



Protective Factors Survey Frequently Asked Questions

What is the cost of the PFS?

You may download and use the PFS free of charge. It is accessible on this page of the FRIENDS website: <http://www.friendsnrc.org/outcome/pfs.htm>.

What is the purpose of the list of services on the Staff Only portion of the PFS?

The items about services were included so programs could track whether services offered were actually received. This information may be useful to programs that want to track that information. It may not be useful for others to use that section of the survey. The program specific or demographic items are not required for validity of the scale. They are optional. The survey items that are answered on the 1-7 pt. scale are the actual items that measure the protective factors and comprise the subscales.

Why did you choose a 7-point response scale?

The team that developed the PFS had many discussions about the scale and reviewed studies related to odd and even numbered scales and scale length. We made decisions about scaling (and item selection, etc.) only after extensive field testing and discussions with parent focus groups. Our experience was that neither administrators nor respondents reported any awkwardness in using the scale. The primary purpose of the PFS was to measure change in protective factors. It was critical to select a response scale that was sensitive to small amounts of change. The seven-point response scale was selected over the five-point response scale because it provided additional measurement points, thus increasing the sensitivity of the measure.

How was the reliability of the PFS tested?

The reliability of each subscale of the PFS has been estimated using an internal-consistency measure of reliability, Cronbach's coefficient alpha. Reliabilities for each subscale are provided below. For further information about the psychometric properties of the PFS, please refer to the technical report, available upon request from the University of Kansas Institute for Educational Research and Public Service.

Technical Data Subscale	Reliability
Family Functioning/Resiliency	.89
Social Support	.89
Concrete Support	.76
Nurturing and Attachment	.81

Why is there no subscale score for Knowledge of Parenting?



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Knowledge of parenting is a complex construct with different components that don't necessarily correlate. For example, knowledge of good disciplinary practices may not correlate with helping your child learn, therefore there is no theoretical reason to expect them to conform to any particular subscale structure. Calculation of a subscale score is not recommended. Means, standard deviations, and percentages at the individual item level should be used to assess an agency's progress in this area.

What instruments were used in the validation studies?

The following instruments were used in the validation studies:

- Brief Child Abuse Potential Inventory*. (BCAPI; Ondersma, Chaffin, Simpson, & LeBreton, 2005)
- Brief Cope*. (Carver, 1997)
- PRIME-MD Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ)*. (Spitzer, Kroenke, & Williams, 1999)
- Perceived Stress Scale*. (PSS; Cohen, Karmarck, & Mermelstein, 1983)
- Physical Health and Functioning*.

How long after a parent begins a program should they be given the posttest? We are an open-ended parent support program. Parents sometimes participate in our program for many years.

Agencies should take theoretical considerations (estimated time for program impact) as well as logistical details (accessibility of clients) to determine the optimal time for survey administration.

Which items are appropriate for first time parents in a prenatal program?

Three of the PFS subscales (Concrete Support, Emotional Support, Family Functioning and Resiliency) refer to the family and could be answered by first time parents with no children in the home.

If parents are receiving services between the time they are pregnant and after the child is born, it would be appropriate to complete questions 1-11 before the child is born and then questions 1-20 after the child is born. The reason for repeating questions 1-11 is that protective factors may change when the child is born and it's important to understand how the protective factors are affected as a system. In terms of analysis, questions 1-11 could be examined using a time-series design, where prenatal serves as time point one, after birth is time point two, and end of program is time point three.

What age should a child be before a first-time parent should complete the form?

The instrument was validated for use with parents of children of all ages.

Some items refer to a relationship with a specific child (e.g., when I discipline my child, I lose control). Our program will serve multiple children from a single household. Is it legitimate to answer these questions repeatedly, once for each child in our program?

The survey asks respondents to select one child – the child they are receiving services for or the child they think will benefit most from their participation in services. If participants have several children for whom they are receiving services, instruct them to pick one (it doesn't matter which one) and keep that same child in mind when responding to the questions. Although the questions could be asked repeatedly, the instrument has not been validated for this use. Moreover, the database is limited to one set of responses per question.



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Are any subscales invalidated if a respondent lists a different child on the posttest from the one listed on the pretest?

The question about the target child's age is intended as a PROMPT for participants to encourage them to think about only one child when responding to the items. Its primary purpose is to help participants respond to the items in a consistent way by thinking about one child. In validity studies, we did not examine whether participants used the same target child at pretest and posttest. The survey functioned well without looking at this variable.

If the agency has the time, they can look at each participant's pretest and posttest data to ensure that the target child is the same (and retain only the responses for which the target child is the same). This will strengthen the rigor of the survey findings. However, our validity studies suggest it is appropriate to analyze the data without taking this variable into consideration.

How are the questions answered if the child does not live with the respondent?

The survey is intended to be given to caregivers. Some parents involved in services may have had their children removed from their care (either through CPS intervention or a divorce/custody situation). If it is probable they will care for their children sometime in the future—even if they never actually reside with that caregiver—and they are involved in prevention services, it is appropriate to give them the survey.

Is the PFS an appropriate tool for parents of teenagers?

The PFS appears to be an appropriate tool for use with parents of teenagers. The Nurturing and Attachment subscale and individual Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development items (with the exception of Item 13, "I know how to help my child learn") appear to be the most impacted by the age of the identified child (located between Items 11 and 12). In general, caregivers of younger children tend to respond higher on all subscales/items of the PFS than do caregivers of older children.

A possible explanation for these differences might be that the challenges of having an older child slightly lower the Nurturing and Attachment subscale and Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development items; alternatively, it might be that caregivers with older children have more parenting experience (and are older in age) and better recognize their areas for growth as caregivers and are more willing to report those. Agencies might keep these differences in mind when collapsing scores across identified children from birth to age 18.

Some items refer to “family”. Is there a rule about the definition of family? Who constitutes a family?

Respondents are encouraged to construct their own definition of family. It is fine if they want to include children living in the household who are not directly related to them, or close relatives that may or may not live with them.

Are there cutoff scores identified in the technical material?

No, there are no cutoff scores for the PFS.

Could this survey be used along with other parenting surveys effectively as a type of check & balance tool?

Yes. The PFS can be used with other measures to validate other instruments and/or increase the validity of the evaluation findings.

Is there a Spanish version of the PFS?



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Yes, a Spanish adaptation of the PFS has been tested and found to be valid and reliable. It can be downloaded free of cost from the FRIENDS website.

Is there a retrospective version of the PFS?

A retrospective version of the tool has not been tested sufficiently to be officially released by FRIENDS.

Do the database reports provide information on the statistical significance of scores?

The PFS report contains pretest/posttest means and standard deviations. To measure change, the percent of clients with improvements in scores from pretest to posttest is reported. NOTE: The PFS database 2.0 will allow users to run t-tests on pre and post subscale scores.

The reliability of the subscales is reported in the PFS Field Test Report. All four subscales demonstrated acceptable levels of reliability ($\alpha > .7$). Agencies interested in conducting significance tests are encouraged to use a dependent samples t-test to compare pretest/posttest means. As with all significance testing, data should be screened prior to analysis.

If the database is used, does FRIENDS have access to each site's local data?

No. Once the database has been downloaded, FRIENDS does not have access to the data.

How long will agency data be retained on the PFS database?

After you download the PFS database, the data is stored on your local computer or network drive. Your database manager determines how long the data is retained. The database is not web-based.

Can we aggregate data from several agencies?

The database is set up to aggregate data across agencies. The database manager determines how the data is organized and reported. Please read the "read me" document on the FRIENDS website for details.

Is the downloadable PFS Database compatible with Apple / Mac computers or only PCs / Windows?

The PFS database only works in a Windows environment.

What are the Psychometric Properties of the PFS?

The four scales of the PFS demonstrate high internal consistency (.76 - .89). Temporal stability estimates are also adequate (.52 - .75). Content validity, construct validity, and criterion validity were also examined and provide evidence that the PFS is a valid measure of multiple protective factors against child maltreatment. In two separate studies, the PFS subscales were found to be negatively related to stress, depression, and risk for child maltreatment, and positively related to adaptive coping and caregiver health.

References

Counts, J.M., et al. The development and validation of the protective factors survey: A self-report measure of protective factors against child maltreatment. *Child Abuse & Neglect* (2010), *Child Abuse & Neglect* Volume 34, Issue 10, October 2010, Pages 762-772



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What were the demographics of the population used in the PFS field trials?

Race/ethnicity:	Pilot Study N=349	Study II N=249	Study III N=291
Hispanic/Latino	52.1%	5.60%	8.90%
White (non-Hispanic)	28.7%	61.80%	62.20%
African American	12.0%	9.20%	15.80%
Black (African Nationals/Caribbean Islanders)	5.60%		8.20%
Native American (American Indian/Alaskan Native)	12%		1.40%
Asian/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders	< 1%		0.30%
Multi-Racial	2.80%		2.40%
Marital Status	N=330	N=248	N=291
Married	31.8%	39%	39.5%
Partnered	7.6%	9.2%	9.6%
Single	43.9%	36.1%	34.7%
Divorced	7.3%	7.6%	7.2%
Widowed	0.9%	0.8%	0.7%
Separated	8.5%	6.8%	6.9%
Education	Pilot Study N=324	Study II N = 248	Study III N=291
Elementary or junior high school	14.8 %	0.4 %	3.8%
Some high school	32.4 %	2.8 %	17.2%
High school diploma or GED	7.8 %	21.3%	29.6%
Trade/vocation school	6.8 %	6 %	6.9%
Some college	4.9 %	18.9%	22%
Housing	N=72	N=247	N=291
Own	12.5 %	24.5 %	32%
Rent	61.1 %	53.8 %	52.6%
Shared housing	22.2 %	18.1 %	12.4%
Temporary	4.2 %	2.8 %	2.1%
Services	N/A	N = 248	N=291
Food stamps	N/A	47.8 %	42.3%
Medicaid	N/A	65.9 %	52.6%
Earned income tax credit	N/A	23.3 %	14.4%
TANF	N/A	6.4 %	10.3%
Head start/Early Head Start	N/A	10.8 %	10%
Income Level	N=70	N=245	N=291
\$0-10,000	40 %	41 %	32%
\$10,001-\$20,000	28.6%	22.5%	19.6%
\$20,001-30,000	25.7 %	16.9 %	14.8
\$30,001-40,000	2.9 %	7.2 %	9.3%
\$40,001-50,000	2.9 %	5.2 %	8.6%
More than \$50,000	0%	5.6 5	13.4%