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Research & Education Program

# Use of the NCAST Parent-Child Interaction Scales in Healthy Babies Healthy Children and Nurse-Family Partnership programs in Ontario: A (re)orientation

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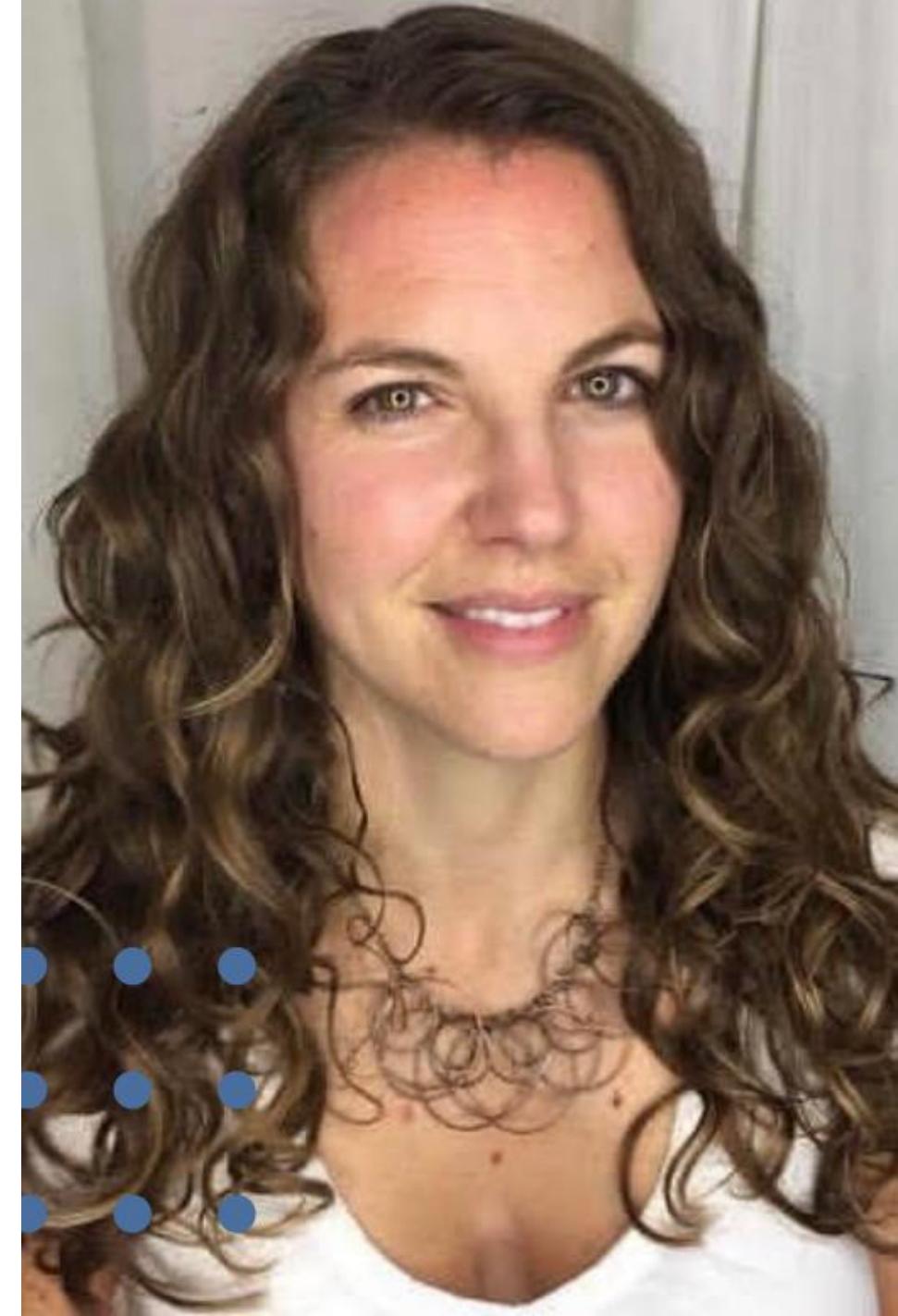


# Introduction

Anja Cahill, RN  
Healthy Babies Healthy Children  
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Program Nursing Practice Lead

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# Which program are you representing today?

- Healthy Babies Healthy Children (HBHC)
- Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP)
- Other





# Which position are you representing today?

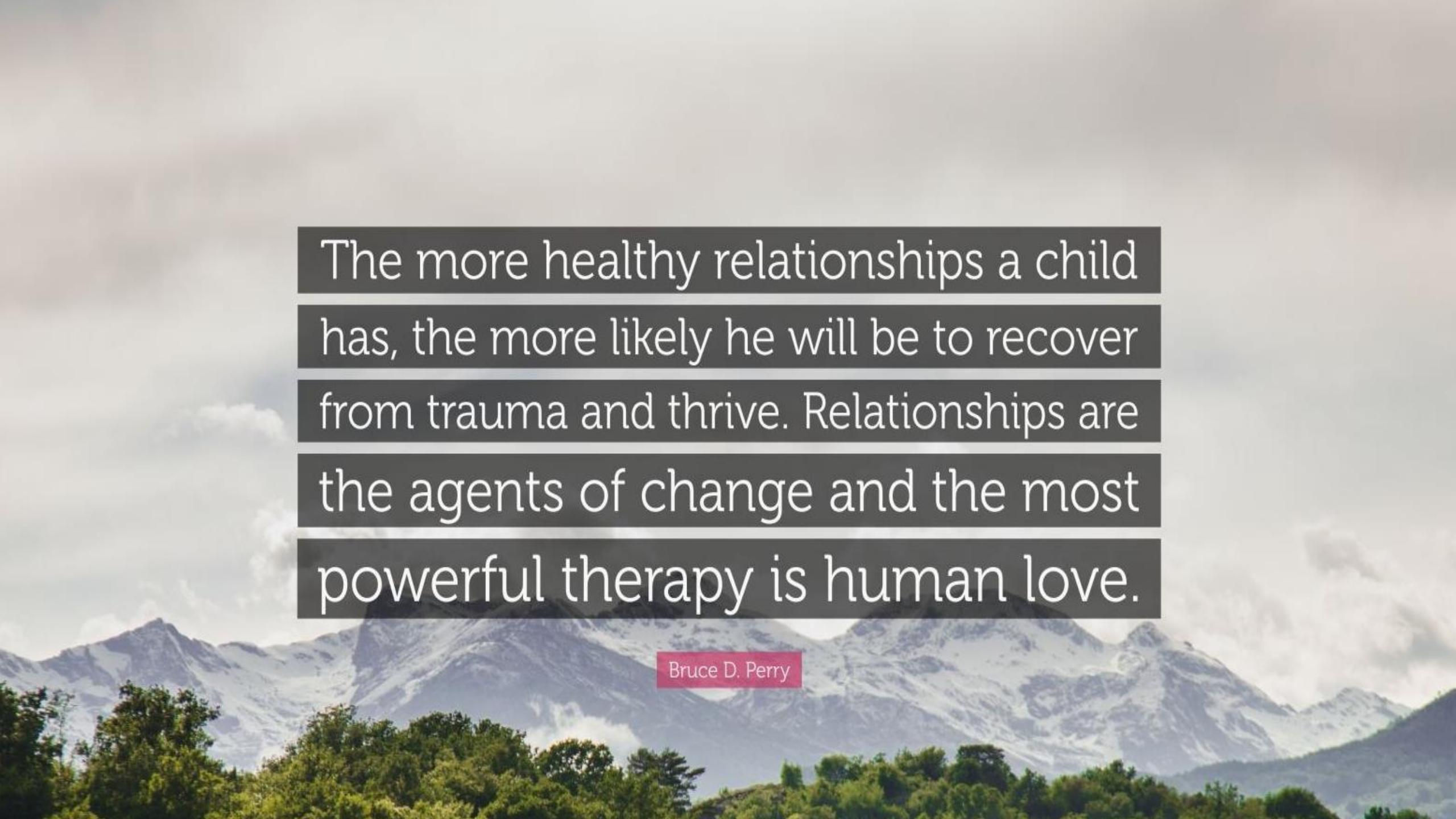


- Public Health Nurse
- NCAST PCI Instructor
- Program Manager / Supervisor
- Program Director / Executive
- Other



## Outline

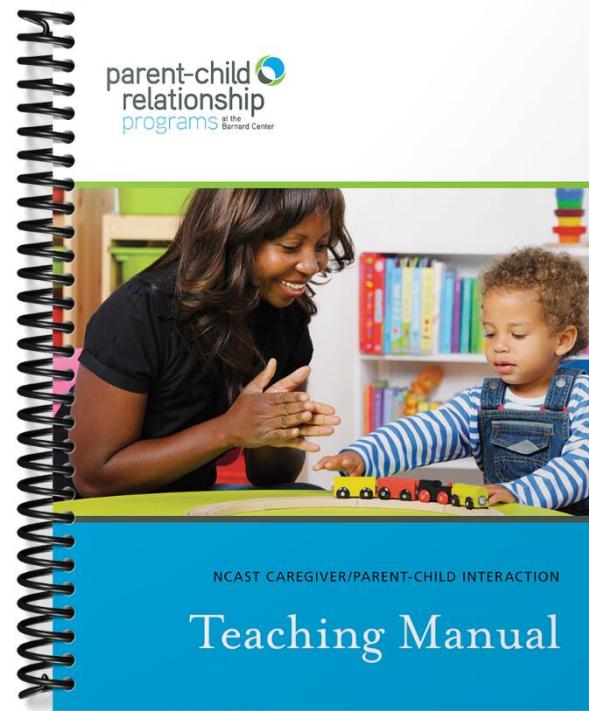
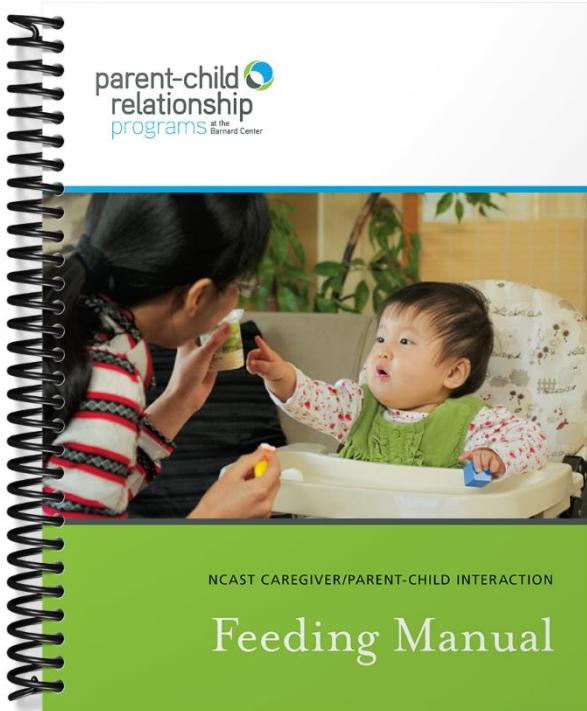
- NCAST Parent-Child Interaction Scales (PCI Scales)
- Role of the PCI Scales in home visiting in Ontario
- Role of the NCAST PCI Instructor in Ontario
- What NCAST PCI Scales are not



The more healthy relationships a child has, the more likely he will be to recover from trauma and thrive. Relationships are the agents of change and the most powerful therapy is human love.

Bruce D. Perry

What are the  
NCAST PCI  
Scales?



Professional Resource

## Parent-Child Relationship Program: Parent-Child Interaction Scales (An Overview)\*

In the Healthy Babies Healthy Children (HBHC) and Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) programs in Ontario, determination of the parent-child relationship strengths and areas for concern are identified through completion of the NCAST Parent-Child Interaction Feeding and Teaching Scales.<sup>1</sup> All public health nurses employed to deliver services to families enrolled in either the HBHC or NFP programs are required to be competent and reliable in their administration of these scales. The purpose of this document is to provide a brief overview describing components of the Parent-Child Interaction Scales.

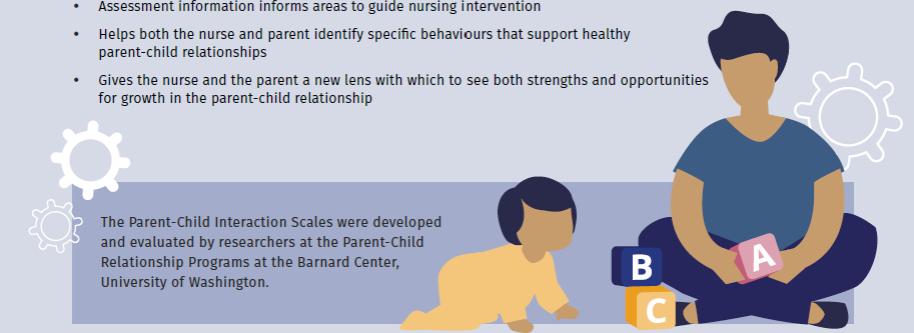
### What are the NCAST Parent-Child Interaction Scales?<sup>2</sup>

- Valid and reliable assessments for measuring parent-child interaction<sup>2</sup>
- A set of observable behaviours that describe the quality of parent (or caregiver)-child interactions in either a feeding or teaching situation
- Comprehensive clinical tools that reveal the infant or young child's changing needs as well as the parent's ability to adapt to those changes

\*NOTE  
This document updates and replaces the HBHC resource document titled: *NCAST Parent-Child Assessment: Feeding/Teaching Scale*

### How do the Parent-Child Interaction Scales Benefit Caregiver/Parent-Child Interactions?<sup>2</sup>

- Assessment information informs areas to guide nursing intervention
- Helps both the nurse and parent identify specific behaviours that support healthy parent-child relationships
- Gives the nurse and the parent a new lens with which to see both strengths and opportunities for growth in the parent-child relationship

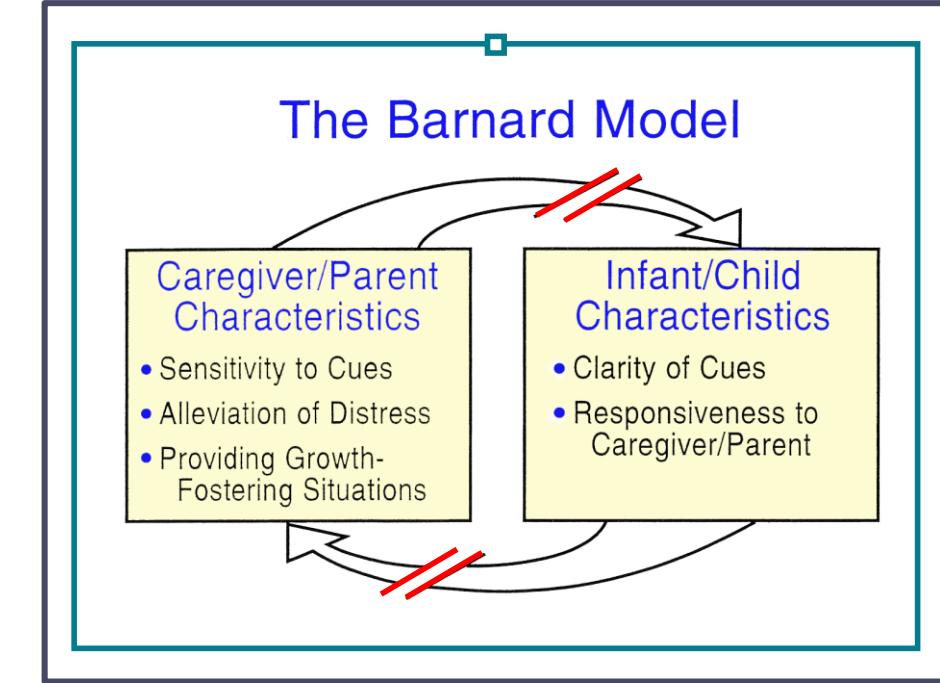
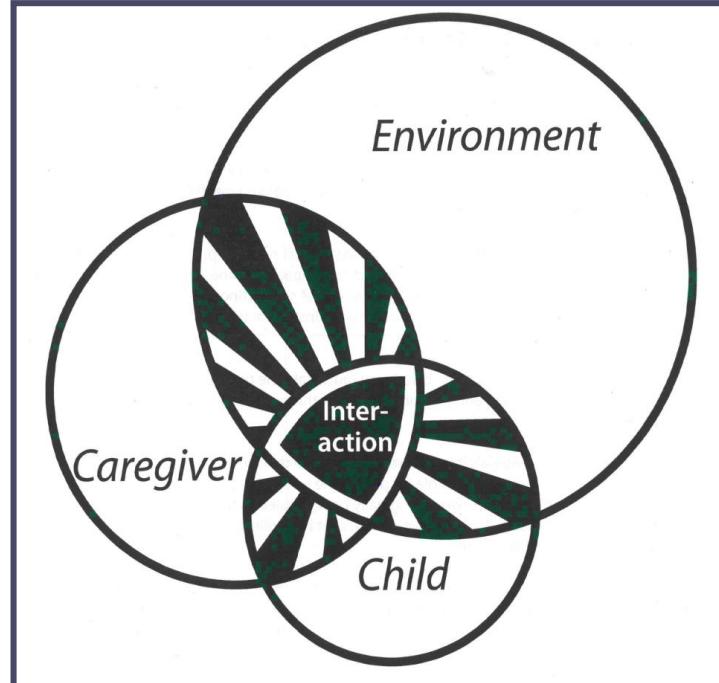


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# Where did they come from?

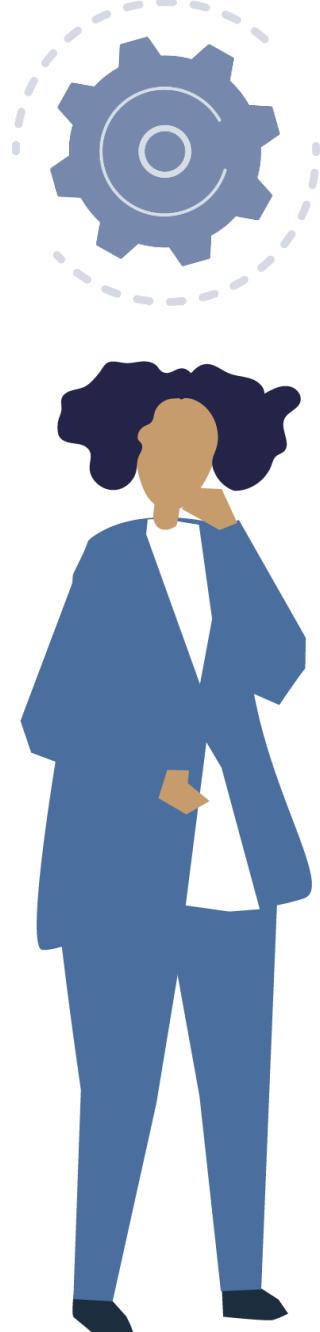




# How are nurses trained to use them?

- Certification courses
- Requirements
- Financial Responsibility





## What about re-certification?

- Annual Re-Certification courses
- Requirements
- Financial Responsibility



# What about nurses returning from redeployments?

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Public Health Nurse Certification and Re-Certification in the NCAST Parent-Child Interaction Scales (2022)

In the Healthy Babies Healthy Children (HBHC) and Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) programs in Ontario, determination of the parent-child relationship strengths and areas for concern are identified through completion of the NCAST Parent-Child Interaction Feeding and Teaching Scales.<sup>1</sup> All public health nurses that deliver services to families enrolled in the HBHC or NFP programs are required to be reliable in their administration of these scales. The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to teams with respect to the need and timing for public health nurse certification or re-certification in the Parent-Child Interaction Scales in 2022.

**Certification and Re-Certification in the Parent-Child Interaction Scales**

**Roles and Responsibilities**

An NCAST Parent-Child Interaction Instructor is responsible for training and supporting all public health nurses in their local HBHC or NFP programs to:

1. complete their initial certification to administer the Parent-Child Interaction Scales.
2. annually re-certify in one of the scales (i.e., rotating between the Teaching and Feeding Scales).

Training to become an NCAST Parent-Child Interaction Instructor is completed by educators from the Parent-Child Relationship Program at the Barnard Center in collaboration with the Ontario Parent-Child Relationship Nursing Practice Lead.

The PHN-PREP program, School of Nursing, McMaster University receives funding from the Ontario Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services to provide oversight to the training and support of NCAST Parent-Child Interaction Instructors and to purchase and have scored the forms required to annually re-certify public health nurses on either the Feeding or Teaching Scales.

Each individual public health unit is locally responsible for covering costs associated with:

1. training public health nurses to use the Parent-Child Interaction Scales in practice, which includes the certification (or re-certification) process; and
2. supplies to support the program (e.g., manuals, scale pads, handouts).

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## CURRENT OR RETURNING Public Health Nurses

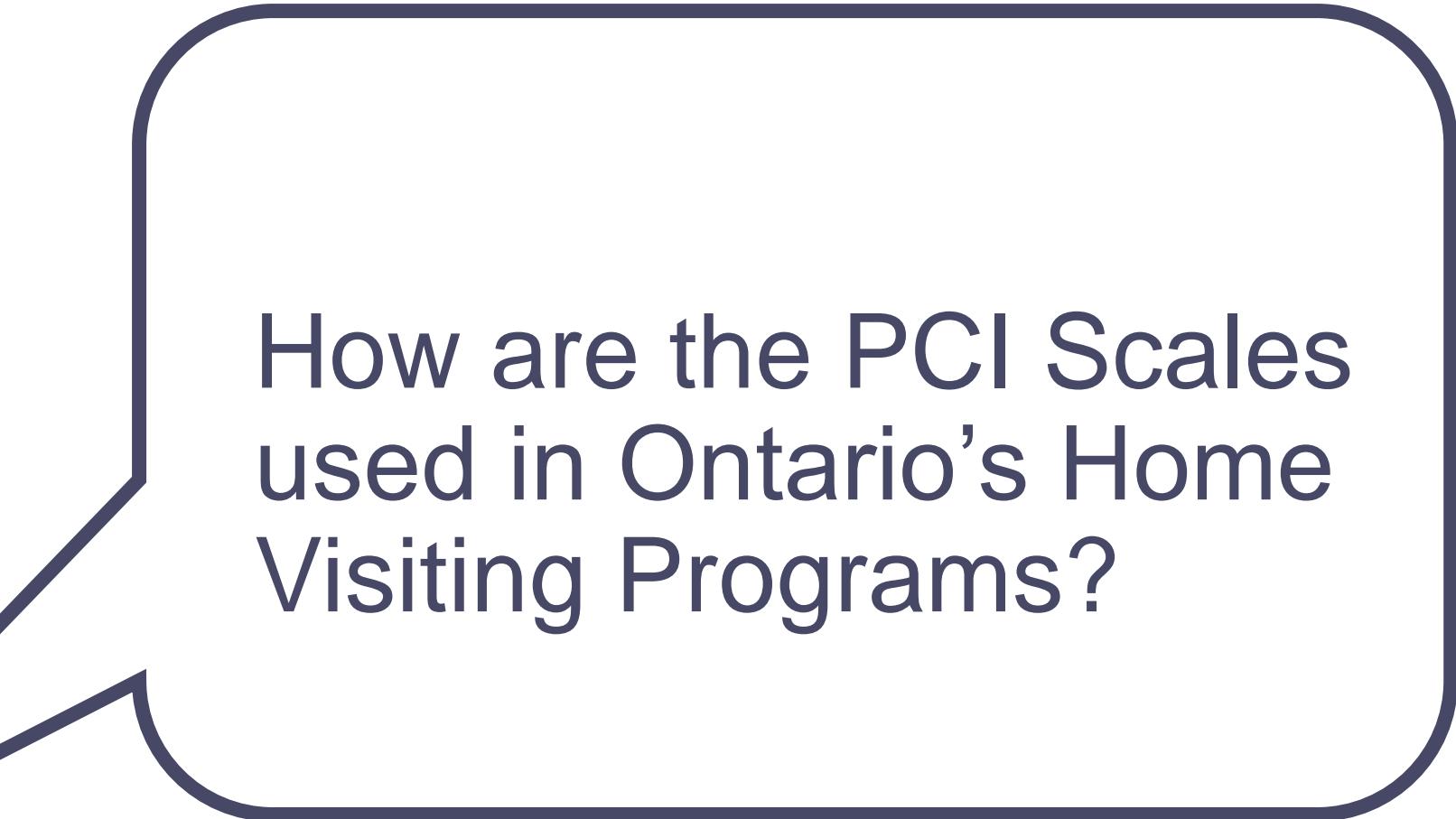
- Public health nurses who were certified or re-certified in at least one scale in 2020, 2021 or 2022 can continue using both scales in their practice and should plan to complete their re-certification in the Teaching Scale prior to December 31, 2022.
- Refresher support should be offered by the local NCAST Parent-Child Interaction Instructor to any nurse who falls within this group and who is uncertain about their reliability or the use of the assessments in practice.
- Public health nurses who completed their certification or last re-certification prior to March 31, 2020, are required to re-certify in using the Teaching Scale prior to using either scale in practice.
- For all nurses, successful re-certification with the Teaching Scale in 2022 will be sufficient to allow them to use both scales in their practices.



# What about those “Teaching Kits”?

- Certification course
- Shared
- Handed down
- Review contents
- Substitutions





How are the PCI Scales  
used in Ontario's Home  
Visiting Programs?

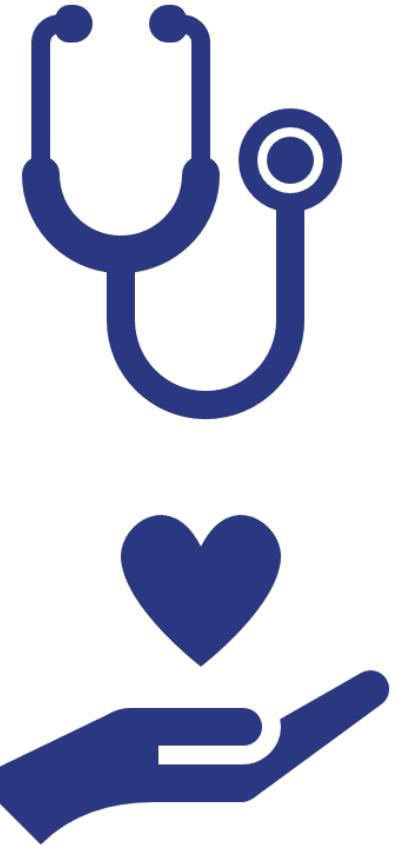


## How can they be used?

- In home, in-person
- Virtually through secured videoconferencing platforms
- Completed with each caregiver enrolled in service
- Completed for each eligible child
  - From birth through 36 months of developmental age
- HBHC Guidance Document, 2012



# Vital Signs



Repeated: *multiple measures over multiple time points*

The fact that the brain develops sequentially – and also so rapidly in the first years of life – explains why extremely young children are at such great risk of suffering lasting effects of trauma: their brains are still developing. The same miraculous plasticity that allows young brains to quickly learn love and language, unfortunately, also makes them highly susceptible to negative experiences as well.

Bruce D. Perry



# When?

## 2 Weeks

Early feeding problems

Early relationship concerns/PMD

## 8 Months

On the move!

Emerging autonomy

## 3 Months

More social, smiling, vocalizing

Evaluate PMD again

## 12 Months

Independent

Maternal sensitivity to cues may decrease

***multiple measures over multiple time points***



# When?

**The Teaching Scale can also be completed at:**

18 Months

Increasing independence

Negativism

36 Months

Increased cooperation

Identify concerns prior to program discharge

24 Months

Tantrums

Increased vocabulary

***multiple measures over multiple time points***



One of the few things I knew for sure by then about traumatized children was that they need predictability, routine, a sense of control and stable relationships with supportive people.

Bruce D. Perry



# Benefits of Use



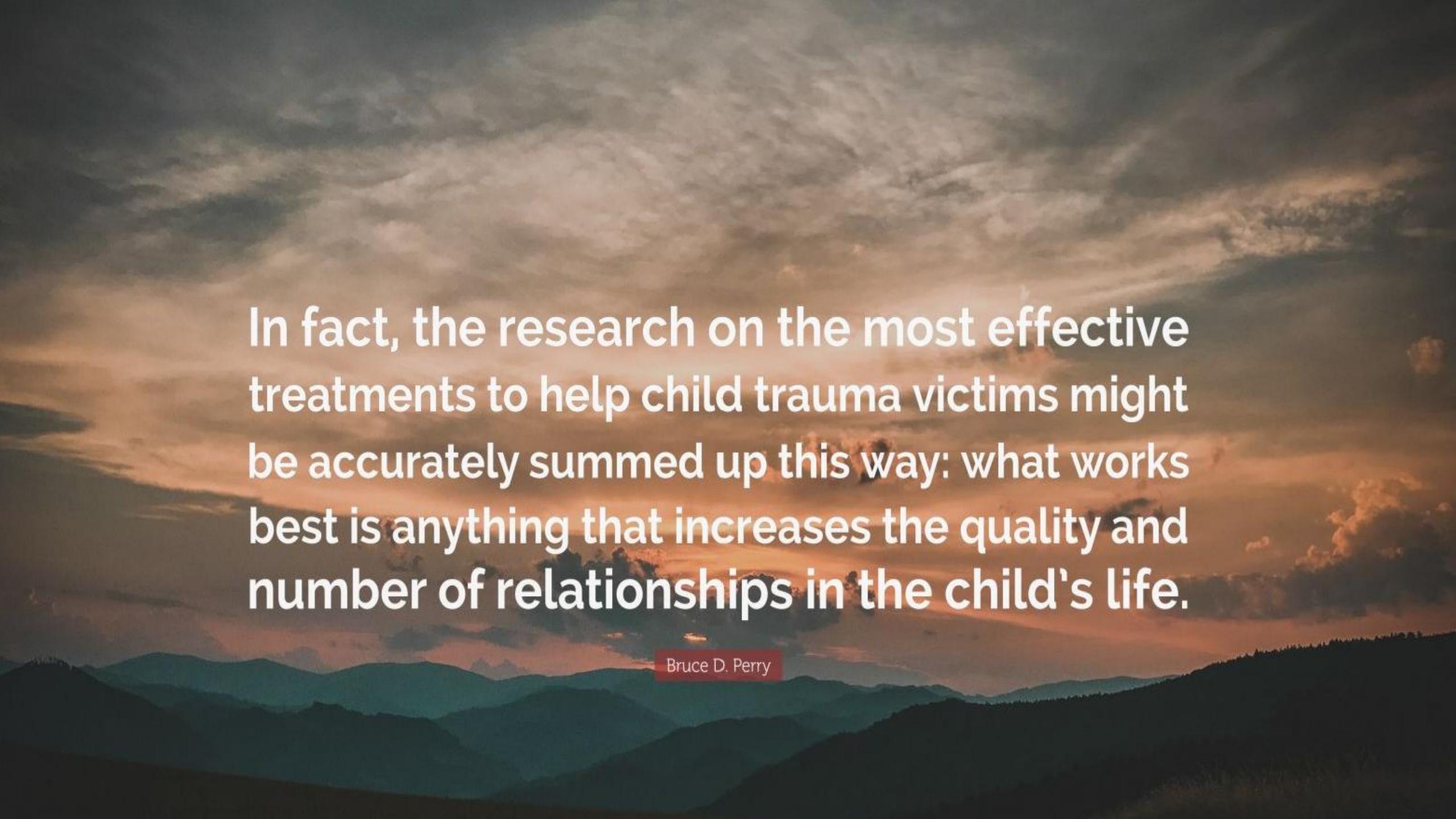
- Identifies specific areas to guide our interventions
- Transforms the nurse's view of the dyadic relationship
- Ensures a strength-based lens for seeing opportunities for growth



# The role of HBHC and NFP

- High-risk families often experience on-going crises
- Connect the family with their community supports
- Supportive, present and consistent adults are protective factors





In fact, the research on the most effective treatments to help child trauma victims might be accurately summed up this way: what works best is anything that increases the quality and number of relationships in the child's life.

Bruce D. Perry

# What is the Role of the NCAST PCI Instructor in Ontario?



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Professional Resource

## NCAST Parent-Child Interaction Instructor (Ontario): Roles, Requirements and Responsibilities

In Ontario, each public health unit should have at least one public health nurse (PHN) who is a certified NCAST Parent-Child Interaction (PCI) Instructor. Across the province, the community of NCAST Parent-Child Interaction Instructors receive professional practice support from the Ontario Parent-Child Relationship Program Nursing Practice Lead.

### NCAST PCI Instructor: Role

The NCAST PCI Instructor has a critical role in ensuring that PHNs on their local Healthy Babies Healthy Children (HBHC) and/or Nurse Family-Partnership (NFP) teams are certified, and then annually re-certified, to administer the NCAST PCI Feeding and Teaching Scales. These scales are valid and reliable assessments for measuring parent-child interactions. The NCAST PCI Instructor is to be available to their team as a resource for PCI Feeding and Teaching scale interpretation and interventions. As well, NCAST PCI Instructors may be asked to provide support to other public health units as required.

Within each public health unit, the NCAST PCI Instructor serves as a resource and may provide practice support to PHNs and other members of the HBHC and NFP teams, with respect to:

- ✓ Keys to Infant Caregiving Program
- ✓ Promoting Maternal Mental Health During Pregnancy (PMMHDP)
- ✓ BabyCues videos, cues cards and handouts
- ✓ Partners in Parenting Education (PIPE)



### NCAST PCI Instructor: Certification Requirements

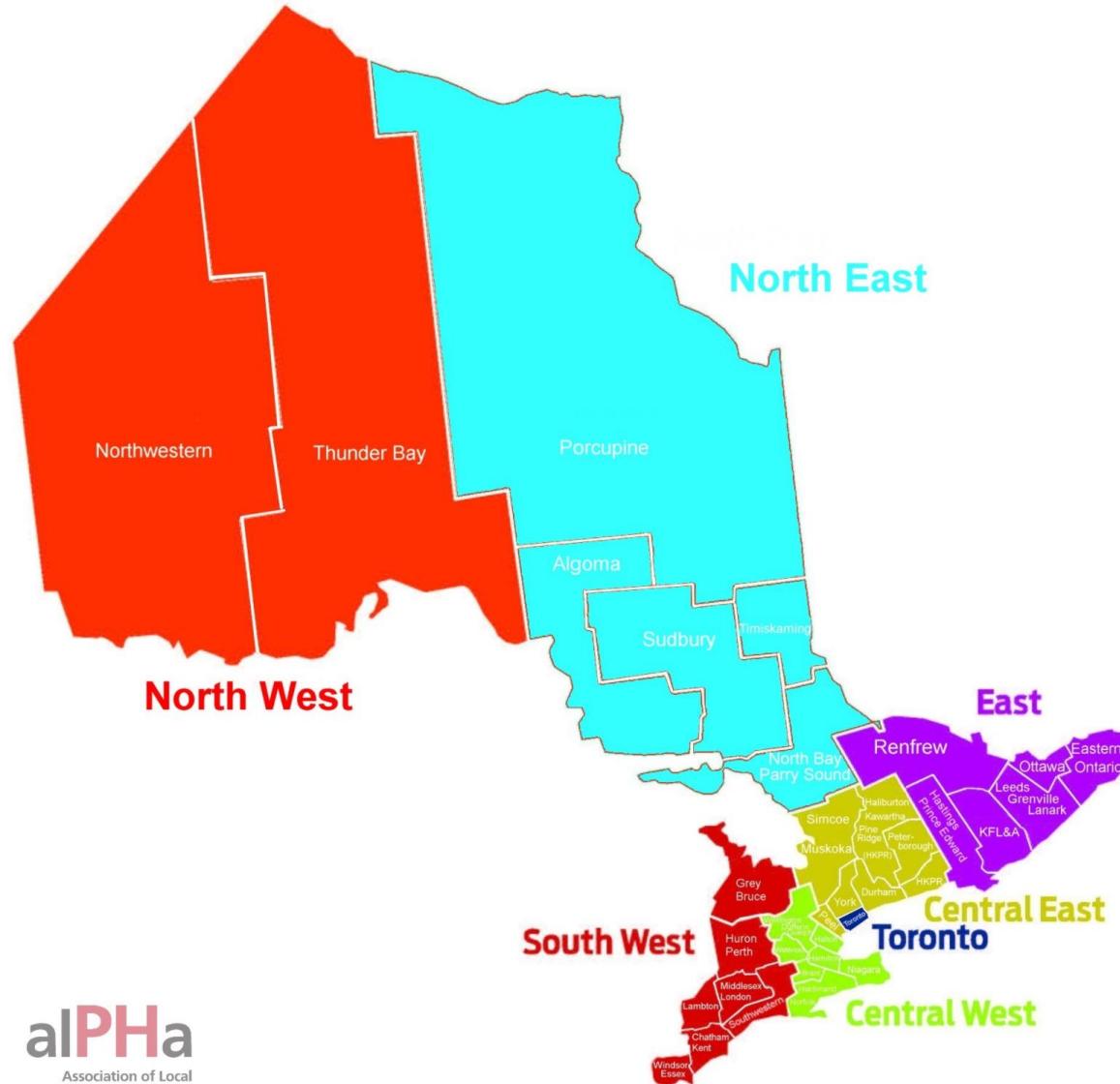
To be considered certified, all NCAST PCI Instructors must:

- ✓ Hold a Baccalaureate degree in Nursing
- ✓ Be an employee of an Ontario public health unit
- ✓ Be actively managing a caseload in the HBHC or NFP program
- ✓ Have completed a Keys to Infant Caregiving course\*
- ✓ Have successfully completed the NCAST PCI Instructor training workshop offered through the Parent-Child Relationship Programs (PCRP) at the Barnard Center
- ✓ Have successfully completed the required post-workshop written case study within three months of workshop completion

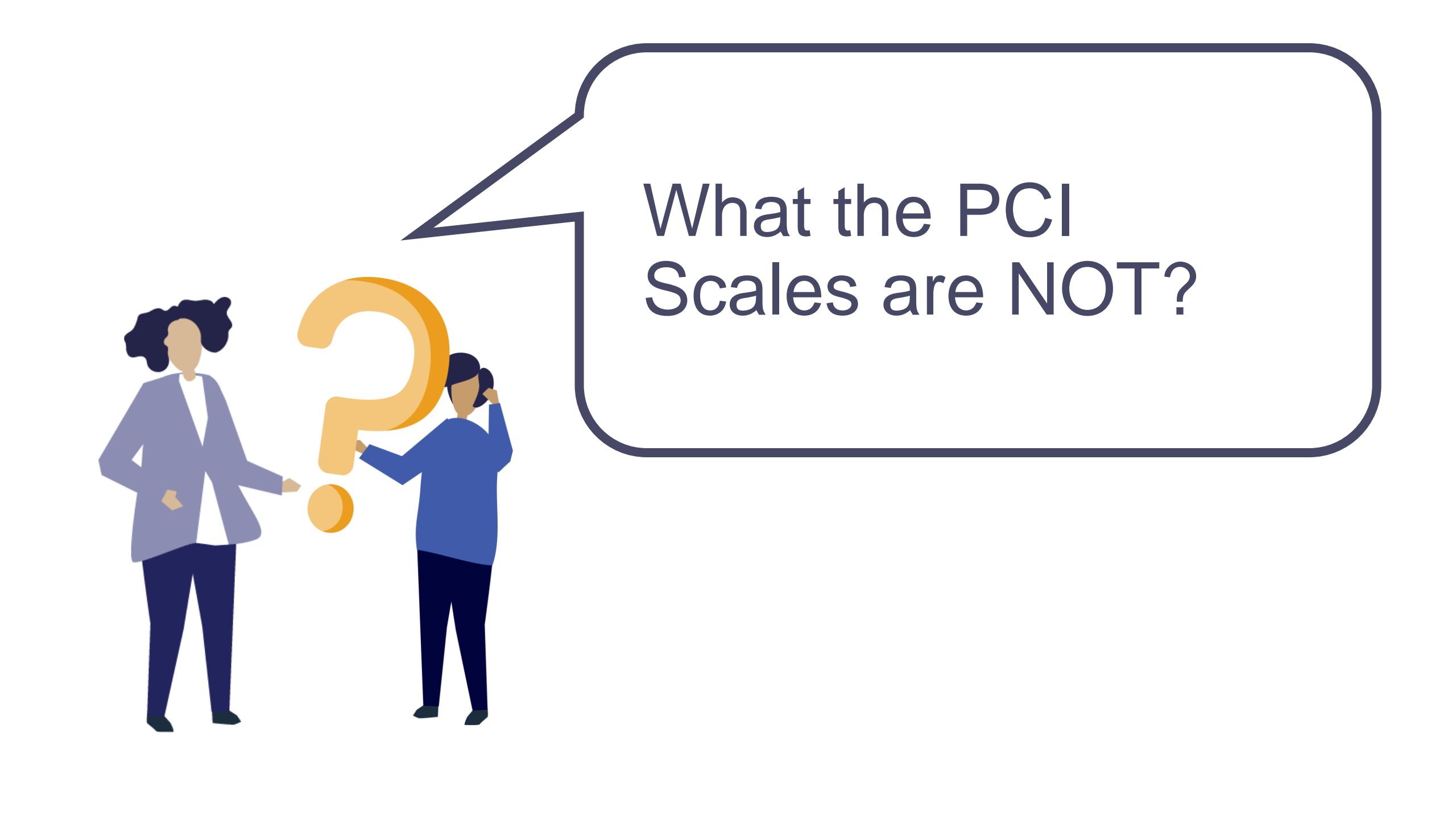
\*The Keys to Infant Caregiving course is available for purchase through PCRP (recommended) as a video to stream on-demand with study guide or as an e-learning module. It is also available as free online modules through Best Start by Health Nexus.

Developed April 2022

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- 44 NCAST PCI Instructors
- Representing 31 PHU
- Coverage in all 7 regions
- September 2022
  - Call for instructor candidates
- January 2023
  - 2-weeks of virtual Instructor Training



What the PCI  
Scales are NOT?



# THANK YOU!

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