1987)

1. HIGH: Expresses anger or frustration openly and directly.  
LOW: has difficulty expressing anger, especially to the person who causes it; or may misdirect her/his anger to someone else.
2. HIGH: Indirect with other children.  
LOW: asks directly and openly for what he/she wants.
3. HIGH: Well-coordinated and agile.  
LOW: poorly coordinated, clumsy.
4. HIGH: Willing to pursue tasks alone.  
LOW: prefers social interactions.
5. HIGH: Forcefully goes after what she/he wants.  
LOW: hesitates or is easily put off.
6. HIGH: Likes to learn new cognitive skills.  
LOW: does not actively seek new learning experiences.
7. HIGH: Sympathetic towards other children who are upset.  
LOW: indifferent; VERY LOW: teases or hits a child who cries.
8. HIGH: Does not persevere when she/he encounters frustrations.  
LOW: perseveres when difficulties are encountered.
9. HIGH: Lacks ability to get along with other children.  
LOW: gets along well.
10. HIGH: Spectator in social activities.  
LOW: participates in play.
11. HIGH: Suggestible.  
LOW: has a mind of his/her own.
12. HIGH: Gives best to work and play.  
LOW: puts little effort into what she/he does.
13. HIGH: Timid or hesitant with other children.  
LOW: bold with other children.

14. HIGH: Characteristically unoccupied.  
LOW: generally busy, always occupied.
15. HIGH: Hesitates to engage.  
LOW: knows what actions she/he wants to take and with whom.
16. HIGH: Confident.  
LOW: lacks confidence.
17. HIGH: Lacking in curiosity.  
LOW: curious.
18. HIGH: Self-starting and self-directed.  
LOW: needs direction from peers or teacher.
19. HIGH: Doesn't seem to know what activities are available in the class room.  
LOW: well-oriented, knows where things are and what is available.
20. HIGH: Likes structured tasks.  
LOW: does not like structured activities.
21. HIGH: Peer leader.  
LOW: follower.
22. HIGH: Supports or incites misbehavior by other children.  
LOW: does not support or incite misbehavior.
23. HIGH: Other children seek his/her company.  
LOW: seldom sought by other children.
24. HIGH: Paid attention to by other children.  
LOW: goes unnoticed by other children.
25. HIGH: Dependent upon any one adult, especially mother.  
LOW: self-reliant in relating to adults and teachers.
26. HIGH: Easily upset or frustrated.  
LOW: is not easily upset or distressed.
27. HIGH: Tries to evade adult authority.  
LOW: accepts adult guidance.
28. HIGH: high energy level.  
LOW: low energy level.

29. HIGH: Easily expresses pleasure, joy, or delight.  
LOW: reserved; seldom expresses pleasure or delight.
30. HIGH: Apprehensive, worried.  
LOW: comfortable, relaxed.
31. HIGH: Argues with other children to get her/his point across; assertive.  
LOW: backs down when other child is angry.
32. HIGH: Obedient.  
LOW: disobedient.
33. HIGH: Impetuous and impulsive.  
LOW: Thoughtful, deliberate.
34. HIGH: Unaware, "spaced-out", or apathetic.  
LOW: alert, lively.
35. HIGH: Helps other children carry out their plans.  
LOW: disrupts activities of other children.
36. HIGH: Does not question adult direction.  
LOW: questions authority when there is a good reason.
37. HIGH: Expresses preferences for one kind of activity over another.  
LOW: does not express preferences.
38. HIGH: Communicates well verbally.  
LOW: unclear, difficult to understand.
39. HIGH: Requires a great deal of adult supervision.  
LOW: requires very little supervision.
40. HIGH: Likes to compete with other children.  
LOW: avoids competitive situations.
41. HIGH: Concerned about adult disapproval.  
LOW: not concerned about adult disapproval.
42. HIGH: Sets goals which expand abilities, e.g., trying difficult physical activities or difficult puzzles.  
LOW: Likes to do only what is easy.

43. HIGH: Gets other children in trouble with teacher.  
LOW: protects other children from disapproval or punishment.
44. HIGH: Actively facilitates nursery school routine.  
LOW: undependable, disruptive.
45. HIGH: Seeks company of other children.  
LOW: avoids other children.
46. HIGH: Seeks contact with adults.  
LOW: does not seek out contact with adults.
47. HIGH: Suggests activities to other children, initiates play.  
LOW: seeks direction from other children.
48. HIGH: Resists domination by other children.  
LOW: submits to demands.
49. HIGH: Child attracts adult interest because of outstanding positive characteristics, such as maturity, intelligence, competence or creativity.  
LOW: not much different from other children.
50. HIGH: Socially withdrawn.  
LOW: outgoing, frequently interacts with peers and teachers.
51. HIGH: Physically courageous with playground apparatus.  
LOW: cautious.
52. HIGH: Can be trusted to do what she/he agrees to.  
LOW: cannot be trusted.
53. HIGH: Stretches to meet demands for excellence.  
LOW: retreats, does not try.
54. HIGH: Bullies other children.  
LOW: is not a bully.
55. HIGH: Understands other children's position in interaction or dispute.  
LOW: not considerate, not empathic.
56. HIGH: Content; cheerful attitude; smiles often.  
LOW: usually discontented or unhappy.

57. HIGH: Withdraws when faced with excitement or a great deal of activity.  
LOW: enjoys excitement.
58. HIGH: Friendly attitude towards staff.  
LOW: indifferent or unresponsive to staff.
59. HIGH: Samples activities aimlessly, lacks goals.  
LOW: purposive.
60. HIGH: Typically in the role of a listener.  
LOW: participates fully in group talks.
61. HIGH: Indirect in asking adults for help.  
LOW: straightforward and direct in asking adults for what she/he wants.
62. HIGH: Excludes other children from play.  
LOW: easily includes others in play.
63. HIGH: Selfish.  
LOW: shares possessions willingly.
64. HIGH: Creative and original with materials.  
LOW: not original.
65. HIGH: Blame-avoidant.  
LOW: accepts responsibility for his/ her own misbehavior.
66. HIGH: Ordinary, unoriginal in talking with others.  
LOW: creative, original, or imaginative in talking.
67. HIGH: Hits only in self-defense or doesn't hit at all.  
LOW: hits other children frequently.
68. HIGH: Tests limits set by adults.  
LOW: does not test limits.
69. HIGH: Responsible about following standard school procedures.  
LOW: does not follow basic rules.
70. HIGH: Insults, calls names, or ridicules other children.  
LOW: does not call names or ridicule others.
71. HIGH: Polite or considerate when playing with others.  
LOW: domineering, intrusive, impolite.

72. HIGH: Thoughtless or careless of other children's work.  
LOW: careful of others' work.

### Instructions for the Preschool Behavior Q-Sort Cards

In trying to gain more understanding of young children and the effects of different types of parenting, we need to have an accurate picture of the behavior of \_\_\_\_\_, whose family is participating in our research project. We would like you to indicate your impressions of this child by sorting a special set of cards that contain statements about different aspects of children's behavior in preschool settings.

An accurate description of behavior depends to a large extent on your willingness to be thoughtful and careful. Please be so! Your input is critical. The quality of your response determines the quality of the conclusions that can be drawn from the entire study.

#### The Cards and Envelopes

Each set or deck contains 72 cards. Each card contains two statements. The first statement describes some aspect of children's behavior. The second, in italics, describes its opposite. The final meaning the card has depends on which envelope it is sorted into.

There are 9 envelopes, labeled as follows:

9. Most descriptive or characteristic.
8. Quite descriptive or characteristic.
7. Fairly descriptive or characteristic.
  
6. Somewhat descriptive or characteristic.
5. Neutral, neither descriptive nor uncharacteristic.
4. Somewhat undescriptive or uncharacteristic.
  
3. Fairly undescriptive or uncharacteristic.
2. Quite undescriptive or uncharacteristic.
1. Most undescriptive or uncharacteristic.

Note that these labels refer to the first statement on the cards.

As a card is ranked low, the first phrase becomes undescriptive or uncharacteristic of the child, and the card takes on the meaning of the second statement, the statement in italics.

For example, if card 21, "HIGH: Peer leader (LOW: follower.)" is placed in envelope 6, 7, 8, or 9, it means that being a peer leader is characteristic of the child. If being a

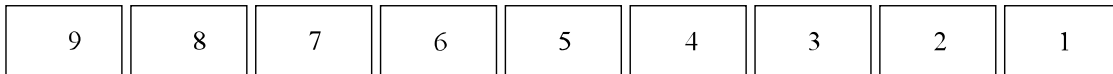
peer leader is uncharacteristic of the child, the card is placed in envelope 1, 2, 3, or 4, and indicates that the child is a follower.

Your task is to describe \_\_\_\_\_ by choosing 8 cards for each of the 9 envelopes, according to the instructions below.

How to Sort the Cards

You may wish to check off each step as it is completed.

\_\_1. Find a large cleared surface, like a desk or kitchen table, and spread out the envelopes in a row, going from 9 to 1 (Most Descriptive to Most Undescriptive):

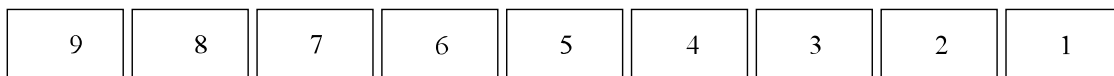


\_\_2. Take the cards and shuffle them a bit.

\_\_3. Now, reading each card carefully, make three piles of cards: one pile containing cards that are generally descriptive of the child; one pile that you're not certain about; and one pile of cards that are generally uncharacteristic or undescriptive.

It doesn't make any difference how many cards you put in each of the three piles at this time, since you'll probably have to do some switching around later. But you may find it helpful if each pile contains about the same number of cards.

Now your cards and envelopes look like this:



"Descriptive"  
Cards

"Not Sure"  
Cards

"Undescriptive"  
Cards

\_\_4. Now take the pile of descriptive cards and pick out the 8 cards that are most descriptive of this child. Put these cards on top of envelope #9. Don't put them inside yet, because you might want to shift some of them later.



- \_\_5. Next, from the cards that remain, pick out 8 cards that you think are quite descriptive and put these on top of envelope #8.
- \_\_6. From the remaining descriptive cards, pick out 8 cards that you think are somewhat descriptive and put these on top of envelope #7. (If you run out of cards from your "descriptive" pile, you'll have to add some of the more descriptive cards from your "Not Sure" pile.)
- \_\_7. Now begin at the other end. Take the pile of "undescriptive" cards and pick out the 8 cards that are most undescriptive of this child. Put these on top of envelope #1.
- \_\_8. Then pick out the 8 cards which are quite undescriptive and put them on envelope #2.
- \_\_9. From the remaining undescriptive cards, pick out 8 cards that you think are somewhat undescriptive and put these on top of envelope #3. (Again, you may have to "borrow" from your "Not Sure" pile to make the necessary 8 cards for envelope #3.)
- \_\_10. You should now have 24 cards left over. These are now to be sorted into three new piles with 8 cards in each: 8 cards that are somewhat descriptive (to be put on envelope #6.); 8 cards that are neither descriptive nor undescriptive (to be put on envelope #5); and 8 cards that are somewhat undescriptive (to be put on envelope #4).

You may find it hard, as others have, to put the specified number of cards in each pile but we must ask you to follow these directions exactly, even if you feel limited by them.

- \_\_11. Now, as a last step, look over your sort to see if there are any changes you want to make. When the cards seem to belong where you have put them, double-check to be sure that you have 8 cards in each pile. Then put each pile in the proper envelope and tuck in the flaps.

Thank you for your cooperation!

References

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