

Guidelines for use of the HOME Inventory

Overview

- The HOME Inventory helps us to gain a better understanding of the home environment of the child.
- The HOME provides a “slice of time” or “snapshot” view of this particular child’s environment. It allows us to look at what the child is experiencing in his/her day to day life, from the viewpoint of the child.
- Administering the HOME is using a semi-structured process not a structured interview or a test with a certain sequence. YOU are the instrument; YOU are more the HOME and how it’s gathered, rather than a procedure.
- The Infant/Toddler version of the HOME consists of VI factors with a total of 45 items, scored yes or no.
- The Early Childhood version of the HOME consists of VIII factors with a total of 55 items, scored yes or no.
- Allow an observation-interview period of approximately 45-60 minutes. The importance of the 45 minutes is to allow spontaneous behavior to occur.
- The child must be present and awake.

Scoring the HOME Inventory

- Score the HOME Inventory based on the descriptions for the items provided in the HOME Inventory Administration Manual.
- You will use a combination of observation and interview to score the inventory.
- In general, you must score based on what you see or learn about at the visit.
- The biggest rule of thumb is: “If you didn’t see it, it didn’t happen.”
- Be sure that you have enough information to complete the form before you leave the home!
- You may want to give credit for things that you know MUST happen in a particular home, but if you didn’t see it during your visit, you can’t count it!

Other tips and hints for administering the HOME Inventory

These are only a few of the tips and hints for administering the HOME. Additional information can be found in the Administration Manual.

1. There isn’t one way this has to be done. In fact, you will find that each interview you do will be different. Work hard to phrase your questions so that parents do not feel “on the spot” or defensive. Remember, you are not there to judge the family, only to gather information.
2. Do the set up. When you set up the visit, let the family know that you will be coming to learn more about their family and their child. You are there to have the family help you find out how the home visiting program is working for families in the projects with the hope that the State of Alabama will be able to expand these programs to help other families other parts of the state. Also it is an opportunity to find out if there are other things that the family would like from the home visits.
3. It’s very important that the child and the family are at ease. If there are a lot of players, that may take some extra time and effort. The conversational interview should look like you were going in to meet a new neighbor or friend. Carry a relaxed manner. If you are not the usual visitor, so you can play the “bumpkin”, asking them to teach and tell you.
4. It may work best to develop your own interview protocol instead of asking the questions in the order they are listed. Think about the questions you need to ask, and the behaviors you need to observe. Then, think about some general prompts that you can use to solicit this information. Follow up with more specific questions if you don’t get your question answered. You may want to develop prompts in these 4 main areas: outside trips, toys, routines, and training/discipline. Use open ended questions, and try to avoid leading questions. For example:
 - a. Can you tell me about a typical day for your child? Take me through what usually happens each day... Are the weekends different?
 - b. What kinds of things does your child like to play with? What new things has he/she started doing lately? What can your child doing now that he couldn’t do a month ago? How did he learn to do that? Kids learn lots of different ways, how did your baby learn it?
 - c. Having a little baby can be frustrating? Can you tell me some of the things you find hard about being a parent? Do you ever get to the point where you have to spank your child?
 - d. Isn’t the day full of busy stuff? Do you ever get any time for yourself? Do you read? Etc.
 - e. Other prompting comments: That’s interesting, tell me a little bit more about that. Some parents....how about you, do you do this too? Lots of kids are doing this. . say this. . . etc.