

## The Association Between Parent's Perception and Child's Actual Motor Skills in Preschool-age Children

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### ABSTRACT

The preschool years is a critical time for the optimal development of children's fine and gross motor skills for future engagement in physical activity. Parents play a critical role in the development of these skills and early identification of potential developmental delays in their children. Early identification of developmental delay is essential for early intervention and rely on accurate child screenings that are often administered by parents. Few studies have compared the accuracy of parent's perceptions across two different measurements with children's actual motor skills. **PURPOSE:** This study compared parents' perceptions of their child's motor skills on two assessments with their actual performance on the MABC-2. **METHODS:** 45 preschool-age children across the metro DFW area participated in this study (26 girls and 19 boys,  $M_{age} = 4.0$ ). IRB approval was obtained for all participants. Children were assessed using the MABC-2. The MABC-2 is comprised of 8 items across three subdomains (aiming and catching, manual dexterity, and balance). Parents completed two separate surveys on the perception of their child's motor skills (Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ), and the Little Developmental Coordination Disorder questionnaire (LDCDQ). The ASQ ask parents to compare their child's abilities against other children within the same age group across five different domains (communication, gross motor, fine motor, personal-social, and problem solving). The LDCDQ ask parents to rate their child's gross and fine motor abilities across fifteen different items. Bivariate correlations were used to analyze the relationship between parent responses and children's scores on the MABC-2. **RESULTS:** On the LDCDQ, parents rating on fine motor skills was significantly related to total MABC-2 score; ( $p = .006$ ,  $R = 0.402$ ), manual dexterity ( $p = .038$ ,  $R = 0.310$ ), and aiming and catching ( $p\text{-value} = .005$ ,  $R = 0.407$ ). On the ASQ, parent's ratings on fine motor skills were significantly related to total MABC-2 scores ( $p = .048$ ,  $R = 0.303$ ). Parent's ratings on their child's ASQ personal social skills were significantly related to total MABC-2 scores ( $p = .011$ ,  $R = 0.385$ ), and aiming and catching ( $p = .013$ ,  $R = 0.377$ ). No other correlations were significant amongst the parent assessments and child's MABC scores. **CONCLUSION:** While neither assessment appeared to be more related to children's actual scores than the other, in both assessments fine motor skills were more closely related to children's actual performance.