



Parenting Consistency

Collected Jan – Dec 09, Jan– Apr 10, May– Dec 11
Analyzed April 2012

Monitor Introduction

The purpose of the Parenting Consistency module is to contribute to local knowledge regarding parenting capacity, specifically with respect to children under 12 years of age. The module was designed based on standard questions that were used in the now inactive National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth¹, a survey that commenced in 1994 and was a joint project between Statistics Canada and Human Resources and Social Development Canada.

This RRFSS module relies on a parenting consistency index developed by the Canadian National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth, ranging on a scale of 0 to 20. The higher the score, the more often parents engage in positive parenting activities. Parents (the child's natural parents, step-parents, guardians, grandparents, or siblings who are responsible for raising the child) with children under the age of 12 were asked a series of five questions to determine the frequency of specific activities. These activities included: praising their child; talking or playing with their child; laughing with their child; doing something special with their child that the child enjoys; and, playing games with their child. Each question was scored with a value ranging between 0 (never) and 4 (many times a day). The responses from each of these five questions were then summed to give a total score, ranging between 0 and 20.

The scores were assessed using either the 1994 Canadian National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth national average as a comparison point (above or below 13.5) and by classifying parents into one of four categories: low scores (0 to 5); lower-mid scores (6 to 10); higher-mid scores (11 to 15); and, high scores (16 to 20). A more recent national average from the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth is not readily available.

A total of 590 adults aged 18 years and older who were responsible for raising at least one child under the age of 12 in Waterloo Region were included in this module. The survey questions were administered from January 2009 to April 2010 and May 2011 to December 2011 (cycles 3 to 6, and 8 to 9). Estimates are presented with 95% confidence intervals (CI) and appear in the following format: (CI: xx.x-xx.x).

Fast Facts:

- Average parenting consistency health index score for Waterloo Region **16.1** (CI: 15.7-16.6)
- Per cent of parents who scored above the Canadian average **82.2%** (CI: 76.2-88.1)
- Factors that positively influence parents' score:
Younger child, younger parent and absence of siblings

¹ Canadian Council on Social Development. (2006). *The progress of Canada's children and youth, 2006*. Canadian Council on Social Development.

Majority of Waterloo Region parents score high in parenting consistency

In 2009/2010 and 2011, Waterloo Region parents with a child under the age of 12 were asked five questions which were used to calculate the parenting consistency index. Overall scores for the five component questions for 2011 were as follows:

- **94.7%** (CI: 91.3-98.1) of parents praise their child at least once daily,
- **89.4%** (CI: 84.3-94.4) of parents talk or play with their child for five minutes or more at least once daily,
- **92.9%** (CI: 89.0-96.8) of parents laugh with their child at least once daily,
- **53.7%** (CI: 45.8-61.5) of parents do something with their child that the child enjoys doing at least once daily, and
- **53.1%** (CI: 45.2-61.0) of parents play games, sports or hobbies with their child at least once daily.

The scores were similar between 2009/2010 and 2011 for all five questions.

In 2009/2010, parents in Waterloo Region with a child under the age of 12 obtained an average a parenting consistency score of **15.8** (CI: 15.5-16.1) and in 2011 the average score was **16.1** (CI: 15.7-16.6). Both of these scores are above the 1994 Canadian national average of 13.5 from the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth. The majority of parents scored above 13.5 in both 2009/2010 and 2011 (**78.6%** (CI: 74.2-83.0) and **82.2%** (CI: 76.2-88.1) respectively). When classified into the four score categories, i.e., low (0-5), lower-mid (6-10), higher-mid (11-15) and high (16-20), none of the parents surveyed were classified in the low range and the majority were in the high range (Table 1). There were no significant differences in the proportion of parents who scored in the four categories from 2009/2010 to 2011.

Table 1: Per cent of parents with a child under 12 years of age who scored in the low range, lower-mid range, higher-mid range or the high range on the parenting consistency index, by year, Waterloo Region, 2009/2010 and 2011

	Low Range (0 to 5)	Lower-mid range (6 to 10)	Higher-mid range (11 to 15)	High Range (16 to 20)
2009/2010	0.0%	3.4% ^E (CI: 1.5-5.3)	40.3% (CI: 34.4-46.2)	54.0% (CI: 48.0-59.9)
2011	0.0%	5.7% ^E (CI: 2.0-9.4)	29.0% (CI: 27.8-36.2)	65.3% (CI: 57.7-72.8)

The superscript "E" denotes high sampling variability, and estimates must be interpreted with caution.

In 2011, there were no significant differences in the average parenting consistency score by sex of parent, or household income levels. There were significant differences by education, municipality, age of the child, age of the parents and presence of siblings.

Significant differences existed by education level

In 2011, parents who had some post-secondary schooling or had a university/college degree/diploma had a significantly higher average score (**16.5** (CI: 16.0-17.4)) than parents who only had a high school diploma or less (**15.4** (CI: 14.3-16.4)).

Significant differences existed by geography

In 2011, parents who lived in the City of Waterloo or the City of Kitchener had a significantly higher average score than parents who lived in the surrounding townships (Table 2).

Table 2: Average parenting consistency index score, by municipality, Waterloo Region, 2011

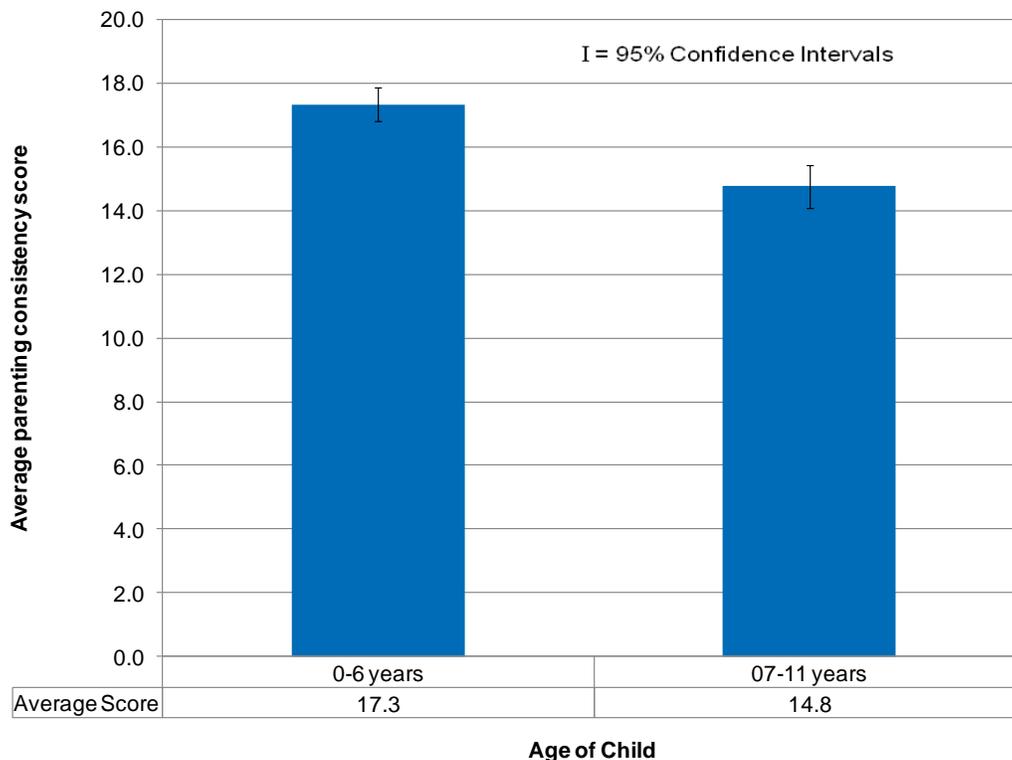
	Cambridge	Kitchener	Waterloo	Townships
Average Score	15.3 (CI: 14.2-16.3)	16.7 (CI: 16.0-17.4) ^x	17.0 (CI: 16.0-18.1) ^y	14.4 (CI: 13.3-15.6) ^{x,y}

x,y,z...Represent statistically significant differences between two proportions (%) with a p-value <0.05, e.g. two proportions with an ^x next to them are statistically different from each other.

Significant differences existed by age of child

In 2011, the majority of parents had scores in the higher-mid and high ranges, regardless of the age of the child – **98.9%** (CI: 96.7-100) of parents with children aged 0 to 6 years (younger children) scored in these upper ranges (i.e., scores of 11-20) while **88.8%** (CI: 81.3-96.3) of parents with children aged 7 to 11 years (older children) scored within these ranges. There was a significant difference between the average scores based on the age of the child (Figure 1). Parents with children aged 0 to 6 had a significantly higher average score than parents with children aged 7 to 11 (**17.3** (CI: 16.8-17.9) and **14.8** (CI: 14.1-15.4) respectively).

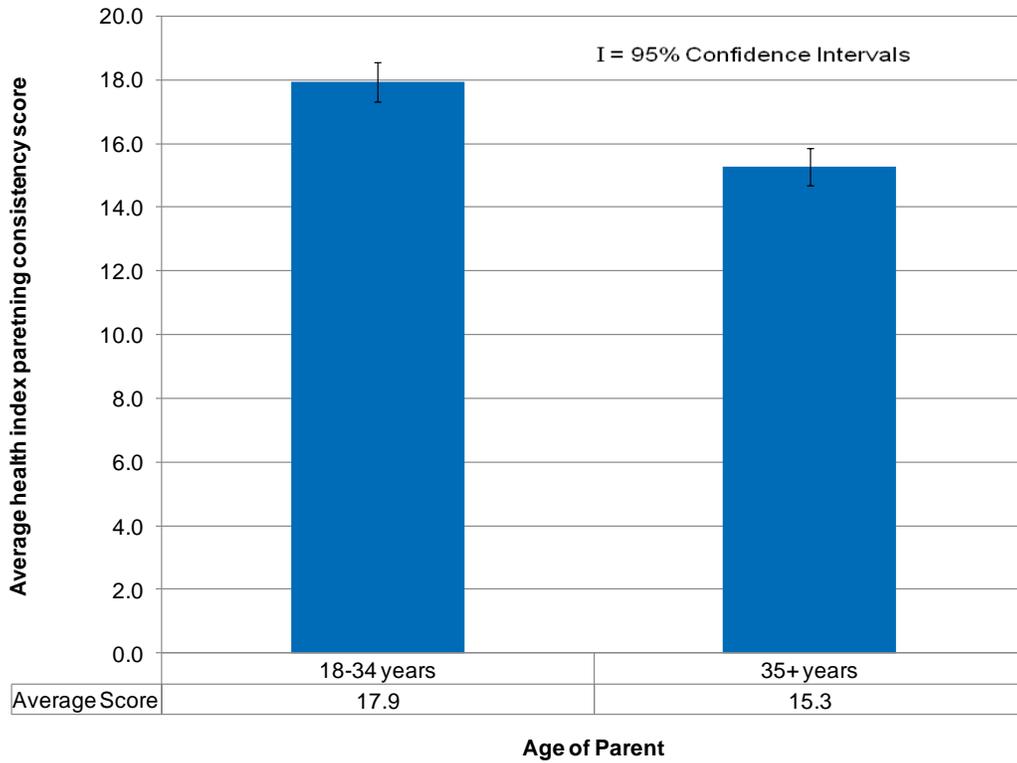
Figure 1: Average parenting consistency score, by age of child, Waterloo Region, 2011



Significant differences existed by age of parent

In 2011, the average score for younger parents (**17.9** (CI: 17.3-18.6)) was significantly higher than for older parents (**15.3** (CI: 14.7-15.8)) (Figure 2).

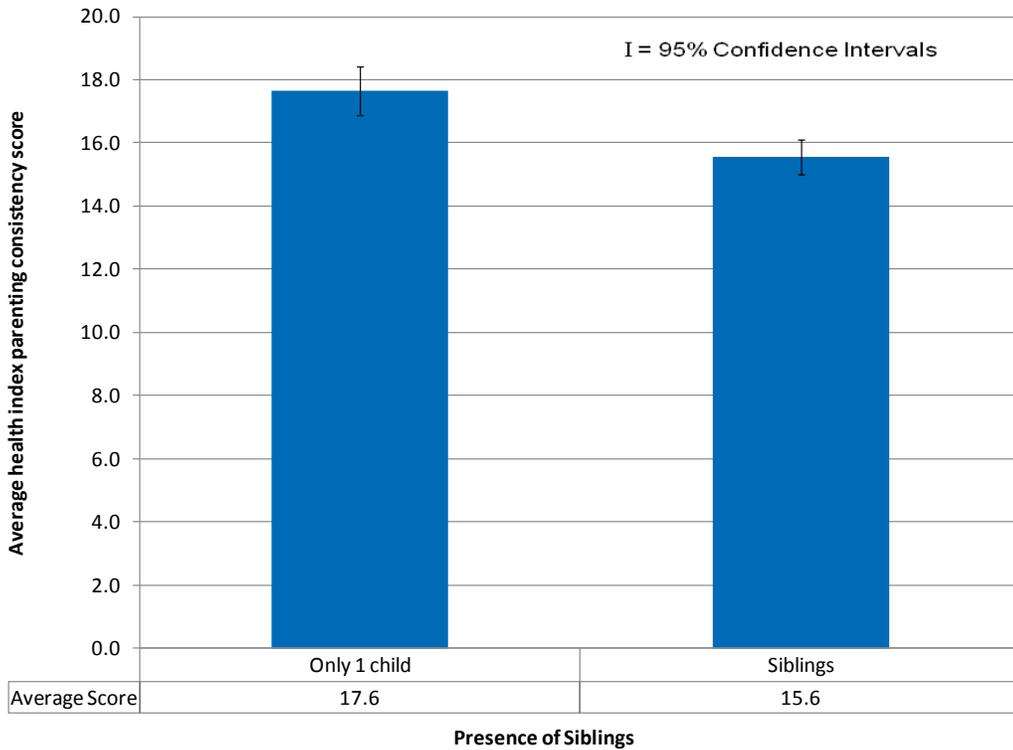
Figure 2: Average parenting consistency score, by age of parent, Waterloo Region, 2011



Significant differences existed by presence of other children in the household

In 2011, the average score for parents with one child (**17.6** (CI: 16.9-18.4)) was significantly higher than parents with more than one child (**15.6** (CI: 15.0-16.1)) (Figure 4).

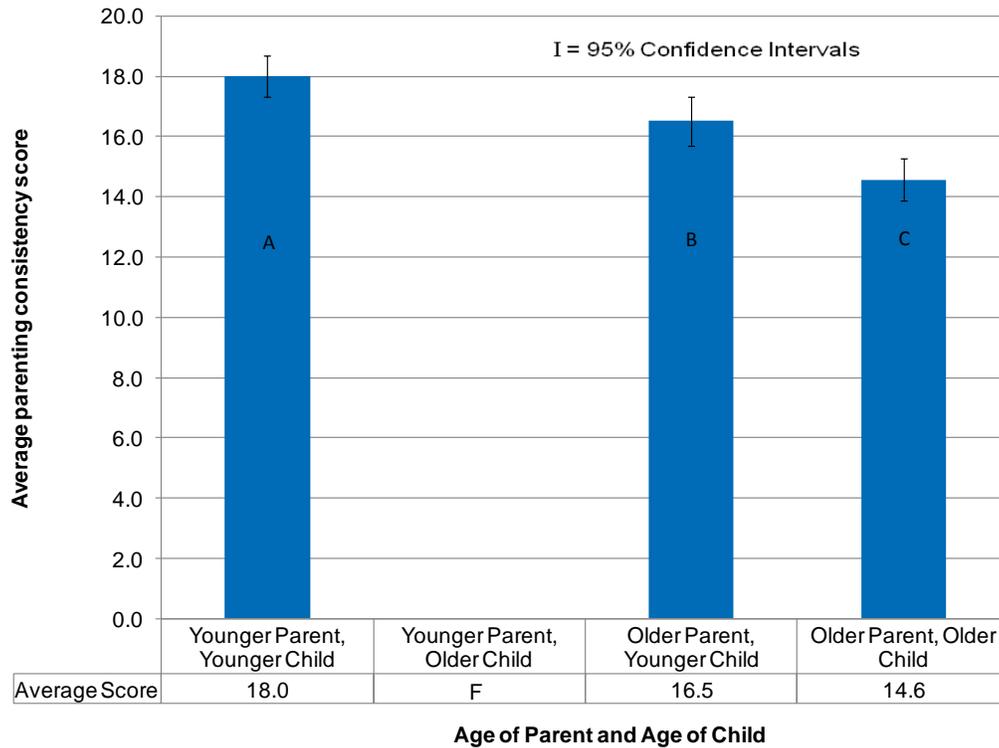
Figure 3: Average parenting consistency score, by presence of siblings, Waterloo Region, 2011



Significant differences existed by age of child and age of parent, and by age of child and presence of siblings

When examining both the age of child and parent, there was a significant difference in the average score in three of the four categories in 2011. Younger parents with younger children (A) (18.0 (CI: 17.3-18.7)) have a higher average score than older parents with either younger or older children (B and C) (16.5 (CI: 15.7-17.3) and 14.6 (CI: 13.9-15.3) respectively). As well, older parents with younger children (B) have a higher average score than older parents with older children (C) (Figure 4).

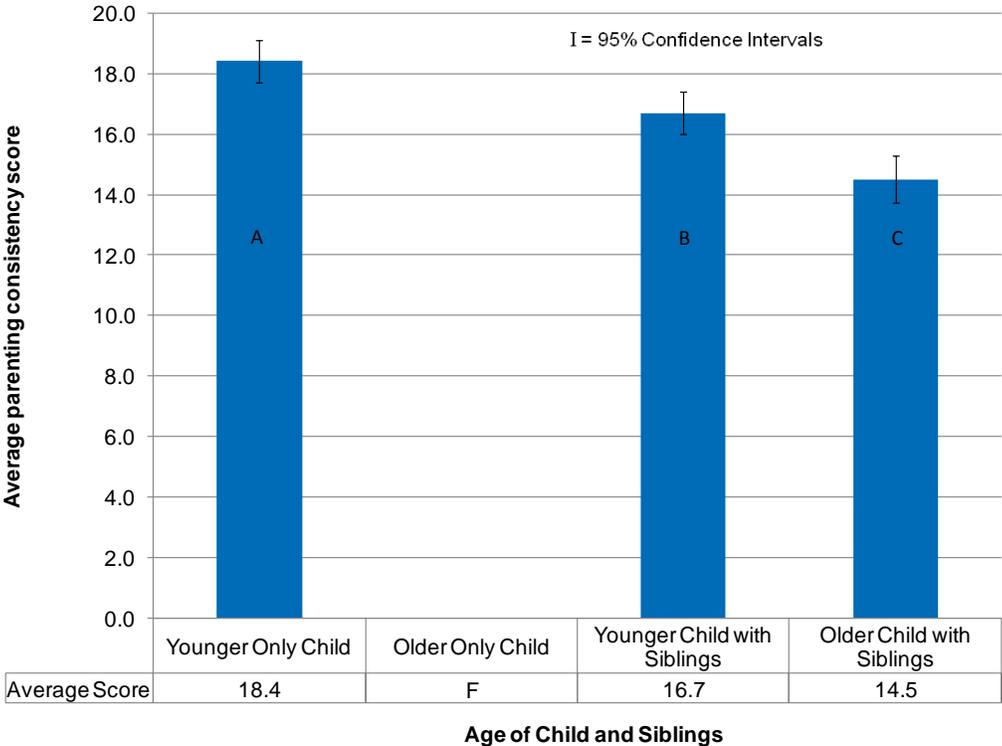
Figure 4: Average parenting consistency score, by age of parent age and child, Waterloo Region, 2011



Younger Parent indicates parent aged 18-34, Older parent indicates parent aged 35+, Younger child indicates child aged 0-6, Older child indicates child aged 7-11
 The "F" denotes unacceptable sampling variability, and estimates or conclusions based on these data will be unreliable and most likely invalid

When examining both the age of the child and the presence of siblings in 2011 there were significant differences for three of the four combinations. The parents of younger children without siblings (A) (**18.4** (CI: 17.7-19.1)) had a significantly higher average score than parents of younger children with siblings and parents with older children without siblings (B and C) (**16.7** (CI: 16.0-17.4) and **14.5** (CI: 13.7-15.3) respectively). Parents of younger children with siblings (B) had a significantly higher average score than parents of older children with siblings (C) (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Average parenting consistency index score, by child’s age and presence of siblings, Waterloo Region, 2011

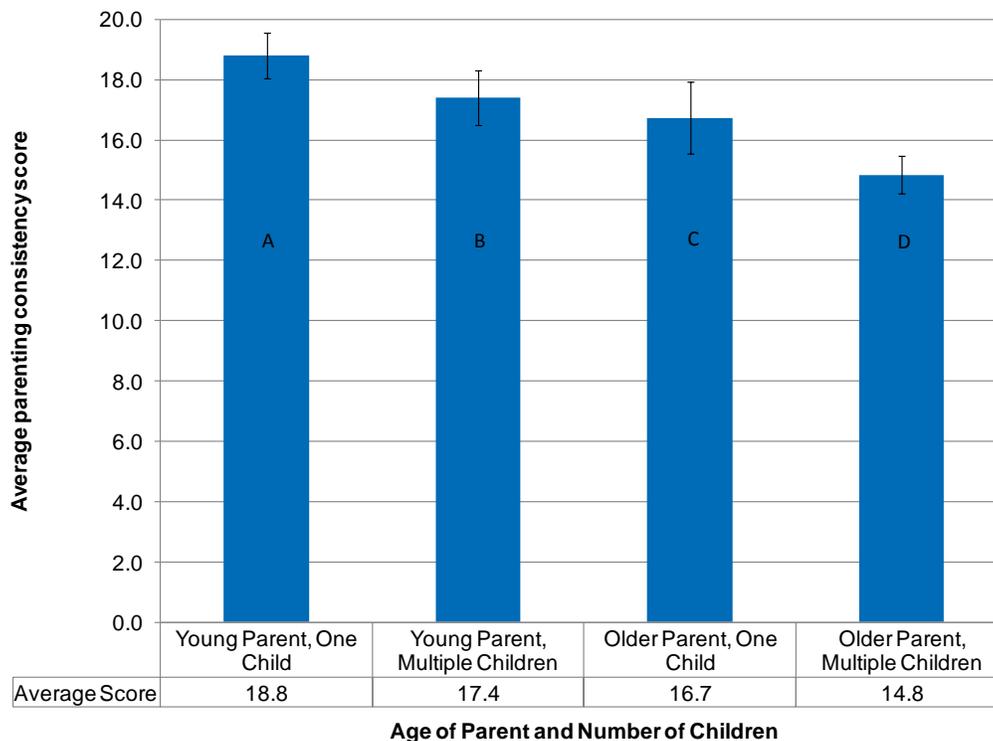


Younger child indicates child aged 0-6, Older child indicates child aged 7-11, a sibling can be any child in the same household under the age of 18

The “F” denotes unacceptable sampling variability, and estimates or conclusions based on these data will be unreliable and most likely invalid

When examining age of parent and number of children from 2011 there were significant difference between most pairings. Younger parents with only one child (A) (**18.8** (CI: 18.0-19.6)) had a significantly higher average score than older parents with only one child and older parents with multiple children (C and D) (**16.7** (CI: 15.5-17.9) and **14.8** (CI: 14.2-15.5) respectively). Younger parents with multiple children (B) (**17.4** (CI: 16.5-18.3)) had a significantly higher average score than older parents with multiple children (D). As well, older parents with only one child (C) had a significantly higher average score than older parents with multiple children (D) (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Average parenting consistency score, by age of parent and number of children, Waterloo Region, 2011



Younger Parent indicates parent aged 18-34, Older parent indicates parent aged 35

About RRFSS survey

Information here is presented from the Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System (RRFSS). RRFSS is an on-going telephone survey occurring in participating public health units across Ontario. On a monthly basis, a random sample of approximately 100 adults aged 18 and older are interviewed regarding risk behaviours of importance to public health. The survey is conducted by the Institute for Social Research (ISR) at York University, on behalf of Region of Waterloo Public Health. For more information, please visit www.rfss.on.ca

Analyzed Questions (Total Weighted Sample = 603)

- Now some questions about parent and child relationships. [If more than one child LESS than 12 years old] How old is this child? [The child with the LAST birthday] (n=590)
- What is your relationship to [name of child], are you a parent, step-parent, legal guardian, grand-parent, brother, sister, or something else? (n=590)
- If you are the step-parent, legal guardian, grand-parent, brother, sister or of another relationship to the child, are you completely or partially responsible for raising [name of child]? (n=35)
- First, how often do you praise [name of child], by saying something like: "Good for you!" or "What a nice thing you did!" or "That's good going!" Do you do this many times a day, one or two times a day, a few times a week, about once a week or less, or never? (n=564)
- How often do you and [name of child] talk or play with each other, focusing attention on each other for five minutes or more, just for fun? Do you do this many times each day, one or two times a day, a few times a week, about once a week or less, or never? (n=565)
- How often do you and [name of child] laugh together? Do you do this many times each day, one or two times a day, a few times a week, about once a week or less, or never? (n=562)
- How often do you do something special with [name of child] that he/she enjoys? Do you do this many times each day, one or two times a day, a few times a week, about once a week or less, or never? (n=564)
- How often do you play games with [name of child] or How often do you play sports, hobbies, or games with [name of child]? Do you do this many times each day, one or two times a day, a few times a week, about once a week or less, or never? (n=561)

Analyzed Indicators

- Average parenting consistency score of parents (18+) (n=548)
- Per cent of parents (18+) who fall below/above the Canadian average as indicated on 1994 NLSCY (13.5 out of 20). (n=548)
- Per cent of parents (18+) who score in the lowest to highest quartiles of the scale. (n=548)

Important definitions and cautions:

- All data were analyzed according to the RRFSS Manual of Operations. The superscript "E" denotes high sampling variability, and estimates must be interpreted with caution. The superscript "F" denotes unacceptable sampling variability, and estimates or conclusions based on these data will be unreliable and most likely invalid. The sample was weighted to reflect the number of adults in a household.
- A "module" in RRFSS is generally a self-contained group of questions on a specific public health topic. Generally, modules may be added or taken off the RRFSS every 4 month period (cycle) of the on-going survey system.

- Confidence intervals and coefficient of variation were calculated using unweighted sample sizes and weighted estimates.
- Tests of significance were performed and statistically significant differences were determined by p-value <0.05. The terms “significant” and “significance” indicates a statistically significant difference.
- The survey was only administered in English, using a random digit dialing methodology and represents the behaviours, attitudes, and beliefs of adults in Waterloo Region.
- Responses which include “don’t know” and “refused” are generally removed from analysis when they represent less than 5% of the sample.
- The term “children in the household” refers to individuals under the age of 18 years.

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