Correlations in SPSS

In this example, we have *correlated* groups—in other words, “parent score” and “child score” are a pair for the first person in each of the two rows.
To get a correlation coefficient, use the “correlate” command (again, in the “Analyze” menu). Because a pair of variables will be correlated, this is a “bivariate” correlation. (If you were to produce many correlations at once – a correlation matrix – you would still be looking at each pair individually, so you would still use the “correlate/bivariate” command).
If you had many variables and wanted to produce a correlation matrix showing how each of them is related to each of the others, you would just move all of them to the right hand column in this same dialog window.

Hit the “Options” key to go on:

Let’s get means and standard deviations for these variables.

We’re assuming these variables are I/R-level (i.e., “scales”), so the Pearson correlation is the correct one.

Select these two variables and then use the arrow to move them both over to the “variables” area.
Hit “Continue,” and then “OK” to see the output:

This output is called a correlation matrix. A correlation matrix has a list of all the variables across the top, and the same list down the side. The diagonal is always all 1’s, because that’s the correlation between each variable and itself.

A correlation matrix with more variables included would just have more rows and columns. You can either read across (row name correlated with column name) or down (column name correlated with row name) and get the same answer.

Paul F. Cook, University of Colorado Denver, Center for Nursing Research
Updated 1/10 with SPSS (PASW) version 18