

## IX. Directions for the Parent Survey I and II (A and B) Forms

Parent Surveys provide an opportunity for parents to provide confidential information directly to the Healthy Start evaluation team. This information is critical to ongoing program development and improvement, and is best obtained in a manner that allows parents to “have a voice” in the evaluation process in a way that protects their confidentiality. Information about key parent outcomes provided by parents is a critical part of the evaluation process. Parent satisfaction with services and relationships with Healthy Start staff provides key information about the quality of relationships that staff build with Healthy Start clients. In the past, Parent Surveys have been collected and used by Healthy Start programs. In 2005, a change in procedure was implemented in order to provide an avenue for parent input that protects their confidentiality. This procedure is outlined below.

**IMPORTANT:** For tracking purposes, please submit a parent survey for EVERY PARENT, even if the parent declines to complete the survey, or is on creative outreach. Home visitors should complete the entire bottom “For Program Use Only” section, including why the survey is not being completed, and submit the incomplete questionnaire to NPC Research.

1. The home visitor fills out the information on the bottom part of the first page of the Parent Surveys, prior to presenting the survey to the parent, including:
  - a. Update Point (6-, 12-, 24-, 36-, 48-, or 60-month time period),
  - b. Worker ID,
  - c. Child ID,
  - d. County,
  - e. If the survey being completed (if no, please indicate why not), and
  - f. If the survey is being filled out by the FSW for the parent.
  
2. Home visitors should bring the Parent Survey (I or II-A and II-B) to the parent during a home visit, and present the form to them as something we would encourage them to complete as part of our ongoing efforts to improve Healthy Start’s services to families (see “Tips” below). Workers should be trained in how to approach parents about the parent survey to encourage parents’ participation. **Home visitors should not leave the Parent Survey with the parent, but should collect the survey after it has been completed.**
  
3. Home visitors should provide the parent with the survey and give the parent sufficient privacy to complete the survey, and/or any assistance she/he may need in completing it. Although the goal is to have the parents complete the survey confidentially, some parents may need assistance from the home visitor in completing the survey (e.g., if there are language and/or literacy issues). If the home visitor does assist the parent, please indicate this in the “For Program Use Only” section, #F.
  
4. Parents should be asked to complete the Parent Survey I and Parent Survey II-A and return it to the home visitor. Parents should be asked to complete the Parent Survey II-B, place it in the envelope, seal the envelope and return it to the worker.

5. Home visitors should review and photocopy the Parent Survey I and Parent Survey II-A. Home visitors should keep the Parent Survey II-B in the sealed envelope and turn in all parent surveys to the program with their other evaluation forms to be returned to NPC with the usual monthly (or more frequent) submission of evaluation forms.

6. If the parent needs help reading or completing the survey, the home visitor should provide any assistance needed; however, if the parent cannot complete the survey in privacy, the survey item #E (“Is survey being filled out for the caregiver by Healthy Start worker?”) on the Parent Survey I and item #F on the Parent Survey IIs in the “For Program Use Only” section should be marked “YES.”

7. For tracking purposes, if the parent declines or does not complete the survey for any other reason, the home visitor should complete the “For Program Use Only” section, indicating for item #D (on PS I) or item #E (on PS IIs) that “Caregiver declines” and ***return the unanswered survey to the program to return to NPC Research. Programs should send in both completed and declined Parent Survey forms with their regular monthly (or more frequent) data submissions to NPC.***

***Who completes the Parent Survey?***

The parent who is the primary caregiver completes the remainder (non-shaded portion) of the Parent Survey. In most cases, the parent completing the survey will be the mother. However, if the father (or second parent figure) is present and involved, you may ask him/her to complete a survey as well. If both parents complete the survey, return the survey completed by the primary caregiver to NPC. The other form may be kept for your records. Please let us know if any questions are confusing for the parents; we will keep track of suggestions as we consider form changes each year.

***When are the Parent Surveys conducted?***

Home visitors ask the parent/primary caregiver to complete the Parent Survey I during the first month after the child’s birth (or during the first month of service). Parent Survey II (A and B) is completed when the child is 6, 12, 24, 36, 48 and 60 months of age. ***Spanish versions of Parent Surveys are available.***

***Tips for Conducting Parent Surveys***

- **Be positive when you introduce the survey.** For example, you can say: “Here are some questions about you, your child and your family. Some of the questions may seem a little personal, but they’ll help our program know about services families need and find helpful so that we can continue to improve.”
 

<u>Words to Use</u>	<u>Words Not To Use</u>
Interesting, helpful	Test, evaluate
- **Participation is voluntary.** Let the parent know that participation is voluntary. Tell the parent: “Answering the questions will help us plan better programs for you and other parents. But whether you answer the questions or not will not affect your eligibility to receive home visits.”
- **Be helpful.** Offer to amuse or hold the baby while the parent completes the survey. For some parents, reading the questions aloud may be appropriate. Please note on the survey, in the area

provided, whether you or the parent filled out the survey.

- **Explain questions neutrally.** If the parent asks you to explain a question on the survey, describe it in a neutral way. Reframe the question by *normalizing* the issue such as: “Some people feel \_\_\_\_ and other people feel \_\_\_\_\_. How do you feel?”
- **Do not leave the survey with parent.** Please do not leave the survey with the parent(s). One reason not to leave the survey with the parent is that the survey may get lost. A second reason is that there is a strong chance that if the survey is left with the parent others in the household may affect what the parent will say on the survey. Responses from the parents should be from the primary caregiver with no input from others.

### *What’s On the Parent Surveys?*

<b>Literacy and Activities</b>	<p>Parent Survey I question 5, and Parent Survey II-A question 4 are designed to gather general information about literacy and play activities in the home.</p> <p>Parent Survey II-A questions 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 are designed to gather more specific information about literacy activities, including use of the library and reading with the child.</p>
<b>Good Things about Being a Parent and Hard Parts of Parenting</b>	<p>Parent Survey I questions 4a-4s and Parent Survey II-A question 13 include questions to help new parents focus on what they find most enjoyable about their child.</p> <p>Parent Survey I questions 4a-4s and Parent Survey I-A question 13 also include questions drawn from the standardized <i>Parenting Stress Index</i>,<sup>1</sup>. These questions ask the parent “What is hard for you right now?” Three areas are measured:</p> <p><b>Depression.</b> Includes questions such as “I don't enjoy things as I used to” and “I feel alone and without friends.”</p> <p><b>Parent role stress.</b> Includes questions such as “I find myself giving up more of my life to meet my child’s needs than I ever expected,” and “I feel trapped by my responsibilities as a parent.”</p> <p><b>Perception of the child as difficult.</b> Includes questions such as “My child makes more demands than most children,” and “My child is more of a problem than I expected.”</p>
<b>Parenting Ladder (Parent Survey II-A only)</b>	<p>The Parenting Ladder (Parent Survey II-A questions 11 and 12) was designed for the evaluation to measure parent perceptions of child rearing skills, stress and stress-coping skills, and social support resources. Using the visual representation of a ladder, parents rate themselves from 0 (low) to 3 (high) on the following three items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of how children grow and develop</li> <li>• Confidence that you know what is right for your child</li> <li>• Ability to help your child learn</li> </ul> <p>Parents are asked to rate where they are <i>NOW</i>. They are also asked to think back</p>

<sup>1</sup> Abidin, R. (1990). *Parenting Stress Index*. (3<sup>rd</sup> edition). Charlottesville, VA: Pediatric Psychology Press.

	to when the baby was born, or the last time they completed the survey, and rate where they were on the three items <i>THEN</i> . This second set of questions is called a retrospective pretest.
<b>Satisfaction with Healthy Start Services</b>	Parent Survey II-B questions 6 (helpfulness) and 7 (relationship with program staff) designed to provide information on satisfaction with intensive visiting services and support workers. Question 7 includes questions from the standardized measure the <i>Strengths-Based Practices Inventory</i> <sup>2</sup> .
<b>Social Support</b>	Parent Survey II-A question 13l and Parent Survey II-B question 6f asks about the adequacy of the parent’s social support system.

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<sup>2</sup> Green, B. L., McAllister, C. L., & Tarte, J. M. (2004). The Strengths-Based Practices Inventory: A tool for measuring strengths-based service delivery in early childhood and family support programs. *Families in Society*, 85 (3), 326-334.