

## X. Directions for the HOME Forms

The HOME (Home Observation for Measurement of the Environment) Inventory is used by the Healthy Start evaluation to measure the extent to which Healthy Start children, whose families receive Intensive Home Visitation Services, are living in nurturing and supportive environments. The HOME Inventory assesses the following outcome indicators:

- Nurturing, responsive care
- Family effectiveness as child's first teacher

Numerous studies show that the child's early learning environment is related to being ready to learn when the child reaches kindergarten age. In particular, the HOME is a strong predictor of developmental outcomes for kindergarten children, particularly in the cognitive and language areas.

The HOME was originated by Betty Caldwell and Robert Bradley in 1978 at the University of Arkansas, Little Rock and has been widely used, nationally and internationally. Three separate versions of the HOME are available to assess the home environment of children: the Infant/Toddler version is for children aged 1 to 3 years, the Preschool version is for children aged 3 to 5 years, and the School-Age version is for children aged 6 to 10 years. The current evaluation only obtains information based on the first two HOME Inventory tools (12 and 24-month; and 36, 48, and 60-month).

**Training Video:** A training video for the HOME assessment is available from NPC Research. Please contact [healthystart@npcresearch](mailto:healthystart@npcresearch) to obtain a video or CD.

**HOME "Review Sheet."** A simple guide for information needed during the HOME assessment is included at the end of this chapter. We recommend copying this form for home visitors to use during the HOME assessment.

### *Overview*

The HOME Inventory is designed to give a picture of the home learning environment from the child's point of view:

- Scores are based on both *observations* and *information obtained from the parent* during a home visit at a time when the child is awake and engaged in a normal routine for that time.
- After the visit, the home visitor answers either *Yes* or *No* to a series of questions relating to family support for children's learning. Questions are grouped into a series of categories as follows.

## Sub-Scales on the HOME

12 and 24-month HOME	36, 48, and 60-month HOME
<p><b>I. Responsivity.</b> The extent to which the parent responds to the child's behavior verbally, emotionally, and physically.</p> <p><b>II. Acceptance.</b> Parent acceptance of less than optimal behavior and avoidance of undue restriction and punishment.</p> <p><b>III. Organization.</b> Regularity and predictability (without monotony) of the environment, safety of the physical environment, and access to family and community supports.</p> <p><b>IV. Learning Materials.</b> Provision of play and learning materials capable of stimulating development.</p> <p><b>V. Involvement.</b> Active involvement of the parent in the child's learning and stimulation of mature behavior.</p> <p><b>VI. Variety.</b> Opportunities for variety in daily stimulation and inclusion of the child in daily family life.</p>	<p><b>I. Learning Stimulation.</b> Provision of appropriate toys, games, and reading materials. The child must have access to the items and be allowed to play with them when s/he wants to.</p> <p><b>II. Language Stimulation.</b> The extent to which the parent encourages language development.</p> <p><b>III. Physical Environment.</b> Safety of the physical environment.</p> <p><b>IV. Warmth and Acceptance.</b> The extent to which the parent/caregiver emotionally and verbally responds to the child, illustrating warmth and affection in the relationship.</p> <p><b>V. Academic Stimulation.</b> Parent/caregiver encouragement of academic behaviors.</p> <p><b>VI. Modeling.</b> Parent/caregiver involvement in modeling and encouraging social maturity.</p> <p><b>VII. Variety of Experience.</b> Opportunities for variety of daily stimulation.</p> <p><b>VIII. Acceptance.</b> Parent/caregiver acceptance of less than optimal behavior and avoidance of undue restrictions and punishment.</p>

### *Timing*

**12 and 24-Month HOME:** Healthy Start sites administer the 12 and 24-month HOME Inventory to each family participating in Intensive Service around the child's 1st and 2nd birthdays.

**36, 48, and 60-Month HOME:** Healthy Start sites administer the 36, 48, and 60-Month HOME Inventory to each family participating in Intensive Service at the child's 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> birthdays.

## ***Administration***

Healthy Start home visitors have built a strong relationship with parents by the time of the first administration of the HOME Inventory. Using the HOME will have two major advantages, since it provides:

- An opportunity for the parent and home visitor to review the child’s learning environment together.
- Normative information on the child’s environment for the evaluation.

## **Talking about the child’s daily routine**

The HOME is conducted through a conversation/observation format where the parent is asked to describe a typical day for the child. As the day is reviewed, information necessary to score the inventory can be obtained with follow-up questions relating to daily routines, trips for the child out of the home, and discipline. *Sample questions are provided for these areas (see end of this chapter).* However, in most cases, this information flows naturally from the conversation.

## **Talking about the child’s toys and play materials**

The second part of the conversation focuses on the toys and other learning materials in the home. The visitor asks the child’s favorite toys and/or play materials. As the parent and visitor look at the child’s favorite toys and play materials, necessary information can be obtained through follow-up questions. *Sample questions are provided.*

We recommend that the home visitor alert the parent to the coming conversation during the previous visit. The visitor might say,

“Let’s spend some time next week looking over what [child] is doing right now; what s/he is playing with, what s/he’s interested in. That will give us a chance to think about what s/he needs to continue to grow and develop as well as s/he is right now.”

## ***Scoring***

**Review and score the HOME Inventory as soon as possible after your visit.** You do not have to refer to the Inventory during the visit, although you may wish to have the sample questions at hand.

**Items are scored as either *Yes* or *No*.** Items are scored as *Yes* if the behavior is observed or the parent reports the item to be characteristic of the child’s environment. Items are scored as *No* if the behavior is not observed or if the conditions do not exist. Refer to the appropriate “Coding Instruction” at the end of this chapter for a discussion of individual items. The total score is the number of items that were answered *Yes* for each section.

## ***What if you don’t observe a particular behavior during the home visit, but you have seen it on a previous visit?***

For example, this week the parent did not caress or kiss the child at least once during the visit, but last week, the parent did several times. We are trying to maintain standardized conditions for the evaluation. **Therefore, we request that you report *only* what you observed during this particular home visit for items requiring specific observation during the visit:**

- Starred items 1 – 6, 8 – 14, 16, 17, 29, 35 on the 12 and 24-Month version
- Starred items 15, 17, 19 – 25, 27 – 32, 52 – 55 on the 36, 48, and 60-Month version

You may have information *about other items* from earlier home visits (like regularity of health care or regularity of any alternative care giving arrangements). You do not have to inquire about these conditions again.

Either before or after you complete filling out the HOME, *please put some additional pieces of information on the form:*

- Your Worker ID number
- Child’s Healthy Start ID number
- County of Service
- Date of visit/assessment
- Child’s date of birth
- Childs initials (optional—this is to help with your own record keeping)
- Child’s age in months at time of assessment
- Which HOME time period you are completing it for (i.e., 12, 24, 36, 48, or 60 months)

***Using the information from the HOME***

We will report the information in aggregate form for the Healthy Start projects across the state. Because there is normative information for the HOME Inventory, we can report the percentage of children who have supportive (above average) environments. We can also look at changes in environments over time by comparing scores at 12 months with scores at 24 months, 36 months, 48 months, and 60 months.

In addition, information can be useful to you as you work together with families to strengthen parent-child relationships. Looking at the sub-scales can help you pinpoint areas of strength and areas for growth. Ranges for scores on the sub-scales are included in this section. By looking at these ranges, you can pinpoint whether the child’s environment is in the upper fourth of the range, in the middle half, or in the lowest fourth.

**HOME 12-24 Months  
Score Summary**

Subscale	Subscale Items	Percentile Range		
		Lowest Fourth	Middle Half	Upper Fourth
I. Responsivity	1-11	0-6	7-9	10-11
II. Acceptance	12-19	-	-	-
III. Organization	20-25	-	-	-
IV. Learning Materials	26-34	0-4	5-7	8-9
V. Involvement	35-40	0-2	3-4	5-6
VI. Variety	40-45	-	-	-
	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good
TOTAL SCORE	0-25	26-36	37-40	41-45

**HOME 36-48 Months  
Score Summary**

Subscale	Subscale Items	Percentile Range		
		Lowest Fourth	Middle Half	Upper Fourth
I. Learning Stimulation	1-11	0-2	3-9	10-11
II. Language Stimulation	12-18	0-4	5-6	7
III. Physical Environment	19-25	0-3	4-6	7
IV. Warmth and Affection	26-32	0-3	4-5	6-7
V. Academic Stimulation	33-37	0-2	3-4	5
VI. Modeling	38-42	0-1	2-3	4-5
VII. Variety of Experience	43-51	0-4	5-7	8-9
VIII. Acceptance	52-55	0-2	3	4
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>		0-29	30-45	46-55

*When are trainings for the HOME held and by whom?*

HOME trainings are held on an as-needed basis, as we feel it is important for workers to understand the tool as best they can. However, funding limits the number of trainings that can be held. A HOME training video/DVD was distributed to all sites at the July 2004 Quarterly Managers Meeting. Additional copies can be requested directly from NPC Research, [healthystart@npcresearch](mailto:healthystart@npcresearch).

## Sample Questions 12 and 24–Month HOME Inventory

The following are sample questions taken from the 12- and 24-Month HOME Inventory, that illustrate how to formulate questions related to the item numbers.

*Let's spend some time talking about [child] today and looking at how things are going and what s/he is learning.*

(Be sure to say something nice about the child during visit. Observation of the parent's response will enable you to score item 11).

*First, let's talk about what a typical day is like for [child]; what you do, what happens.*

7. How about messy things... Does [child] sometimes like to play in his/her food or the bath? How do you handle that?
14. How are you managing discipline at this age? What works best for [child]? Do you ever feel you have to slap his/her hand or spank him/her? Have you had to in the past week?
21. - 22. How about time out of the home? Where are some of the places you take him/her? How often?
36. Do you find yourself making conversation with [child] while you're working around the house?
42. Does [child] like you to read to him/her? How often does s/he like you to do that?
43. How do you handle meal times? Does [child] eat with you or separately?

*Now, let's look at some of [child]'s toys, some of his/her favorite things to play with.*

37. What are some of the things you're helping [child] to learn at this age?
38. How does s/he usually get started playing with a *new toy*? Do you show [child] how to work it and try and get him/her involved or does s/he usually figure it out by him/herself?
39. Do you sometimes sit and play with [child] or does s/he usually get started by him/herself and play alone?
40. How do you usually decide what kinds of toys to select and offer [child] to play with at this age? What are some of your guidelines?
45. How about books? Does [child] have any of his/her own yet?

**CODING INSTRUCTIONS**  
**12 and 24-Month Version**  
**Home Observation for Measurement of the Environment (HOME) <sup>1</sup>**

***1. Emotional and Verbal Responsivity of the Parent***

- 1. Parent spontaneously vocalizes to child at least twice during the visit (excluding scolding).** “Vocalizes” refers to any sound or words emitted by the parent. For example, s/he may say, “S-s-s” or “Sweet baby,” or any random words or sounds. In order for this item to be scored positively, the parent’s vocalizations must have occurred spontaneously as opposed to having occurred in response to some vocalization by the child.
- 2. Parent responds verbally to child’s vocalizations or verbalizations.** Again the parental response may be either a complete word or words or merely clearly differentiated sounds, e.g., “ta-ta”; “tsk-tsk,” or “You talking to Mommy?” The key factor here is that the parent is responding to the child’s vocalization, not ignoring it. If the child does not vocalize during the interview, thereby denying the parent an opportunity to respond, the score would still be *No*.
- 3. Parent tells child the name of object or person during the visit.** The parent does not have to say, “That’s an apple,” or “We call this a purse,” in order to obtain credit on this item. What is being measured here is the adult’s sensitivity to the child’s search for labels of objects around him. Credit for this item may be earned by a pattern of emphasis with the voice. For example, “Do you remember Amelia?” referring to the interviewer. S/he has “taught” the word with her intonation and supplied a referent for the child.
- 4. Parent’s speech is distinct, clear, and audible.** A positive score on this item is determined by whether the interviewer is able to understand what the parent says. This item should not be interpreted as meaning that dialect usage mandates a negative score. What is important is whether the interviewer can understand and communicate with the parent.
- 5. Parent initiates verbal interchanges with visitor.** The parent talks with the visitor, asking questions or making spontaneous comments. The key words here are “initiates” and “spontaneous.” In order to be credited on this item the parent must demonstrate some initiative in asking two or three questions or making comments that go beyond the bare minimum needed to give an answer. It is not necessary that the parent do this on all questions; however, occasionally s/he should take the initiative in the conversation and be a little wordy.
- 6. Parent converses freely and easily.** The parent expresses ideas freely and easily and uses statements of appropriate length for conversation (e.g., gives more than brief answers). In order to receive credit on this item, spontaneity is not as important as fluency. That is, the parent will be talking about things that are very close to them, and it should be very easy for the parent to express ideas on this subject. A *No* would be given to a person who, throughout the visit, tends to speak in one-word sentences or to use

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<sup>1</sup> From the 1984 Administration Manual, Revised Edition, Home Observation for Measurement of the Environment, Bettye M. Caldwell & Robert H. Bradley, University of Arkansas at Little Rock

headshakes. An occasional exception would not earn credit; the characteristic speech pattern should be noted.

7. **Parent permits child to engage in “messy” play.** Included may be such things as playing with sand, mud, water, finger-paints, or, for young babies, food.
8. **Parent spontaneously praises child at least twice.** Parent spontaneously praises child’s qualities or behavior twice during the visit. In scoring this item, do not hesitate to read the parent’s affect – any achievement reported with pride should count (can dress himself, has a good disposition, etc.). However, occasionally a parent will indicate approval of their child’s behavior by making what appears to be a negative statement, “I tell you, this kid is really bad.” If the parent says that with a smile on their face and immediately follows the statement with some rather remarkable achievement, “Would you believe he climbed out of his crib, got his bottle, and climbed back in all by himself?” from which one can obviously infer that the parent is proud of him, then consider this one instance of praise. Do not credit this kind of semantic reversal if it stops with the negative term; score only if some proof of positive feeling is offered.
9. **Parent’s voice conveys positive feelings toward child.** When speaking of or to child, parent’s voice conveys positive feeling. What you are looking for here is evidence that the parent feels good about their child (e.g., sounds animated when s/he speaks about him, does not use a flat or querulous tone of voice).
10. **Parent caresses or kisses child at least once during the visit.** Under “caresses” would be included a hug, a stroke of hair, patting an arm or leg, reaching out affectionately and touching the face, etc. Blowing a kiss as well as actually establishing physical contact may be counted as a kiss.
11. **Parent responds positively to praise of child offered by visitor.** In order for the parent to earn credit on this item, the interviewer must remember to offer some praise of the child. Make certain that your praise is genuine (i.e., do not try to force praise that you do not feel as you look at the child). Usually you will have no trouble deciding how to score this, as a parent might agree with you, add more facts to encourage your further, beam, etc. However, sometimes you will get little more than a “thank you” said without feeling or an embarrassed smile. If so, find more than one occasion to praise the child. If you consistently get a response that shows no feeling or pleasure, then score *No*. Be alert to observe the parent’s facial expression when you offer a remark.

## ***II. Acceptance***

12. **Parent does not shout at child.** A positive score on this item requires that the parent not raise her voice to a level above that required by the distance between parent and child.
13. **Parent does not express overt annoyance with or hostility toward child.** A parent would receive a *No* on this item if s/he complains that the child is hard to take care of, that he is wearing her out, if s/he calls him “bad” without the affectionate joke described above, says he will not mind, and so on. Examples that would fail to receive credit would be remarks such as, “I don’t know what I’m going to do with this kid,” or “This kid is driving me up the wall.” A parent might tell a child to stop doing something several times during the interview and still be credited for this term if her general tone is positive.

- 14. Parent neither slaps nor spans child during the visit.** Occasionally a visitor will feel that s/he does not know whether a parent is playing or seriously slapping or spanking a child. The best guide to use in such instances is the child's behavior. If the child reacts with pleasure or happiness, chances are this represents a style of positive interaction between him and his parent. If he frowns or looks unhappy or whimpers or cries, you can feel pretty confident that, however the parent intended it, he does not perceive it as pleasurable. Score *No* accordingly.
- 15. Parent reports that no more than one instance of physical punishment occurred during the past week.** Most parents define physical punishment as spanking; some apparently seem to regard it as true punishment only if something other than the hand has been used. Some parents regard restraint and shaking a child also as involving physical punishment. When in doubt, take the parent's definition.
- 16. Parent does not scold or criticize the child during the visit.** This item is obviously similar to #13 above. However, the main difference is that on this item the parent must make the negative remark *directly toward the child*. That is, "You are a bad boy," not, "He (speaking to interviewer) is a bad boy." If such a remark occurs even once, score *No*, otherwise score *Yes*.
- 17. Parent does not interfere with child's actions or restrict child more than three times during the visit.** Restrictions and interference here refer to such things as: taking a toy away from a child; putting a child who has climbed up on the sofa back down on the floor; putting a child who is crawling around the floor into a playpen or crib; slapping a child as he starts to pick up the visitor's handbag. In the last instance, the item would be applicable to both items #17 and also #14. The restrictions may also be verbal, such as, "Stop that;" "Get out of there." Do not code as interference any action taken to prevent the child from harming himself (e.g., running into the street).
- 18. At least ten books are present and visible in the home.** The word "visible" was added to this item to make it an observation and not an interview item. However, being able to observe whether there are books present in the home might require a request to go through the entire house or apartment without being invited to do so by the parent. In such instances, do not hesitate to ask about the books that the family has. The intent of this item is to find out something about whether the child is growing up in a reading family, or in a family that values having books around. For example, there might be a set of encyclopedia on the shelf that have obviously not been read. Even so, credit would be given for the item, as the presence of books indicates that the family values their possessions.
- 19. Family has a pet.** Pet refers to an animal that the family takes care of and the child can play with or look at (i.e., one that stays in the home on a semi-permanent rather than temporary basis, such as a dog, cat, bird, turtle, goldfish, or hamster as opposed to a captured grasshopper, a lame bird, or a jar full of lightning bugs, etc.).

### *III. Organization*

- 20. Childcare, if used, is provided by one of three regular substitutes.** The intent of this item is to determine whether the child's social environment is reasonably predictable and stable. Thus if the parent says that s/he leaves her baby with her 10-year-old daughter, this would still be scored positively even though the interviewer might question the 10-year-old's ability to provide adequate care. Credit the father as a substitute on this item also (if he is regularly used for child care).
- 21. Child is taken to grocery store at least once a week.** This item attempts to get at the breadth of experience that the young child has. A grocery store is a very stimulating environment for a young child. Any size store is a very stimulating environment for a young child, so any store that s/he gets taken to should be credited. Do not worry about whether it is a supermarket or a tiny neighborhood hole-in-the-wall.
- 22. Child gets out of the home at least 4 times a week.** The child may go no farther than the yard in order for credit to be given on this item. The intent of the item is exposure to sounds and sights and objects and people other than those routinely available within the house or apartment.
- 23. Child is taken regularly to a doctor's office or clinic.** This item is intended both to assess the regularity and consistency of the environment and also whether the environment offers the necessary conditions for growth and development. Scoring should be pretty much in terms of the age of the child (i.e., approximately once a month up to about eight or nine months of age and once every six months to a year thereafter).
- 24. Child had a special place for toys and treasures.** This item relates to the regularity and predictability of the environment for the child. The special place may be a closet, drawer, a plastic basket, or even a cardboard box or paper bag. It need not be a fancy chest especially sold for the purpose of containing children's toys. It does not have to be in a special room. The availability of the special place to the child either to remove or return toys by himself is the essence of this item. The special place does not have to belong exclusively to the key child; it may be shared with another sibling.
- 25. Child's play environment appears is safe.** Examples of hazards are: broken glass lying around, furniture with obvious wood splinters on it, an uncovered rotary fan, boards with nails sticking out, unprotected stairs for a pre-walking baby, house so close to the street that child could not safely play in the yard, pot handles extending over edge of the stove, etc. Overcrowding or clutter would not count as a hazard unless it existed to the extent that it could injure the child.

### *IV. Learning Materials*

- 26. Child has access to large muscle activity toys or pieces of equipment.** Examples are crib gym, ball, rocking horse, jump seat, door swing, or any of the items mentioned in #28. If such equipment had not been provided by the parent but is available in the apartment or housing project, the item should be credited so long as the infant or young child is granted access to it. Also, the item need not be identified by the family as "belonging" to the child (the child might share it with siblings). However, it must be available to the child. Thus, for

all the toy items, credit would not be given if someone had bought the toy for the child but it had been lost, broken, or stolen. In such cases it would not be available to the child.

27. **Child had push or pull toy.** Examples are toy lawnmowers, vacuum or carpet sweepers, corn poppers, music boxes on a stick, xylophone that is pulled by a string, wagon, etc.
28. **Child has stroller or walker, kiddie car, scooter, or tricycle.** These items are all self-explanatory—anything with wheels that a child can ride on.
29. **Parent provides toys for child to play with during the visit.** In order to be credited on this item, the parent must make some special effort to see to it that the child has something interesting to do during the time they will be talking to the interviewer. If the interview is conducted in a room that contains a number of toys or the child's toy box, one should assume that the parent has taken special efforts to have something available to entertain the child during the interview. If, however, the child tires of what is available and begins to whimper or to ask for something to do, this item should not be scored unless at that time the parent makes some special effort to bring out a new toy or do something else to interest the child.
30. **Provides learning equipment appropriate to age – cuddly toy or role-playing toys.** This is an item that has a certain amount of age flexibility. For children up to about 18 months a teddy bear or other stuffed animal or doll would provide the tactile experience presumably offered by a cuddly toy. For children between roughly 18 months and age three, any kind of doll or stuffed animal that stimulates make-believe would be credited. It may occasionally be more difficult to decide on this item when the key child is a boy, as families are often loathe to provide their boys with anything that is “sissy.” In such cases a cowboy suit or policeman's or fireman's hat might be acceptable. Cowboy boots would not.
31. **Provides learning facilitators, such as mobile, table and chair, high chair, play pen.** What is essential here is that the parent provides the child with a piece of equipment considered necessary for learning, not just with a toy. (Mobile was included in order to having something applicable to young infants.)
32. **Child has simple eye-hand coordination toys.** These toys include items to go in and out of a box or other receptacle, fit together toys, building toys, and beads to string. The items should be fairly small and should require precise hand movement. The child should not be able to move around and manipulate them at the same time.
33. **Child has complex eye-hand coordination toys.** The parent provides eye-hand coordination toys that permit combinations, such as stacking or nesting toys, blocks or building toys. Obviously this item is similar to the previous one. The key feature here is combinations. Good examples are Rocker Stackers, Bristle Blocks, Duplos or Legos, Nuts and Bolts, or Tinker Toys.
34. **Toys for literature and music.** The parent provides books, CDs, tapes, or toy musical instruments. The “literature” part (books, talking CDs, tapes) of this item seldom causes any trouble, although the “music” part does. A CD player that the child himself may manipulate would be a perfect example in that both story CDs and music CDs could be played on it. Again, consider the age of the child in scoring this item. For example, a rattle with a musical jingle would be acceptable for a baby but not for a toddler. The

radio is acceptable if the child is allowed to turn it on and select a station. The same would be true for a CD player that belongs to the entire family. If the family CD player is accepted, then the toys must be available (one for literature and one for music) in order for credit to be given on this item.

Throughout items #29 - #34, the key to scoring is that the child be allowed to manipulate the play with the item even though he may not choose to do so. For example, the parent may report that s/he has bought blocks for her child but that the child never plays with them. In such instances inquire in order to determine whether this is because he is not interested or whether s/he has kept them from him. "Provides" requires that the child is not forbidden to touch, handle or play with the item. The parent does not have to be the one who bought the items. What is critical is that the items be available to the child.

## *V. Parent Involvement with the Child*

- 35. Parent keeps child in visual range and tends to look at the child often.** "Often" means frequently enough to ensure safety of the child and to keep some kind of interpersonal contact with the child—the sort of thing lovers do when in the same room but out of reach of one another.
- 36. Parent "talks" to child while doing household work.** "Talking" to the child in this item means that the parent in the course of their own work activities finds a way of including the child in what s/he is doing. The parent may talk directly to the child; for example, "Well, Mommy's going to wash these dishes now;" or s/he may simply talk to the child as s/he goes about their work, "I don't see how one family can get a house so dirty."
- 37. Parent consciously encourages developmental advance.** The key word in this item is "consciously," as it is indicative of a teaching attitude on the part of the parent. Credit on this item is given to the parent who finds little ways to help their child learn to roll over, who occasionally puts a toy out of reach to encourage the child to crawl for it, who gives them a spoon to let him/her try to feed himself/herself, who tries to teach them to play patty-cake.
- 38. Parent invests "maturing" toys with value via the parent's attention.** Maturing toys are those that, the first time the child is introduced to them, call for abilities a little bit beyond any the child had demonstrated to date. Thus, they involve the acquisition of new skills and offer the child a challenge. Many times parents will buy such toys, put them down in front of the child, and assume that the child should take it completely from there. Success on this item requires that the parent "talks up" the new toy, sits down and play with it themselves with pleasure and glee, or shows the child how it can be used and encourages the child to play with it. The encouragement should be participatory, not merely offering some command like "Go play with the fancy blocks I bought you."
- 39. Parent structures child's play period.** Parent recognizes the short attention span of the young child and makes occasional suggestions as to things the child might wish to do. Structuring need not involve any request that the child play. For example, the parent who notes a fretful child and who goes and gets a corn popper and puts in down in front of the child is structuring his play period. Credit should also be given for a more verbal

parent. For example, one who says, "Why don't you go and get your corn popper and play with it."

- 40. Parent provides toys that challenge the child to develop new skills.** Parent understands the child's ability and interest level and finds materials that will challenge the child to show further development. Credit should be given even if the parent appears to overestimate the skills that her baby is ready to begin to acquire.

## *VI. Variety*

- 41. Father provides some care every day.** The "father" does not necessarily have to be a husband or the parent or even a biological father of the child. He must, however, be someone *who plays a fathering role*, such as the parent's boyfriend(s)/partner(s), parent's father. IF there is no father or father figure in the home, score *No* for this item. For credit to be given, father does not have to live in the home 24 hours a day, but must have some daily contact with the child.
- 42. Parent reads stories to child at least three times weekly.** This should refer to a children's book or magazine and, except with young infants, should be more than merely turning pages of a magazine and saying words.
- 43. Child eats at least one meal per day with parent(s) plus one other adult parent figure.** This may be any meal, and the child may either be helped or placed in high chair at table. He may be fed in a feeding table provided the table is pulled right up to the table and the child is conversationally included at the table. **In one-parent families with no person who either is the father or who plays the father role, this receives an automatic *No*.**
- 44. Family visits or receives visits from relatives approximately once a month.** No further explanation needed. Define "relative" loosely.
- 45. Child has three or more books of his own.** The books may be shared with siblings, but they should be recognized as belonging primarily to the child. They may have formerly belonged to an older sibling.

## Sample Questions 36, 48, and 60-Month HOME Inventory

The following are sample questions taken from the 36, 48, and 60-Month HOME Inventory, which illustrate how to formulate questions related to the item numbers.

*Let's spend some time talking about [child] today and looking at how things are going and what s/he is learning. First let's talk about what a typical day is like for [child], what you do, what happens in your family.*

1., 11., & 33.

Is there anything to help him/her learn colors and sizes and shapes? How do you encourage learning about colors and shapes? Now let's look at some of [child]'s toys. What are some of his/her favorite things to play with, now?

2. What about puzzles? Does [child] have any of his/her own yet? Puzzle pieces have a tendency to get lost. Have you been able to keep track of all the pieces?

6. & 36. Is there anything to help him/her learn numbers? How do you encourage learning numbers?

7., 13., & 37.

How about books? How many books does [child] have? Is s/he interested in the alphabet? Are you beginning to encourage him/her to read a few words?

8. (If books are not visible during visit) Do you enjoy reading when you have some free time? When you read books do you use the library or is it easier to buy books?

9. & 10. Do you enjoy reading magazines or the newspaper? How often do you get a chance to read them? What do you subscribe to?

14. Different parents have different rules. Some parents have rules about manners, some stress taking turns, sharing, politeness, not to fight, or to say "please" when their child asks for something. What is important to you for [child] right now? Has this come up yet? How do you usually handle it?

16. Sometimes children talk about their activities and experiences? Does [child] ever tell you about what s/he has been doing?

18. Is [child] willing to eat whatever you fix, or does s/he tell you what s/he wants? Does s/he usually eat what you fix whether s/he likes it or not?

20. Do you have a place where you play outside? What is it like?

26. Do you find time during the day to cuddle with [child]? Maybe while you're watching TV or reading a story?

34. Does [child] know any nursery rhymes? Prayers? Songs? TV Commercials? *If appropriate, you may want to ask the child:* Do you know any songs or nursery rhymes? Where did you learn that
39. Lots of families find the TV to be a lot of company. Do you usually leave it on all day or just turn it on for special programs?
41. & 42. Does [child] ever get angry and negative about you or some of the things around? Tell me about some of the times this might happen. How do you handle it?
- Has [child] ever gotten angry enough to hit you? How did you handle it? (If it hasn't happened) How do you think a parent should handle a situation like that?
44. How about time out of the home? Where are some places you take [child]? How often? Do other family members ever take [child] places? Where?
45. Has [child] ever been on a trip out of town? Where did you go? When?
47. When playtime is over, what happens? Do you try to get [child] to pick up the toys or do you pick up the toys yourself?
50. Do you usually feed [child] early or does the whole family eat together?
51. When you go to the grocery, are there certain items that [child] would like to get? What do you do?
55. How are you managing discipline at this age? What works best for [child]? Do you ever feel you may have to slap his/her hand or spank him/her? Have you had to in the past week?

## CODING INSTRUCTIONS 36, 48, and 60-Month HOME

### *I. Learning Stimulation*

The first seven items must be present in the home, in usable condition (cannot be broken or have parts missing), and the child must be allowed to play with them when s/he wants to. They cannot be kept in storage, or on the top shelf in a closet where the child does not have access to them.

- 1. Toys to learn colors and sizes and shapes.** This does not have to refer to one toy that teaches all these things. However, if the parent has bought a single toy that teaches all these things, credit should be given. Examples of individual toys that merit credit for these items are shape sorting cubes, press-outs, puzzles, and peg boards.
- 2. Three or more puzzles.** This item is more or less self-explanatory. However, the puzzles must be appropriate to the child's age, and all of the pieces must be present. Many times a parent will say, "oh yes, he has lots of puzzles, but I don't know where the pieces are." Thus it is a good idea to inquire about all the parts.
- 3. Music player and at least 5 children's records, tapes, or CDs.** The CD player may be that of the parents as long as the child has their own CDs and is permitted to hear them and use the CD player to play his/her own CDs.
- 4. Toys or games permitting free expression.** Examples of toys allowing free expression would be clay, finger paints, play dough, crayons, and paint and paper.
- 5. Toys or games necessitating refined movements.** Examples: paint by number (very simple level), dot book, coloring books, crayons, scissors and paper, paper dolls, and stringing beads.
- 6. Toys or games facilitating learning numbers.** This could include puzzles with numbers, blocks, books, games, and playing cards.
- 7. Ten children's books.** These must be children's books and must be in readable condition. They need not be the sole property of the child but may be shared with siblings or have been handed down by older children.
- 8. At least ten books are present and visible in the home.** The word "visible" was added this item to make it an observation rather than an interview item if possible. However, being able to observe without going through the entire home is usually difficult. In such instances do not hesitate to ask about the reading habits of the family. A simple question like, "Do you enjoy reading when you have some free time?" and "When you read books do you use the library or is it easier to buy books?"

The intent of the item is to find out something about whether the child is growing up in a family that reads and values having books around. There might be a set of encyclopedias

on the shelf, which appears to be unopened. Nonetheless, presence of the books would indicate that the family values their possession and credit would thus be given.

9. **Family buys a newspaper daily and reads it.** This is also designed to get at the reading habits of the family. The question should not be scored “yes” unless the paper is read daily. It does not have to be read in its entirety, but the news should be sampled fairly completely (more than comics and TV section). It is acceptable if only one parent reads the paper.
10. **Family subscribes to at least one magazine.** When discussing books it is usually easy to ask if the parent ever finds time to read magazines. Any magazine the family might subscribe to is acceptable, including children’s magazines such as “Highlights” and “Jack and Jill”.
11. **Child is encouraged to learn shapes.** A parent might mention that “A ball is round,” or “That block is square” when s/he is playing with the child. With an older child who uses paper and pencil the parent might take the time to draw different shapes for the child.

## *II. Language Stimulation*

12. **Toys to learn animals.** Examples for this could include toy animals, books about animals, circus games, and animal puzzles.
13. **Child is encouraged to learn the alphabet.** For this item any attempt to introduce the child to the letters is acceptable. Teaching her to write her name, talking about and pointing out letters in books or magazines, and working with chalk board are usually the most common forms of teaching the letters.
14. **Parent teaches child some simple manners, such as to say, “Please,” “Thank you,” and “I’m sorry.”** The concern here is with explanations rather than mandates or rules that either have no follow through or rely only on punishment. Mandates do not count as teaching. This is often a difficult item to get an answer to. One approach might be: “At school each teacher had different rules: There are sharing, politeness, not to fight, or to say “please” when the child asks for something. What is important to you for Jane right at this time when s/he is three years old? Has this come up yet? How do you usually handle it?”
15. **Parent uses correct grammar and pronunciation.** To receive credit the parent must be able to communicate with the interviewer. Pronunciation with enough precision that the parent can be understood is more important than precise grammar. The parent may have challenges with the English language, but precise grammar in another language that the child is learning.
16. **Parent encourages child to relate experiences or takes time to listen to him relate experiences.** This is designed to find out whether the parent takes an active interest in the child’s experiences and activities. Does s/he actively inquire about what s/he did when he was across the street at a friend’s birthday party or what s/he did at school in the morning? In order for this to receive credit the parent must make an active effort to have the child relate his/her experiences.

- 17. When speaking of or to child, parent's voice conveys positive feeling.** Is the parent pleased with their child? Does the parent enjoy their child and talk about him/her in a pleasant, joyful manner rather than talk in a flat tone that communicates, "S/he's here, so I'll put up with him/her."
- 18. Child is permitted some choice in lunch or breakfast menu.** "Permitted" and "some" are the key words in this item. An opener to the discussion of food could be, "Is s/he willing to eat whatever you prepare, or does s/he tell you what s/he wants?" "Does s/he usually eat what you fix whether s/he likes it or not?"

### *III. Physical Environment*

- 19. Building has no potentially dangerous structural or health defects** (e.g., plaster coming down from the ceiling, stairway with boards missing, rodents). The interviewer should use his or her good judgment in scoring this item. Some of the most common concerns for this item are: open gas fires in a small home, and the presence of bleach, cleaning fluids, and other poisons within easy reach of a small child. Overcrowding or clutter in the home would not count as a hazard unless it is to such an extent that it could injure the child.
- 20. Child's outside play environment appears safe and free of hazards.** (No outside play area requires an automatic *No.*) Once again the interviewer should use good judgment on the scoring. Examples of typical hazards are: broken glass lying around, junk cars abandoned in the yard or along the side of the street, open ditches or a house so close to the street that a child could not safely play in the yard, and boards with nails sticking up out of them.
- 21. The interior of the home is not dark or perceptually monotonous.** On this item the interviewer can take into account the lack of lighting, drawn drapes, lack of pictures or plants, or a seeming lack of effort to dress the home up and make it attractive.
- 22. Neighborhood has trees, grass, birds – is esthetically pleasing.** This, of course, would be a case where junk cars and garbage and other debris are not present.
- 23. Home has 100 square feet of living space per person.** In making a rough calculation for this item, we use as a general rule of thumb a 9x12 room as being about the right amount of space for one person. A little simple math is then all that is required for scoring.
- 24. The rooms are not overcrowded with furniture.** Is the furniture arranged in a manner so that all of the exits are free and easily accessible? Does the living area allow for freedom of movement and room for the children to play, unless another specified area is designated as a play area?
- 25. All visible rooms of the home are reasonably clean and minimally cluttered.** The interviewer will have to use his or her good judgment based on the degree of neatness/cleanliness that can be expected with children.

#### *IV. Warmth and Acceptance*

- 26. Parent holds child close ten to fifteen minutes per day** (e.g. during TV, story time, or visiting). This may not be possible at one sitting especially if the parent has several children wanting her attention. A couple of minutes several times a day will receive credit. The parent may find time to hold the child and talk to him/her when s/he comes home from work or they may sit down and watch TV together.
- 27. Parent converses with child at least twice during visit.** (Scolding and suspicious comments are not counted.) This item involves parental conversation, not just vocalization, which can be any sounds or words exchanged with the child. The parent must make an effort to converse with the child and ask question, to talk about things, or to engage in verbal interchange other than scolding or degrading comments.
- 28. Parent answers child's question or request verbally.** In order to receive credit for this item the parent must make an effort to answer the question for the child. If the parent is unable to answer it at the moment s/he may tell the child s/he doesn't know but that they will look up the answer later. Responses such as "I am busy, go away" or "Don't bother me now" do not receive credit.
- 29. Parent usually responds verbally to child's talking.** The key here is that the parent recognizes and acknowledges the child's vocalizations and does not ignore them. For a score of *Yes*, the response may be a word or series of words or sounds such as, "uh huh," "um" or "sure." If the child does not vocalize in any way during the interview, thereby giving no opportunity for response, the score would be *No*.
- 30. Parent spontaneously praises child's qualities or behavior twice during visit.** The key word here is "spontaneous," but since most parents enjoy talking about and are proud of their children, this is not too hard to observe. Frequently a parent will tell you how well her child throws a ball or runs and will brag about how well s/he dresses him/herself or can get his/her own drink.
- 31. Parent caresses, kisses or cuddles child at least once during visit.** This need not be a wild burst of showy affection. Simple signs of concern such as a parent gently tucking the child's shirt in, holding the child on his/her lap, holding a hand, or a gentle pat on the shoulder would all receive a *Yes*.
- 32. Parent sets up situation that allows child to "show off" during visit.** Does the parent consciously get the child to sing a song, count, show how a toy works or anything that allows the child to do something to impress the visitor?

## *V. Academic Stimulation*

- 33. Child is encouraged to learn colors.** Any attempt by the parent to teach colors. Common times are when the child is being dressed, when playing with toys, or watching cars go by.
- 34. Child is encouraged to learn patterned speech** (e.g., nursery rhymes, prayers, songs, TV commercials). Frequently this is a good time to include the child and ask him if he know any songs or nursery rhymes. The parent will usually beam with pride and encourage the child to sing or recite a poem. Many families say a blessing before meals, and the children are encouraged to join in. Also many children learn and are able to repeat the popular TV commercials. Be sure to inquire where the child learned these, as they may have been learned at church or in daycare. If this is the case be sure to continue to probe to find out whether or not the parent or other members of the family actually teaches the child any of these things.
- 35. Child is encouraged to learn spatial relationships** (up, down, under, big, little, etc.). This is one most parents do without really being aware of it. A child is told to pick his toys “up” and put them “in” the box. However, credit should be given only if there is evidence of deliberate and planned clarification of the meaning of these confusing prepositions.
- 36. Child is encouraged to learn numbers.** Any attempt at teaching the child numbers is given a *Yes* score. Counting the child’s toes or fingers, asking the child, “How old are you?” and showing him/her by holding up a certain number of fingers are examples of such activities.
- 37. Child is encouraged to learn to read a few words.** This is another area where ability increases with age. At the lowest level (age three) credit is given for making an attempt to teach the child to recognize his/her printed name. Another acceptable procedure is to use books to teach the child the association between “D” for dog and the association of a picture with a dog.

## *VI. Modeling*

- 38. Some delay of food gratification is demanded of the child** (e.g., not to whine or demand food unless within ½ hour of meal time). This can usually be scored during a discussion of food and eating habits; however, it is often not necessary to ask the parent directly whether the child snacks any time s/he is hungry or whether s/he must wait until mealtime.
- 39. Family has TV, and it is used judiciously, not left on continuously.** Not having a TV requires an automatic *No*. Any scheduling is scored *Yes*. If the TV is turned on in the morning and left on all during the day, regardless of what is on, a score of *No* is given. To get at this item, the interviewer might say something like, “I’m sure you find the TV a lot of company. Do you usually leave it on all day or just turn it on for special programs?”
- 40. Parent introduces interviewer to child.** In many cases the child already knows the interviewer; however, the parent must still remind the child of the visitor’s name. A

formal introduction is not necessary for credit. A comment such as, “You remember Mary, don’t you?” or “Show Mary the new book you got for your birthday” will receive credit. The object is for the parent to make the child aware of the visitor’s name and the fact that s/he has come to visit both of them and not just the parent.

- 41. Child can express negative feelings without harsh reprisal.** In this case “harsh” does not necessarily mean physical punishment but it should connote some punishment such as deprivation of privilege. Examples of negative feelings would be “I hate you, you mean old lady!” “I hate squash, and I won’t eat it!” or a tantrum where the child kicks, screams, and throws.
- 42. Child is permitted to hit parent without harsh reprisal.** In this case “permitted to hit” includes any and all times **without physical punishment** from the parent. For items 41 and 42, if the parent states this hasn’t happened yet, ask her what s/he would do if it did occur. Most parents are very willing to talk about their child’s behavior, their discipline, and you will find little difficulty in asking, “Does Johnny ever get angry and negative about you or some of the things around?” “Tell me about some of the times this might happen?” “Does he ever get angry enough to hit you?” “How do you think a parent should handle that kind of thing?”

## *VII. Variety of Experience*

- 43. Real or toy musical instrument.** Examples will include a piano, drum, toy xylophone, guitar, and radio (either real or toy).
- 44. Family members have taken child on one outing (picnic, shopping, excursion) at least every other week.** Family member can include anyone in the child’s immediate family such as an aunt, uncle, or older sibling as long as they are over twelve years old. These outings may include the barber shop, dime store, picnic in the park, zoo, drive-in movie, ice cream shop, etc. and must occur two or three times a month.
- 45. Child has been taken by family member on a trip more than 50 miles from his home during the past year (50 mile radial distance not total distance).** This item is pretty much self-explanatory, and each interviewer will have to be the judge as to whether or not the area of the trip meets the requirements.
- 46. Child has been taken by a family member to a scientific, historical, or art museum within the past year.** This is pretty much self-explanatory in that almost any type of museum will do; a local art center, a clock museum, natural history museum, or an art display even if held in a local bank or other display area.
- 47. Tries to get child to pick up and put away toys after play session, without help.** Does the parent actually ask and try to get the child to pick up his or her own toys after each play session or before going to bed rather than doing it herself because it is easier? Some typical probing questions might be, “Do you pick up the toys yourself or try to get him to do it each day? Is it something you would rather have him do than do it yourself?”
- 48. Parent uses complex sentence structure and some long words in conversing.** If the parent makes an attempt at carrying on a regular conversation instead of just finding a

way to answer all of the questions with “Yes” or “No” or “I don’t know” and not giving any explanation, this should be scored *yes*.

**49. Child’s artwork is displayed some place in house (anything that the child makes).**

Occasionally this can be observed, but it is often necessary to get at this through direct questioning. If the parent mentions that the child enjoys coloring and drawing during the discussion of toys, this presents an excellent opportunity to inquire about what he likes to do with his/her creations when s/he completes them or when s/he brings something home from daycare or school.

**50. Child eats at least one meal per day, on most days, with mother (or mother figure) and father (or father figure).** (One-parent families get an automatic *No*.)

This can be any meal during the day. The child must eat with the family either at the table or in a highchair pulled up to the table. In the case of large families where part of the family sits in the dining room and part in the kitchen, credit is given if they all eat and sit down together. This usually comes up easily during a discussion of food and can be approached with a question like, “Do you usually feed Johnny early or does the whole family eat together?”

**51. Parent lets child choose certain favorite food products or brands at grocery store.**

A good opener is as follows: “I guess Johnny sees a lot of things advertised on TV. Does he want to get some of these things when you go to the store?” “Now that food prices are so high are you able to let him select certain items?” In order to receive credit, the child must express a desire for a product and be allowed to get it not just select an item the parent has asked him to find.

### *VIII. Acceptance*

**52. Parent does not scold or derogate (put down) child more than once during visit.**

In this item all remarks must be made to the child; that is, the parent must tell the child that s/he is a bad and not simply tell the interviewer that the child is bad. If this occurs more than once during the visit the item should be scored *No*.

**53. Parent does not use physical restraint, shake, grab, pinch child during visit.**

In a younger child the parent might be apt to hold the child in her lap even though the child struggles to get down. An older child might be placed in a chair to keep him/her out of the way, or s/he might be jerked back for handling items on a table or pulled away if s/he tried to climb on the interviewer’s lap.

**54. Parent neither slaps nor spanks child during visit.**

This item goes hand in hand with number 53. In this item the slaps and spanks must be in anger or as a reprimand for some wrongdoing. An affectionate pat on the bottom as the parent sends the child out to play does not mean the item should receive a *No*.

**55. No more than one instance of physical punishment occurred during the past week.**

In this case the interviewer must take the word of the parent. The parents must act as a team. Even if the parent states that this week was most unusual, and the child received more than one spanking, the item should receive a *No*. Definitions of “physical punishment” seem to vary considerably. Many parents consider restraint and shaking a child as physical punishment. If in doubt, take the parent’s definition.

## 12 & 24 Month HOME Review Sheet

OBSERVE	ASK ABOUT (if needed)
<p><b>Toys or materials:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Gross motor/locomotion</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Fine motor</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Music</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Cuddly</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> For learning/stimulation</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Place to keep toys</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 3 books of child's own</li> </ul> <p><b>Household:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 10 books</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Pet (can be asked)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Safety for child</li> </ul> <p><b>Parent-Child Interactions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Kissing/caressing</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Discipline</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Tells child name of object/person</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Responds to child's vocalizations</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Praises child</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Visual contact with child</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Helps child focus/structure play</li> </ul>	<p><b>Parent-Child Interactions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Messy play</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Talking to child while doing housework</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Parent approach to play, new toys, learning</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reading frequency</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Discipline, physical punishment</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> How picks out toys</li> </ul> <p><b>Other:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Childcare (number of caregivers)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Outings, grocery store, doctor's office</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Pets (if not visible)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Visits from relatives</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Care provided by father figure</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Mealtimes (together)</li> </ul>