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Department of Health

Home Conditions

ASSESSMENT

Name of Child:

_____

Completed by:

_____

Relationship to child:

_____

Date: _____

HOME CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT

Background

1. Social workers assess physical aspects of the home environment.
2. This scale may appear judgmental, but workers necessarily make judgements about the safety, order and cleanliness of the place in which the child lives. The use of a list helps the objectivity of observation.
3. The total score has been found to correlate highly with children's abilities, so that children from homes with low scores usually have better language and intellectual development. This does not mean that all children from high scoring homes will have poor intellectual progress.
4. Like all methods of assessment it should not be used in isolation – other sources of information, including the quality of the parent-child relationship will contribute to the overall assessment.

The Scale

5. The assessment is identical to the Family Cleanliness Scale devised by Davie and others (1984).
6. This is a list of 11 items to be observed during home visits.
7. Social presentation, namely the cleanliness of the children is included.

Use

8. The scale if best used as a mental checklist to provide a framework for observation.
9. It is particularly appropriate to use during initial assessment. Once used it is a method of keeping track of progress or deterioration.
10. In order to be able to complete the scale it is necessary to look over the home. The caregiver can be asked whether they have any problems with their housing, or whether the nature of their accommodation causes difficulties from the point of view of brining up the children. This can lead naturally to a request to look round.
11. It will usually be unhelpful to share all that has been observed with the caregiver. This could upset the establishment of partnership – a good working relationship is of overriding importance. However the worker needs to have a clear picture of the environment from the child's point of view.
12. Individual items can be a focus for a piece of work. This might be to encourage the parent to attend to something that could pose a health risk to the children, or to bring in additional support where the parent is unlikely to be able to improve matters unassisted.

References

Davie CE, Hutt SJ, Vincent E & Mason M (1984) *The young child at home*. NFER-Nelson, Windsor

The Scale

1.	Smell (e.g. stale cigarette smoke, rotting food)	0	1
2.	Kitchen floor soiled, covered in bits, crumbs etc.	0	1
3.	Floor covering in any other room soiled as above.	0	1
4.	General decorative order poor – obviously in need of attention (e.g. badly stained wall paper, broken windows)	0	1
5.	Kitchen sink, draining board, work surfaces or cupboard door have not been washed for a considerable period of time	0	1
6.	Other surfaces in the house have not been dusted for a considerable period of time	0	1
7.	Cooking implements, cutlery or crockery showing ingrained dirt and/or these items remain unwashed until they are needed again.	0	1
8.	Lavatory, bath or basin showing ingrained dirt.	0	1
9.	Furnishings or furniture soiled	0	1
10.	Informant's or children's, clothing clearly unwashed, or hair matted and unbrushed	0	1
11.	Garden or yard uncared for and strewn with rubbish	0	1
	Total Score		