 ISBN 0 11 322426 5

Department of Health

Family Activity

SCALE

Name of Child/ren:

_____

Completed by:

_____

Relationship to child/ren:

_____

Date: _____

Family Activity

SCALE FOR CHILDREN AGED 2 TO 6

Could you let me know the sort of things you do as a family, or with your child/children both regularly and in the last year. Below are some examples of activities you may have done.

If you have done any of these activities **within the time-scale written in bold**, please tick in the box provided. You may also like to mention other activities you have done. You can do this by filling in the lines at the end of this sheet.

	Activity if YES , please tick
Have you read a story to your child **in the last week**?	☐
Has your child eaten with you and other family members at least **once in the last wee**k?	☐
Did you do anything special for your child on their **last birthday**, such as a cake, party, trip to the park etc.?	☐
Have you gone with your child/family to the park, playground, farm or similar **in the last month**?	☐
Have you gone with your child/family to a local event, such as county show, fete, **in the last 6 months**?	☐
Have you ever belonged to a mother/toddler or baby group of any kind for **at least 3 months**?	☐
Have you and your child/family visited friends who have young children **in the last month**?	☐
Has the family been away for the day out to somewhere different **in the last 6 months** (town/into town/ to the seaside/day trip)?	☐
Has your child had a friend to visit **in the last 6 months**?	☐
Has your child been to visit relatives or friends as a treat for her/him **in the last 6 months**?	☐

Are there any other things you have done as a family/with your child in the last:

Week

Month

6 months

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Family Activity

SCALE

Name of Child/ren:

_____

Completed by:

_____

Relationship to child/ren:

_____

Date: _____

Family Activity

SCALE FOR CHILDREN AGED 7 TO 12

Could you let me know the sort of things you do as a family, or with your child/children both regularly and in the last year. Some examples of the kind of activities you may have done are listed below.

If you have done any of these activities **within the time-scale written in bold**, please tick in the box provided.

You may also like to mention other activities you have done in the space provided at the bottom of the page.

	Activity if YES , please tick
Had a friend of your child to visit **in the last month**?	☐
Had a birthday celebration (i.e. party/cake)?	☐
Been to the cinema/museum/zoo/panto/local event – **in the last 3 months**?	☐
Been swimming/skating/other (participant) sport – **in the last 3 months**?	☐
Been away on holiday with the family/to the seaside – **in the past year**?	☐
Been to the park/for a picnic/local farm – **in the last 3 months**?	☐
Has – or had – any pets **in the past year**?	☐
Attended any special classes/clubs i.e. football, dance – **in the last 3 months**?	☐
Been to stay with relatives or friends (without parents) – **in the last year**?	☐
Visited own friends (i.e. for a meal/for the day) – **in the last 3 months**	
Belongs to a children's library?	☐

Are there any other things you have done as a family/with your child in the last:

Week

Month

6 months

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family is at the present time – the questionnaire can be a way to broaden the focus of discussion. Where there a disabled child there is a need to understand how this restricts family activity, and whether there are ways to ensure that the needs of all family members are met.

22. The scale will usually be used with main caregivers, but, as indicated, it can be used with parent(s) and children together.
23. The scale takes about 10 minutes to complete if used with a single adult, but discussion or any relevant work that develops will naturally take longer.

Scoring

24. Each item is scored 1 if it has occurred, or 0 if it did not, and the item scores are summed to give a total score from 0–11 for the list of specific activities, and 0–3 for the items at the bottom of the scale, which allow for activities that have not been specified.
25. To be scored the interviewer must satisfy themselves that the motivation for the action was from the parents and that it was for the child(ren)'s enjoyment or stimulation. For example staying with the grandmother as a treat during the holidays would count, but staying with a relative because the parents were going on holiday would not. Family pets only count if the child has a special responsibility for looking after them, otherwise only pets 'belonging to the child count'.
26. There is not cut-off score. The questionnaire is scored on a continuum: the higher the score, the more child-centred are the family activities.
27. Formal scoring – adding up the number of activities that have occurred in the specified time periods – can give a general indication of family child-centredness, but parental attitude to the various possibilities on the list, and their motivation to provide suitable opportunities, will contribute to the overall assessment.
28. In evaluating the meaning of the scoring, family circumstances, the development of the child, presence/absence of disability all should be considered.

Reference

Smith M (1985) *The Effects of Low Levels of Lead on Urban Children: The relevance of social factors*. Ph.D. Psychology, University of London.

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DH Department of Health

Family Activity

GUIDANCE ON USING SCALES

FAMILY ACTIVITY SCALE

Background

1. The study of parenting styles has explored several different dimensions, including warmth/coldness and authoritarian/permissive approaches. Related dimensions are control and child-centredness.
2. Newson and Newson (1968) in their study of families in the general population, found that mothers felt strongly about their child's compliance because having children who behave well, and do not 'show them up' in public was important for their self esteem. At the same time, many mothers also recognised that they needed to concede some autonomy to their children.
3. Referring to 'child-centredness' Newson & Newson (1976) said:
   'The keynote to this is the parents' recognition of the child's status as an individual with rights and feelings that are worthy of respect'.
   One example cited by the Newsons was the extent to which mothers were prepared to accept their 4-year-old's claim that they were busy.
4. The concept of child-centredness underlies many schemes for observing parent-child interaction, and there is evidence that it is an important determinant of good child development.
5. What people do together and how they conduct joint activity is an important indicator of the quality of their relationship.

The Scale

6. The Family Activity Scale is derived from a Child-Centredness Scale devised by Marjorie Smith (1985).
7. Child-centredness is seen to be reflected in appropriate opportunities for the child to be involved in autonomous activities of their own choice, or family activities that the parents judge to be potentially enjoyable or fulfilling for the child.
8. There are two versions – one for children aged 2–6, and one for children aged 7–12.
9. The scale aims to identify the extent of joint, child-centred family activity and independent/autonomous child activity, such as pursuit of hobbies and relationships outside the home, and self-care.
10. The activities in the scale are intended to be relatively independent of family income.
11. It is not expected that families will provide all the activities or opportunities. To some extent this will depend on the characteristics of the child and the context of the family.
12. There are circumstances, for example low income families living in isolated rural areas and those with a disabled child, where access to some of the activities is not possible without additional support.
13. The scale is not intended to judge parents in a critical way, but provide an opportunity to encourage relevant activity, and assess the need for support to enable it to take place.

Use

14. The scale has been used successfully with children as well as caregivers
15. In piloting it was reportedly 'extremely useful' in initial assessment.
16. Used with both parents separately it highlighted differences in parent perceptions.
17. Used both with caregivers alone and with the children it helped with work on family relationships.
18. On one occasion the children's enthusiastic account of joint ,family activity gave weight to the view that there had been considerable improvements in the function of the family concerned.
19. When children took part it helped them to feel included, and was thought to have been confidence-building.
20. Specific items were useful as the focus for work to extend joint family activity. Where there is a lack of resource available to the family, or a disabled child relevant support can be discussed, and if appropriate, provided.

Administration

21. It is as always important to introduce the scale in a fashion that is appropriate to the family in question. With families that are new to the worker, the need to understand the family can be put forward. For those that are well known there is the need to get a fuller picture of how the

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