

*The Children's Fantasy Inventory*  
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Erica Rosenfeld & L. Rowell Huesmann

For permission  
please contact:

L.R. Huesmann  
Research Center for Group Dynamics    Fax: (313) 763-1202  
Institute for Social Research  
*University of Michigan*  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1248  
Tel: (313) 764-8385

The *Children's Fantasy Inventory Scale* was developed to measure the types and frequency of the fantasy behavior in which children engage. The measure was tested on first and third grade children and consequently refined into nine style subscales, including: Frequency, Aggressive, Fanciful, Absorption, Scary, Vivid, Intellectual, Active-Heroic, and Dysphoric. In light of young children's attention span, the scale is only 45 items in length. However, because younger children sometimes lose interest in the measure and answer systematically, the subscales can be used individually or in a combination. This, in turn, allows the scale to be targeted to the project's objectives.

The items are administered to students in their classroom setting. The proctor hands out booklets which have different colored pages (pink, yellow, green, blue, white) and symbols (bird, flower) on the margin of the paper, alongside the question numbers. These are to help the proctor see if any of the children are on the wrong page or question. The proctor reads a set of brief instructions, explaining the anonymity of the children's answers and also why they are being asked these questions. Then, the questions are read individually. The children answer by placing an "X" in one of three boxes; "a lot," "a little," or "no," scored as 2, 1, and 0 respectively.

Information has been collected concerning the reliability and stability of the measure, tested at both 1 month and 1 year increments. Coefficient alphas range from .42 to .70 and all the scales except the Absorption scale has alphas of .59 or better. The 1 month retest reliability found alphas from .39 to .67. (It should be noted that an alpha of .50 is acceptable because of the young age of the subjects.) The 1 year follow-up shows the fantasy behaviors to be stable, and the individual differences in behavior does not appear to be transitory. Some of the items have elements of the two different scales, thus they are referred to as "intercorrelated." These items have an average intercorrelation of .43, so the intercorrelated scales seem to represent independent fantasy behaviors.

Results have found differences between boys and girls and the first- and third-graders. The girls engage in Fanciful fantasy more frequently than boys, which is more "child-like" than other subtypes, such as the Intellectual subtype. Likewise, boys score higher than girls on the Active-Heroic Fantasy scale, which could be predicted by the male sex typed activities on that scale. The absorption of fantasy increases from first to third grade, reflecting on the decrease of imaginary play and the increase of internalization of scenarios with age.

The scale has also found that some of the fantasy types had close parallels to adult daydreaming patterns. (see Rosenfeld, et al. for further discussion).

*References:*

- Huesmann, L.R. and Eron, L.D. (1986). *Television and the Aggressive Child*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Publishers.
- Rosenfeld, E., Huesmann, L.R., Eron, L.D., & Torney-Purta, J. (1982). Measuring Patterns of Fantasy Behavior in Children. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. Vol. 42, no. 2, 347-366.

# The Children's Fantasy Inventory Measure

## *Instructions:*

We are going to ask you to do a number of things for us today. These things are not tests. We just want to know how you feel about some things. All of the answers you give us today will be a secret between you and us. You will know your answers, and we will know your answers, but no one else in your class will know, not even the teacher.

Now we have some rules we would like you to follow, and if you listen and follow the rules, you will get a prize. The first rule is: Don't talk to other children while you are doing these things. Second rule: Don't shout out your answer; we don't want you to tell anyone your answer. Third rule: Don't look at other children's papers or answers. Fourth rule: Don't turn any pages until we tell you to. Once again, the rules are (Repeat them). You get a prize if you follow these rules.

We are going to pass out some papers to you now. Just leave the papers on your desk and don't make any marks or write on them yet. Remember that one of the rules is that you don't turn any pages until we tell you to. (Pass out booklets and pencils.)

We would like to ask you all some questions because we really want to know what boys and girls your age think about and what kinds of things you play. Your answers will be very helpful to us and will make it possible for us to help[ other boys and girls. So we really want to thank you for helping us.

You know how sometimes when you're by yourself, or before you fall asleep at night, or when you're just not doing anything special, you start to think about something just for fun or because it just pops into your head? Well, this happens to everybody--adults as well as boys and girls. Sometimes these thoughts are big, long, make-believe stories, and sometimes they are just quick little thoughts. We call these make-believe thought "daydreams." You know, also, how sometimes you play (by yourself, or with friends) and you pretend you're somebody or body or something else? Or you pretend that a toy is really something besides the toy? Well, I would like very much to know about your daydreams and about the pretend games you play.

I am going to ask you some questions. Some of the things I ask you about you will say yes to and some things you will say no to. Everybody has daydreams, but we all think about different kinds of things. There are no right or wrong answers. This is not a test. Try to remember which things you think about a lot, which things you did think about a little and which things you never thought about.

Now you can turn to the first page in front of you. It's a blue page. Does everybody have a blue front page? Do you see the boxes on the blue page? Now, what we want you to do is, after I ask you a question, put an X in the big box if your answer to a question is a lot, and put an X in the middle box if your answer is a little and put an X in the little box if your answer is no. (Demonstrate on a chalk board). The pictures next to the boxes tell you which questions we are on. So, when I say put your finger on the flower, everyone will know what they should mark the boxes next to the flower, and we will be able to see that you are all on the right question. What you mark down will be just between you and me. I won't tell anyone--not your teacher or your parents or the other kids. Do you have any questions? Do you think you know what a daydream is? (Pause). If you change your mind after marking a box, put a wavy line through it like this (demonstrate) and then pick another box.

Now (read item 1 from list on next page). If your answer to this question is a lot, put an x in the big box; if your answer is a little, put an X in the medium size box; if your answer is no, put an X in the little box.

(Read off symbol, symbol number and item up to #39, using the above format. Read each item two times. You should repeat instructions about finger on the symbols only a few times, then drop it. Check to be sure all children are on proper page and have fingers on proper symbol. Be sure to tell them when to turn the page.)

(After question #39, say...) The rest of the questions are just a little different. You see four boxes instead of three after each question. I will read what it says under each box after I ask the question and you put an X in the box which is the best answer for you. Let's try bird number 4; (read question 40.) If you do that every night, put an X in the first box; if you do that almost every night, put an X in the second box; if you do that some night, put an X in the third box; and if you never do that, put an X in the last box. (Repeat for the next question.)

## Fantasy Items and Their Scale Assignments

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|----|---|--------------|
| 1. | Did you ever have a whole special pretend world with lots of people or animals that you thought about or played with?                                     | Intellectual |
| 2. | Did you ever have a make-believe friend who you talked to and who went place with you?  | Fanciful     |
| 3. | Do you have a special daydream that you like to think about over and over?  | Absorption   |
| 4. | When you are by yourself, do you like to sit and just be very quiet?  | Absorption   |
| 5. | Do you keep right on playing or reading, even when it's noisy in the room?  | Absorption   |
| 6. | Do you sometimes dream about falling or getting hurt?   | Dysphoric    |
| 7. | Do you find that even if you try real hard to pay attention to what you're doing or to your teacher, that you sometimes start to think of something else? | Absorption   |
| 8. | Do you sometimes dream about someone in your family getting hurt?   | Dysphoric    |
| 9. | Do your daydreams sometimes seem so real to you that you almost forget it is just pretend and really think that it happened?                              | Vividness    |

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|-----|--|-----------------------------|
| 10. | Have you ever wondered about things like how a bird can fly or how a fish can live in water?   | Intellectual                |
| 11. | When you get mad, sometimes, do you think about the things you would like to do to the person you're mad at--like hitting, or breaking his toys or telling on him? | Aggressive                  |
| 12. | When you are daydreaming, do you think about being the winner in a game that you like to play?   | Intellectual, Active-Heroic |
| 13. | Are your daydreams about things and people the could never really happen like monsters or fairies or men from outer space?   | Scary                       |
| 14. | When you're daydreaming, do you think about how to make or build something or how to put together a real hard puzzle?  | Intellectual                |
| 15. | Do you sometimes daydream about what would happen if you did real bad in school--even when this didn't really happen?  | Aggressive, Dysphoric       |
| 16. | Do you have daydreams about how the world will be and what you are going to be many years from now when you're all grown up?                                       | Intellectual, Absorption    |
| 17. | Do the people and things that you daydream about sometimes seems so real that you think you can almost see or hear them in front of you?                           | Vividness                   |
| 18. | When you are daydreaming, do you think about being a great astronaut, or scientist, or singer, or somebody like that who is very famous?                           | Intellectual, Active-Heroic |
| 19. | Do you sometimes have daydreams about hitting or hurting somebody the you don't like?  | Aggressive                  |

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|-----|--|---------------------------|
| 20. | Do you sometimes have daydreams or nightdreams about running away from somebody who is trying to catch you and punish you--even when you weren't really bad? | Aggressive, Dysphoric     |
| 21. | Do you have daydreams about people in other far away countries--where they live, what they wear and eat, or what they do every day?                          | Intellectual              |
| 22. | Do you have daydreams about things that can work by magic and have all kinds of magic wishes?  | Intellectual              |
| 23. | Do you sometimes think about something bad that you did, that nobody knows about but you?  | Aggressive, Dysphoric     |
| 24. | Does your Mother or Father or someone else, read fairy tales to you (3rd grade--do you read...)-like <u>Hansel and Gretel</u> or <u>Snow White</u> ?         | Fanciful                  |
| 25. | When you play pretend games, do you feel like you really see the pretend places and people in the room with you?   | Vividness                 |
| 26. | Do you play pretend games about how things used to be when you were much younger--before you started going to school?  | Fanciful                  |
| 27. | Do you sometime pretend that you are a brave hero who saves somebody or who captures a bad guy?  | Active-Heroic             |
| 28. | Do yo play games where you pretend to fight someone?   | Aggressive, Active-Heroic |
| 29. | Do you play pretend games about things that don't ever really happen in real life?   | Intellectual, Vividness   |
| 30. | Do you play scary pretend games--like ghost or monsters or something like that?  | Scary, Active-Heroic      |

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|-----|---|--------------------------|
| 31. | Sometimes when you play pretend things, do you feel so happy that you don't ever want the game to end?  | Vividness, Fanciful      |
| 32. | When you are playing checkers or cards or other games like that, do your friends sometimes have to tell you that it's your turn because you were thinking about something else? | Absorption               |
| 33. | Do you sometimes feel like you don't want to think about anything and wish that someone would tell you a story or that you could turn on the TV?                                | Scary, Vividness         |
| 34. | Are your daydreams sometimes so scary that you try real hard not to think about them anymore?   | Scary                    |
| 35. | Do you daydream about very happy things?  | Fanciful                 |
| 36. | If someone asks what you're thinking or doing when you're daydreaming, does it make you feel silly?   | Dysphoric                |
| 37. | Do you sometimes think about very sad things when you are daydreaming?  | Scary, Dysphoric         |
| 38. | Do you sometimes dream about accidents or fires or crashes?   | Dysphoric, Active-Heroic |
| 39. | Do you get real scared because of something that you daydream about?  | Scary                    |
| 40. | How often do you dream about things that you see on television?   | Frequency                |
| 41. | Counting all the different kinds of daydreams--when you are by yourself, how much do you daydream?  | Frequency                |
| 42. | Counting all the different kinds of daydreams--when you are by yourself, how much do you daydream?  | Frequency                |

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|-----|--|-----------|
| 43. | Counting all the different kinds of pretend games--when you are alone, how much do you play pretend?                   | Frequency |
| 44. | Counting all the different kinds of pretend games--when you are with your friends, how much do you play pretend games? | Frequency |
| 45. | Do you have dreams at night or early in the morning just before you get up?  | Frequency |

### Children's Fantasy Inventory Items: Aggressive and Active Heroic Scale

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|-----|---|---------------|
| 11. | When you get mad, sometimes, do you think about the things you would like to do to the person you're mad at - like hitting, or breaking his toys or telling on him? | Aggressive    |
| 12. | When you are daydreaming, do you think about being the winner in a game that you like to play?  | Active-Heroic |
| 15. | Do you sometimes daydream about what would happen if you did real bad in school - even if this didn't really happen?  | Aggressive    |
| 18. | When you are daydreaming, do you think about being great astronaut, or scientist, or singer or somebody like that who is very famous?                               | Active-Heroic |
| 19. | Do you sometimes have daydreams about hitting or hurting somebody that you don't like?  | Aggressive    |
| 20. | Do you sometimes have daydreams or nightdreams about running away from somebody who is trying to catch you and punish you - even when you weren't really bad?       | Aggressive    |

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|-----|---|---------------------------|
| 23. | Do you sometimes think about something bad that you did, that nobody knows about but you?       | Aggressive                |
| 27. | Do you sometimes pretend that you are a brave hero who saves somebody or who capture a bad guy? | Active-Heroic             |
| 28. | Do you play games where you pretend to fight with somebody?                                     | Aggressive, Active-Heroic |
| 30. | Do you play scary pretend games - like ghost or monsters like that?                             | Active-Heroic             |
| 38. | Do you sometimes dream about accidents or fires or crashes?                                     | Active-Heroic             |

The response items for each item was "a lot," "a little," or "no."  
Each item was scored "a lot" = 2, "a little" = 1, and "no" = 0.