



Instruments for the Assessment of Coparenting: A Systematic Review

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Abstract

In light of the increasing variability in family structures, coparenting has attracted growing attention as a crucial dimension on which to evaluate children's mental health across different family structures. In this study, we present a systematic review of the available measures for the assessment of coparenting. After duplicate removal, screening, and eligibility assessment, 26 instruments were selected. Due to the importance of the coparental relationship to children's mental health, special attention was paid to the characteristics that contribute to enhancing the instruments' suitability for use in clinical contexts. The results show a great increase in the number of published instruments designed to assess coparenting. The review also found some instruments to be more suitable than others for use in clinical contexts due to their time-efficiency, their psychometric properties and/or to other dimensions. This review reinforces the importance of developing instruments that allow for the assessment of coparenting and contributes to the body of knowledge in the field by offering information of interest to professionals dealing with families.

Keywords Coparenting · Assessment · Systematic review · Co-parenting · Measurement · Psychometrics

Highlights

- Coparenting should be assessed as an important factor regarding children's mental health.
- There is a need for instruments that assess coparenting across family structures.
- Coparenting should be evaluated with other family relationships.

Family structure encompasses a number of different systems. The parent-child subsystem constitutes the parenting relationship within a given family. This system is dyadic, and it includes the individual relationships of each parent with the child. Meanwhile, the parent subsystem also plays a central role in regulating family interplay (Minuchin 1974). This subsystem is defined by the interactions between the two parental figures, and consists of two main relationships: the marital relationship (the couple's way of

relating to one another) and the coparenting relationship (the parental interactions involved in caring for and ensuring the well-being of their children) (Margolin et al. 2001).

Previous researchers have variously conceptualized coparenting either as a triadic relationship or as a dyadic construct with a triadic manifestation. The concept's role as a mediating factor between individual parenting and the marital relationship has also been discussed in the literature. Coparenting is specifically connected to the collaboration between the two parents with regard to childrearing (Feinberg 2003; Lamela and Figueiredo 2016). In other words, the term coparenting refers to horizontal interactions between the two parents, while the word parenting describes the vertical interplay between a given parent and his or her child (Lamela and Figueiredo 2016).

Although there is no single, uncontested theory of coparenting, a number of scholars have posed comprehensive theories of the concept. For example, Feinberg and Sakuma (2011) described four overlapping constructs that summarize the domains described by researchers: agreement

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on child-rearing goals and approaches; division of child-rearing labor; support vs. undermining of the other parent; and mutual regulation of family norms and interactions.

Elsewhere, Belsky et al. (1996) and McHale (1995) drew a distinction between supportive coparenting and undermining coparenting. These two categories have also been labelled as cooperative and competitive coparenting. Supportive coparenting is characterized by the “affirmation of the other’s competency as a parent, acknowledging and respecting the other’s contributions, and upholding the other’s parenting decisions and authority” (Feinberg 2003). Meanwhile, competitive coparenting is marked by “parental undermining of the other parent through criticism, disparagement, and blame” (Belsky et al. 1996; McHale 1995). McHale (1997) later observed that these dynamics could take place either overtly or covertly, depending on whether the interactions between the coparents take place when the other parent is absent (*covert* coparenting) or present (*overt* coparenting).

Coparenting is a characteristic feature of all family systems (McHale and Lindahl 2011), but there seem to be differences between functional and dysfunctional coparenting. The issue of how these differences are manifested throughout the whole range of family types is worthy of special attention. It is clear that family structure and organization in the Western world have undergone widespread transformations over the past few decades. As a result, a range of new family structures have emerged, including divorced families, cohabitating couples, same-sex couples, reconstituted families, unmarried parents and a variety of other kinds of family systems (Casares 2008; Hamilton et al. 2010). The inherent complexity associated with the constant changes to the family system has eroded the established definitions of the family’s dimensions and its functional and dysfunctional characteristics.

Research has shown that children can attain positive outcomes within a number of different family structures. What matters most is the effectiveness of family processes and the quality of relationships within a family (Walsh 2006). Studies have found evidence of relationships between coparenting dynamics and both parental adjustment and parenting quality (Feinberg et al. 2012). For instance, a weak coparenting alliance has been linked to greater stress in resident fathers (Bronte-Tinkew et al. 2010). Conversely, a strong parenting alliance has been linked to better and warmer parenting quality and to greater self-efficacy in both mothers and fathers from a wide range of racial and socioeconomic backgrounds, all of them with children of between two and seven years of age (Abidin and Brunner 1995).

Previous research has empirically established the influence of coparenting on children’s likelihood of developing certain externalizing and internalizing symptoms. In fact,

coparenting has been found to independently predict children’s degree of psychological adjustment (Feinberg et al. 2012; Teubert and Pinquart 2010; Zemp et al. 2018). For instance, Umemura et al. (2015) found that competitive coparenting during toddlerhood (2 year-old children) to be a risk factor and showed that it predicted the emergence of psychological problems and symptoms later in childhood (at age 7). The issues found to be linked to this coparenting style included attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), oppositional defiant disorder (ODD), affective disorder and somatic complaints.

More specifically, strong links have been established between an undermining coparenting style and negative outcomes for children. These negative consequences mainly take the form of externalizing symptoms (Davies and Lindsay 2001; Solmeyer et al. 2014) such as aggressive behavior (Feldman et al. 2010), internalizing symptoms sometimes appear as well (Davies and Lindsay 2001; Kolak and Vernon-Feagans 2008). Murphy et al. (2016) found that externalizing behavior was predicted by competitive coparenting, even when controlling for the variance related to a low degree of cooperation in coparenting, an adverse family-emotional environment and family conflict.

Longitudinal studies that examined both parental characteristics and parenting practices have shown these phenomena can play a bigger role in children’s wellbeing than the overall quality of a couple’s relationship (Feinberg et al. 2012). Research shows two ways in which coparenting can affect children’s outcomes: directly, by endangering their emotional stability in the family (Davies and Cummings 1994), and indirectly, through coparenting’s impact on individual parenting (Erel and Burman 1995; Margolin et al. 2001). In terms of influencing children’s outcomes, coparenting has been shown to explain an additional variance, one that neither parenting itself nor the marital relationship can explain (Teubert and Pinquart 2010). As would be expected in light of the above, coparenting has been well established as a predictor for psychopathology in children (Johnson et al. 1999; Kolak and Vernon-Feagans 2008), both in intact nuclear families and in post-divorce family systems (Ahrons 2007).

Separately, researchers have found links between a low degree of cooperative coparenting and negative psychological outcomes in children (Schoppe-Sullivan et al. 2001). Conversely, a highly cooperative coparenting style has shown to be related to positive outcomes in children, including improvements in social competence (McHale et al. 1999) and academic competence (McHale et al. 2000b) and a decreased prevalence of externalizing symptoms (Schoppe-Sullivan et al. 2001). In short, parenting practices that feature cooperative relationships tend to lead to positive social and relational outcomes in children (Schoppe-Sullivan et al. 2001; Umemura et al. 2015).

In a reflection of the growing interest in coparenting, researchers have developed a number of ways to assess the concept, both in research and in clinical settings (techniques including observational tools, questionnaires/self-reports, etc.). However, the existence of a range of different ways of measuring coparenting inevitably means that there are different ways of understanding the underlying concept. An additional complication emerges when one considers that most of the studies aimed at assessing coparenting have been carried out in the United States, and, as some researchers have pointed out, there is a lack of properly validated instruments for use in other countries (Carvalho and Barham 2016) and across different cultures. Broadly speaking, assessing coparenting and integrating the results obtained from different studies is a complex task.

The aim of this review is to systematically examine the available measures for the assessment of coparenting. In so doing, we will also seek to provide a thorough overview of the main characteristics and psychometric properties of this concept as it has been defined. The overriding purpose of this review is to evaluate the conceptualization and clinical usefulness of coparenting approaches and tools for clinicians, to guide activities in this domain.

Method

In order to identify empirically supported instruments for the assessment of coparenting, the authors performed a systematic review of articles published from 1970 to 2019. The PRISMA Statement for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses was followed (Moher et al. 2009).

Studies were identified via a systematic search of three electronic databases: PsycINFO, Web of Science, and Pubmed. Reference lists of included articles were also examined to identify any additional instruments. The following terms were used to search article titles, abstracts and keywords: assessment, evaluation, test, checklist, coparent*, co-parent*, measure, questionnaire, instrument, scale, and inventory. Specifically, the following search string was used to perform the literature search: (evaluation OR assessment OR questionnaire OR inventory OR scale OR measure OR test OR checklist OR instrument) AND (coparent* OR co-parent*).

Studies were included if their main objective was to present, develop, adapt or study the psychometric properties of one or more instrument that assessed coparenting. The inclusion criteria for this review were: (1) the article presented an instrument that assessed coparenting or included the assessment of any dimension of coparenting; (2) research papers in various languages and with the abstract available in English; (3) the aim of the article was to study the instrument's psychometric properties; and (4) it had

been published by September 2019. Currently, psychometric researchers advocate for following evidence-based criteria when selecting assessment instruments (Rosenthal and Tate 2018). In accordance with this recommendation, we excluded from the sample instruments for which we found no published articles describing the development or analysis of their psychometric properties.

Electronic searches, study screening, selection and inclusion, and data extraction were conducted by two reviewers to ensure accuracy and to avoid bias. The first and the second authors performed the electronic searches, study screening, selection and inclusion, and data extraction. The rest of the co-authors served as auditors during the process to ensure accuracy. Titles and abstracts were examined to see if they fulfilled the inclusion criteria. Additional articles identified through other sources were included (i.e., articles found as a result of the review of the reference lists of relevant papers). Figure 1 (flow diagram) describes the selection process used for the inclusion of studies.

Results

The electronic search produced 1110 citations, and the reference list search yielded an additional 14 citations. Of the items that appeared in the search, 348 records were eliminated as duplicates, leaving 776 records to be screened. After screening, 53 full-text articles were assessed for eligibility. Finally, 26 articles were included for the analysis in this review. The reason for discarding the remaining articles were: (1) not presenting a questionnaire (its development or its psychometric properties; Carvalho and Barham 2016; Kato et al. 2014; Liu and Wu 2015; Shai 2018), (2) presenting an adaptation of a previously included questionnaire (Antunes et al. 2019; Frascarolo et al. 2009; Guzman-Gonzalez et al. 2018; Kröger et al. 2009; Lamela et al. 2018; Mosmann et al. 2018; Pedro et al. (2015)), (3) presenting an obsolete questionnaire (i.e., an updated

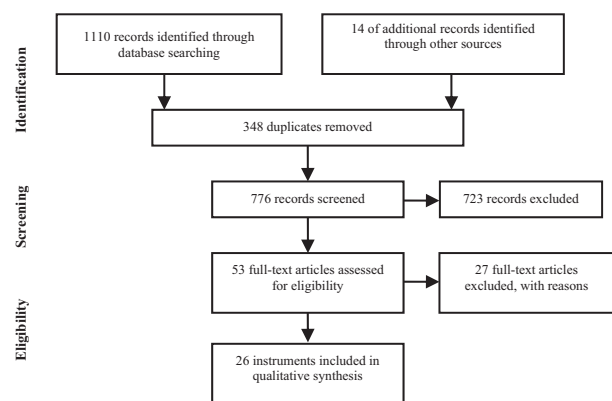


Fig. 1 Flow diagram

version of the questionnaire had been published), as in the case of the *Parenting Alliance Inventory* (PAI; Ahrons 1981; Konold and Abidin 2001), or (4) presenting a questionnaire whose immediate aim was not the assessment of coparenting (Houlston et al. 2019; Moran and Weinstock 2011; Puhlman and Pasley 2017). For example, although the aim of the *Emotional Readiness Assessment for Support in Family Justice Processes* (Houlston et al. 2019) is to assess the emotional state during the process of divorce, a factor which is thought to have an impact on the execution of coparenting, the questionnaire does not measure coparenting itself.

All the measurement tools were evaluated using multiple criteria. Information was compiled on a number of aspects of each, including the construct examined, the dimensions assessed, and the structure of the instrument (e.g., number of items and scale type). We also gathered information on the languages in which each instrument was available and the populations for which they had been validated, as well as the mode of administration of each and other distinguishing characteristics of the questionnaires. Although translations were not included in the analysis, as they do not constitute new instruments, they are mentioned and referenced. Table 1 presents the instruments included in this review and their characteristics, while Table 2 presents their psychometric properties. The instruments were placed into four categories according to their conceptualization of the underlying concept, their theoretical development, the family structures they examine and their assessment aims. The categories were: parental collaboration questionnaires, coparenting in non-separated families, coparenting in conflict and divorce, and coparenting across family structures.

Parental Collaboration Questionnaires

These instruments are designed to assess a range of aspects related to collaboration between parents and the difficulties they face. The instruments examine issues such as parental disagreements, reasons for conflict and concerns. Specifically, the *Child-Rearing Disagreements Scale* (CRD; Jouriles et al. 1991) measures parental disagreements about child rearing by assessing typical child-rearing disagreements; the *Parting Parent Concern Inventory* (PPCI, Sanford and Rivers 2017) assesses six types of concern in divorcing parents, and the *Parent Problem Checklist* (PPC; Dadds and Powell 1991; Stallman et al. 2009) measures conflict between parents. In other words, this latter tool examines their ability to agree and cooperate on parenting functions. The PPC focuses on how parenting conflict behaviors specifically contribute to the development of adjustment problems in children (Dadds and Powell 1991). Along the same lines, but focusing more on the interactions between the parents, the aim of the *Parenting Alliance*

Measure (PAM, Konold and Abidin 2001) is to estimate the perceived characteristics of the parenting alliance, defined here as the degree to which parents act as allies in child rearing. Elsewhere, the parenting alliance has been defined as the part of the marital relationship related to parenting and child rearing (Weissman and Cohen 1985). Finally, the *Partner Parental Support Questionnaire* (PPSQ; Gillis and Roskam 2019) is aimed at assessing different aspects of support between members of a couple, including factors that have been found to be linked to coparenting quality (emotional support, concrete support, and role approval). The tool also examines the coparenting relationship itself.

Coparenting in Non-Separated Families

A number of the instruments that have been developed to assess the coparenting relationship make use of the one or more of the methodological approaches presented in the introduction. The methods include self-report questionnaires, observational measures and questionnaires aimed at a range of specific aspects.

The first questionnaire developed to assess the coparenting relationship was McHale's *Coparenting Scale* (CS 1997), an instrument whose aim was to overcome what this researcher saw as previous questionnaires' failure to specify how disagreements between parents affect children's sense of family. This tool measures the frequency of certain parental behaviors, some of which are expected to promote children's sense of family and others which are thought to undermine this sense. It accomplishes this by asking parents about the frequency of their own behaviors that presumably promote coparenting and family sentiment. Parents are asked to rate their own behaviors instead of describing the family as a unit, as previous instruments had asked. The instrument assesses both overt coparenting (occurring within triadic interactions) and covert coparenting (dyadic parent-child interactions) (McHale 1997). Another tool, the *Coparenting Questionnaire* (CQ; Margolin et al. 2001) was designed to include the dimensions of cooperation, conflict and triangulation, this latter element having been left out of McHale's measurement instrument. The aim of the CQ was to assess the members of married and cohabiting couples' notions of each other as coparents. Meanwhile, the *Coparenting Relationship Scale* (CRS; Feinberg et al. 2012) is a multi-domain measure for the assessment of the coparenting relationship, based on Feinberg's theoretical model (2003). It includes the four domains described by Feinberg et al. 2012: childrearing agreement, coparental support/undermining, division of labor, and joint management of family dynamics. The measure examines the dimensions of conflict and triangulation as part of its assessment of coparental support, and it looks at aspects of cooperation and satisfaction with the distribution of

Table 1 Characteristics of instruments for the Assessment of Coparenting

Instrument name	Type of scale	Dimensions/factors	Total number of items and score range	Scoring format and method	Use (clinical or research)	Scale development/theoretical background	Target population	Versions and languages	Studies
Child-Rearing Disagreement Scale (CRD)	Self-report	Unidimensional: Disagreements (21)	21 items	6-point Likert scale by frequency of disagreements on the past 6 months		Limitations of marital adjustment in order to explain child behavior problems (Jouriles et al. 1991) Interviews with middle-class parents of healthy preschoolers	Non-clinical, non-separated parents with 3–5-year-old boys	English	Jouriles et al. (1991)
Parting Parent Concern Inventory (PPCI)	Self-report	Six types of concern: - Malice (5) - Power (5) - Child rejection (5) - Custody arrangements (5) - Self-esteem (5) - Finances (3)	28 items	5-point Likert scale by degree of worry during divorce	For research on divorce processes and outcomes in children of divorce Applied settings: divorce mediation and psychotherapy		Divorced couples with at least one child under 18	English	Sanford and Rivers (2017)
Parent Problem Checklist (PPC)	Self-report	Unidimensional: Interparental conflict (16) Constructs: parental disagreements (6), open conflict (6), and undermining (4)	16 items	Dichotomous answers (yes/no), and frequency in a 7-point Likert scale (from <i>not at all</i> to <i>very much</i>) when answered <i>yes</i>	allows clinicians to discriminate between clinically distressed and non-distressed couples	Developed as a measure of conflict between parents	Non-separated, clinical and community couples	English German version	Dadds and Powell (1991) Stallman et al. (2009) Kröger (2009)
Parenting Alliance Measure (PAM)	Self-report	2 dimensions: Communication & teamwork (17) Respect (3)	20 items	5-point Likert scale by agreement Raw scores, T scores ($M = 50, SD = 10$) & percentiles Higher scores, more positive parenting alliance		Weissman & Cohen's theory of parenting Refinement of the <i>Parenting Alliance Inventory</i> (PAI and Abidin 1995)	Non-separated parents of children ages 1–19 years	English Short version, validated in Portuguese	Konold and Abidin (2001) Lamela et al. (2013)
Partner Parental Support Questionnaire (PPSQ)	Self-report	3 dimensions: emotional support (5), concrete support (5), and role approval (5) 2 versions: perceived support and given support	15 items	6-point Likert scale by frequency (from <i>never</i> to <i>always</i>).		Revision of the literature on coparenting, parenting alliance, and couple support	Non-separated	Developed in Belgium, language not specified	Gillis and Roskam (2019)
Coparenting Scale (CS)	Self-report	First part triadic interactions (11 items) and second part dyadic parent-child interactions (5 items) 4 dimensions: Family integrity (8) Disparagement (3) Conflict (2) Reprimand (3)	16 items	7-point Likert scale by behavior frequency		Marital Adjustment Test (MAT; Locke and Wallace 1959) Family Environment Scale (FES; Moos 1974) Quality of Coparenting Scale (Ahrons 1981)	Non-separated	English French	McHale (1997) Frascarolo et al. (2009)
Coparenting Questionnaire (CQ)	Self-report	3 dimensions: Cooperation (5) Conflict (5) Triangulation (4)	14 items	5-point Likert scale		Developed to include the dimensions of cooperation, triangulation, and conflict	Non-separated Community sample (4–5-year-olds & 9–13-year-olds)	English Portuguese adaptation	Margolin et al. (2001) Pedro et al. (2015)

Table 1 (continued)

Instrument name	Type of scale	Dimensions/factors	Total number of items and score range	Scoring format and method	Use (clinical or research)	Scale development/theoretical background	Target population	Versions and languages	Studies
Coparenting Relationship Scale (CRS)	Self-report	Coparenting support (4) Endorsement of partner's parenting (7) Coparenting undermining (6) Exposure to conflict (7) Division of labor (7) Childrearing agreement (2) Coparenting closeness (5)	Extended version: 35 items Brief version: 14 items	7-point Likert scale asking the degree of veracity Exposure to Conflict subscale: 6-point Likert scale by frequency Scores for each domain + overall score for coparenting quality (higher values meaning more positive coparenting)		Feinberg's theoretical model (2003)	Non-separated heterosexual couples expecting first child	English French	Feinberg et al. (2012)
Daily Coparenting Scale (D-Cop)	Self-report	Positive daily coparenting (cooperation, support, upholding rules, 7) Negative daily coparenting (disagreement, hostility, 3)	10 items (daily)	7-point Likert type scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Dis-agree) to 7 (Strongly Agree)		Coparenting literature and Feinberg's CRS	Heterosexual couples non-separated (living together) with a child 5-years-old or younger Non-clinical samples	English	McDaniel et al. (2017)
Coparenting and Family Rating System (CFRS)	Observational measure	Coparenting dimensions: competition, cooperation, verbal sparring, and coparental warmth Other dimensions: child-centeredness, parent-child warmth, and parent-child investment	Task: family play Videotaped	5-point Likert scale (low to high)		Coparenting literature	Non-separated	English	McHale et al. (2000a) McConnell and Kerig (2002)
Prenatal Lausanne Trilogue Play (LTP)	Observational measure	Coparent playfulness Structure of the play Intuitive parenting behaviors Couple's cooperation Family warmth	Task: Roleplay first meeting with their baby using a doll	Five scales ranging from 0 (inappropriate) to 2 (appropriate) Global score 0-10 (higher meaning more functional)		Scales 4 and 5 based on CRFS (McHale et al. 2001)	Expectant parents (non-separated)	English Italian	Carreiro et al. (2006)
Revised-Picnic Assessment Scale (Re-PAS)	Observational measure	Structure of the game Coparenting Conjugal relationship Limit setting Family warmth	Task: pretend to have a picnic Videotaped	5-point Likert scales from 1 to 5 (higher the score meaning better family functioning)	Research (laboratory setting) & clinical settings for family assessment		Families with 18-month-old infants and their siblings (non-separated and families)	English Italian	Favez et al. (2016)
Family Alliance Assessment Scales for the Diaper Change Play (FAAS-DCP)	Observational	9 interactive dimensions: readiness to interact, gaze orientation, inclusion of partners, coparental coordination, role organization, parental scaffolding, shared and co-constructed activities, sensitivity, and family warmth	Task: diaper change	5-point scale (5 being optimal functioning, 1 representing significant dysfunction) Total scores from 4 to 20 + categorical assessment of the quality of family alliance (cooperative, collusive, and disordered alliance)		Family alliance model LTP adaptation to 1st week postpartum	Non-separated, parents at 1st week postpartum	Developed in Switzerland	Rime et al. (2018)
Feeding Coparenting Scale (FCS)	Self-report	3 factors: Shared positive views and values in child feeding (5) Active engagement in child feeding (4) Solo parenting in child feeding (4)	13 items	5-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5) Higher scores reflect more coparenting		Feinberg's framework addressing the division of labor and joint engagement in coparenting	Parents married or living together for at least one year with a child between 3 and 5 years old	English	Tan et al. (2019)

Table 1 (continued)

Instrument name	Type of scale	Dimensions/factors	Total number of items and score range	Scoring format and method	Use (clinical or research)	Scale development/theoretical background	Target population	Versions and languages	Studies
Father Involvement Scale (FIS)	Self-report	3 factors: Self-efficacy (5) Parenting skills (5) Co-parenting (3)	13 items	5-point Likert scale with a higher number indicating more positive parenting		Not mentioned	Father's programs in Child Protective Services Separated & non-separated	English	Ramisetty-Mikler et al. (2018)
Coparenting Relationship Scale—Father's Prenatal Version (CRS-PV)	Self-report	4 factors: Lack of coparenting support (15) Coparenting conflict (5) Coparenting disagreement (6) Coparenting undermining (4)	30 items	7-point Likert scale asking the degree of veracity		Feinberg's ecological model (2003) & CRS	Primiparous father at the first trimester of pregnancy	Portuguese	Pinto et al. (2018)
Psychological Adjustment to Separation Test (PAST)	Self-report	3 dimensions: Coparenting conflict Former partner attachment Lonely negativity	26 items	5-point Likert scale, with higher scores representing more adjustment problems			Recently separated individuals (not necessarily with children, 50% of the sample)	English	Sweeper and Halford (2006)
Multidimensional Coparenting Scale for Dissolved Relationships (MCS-DR)	Self-report	4 scales: Overt Conflict (6) Support (6) Self-controlled covert conflict (5) Externally-controlled covert conflict (5)	22 items	5-point Likert scale by agreement		Bohannon's notions of divorce Feinberg's theory of coparenting Ahrons (1981) and Feinberg et al. 2012 measures	Divorced or currently divorcing parents	English	Ferraro et al. (2018)
Instrument for the Assessment of Adaptation to Divorce-Separation (CAD-S)	Self-report	4 factors: Psychological and emotional difficulties (6) Negative consequences of the divorce for the children (6) Conflict with the ex-partner (3) Disposition to coparenting (5)	20 items	5-point Likert scale based on agreement			Divorced parents of 4–18-year-old children and adolescents	Spanish	Yáñez-Yaben (2010a, b)
Questionnaire on Perceived Support from the Former Partner (CARE)	Self-report	Coparenting support from the ex-partner Children satisfaction	8 items	5-point Likert scale based on agreement		Based on post-divorce family relationships theories (DeGarmo et al. 2008), coparenting (Bonach 2005; Cowan et al. 2007), & gatekeeping (Allen and Hawkins 1999)	Divorced parents of 4–18-year-old children and adolescents	Spanish	Yáñez-Yaben (2010a, b)
Divorce Conflict Scale (DCS)	Self-report	Unidimensional	6 items score range 5–26	4 and 5-point Likert scale	Research	High conflict theoretical approaches (Anderson et al. 2010)	Separated	English	Hald et al. (2019)
Dimensions of Conflict for Separated Families Index (DCSFH)	Self-report	15 dimensions: parents' pattern of overall interactions, mental health, substance use/abuse, criminal history, communication regarding children, blame for the end of the couple relationship, level of trust between the parents, economic resources, views of parenting responsibility, level of emotional abuse between parents, level of physical abuse between parents, involvement of child in conflict, complaints to child welfare agencies/police regarding allegations of child abuse, reliance on external system to resolve separation dispute, and reliance on court to solve problems	15 items	5-point scale of discrete responses (minimal, mild, moderate, moderately severe, severe and "don't know") Summary score between 1 and 5, 5 being the highest possible conflict	High conflict settings (child welfare, family justice)	Systems and ecological theory (Bronfenbrenner 1979, 1986; Germain and Gitterman 1996).	Separating high conflict families	English	Birnbaum et al. (2018)

Table 1 (continued)

Instrument name	Type of scale	Dimensions/factors	Total number of items and score range	Scoring format and method	Use (clinical or research)	Scale development/theoretical background	Target population	Versions and languages	Studies
Experiences With Coparenting Scale (ECS)	Self-report	Unidimensional: divorced parents' satisfaction with coparenting (11)	11 items	Pairs of bipolar adjectives in a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from -3 to 3		Focused on satisfaction with the coparenting post-divorce relationships	Divorced couples with a 3–18-year-old child	English	Beckmeyer et al. (2016)
Self-perceived Coparenting of Nonresident Fathers Scale (SPCS)	Self-report	4 domains: undermining, alliance, gatekeeping, and conflict. Conflict was excluded as a factor (statistically problematic)	11 items	5-point Likert scale by agreement		Developed in focus groups with fathers	Low-income, nonresident fathers	English	Dyer et al. (2017)
Coparenting Inventory for Parents and Adolescents (CI-PA)	Self-report	Cooperation Conflict Triangulation CONSTRUCTS: Coparenting as a dyadic construct + individual contributions of each parent to coparenting		5-point Likert scale (from <i>completely true</i> to <i>not at all true</i>) Mother & father inventory: 2 parts (assessment in a dyadic level + respective perceptions of their partners' contribution to their coparenting)		designed to overcome the limitation of previous measures, such as the PPC or the CQ, which do not differentiate between coparenting as a dyadic process and mothers' versus fathers' individual contributions	Community sample Non-separated, separated & adolescents 10–18-years-old Three parallelized versions (mothers, fathers, and adolescents)	German	Teubert and Pinquart (2011)
Coparenting Across Family Structures (CoPAFS)	Self-report	9 dimensions: (1) Communication (2) Sharing (3) Anger (4) Restrictive coparenting; (5) Facilitative coparenting (6) Respect; (7) Trust; (8) Conflict and (9) Valuing	56 items	5-point Likert scale by agreement		Based on a comprehensive review of the social science literature and an expansion on earlier works that have explored coparenting dimensions (e.g., Ahrons 1981; Feinberg 2003; Margolin et al. 2001; McHale 1997; Teubert and Pinquart 2010).	Separated and non-separated parents	English	Saini et al. (2019)

Table 2 Psychometric properties of instruments for the Assessment of Coparenting

Instrument name	Internal consistency (reliability)		Validity		Stability	
	Cronbach's alpha (α)	Construct validity (Factor structure: EFA, CFA)	Convergent and concurrent validity	Predictive and discriminant validity	Inter-informant reliability (ICC)	Test-retest reliability
Child-Rearing Disagreement Scale (CRD)	0.86	-	Correlates with marital scales (GMD & EXP, $p < 0.001$) Correlates with eight child behavior scales (r from 0.12 to 0.66)	Correlates with eight child behavior scales, except <i>rule</i> , even when exposure to marital conflict is controlled (r between 0.14 and 0.30, $p < 0.05$ – $p < 0.001$)	-	-
Parenting Parent Concern Inventory (PPCI)	0.83 to 0.93	CFA Study 1: $\chi^2(df = 335) = 741.44$, $p < 0.01$; CFI = 0.98; SRMR = 0.064; RMSEA = 0.063 CFA Study 2: $\chi^2(df = 335) = 676.39$, $p < 0.01$; CFI = 0.98; SRMR = 0.061; RMSEA = 0.057	Correlates with child negative affect and child internalizing symptoms. (AS), settlement satisfaction, SPS, inclusion of child, attachment anxiety, financial distress, and well-being ($r = 0.18$ – 0.48 ; $p < 0.01$)	No correlations exceeded the cutoff of 0.85	-	-
Parent Problem Checklist (PPC)	Total scale 0.70 Problem scale 0.82 Extent scale 0.89 Factors: Discipline 0.86 Child care 0.80 Family processes 0.50	EFA: 3 factors (discipline, child care, and family processes)	Correlates with DAS ($r = -0.85$) Problem Scale correlates with relationship satisfaction (RQI: $r = -0.69$, $p < 0.001$; ADAS $r = -0.30$, $p < 0.01$) Extent scale correlates with relationship satisfaction (for RQI: $r = -0.73$, $p < 0.001$; for ADAS: $r = -0.46$, $p < 0.001$)	Correlation between PPC Problem and child behavior problems (ECBI) was low to moderate ($r = 0.31$ – 0.34 , $p < 0.001$) Small correlation between PPC Problem and parenting style (PS Total; $r = 0.20$, $p < 0.05$) Low to moderate correlation between PPC Extent and ECBI ($r = 0.28$ – 0.39 , $p < 0.001$)	-	8-week test-retest: $r = 0.90$
Parenting Alliance Measure (PAM)	0.81–0.97	2-factor model: TLI = 0.94 CFI = 0.95 PGFI = 0.70 RMSEA = 0.05	-	-	-	-
Partner Parental Support Questionnaire (PPSQ)	Perceived version: Emotional subscale 0.93 Concrete subscale 0.92 Approval Role subscale 0.94 Total perceived support 0.96 Intercorrelations = 0.80, 0.71, and 0.91 Given version: Emotional subscale 0.88 Concrete subscale 0.85 Approval Role subscale 0.93 Total given support 0.95 Intercorrelations = 0.82, 0.78, and 0.62	CFA Perceived version: $\chi^2(102) = 520.09$, $p < 0.001$ CFI = 0.95 SRMR = 0.04 CFA Given version: $\chi^2(102) = 694.67$, $p < 0.001$ CFI = 0.91 SRMR = 0.06 Standardized factor loading = 0.73–0.90	Correlates with marital satisfaction (DAS) and PSC ($r = 0.21$ – 0.91 , $p < 0.01$)	-	-	-
Coparenting Scale (CS)	0.82 total scale 0.82 Family integrity 0.74 Disparagement 0.79 Conflict 0.59 Reprimand	4 factors explain 61% of the variance	Correlates with FES ($p < 0.01$) Correlates with Ahron's Quality of Coparenting scale dimensions of conflict and support-integrity, and disparagement-support for mothers ($p < 0.01$) Correlates with MAT dimensions of integrity and conflict ($p < 0.01$), and disparagement ($p < 0.05$). Unrelated to reprimand scores	-	Correlations between fathers and mothers for same-construct ($r = 0.21$ – 0.56 , $p < 0.05$ – 0.01)	-
Coparenting Questionnaire (CQ)	Total coparenting 0.84–0.87 Cooperation 0.69–80 Triangulation 0.73–84 Conflict 0.74–0.84	EFA: 3 factors that explained 47% of the variance	Correlates with adolescent reports (CVO) dimensions of triangulation ($r = 0.32$, $p < 0.01$), conflict ($r = 0.24$ – 0.34 , $p < 0.01$) and total coparenting ($r = -0.35$, $p < 0.01$)	-	-	-

Table 2 (continued)

Instrument name	Validity		Predictive and discriminant validity	Stability	
	Internal consistency (reliability)	Construct validity (Factor structure: EFA, CFA)		Inter-informant reliability (ICC)	Test-retest reliability
Coparenting Relationship Scale (CRS)	Extended version 0.91–0.94 Brief version 0.81–0.89 Scale intercorrelations (brief with extended) $r = 0.94-0.97$	CFA: RMSEA = 0.06 CFI = 0.93 χ^2 was significant (indicating that the model does not replicate the covariance matrix)	Small association with social desirability ($r = 0.0-0.026$)	-	Regression coefficients of 0.71–0.74
Daily Coparenting Scale (D-Cop)	0.76 to 0.94 ICCs, 0.29 to 0.56 (44–71% of variability tied to within-person differences across days)	EFA: 2 between-person and 2 within-person factors $\chi^2 (52) = 386.15-4170.01, p < 0.001$ RMSEA = 0.05 CFI = 0.97 SRMR between = 0.01–0.02 SRMR within = 0.03	Correlates with Couple love ($r = 0.60-0.76$), Couple Efficacy ($r = 0.61-0.65$), Quality of Marriage ($r = 0.64-0.71$), Couple conflict ($r = -0.34$ to -0.61), Ineffective arguing ($r = -0.53$ to -0.62), and Divorce proneness ($r = -0.38-0.41$ for men and $-0.61-0.72$ for women) Correlates with CRS.	-	High within-person reliability coefficient (Rc: within-person change): Daily positive coparenting (7 items; $Rc = 0.87-0.88$), Daily negative coparenting (3 items, $Rc = 0.65-0.67$), & Daily overall coparenting (10 items, $Rc = 0.82-0.83$) Within-person correlations mostly significant
Coparenting and Family Rating System (CFRS)	-	Component analysis with varimax rotation: 3 factors (Family harmony, Parenting discrepancy, hostility-competitiveness) accounted for 72.44% of the variance	Family harmony correlated with OPS ($r = -0.33, p < 0.01$) and DAS ($r = 0.27, p < 0.05$) for fathers. Hostility-competitiveness correlates with Conflict and problem-solving scale (CPS) collaboration ($r = -0.26, p < 0.05$) and CPS verbal aggression ($r = 0.34, p < 0.01$), and DAS ($r = -0.24, p < 0.05$) for mothers. Parenting discrepancy had no significant correlations	Inter-rater reliability (ICC) Competition = 0.64 Cooperation ICC = 0.71 Verbal sparring = 0.65 Interparental warmth = 0.69 Child-centredness = 0.49 Mother-child investment = 0.41 Father-child investment = 0.68 Mother-child warmth = 0.61 Father-child warmth = 0.79	-
Prenatal Lausanne Trilogue Play (LTP)	Total score 0.79 Intercorrelations for the five scales between 0.34 and 0.70	-	Prenatal and postnatal parenting alliance correlations (total score $r = 0.42, p < 0.01$; Subscales of Initiative Parenting $r = 0.35, p < 0.05$, Couple Cooperation $r = 0.47, p < 0.01$, and Family Warmth $r = 0.35, p < 0.05$)	Inter-rater reliability Pearson correlation coefficients: $r = 0.60-0.88$ for the five scales, 0.88 on the total prenatal score ($p = 0.0001$) Cohen's kappa = 0.64-0.92 ($M = 0.73$) for the scales, 0.97 on the total scores ($p = 0.0003$)	-
Revised-Picnic Assessment Scale (Re-PAS)	0.78	EFA: one factor solution accounting for 41% of the variance	CARE-Index (Crittenden 2001) Sensitivity correlated with Family Warmth for both parents ($r = 0.34-0.36, p < 0.01$) CARE-Index Unresponsive correlated with Conjugal relationship for fathers ($r = -0.27, p < 0.05$), and Family warmth for both parents ($r = -0.27-0.33, p < 0.01$) Effective scale of "Who does what?" questionnaire (Favez et al. 2016) associated with Conjugal relationship ($r = 0.29-0.39, p < 0.05$) for both mothers and fathers Dissatisfaction scale of "Who does what" associated with Structure of task ($r = -0.36, p < 0.05$) for fathers	Intraclass correlation coefficients (ICC): Structure of task = 0.835 Coparenting = 0.822 Conjugal relationship = 0.779 Limit setting = 0.480 Family warmth = 0.813	-

Table 2 (continued)

Instrument name	Validity		Stability	
	Internal consistency (reliability) Cronbach's alpha (α)	Construct validity (Factor structure: EFA, CFA)	Predictive and discriminant validity	Inter-informant reliability (ICC) Test-retest reliability
Family Alliance Assessment Scales for the Diaper Change Play (FAAS-DCP)	0.91 1st factor 0.84 2nd factor	KMO = 0.851 Bartlett's sphericity test: not an identity matrix ($\chi^2 = 259.86$, $df = 36$, $p < 0.05$) PCA: 2 factors explained 72% of the variance (1st factor, 59% engagement and sharing, 2nd factor –marital and coparental adjustment– 13%) 2 factors were moderately correlated ($r = 0.48$)	Predictive validity (FAAS-DCP vs. FAAS): Higher scores in the LTP than in the DCP without a statistically significant difference and a weak or moderate importance for the dimension "readiness to interact" ($Z = 1.74$, $p > 0.05$, $r = 0.35$), "gaze orientation" ($Z = 1.79$, $p > 0.05$, $r = 0.36$), "role organization" ($Z = 0.77$, $p > 0.05$, $r = 0.16$) Results indicated an absence of difference for family alliances attributed in DCP and LTP [$\chi^2(1) = 0$, p exact > 0.05] Family alliances in DCP explaining 71% of variance in the family alliances in LTP ($\delta\phi = 0.845$). Discriminant validity: Wilks' Lambda: "family warmth" ($\lambda = 0.33$), "inclusion of partners" ($\lambda = 0.35$) and "shared and co-constructed activities" ($\lambda = 0.36$) best discriminate the different categories of family alliance. Family alliance predicted accurately in 88.6% of the cases	ICC from 0.66 to 0.82 (all $p < 0.05$)
Feeding Coparenting Scale (FCS)	0.60–0.83	EFA indicated a 3-factor solution, with most items loading > 0.40 (2 items below) Shared Positive Views and Values in Child Feeding (27.25% of the variance; Active Engagement in Child Feeding (9.63% of the variance) and Solo Parenting in Child Feeding (18.62% of the variance) KMO = 0.921 χ^2 (78) = 2737.60, $p < 0.001$ EFA: 3 factors explained 70% of the variance Self-efficacy (25% of the variance), Parenting skills (24.7%), Co-parenting (20%) CFA: RMSEA = 0.087	Total score strongly correlated with the separate FCS subscale scores, respectively for men and women ($r = 0.55$ – 0.82)	–
Father Involvement Scale (FIS)	0.68–0.87	–	–	–
Total 0.85 Subscales 0.69–0.94	Bartlett's χ^2 (435) = 1999.75, $p < 0.001$ KMO = 0.80 4 factors explained 60.7% of the variance (1st factor 23.0%, 2nd factor 12.9%, and 3rd factor 12.6% and 4th factor 12.2%) CFA: $\chi^2(2) = 2.145$, $p = 0.342$, RMSEA = 0.03, CFI = 0.99 All subscales showed high loadings on the latent factor (between 0.68 and 0.72)	Intercorrelations: r between 0.311 and .696 (all $p < 0.001$) Correlates with CRS ($r = 0.622$, $p < 0.001$) CRS-PPV dimension of coparenting disagreement correlates with depressive symptoms ($r = 0.278$, $p < 0.01$), anxious symptoms ($r = 0.242$, $p < 0.05$), adult attachment anxiety ($r = 0.404$, $p < 0.001$), and partner's relationship (positive relationship $r = -0.227$, negative relationship $r = 0.269$, both $p < 0.05$) Correlates with adult attachment avoidance (0.310–0.382, $p < 0.01$)	–	–

Table 2 (continued)

Instrument name	Internal consistency (reliability) Cronbach's alpha (α)	Validity		Stability		
		Construct validity (Factor structure: EFA, CFA)	Convergent and concurrent validity	Predictive and discriminant validity	Inter-informant reliability (ICC)	Test-retest reliability
Psychological Adjustment to Separation Test (PAST)	Lonely negativity 0.89–0.90 Former partner Attachment 0.88–0.89 Coparenting 0.83–0.86	Nonparenting items: EFA: KMO = 0.92 Solution of 2 factors (1st accounted for 39% of the variance, 2nd 10% of the variance) CEA: adequate fit, $\chi^2(151, N=169) = 329.2, p < 0.05$, comparative fit index = 0.90, Tucker–Lewis index (TLI) = 0.89, RMSEA = 0.08 Parenting items: KMO = 0.81–0.82 One factor accounted for 51–55% of the variance (2 samples)	Correlates with DASS-21 $r = 73$ for lonely negativity, $r = 0.40$ for former partner attachment, and $r = 0.19$ for coparenting conflict Correlates with PCS coparenting conflict ($r = 0.71$)	General adjustment predicted significant variance in global separation adjustment, $F(1, 190) = 58.60, p < 0.001, R^2 = 0.24$ Lonely Negativity and Former Partner Attachment significantly predicted global separation adjustment ($\beta = 0.50$ and $\beta = 0.35$, respectively) Coparenting Conflict did not predict global separation adjustment.	–	One-week test–retest ICC = 0.85 (lonely negativity), 0.93 (former partner attachment), and 0.89 (coparenting conflict)
Multidimensional Co-Parenting Scale for Dissolved Relationships (MCS-DR)	–	Bartlett's test for sphericity & KMO > 0.90 EFA: 4 factors > 0.50 (explained 64.70% of the variance)	QCCS subscale of Conflict correlates with Overt Conflict factor ($r = 0.79, p < 0.0001$). QCCS subscale Support correlates with Support factor ($r = 0.77, p < 0.0001$). Both QCCS subscales and indicators of covert conflict demonstrated low to moderate correlation coefficients ($r = -0.11$ to 0.45) suggesting related yet distinct constructs. Overt Conflict was significantly related to indicators of both Stress ($r = 0.25, p < 0.0001$) and Satisfaction with the Divorce Decree ($r = -0.51, p < 0.0001$) Correlates with SWLS ($r = -0.23$) Correlates with CBCL ($r = 0.23$)	Support was correlated with Satisfaction with the Divorce Decree ($r = 0.39, p < 0.001$) but not Stress ($r = -0.10, p = 0.13$). Both Self-Controlled Covert Conflict and Externally-Controlled Covert Conflict correlated with Satisfaction with the Divorce Decree ($r = -0.22, p < 0.001$; $r = -0.37, p < 0.001$) but only Self-Controlled Covert Conflict was significantly related to Stress ($r = 0.12, p = 0.05$)	–	–
Instrument for the Assessment of Adaptation to Divorce-Separation (CAD-S)	0.65–0.81 Total 0.77	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) index = 0.78 Bartlett's test for sphericity $\chi^2(190) = 1313.87, p < 0.0001$	Correlates with CAD-S coparenting factor ($r = 0.94, p < 0.01$) and total adaptation to divorce ($r = 0.77, p < 0.01$)	–	–	–
Questionnaire on Perceived Support from the Former Partner (CARE)	0.79	KMO = 0.83 Bartlett's sphericity $\chi^2(28) = 422.75, p < 0.0001$ One factor explained 414.76% of the variance	–	–	–	–
Divorce Conflict Scale (DCS)	0.88	EFA: KMO = 0.92 Significant Bartlett's test of sphericity One factor structure accounting for 63% of the variance CFA: RMSEA = 0.048, χ^2/df Ratio = 1.95	–	–	–	–
Dimensions of Conflict for Separated Families Index (DCSFI)	0.84 Correlations between items and total score r between 0.23 (substance abuse) and 0.72 (trust) Inter-item correlations r between 0.01 and 0.60	–	Correlates with satisfaction with coparenting item and summary Ahron Coparenting Scale score: positive ($r = 0.14$ for mothers and 0.33 for fathers), but non-significant. Self-reported injury by partner: significant ($p < 0.01$) for both mothers and fathers	–	–	ICCs between two raters were 0.85 (95% CI: 0.77 to 0.90) for ratings of mothers ($n = 79$) and 0.83 (95% CI: 0.65 to 0.91) for ratings of fathers.
Experiences With Coparenting Scale (ECS)	0.95	PCA: single component that accounted for 64.94% of the variance	Correlates with coparenting communication ($r = 0.72, p < 0.0001$), coparenting cooperation ($r = 0.67, p < 0.0001$), intentions to coparent with ex-spouses ($r = 0.59, p < 0.0001$), & Coparenting conflict ($r = -0.43, p < 0.0001$)	ECS scores were positively associated with postdivorce coparenting communication, $\beta = 0.66, p < 0.0001$ (squared partial correlation = 0.48), and cooperation, $\beta = 0.60, p < 0.0001$ (squared partial correlation = 0.40), and negatively associated with postdivorce coparenting conflict, $\beta = -0.42, p < 0.0001$ (squared partial correlation = 0.17)	–	–

Table 2 (continued)

Instrument name	Internal consistency (reliability) Cronbach's alpha (α)	Validity		Stability		
		Construct validity (Factor structure: EFA, CFA)	Convergent and concurrent validity	Predictive and discriminant validity	Inter-informant reliability (ICC)	Test-retest reliability
Self-perceived Coparenting of Nonresident Fathers Scale (SPCS)	–	EFA: 4 factors Undermining, Alliance, Gatekeeping, & Conflict RMSEA = 0.068 CFI = 0.901 SRMR = 0.04 χ^2 (df) = 778.81(347) CFA: 3 factors (undermining, alliance, and gatekeeping)	SPCS-alliance with decision making responsibility $r = 0.11$ ($p < 0.001$) Contact with mother Alliance ($r = 0.21$, $p < 0.011$), Undermining & Gatekeeping ($r = 0.15$ and -0.15 respectively, $p < 0.05$)	Predictive validity: SPCS Undermining predicts Child behavior problems ($r = 0.20$, $p < 0.01$). SPCS Alliance predicts self-efficacy ($r = 0.21$, $p < 0.001$) and satisfaction with paternal role ($r = 0.31$, $p < 0.001$), contact with child ($r = 0.11$, $p < 0.05$), engagement with infants ($r = 0.53$, $p < 0.001$) SPCS Gatekeeping predicts Satisfaction w/paternal role ($r = 0.23$, $p < 0.001$), Contact w/child, nights spent w/child, engagement w/infants ($r = -0.23$, -0.39 , & -0.44 ; all $p < 0.001$), and engagement w/children 1–5yo ($r = -0.28$, $p < 0.05$)	–	–
Coparenting Inventory for Parents and Adolescents (CI-PA)	0.65–0.91	CFA: 3 factor solution Factor loadings were significant ($p < 0.001$) and mostly > 0.40	Adolescent reports correlate with CQ parent reports	Adolescent ratings moderate to small correlations with Marital Conflict Behavior scale of the PFB Parental ratings predicted adolescent problems (SDQ): $p < 0.0000$	Mother-father reports correlate ($r = 0.56$) Dyadic coparenting correlates between adolescent and parental reports ($r = 0.26$ – 0.39 , $p < 0.01$ – 0.001) Correlations between adolescent-father & adolescent-mother reports about the other parent contributions to coparenting ($r = 0.18$ – 0.30)	Subsample $N = 41$ adults, $N = 46$ adolescents. Period of 6 weeks $r = 0.32$ (adolescents), $r = 0.76$ (parents)
Coparenting Across Family Structures (CoPAFS)	Total scale 0.973 Subscales 0.610–0.932	CFA: all estimates for the 9 subscales were significant and ranged between 0.951 and 0.747, explaining between 55.9% and 90.5% of the variation	Scale and subscale intercorrelations ranged between 0.641 and 0.9952 (all $p < 0.01$)	–	–	–

FES Family Environment Scale, *GMD* General marital disagreements, *MAT* Marital Adjustment Test (Locke and Wallace 1959), *EXP* Children's exposure/reactions to marital disagreements, *DASS-21* 21-item version of the Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scales, *CVQ* Child Views Questionnaire, *PSC* Parenting Conflict Scale (Ahrons 1981), *DAS* Dyadic Adjustment Scale, *SWLS* Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al. 1985), *CBCL* Child Behavior Checklist (Achenbach 1991), *AS* Acrimony Scale (Shaw and Emery 1987), *SPS* Sense of Power Scale (Anderson et al. 2010), *OPS* O'Leary-Porter Scale, *PSC* Parental Sense of Competence (Gibaud-Wallston and Wandersman 1978), *SDQ* Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire, *PFB* Partnership Questionnaire (Hahlweg 1995), *TLI* Tucker-Lewis index, *RMSEA* Root Mean Square Error of Approximation, *SRMR* Standardized Root Mean Square Residual, *ICC* Intraclass Correlation, *KMO* Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin, *EFA* Exploratory Factor Analyses, *CFA* Confirmatory Factor Analyses, *CFI* Confirmatory Fit Index, *PCA* Principal Component Analyses, *QCCS* Quality of the Coparental Communication Scale (Ahron 1981), *ECBI* Eyberg Child Behavior Inventory (Eyberg 1999)

parenting tasks in the assessment of divorced parents, although it has not been validated for use with this population. The *Daily Coparenting Scale* (D-Cop; McDaniel et al. 2017) is a shortened questionnaire that assesses parents' view of their coparenting relationship, as a daily measure. The items selected were those designed to investigate feelings and behaviors that tend to appear almost every day, whereas items from the CRS that ask parents to think more broadly about the coparenting relationship were discarded.

Four observational measurement tools have been developed to assess coparenting. The *Coparenting and Family Rating System* (CFRS; McHale et al. 2000a; McConnell and Kerig 2002) is a behaviorally-anchored observational instrument that assesses coparenting and family processes using recorded family play sessions. The *Prenatal Lausanne Trilogue Play* (LTP; originally created by Carneiro et al. 2006; modified for postpartum use by Altenburger et al. 2014) is an observational assessment of the prenatal coparenting alliance, where expectant parents (around the 25th week of pregnancy) are asked to role-play (for about 5 min) their interactions with the future baby. It is an adaptation of the postnatal LTP. This instrument is used to predict the family structure after birth, and more precisely to indicate the place that the baby will occupy in the family after birth. According to the authors, this instrument can contribute to clinical assessments and help inform prevention strategies. Future parents are asked to sit in a triangular formation with a basket that contains a doll that does not have a clear face. The parents are instructed to imagine their first meeting with their child, just after delivery. The task has four components: in the first two steps, each parent plays separately with the “baby”. Later, the three of them play together. Finally, they let the baby “go to sleep” and then talk together about the experience (Carneiro et al. 2006). A coding system is applied upon viewing of the video recording of the session.

The *Revised-Picnic Assessment Scale* (Re-PAS; Favez et al. 2016) is the assessment tool for *The Picnic Game* (PNG), an observation situation designed to assess family interactions. The PNG is a semi-standardized observation technique for use in a controlled environment, where the family is asked to role-play a picnic. The observation is focused on how family members coordinate with one another during the game. The Re-PAS coding system is designed to evaluate both the coparenting relationship and the overall family dynamic. Finally, the *Family Alliance Assessment Scales for the Diaper Change Play* (FAAS-DCP; Rime et al. 2018) is an adaptation of the LTP to a situation designed to assess coparenting in the first postpartum weeks. It is focused on the assessment of triadic interactions.

As for the questionnaires aimed at targeting different focuses of coparenting, the *Feeding Coparenting Scale*

(FCS; Tan et al. 2019) has its origins in obesity prevention programs and is focused on coparenting aspects connected to feeding. The aim of the *Father Involvement Scale* (FIS; Ramisetty-Mikler et al. 2018) is to assess self-efficacy, parenting and coparenting in fathers who have attended a mandatory parenting program. The *Coparenting Relationship Scale—Father's Prenatal Version* (CRS-PV; Pinto et al. 2018) is an adaptation of the CRS for use with fathers during pregnancy.

Coparenting in Conflict and Divorce

In contrast with the measurement tools discussed above, the instruments developed to assess coparenting in divorced couples include dimensions examining conflict and adjustment to divorce. The *Psychological Adjustment to Separation Test* (PAST; Sweeper and Halford 2006) is designed to measure separation adjustment problems. The *Multi-dimensional Co-Parenting Scale for Dissolved Relationships* (MCS-DR; Ferraro et al. 2018) is aimed at assessing post-divorce coparenting in recently divorced parents. The *Instrument for the Assessment of Adaptation to Divorce-Separation* (*Cuestionario de Adaptación al Divorcio-Separación*; CAD-S; Yáñez-Yaben 2010a, b) is a Spanish questionnaire that assesses the degree of adaptation to divorce. The *Questionnaire on Perceived Support from the Former Partner* (*Cuestionario de Apoyo al Percibido de la Expareja*; CARE; Yáñez-Yaben 2010a, b) is a questionnaire that assesses divorced parents' perceptions of the support they receive from their ex-partners in child rearing. The items were taken from the CAD-S.

In addition, there are two measures intended for high-conflict contexts. The *Divorce Conflict Scale* (DCS; Hald et al. 2019) measures the level of conflict perceived by each parent and other areas indirectly related to this conflict, such as communication and coparenting. The *Dimensions of Conflict for Separated Families Index* (DCSFI; Birnbaum et al. 2018) was developed in the context of high conflict divorces in the family judicial system. The aim is to identify situations of highly conflictive coparenting and domestic violence in order to refer parents for specific interventions.

The *Experiences With Coparenting Scale* (ECS; Beckmeyer et al. 2016) is a brief measurement tool made up of 11 semantic items aimed at assessing the affective domain of post-divorce coparenting. The authors start from the premise that a highly cooperative coparental relationship can be unsatisfactory for some parents, while other parents can be satisfied with less cooperative coparenting. Therefore, the ECS represents an attempt to measure satisfaction with post-divorce coparenting relationships, a fact that sets it apart from previous measures of coparenting. The ECS uses a semantic differential approach to evaluate parents' degree of satisfaction with their post-divorce coparental

relationship. Parents answer by choosing the adjective that more accurately describes the target issue (“coparenting with my ex-husband/ex-wife”) and then specify how much it represents their experience. Unlike other measures, it assesses feelings and perceptions, not coparenting behaviors themselves. The *Self-perceived Coparenting of Nonresident Fathers Scale* (SPCS; Dyer et al. 2017) is specifically developed for low-income, non-resident fathers.

Coparenting Across Family Structures

The *Coparenting Inventory for Parents and Adolescents* (CI-PA; Teubert and Pinquart 2011) is a German self-report questionnaire that uses three parallel versions (for mothers, fathers, and adolescents) to measure coparenting from the perspective of parents and their adolescent children, examining issues of cooperation, conflict, and triangulation. It is designed to overcome the limitations of previous measures such as the PPC or the CQ, which failed to distinguish between coparenting as a dyadic process and mothers’ versus fathers’ individual contributions. The versions for the mother and the father each contain a section on dyadic coparenting and another part that assesses mothers’ and fathers’ perceptions of their partners’ contributions to their shared coparenting activities (Teubert and Pinquart 2011). The *Coparenting Across Family Structures* (CoPAFS; Saini et al. 2019) is a multi-dimensional questionnaire designed to assess coparenting in different family configurations, taking into account that most families move from one kind of structure to another over the years. The measure seeks to improve our understanding of the factors that underlie coparenting.

Discussion

Researchers have done much work to define the concept of coparenting and its importance in assessing family functioning. The approach to the concept in the literature has evolved along with social changes in family structures, a reflection of the proliferation of families with separated, non-cohabiting parents and of reconstituted families. As we have seen, competitive coparenting has been identified as a risk factor associated with child and adolescent psychopathology (Feldman et al. 2010; Solmeyer et al. 2014; Umemura et al. 2015), while cooperative coparenting has been shown to be a protective factor (McHale et al. 1999, 2000b; Schoppe-Sullivan et al. 2001). It is especially worth noting that this link has been confirmed in longitudinal studies, even after controlling for parenting and marital quality (Feinberg et al. 2012; Teubert and Pinquart 2010). However, the range of theoretical definitions of the concept have led to a large degree of heterogeneity in the

available measurement tools used to assess coparenting. The aim of this systematic review, then, was to provide a thorough overview of the available instruments. We expect this review to be useful in helping professionals to take evidence-based decisions when selecting a measurement tool for a particular family situation and/or clinical context.

We can divide the existing measurement tools into two broad types: observational instruments and self-report questionnaires. The former type of instruments have the advantage of providing a deep understanding of family interactions and including all family members. Consequently, observational tools can serve as a setting in which to assess triadic interactions from an expert point of view. Moreover, some of these instruments, including prenatal and perinatal tools, are designed to allow for early (and therefore preventive) assessment. However, the existing observational measures do have three limitations: (1) they are only validated for use with non-separated parents, (2) they are validated in small samples, and (3) they are more time consuming than other kinds of measurements, because they require participants to perform a video-recorded task, which researchers then have to code after a time-intensive reliability training.

Meanwhile, self-report measures have been described as more accurate ways to assess coparenting, detect the risk of parental maladjustment, and provide a quick assessment of family dysfunction (Pinto et al. 2018). The main difference is that these questionnaires are answered from each person’s point of view. That offers the advantage of gathering data from every family member’s perspective, but it has the downside of the lack of an expert evaluation, as none of the identified questionnaires provides an expert-informed version. The most significant limitation is that (with the exception of the CI-PA) all the available questionnaires are addressed to parents only. Finally, although only one study has found a (small) association with social desirability (Feinberg et al. 2012), the nature of this construct and the contexts in which it is assessed (such as when dealing with child behavioral problems thought to be influenced by inter-parent conflict and in family court) would suggest the likelihood of respondents’ bias in favor of socially desirable answers.

As for the psychometric properties of the instruments included in this review, construct validity analyses are in coherence with the theoretical conceptualizations of coparenting. Factorial analyses show similar factors in different measures. Studies found between one- and four-factor solutions. Looking exclusively at factors seen as strictly constituting coparenting (some measures also include factors related to marriage quality and individual parenting), the most frequently identified dimensions can be split into two groups: those related with support and those related with inter-parent conflict. Support dimensions include

constructs such as communication and teamwork, respect, disposition to coparenting, coparenting closeness, cooperation, alliance, trust, shared values, facilitative coparenting, emotional support and concrete support. Conflict dimensions include factors such as triangulation, conflict, reprimand, parental disagreements, undermining of the coparent, exposure to conflict, hostility, overt and covert conflict, restrictive coparenting, and blame. These two dimensions support the distinction Belsky et al. (1996) and McHale (1995) drew between supportive and undermining coparenting. Some measures also encompass other dimensions associated with coparenting, as described by Feinberg (2011), such as childrearing agreement and division of labor. Observational measures are more likely to include the dimension of family integrity.

Given that coparenting has been empirically shown to be a robust predictor of child adjustment with or without the marital dissolution of the parental couple (Lamela and Figueiredo 2016; Teubert and Pinquart 2010), tools for the assessment of coparenting in diverse family forms have a great potential for use in clinical practice. This review shows the growing scientific production of these assessment tools. The expansion started in the early 1990s with the appearance of a few isolated studies, but ten reviewed instruments (i.e., almost 40% of the total) have been developed in the past two years. This evolution is consistent with the proliferation of recent studies showing the important role that less competitive and more cooperative coparenting can play in children and adolescents' mental health (Feinberg et al. 2012; Teubert and Pinquart 2010; Zemp et al. 2018). Even though these results evince an increasing interest in the study of coparenting, there is still a lack of solid evidence that confirms how best to assess this phenomenon. Of the tools examined, only the PPC reports cut-off scores, and only the PAM reports standardized scores, and there are no studies confirming the clinical applications of any of the other instruments.

In light of this lack of clarity, certain instruments might be more suitable than others, depending on the purpose of the evaluation. Some instruments are particularly effective at studying one or another of the specific aspects of coparenting. For example, the CRD can be used with non-separated parents to measure disagreements, while the PPC is ideal for assessing interparental conflict. Meanwhile, the FCS could be used to focus on feeding and the FIS to examine the role of fathers. The tools for use with separated or divorced parents include the CARE (which measures the perceived coparenting support received from the ex-partner), the ECS (which measures divorced parents' degree of satisfaction with coparenting), the PPCI (which measures six different types of concern among parents), the SPCS (which focuses on fathers), and the DCS (developed for high-conflict contexts). Some of the instruments, such as the

PAST and the CAD-S, are designed to target divorced parents and measure their degree of adaptation to divorce. For this reason, these two tools include specific items aimed at measuring these feelings of adaptation. When assessing parents who are in the process of adapting to divorce, it would be advisable to choose one of these measures. When seeking to measure change, the D-Cop would be more suitable, as it is designed for use as a daily measure and as such is sensitive to change. When the aim is to assess coparenting more comprehensively, we would suggest the use of one of the instruments suitable for different family structures, such as the CI-PA and the CoPAFS. These tools allow us to come to a deeper understanding of how coparenting functions in different family structures. However, the CI-PA has the limitation of being only in German and useable with families with children of at least 10 years of age. The CoPAFS is limited in that it does not include other basic family relationships, such as parenting.

The currently available instruments have two prominent limitations. Firstly, they are limited to specific language adaptations. Most measures are available in English, and some are in Spanish, German, Portuguese and French. Secondly, they have the limitation of being validated only in community samples; thus they do not provide a way to differentiate between clinical and non-clinical families. According to the recommendations of the American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association and National Council on Measurement in Education (2014), there is a need to carry out psychometric studies among clinical samples to gather the empirical evidence needed to use these instruments with clinical populations.

Unsurprisingly given the increase in the variability of family structures (Casares 2008; Hamilton et al. 2010), our results show an increase in the development of measures that assess coparenting among parents in different family structures, such as those who have ended their marital relationship or have formed different family systems. However, this assessment has to be conducted through different independent measures. Therefore, there is a need for measures that allow for a broader family assessment, tools that are simple to administer in clinical practice and that can be used quickly to assess family functioning in diverse family structures. This also means that there is a need for instruments that provide a more complete understanding of coparenting, moving beyond instruments that assess one single aspect and toward instruments that encompass different dimensions. It would also be desirable to develop instruments that allow for an examination of different family relationships simultaneously, perhaps looking at both the marital relationship and individual parenting in addition to assessing coparenting. We believe it would be valuable to develop a questionnaire that fills this

void. Such an instrument would help clinicians accurately assess the different aspects of a child's situation and make appropriate treatment decisions, such as suggesting family therapy.

These conclusions should be taken carefully into consideration, but they are subject to some relevant limitations. Coparenting is a recent and evolving construct, and there is no consensus in the existing theoretical framework as to a unified concept of coparenting. This is the main reason why there is such a large degree of heterogeneity in the instruments available. We find believe it is necessary to strive for greater consensus as to the construct of coparenting in order to facilitate further research. Another limitation is that in most cases there is only one study analyzing the psychometric properties of a given instrument, thus making it difficult to generalize results. The factor analyses of most of the studies were consistent with the two high-order dimensions of conflict and support, which tended to be accompanied by several lower-order dimensions. However, it has yet to be determined whether a single dimension ranging from support on one extreme to conflict on the other could fit better or equally well. Finally, this review does not include articles featuring subsequent research with these instruments, which would be valuable in future research.

Despite these limitations, this systematic review of instruments aimed at assessing coparenting adds to the literature because it reinforces the importance of the concept of coparenting and its assessment, and it highlights the need to include different family structures. Our conclusions are in line with previous reviews that have highlighted the need for further research about coparenting among diverse family configurations (Boricevic and Kusmic 2013). In this way, our review helps make the case for the development of a single instrument that would take into account the complexity of different family configurations, one that would include other related family relationships, such as individual parenting. Such a questionnaire could include an initial assessment section to allow for a broader comprehension of a family. These questions regarding family structure would be followed by questions regarding coparenting and other family relationships. Efforts should be made to create a more thorough measurement tool while maintaining simplicity and ease of use in daily practice. We believe that a questionnaire that includes different perspectives would be useful because it would have the value of both subjectivity and of an external point of view. It is also critical to validate these questionnaires in clinical populations and to provide cut-off points and standardized scores, thus allowing for the kind of informative assessment that can guide clinical decisions, such as the indication of family therapy. Future research should also be extended to include an analysis of the predictive validity of these measures by calculating the

overall effect sizes of studies that have used these measures in applied research. In addition, further research is needed to investigate the relationship between coparenting and children and adolescents' mental health so that specific interventions can be developed.

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Compliance with Ethical Standards

Conflict of Interest The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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