

Parent Survey - rev. 2015

Frequently Asked Questions

#1 - Parent's Childhood Experience

Question: 10b - How does this differ from 10a?

Answer: Notice that the examples given here are more likely to lead quickly to severe injuries. For example, a metal belt buckle would be more severe than the belt itself, or a 2x4 is more severe than a switch.

Question: 10k - Can this be scored for medical reasons too?

Answer: No, since the focus of this area is on the type of parenting models these new parents had, here we are concerned with people who have experienced trauma in their childhoods and therefore have blocked memories.

#2 - Lifestyle Behaviors and Mental Health

Question: 5c - How do you average the intake of alcohol?

Answer: The short answer is that you do not average the intake. Sometimes a parent will say they drink a 6-pack of beer a week. It is important to continue to explore to learn whether they drink the whole 6-pack in one or two sittings or if they have 1 bottle per day, how they act when they are drinking, and if anyone in the family sees it as a problem. If they regularly drink the whole 6-pack in one sitting, they may score 10f. If they get drunk and become violent, they may also score 10h. If they drink the 3 beers per day on 2 different days, they may score 5c, since this is more than 1 drink; however, if they get drunk and someone in the family sees this as a problem, they would score 10. And again, if they get violent, they would score 10h. If they drink 1 beer per day, they would score 0 UNLESS someone in the family sees this as a problem, in which case they would score 5.

Question: 10a - Does this include undocumented immigrants?

Answer: We never ask if a parent is undocumented or not. However, often a parent will volunteer that they are. If so, then they would score 10a here because they are in the country illegally—this creates a risk for the child because the parent could be deported at any time and without warning. They may also score under #5 if this situation is very stressful for them.

Question: 10e - Why can't alcohol be scored here?

Answer: Drug use during pregnancy does NOT include alcohol. When the rating scale was validated, we did not know the danger of alcohol use during pregnancy, so we cannot score it here without revalidating the tool. It is important, however, to document the alcohol use so that the reader is aware. In addition, consider whether 5c or 10f,g,h apply.

#4 - Coping Skills and Support Systems

Question: 5d, 10d,e - Can “lifeline” include a partner or other family members?

Answer: Yes, a partner or other family members can definitely count as lifelines. If the partner is the only lifeline, then 5d may apply (as long as there are at least 2 items under #5 that apply). In general, a lifeline is defined as someone who can help in an emergency. Therefore, a parent living in another country would probably not qualify as a lifeline because they would be too far away to help in an emergency.

Question: 5h - If a parent learns about the pregnancy before 12 weeks but is unable to see the doctor until after 12 weeks (e.g., waiting to hear of Medicaid or doctor’s office is booked), would they still score 5h?

Answer: Yes, because they do not really have that support system in place until they have actually seen the doctor.

Question: 5i - Do I still score here if a parent has decided to stay home with the baby?

Answer: There are actually a couple times when a parent would not be scored here:
1) If a parent decides to stay home with the baby and they are financially stable (defined as not using any public assistance), then they would not score; 2) If a parent is in school full-time, then that is considered their job and they would not score here.

#5 - Stresses

Question: Where can a teen parent score? Often they have trouble accessing resources because they are under age.

Answer: There is no specific place to score a teen parent. Many teens have good support and would not be considered “high risk.” However, it is important to continue to explore the circumstances of each individual teen. If they are struggling to access certain services and that creates a stressful housing or financial situation, for example, then the information would be documented in the appropriate topic area and scored accordingly.

Question: This topic area now requires 2 reasons to score a 5 or one reason under 10. How do you write that?

Answer: Document the score first, followed by the reasons for the score in parentheses. For example: 5(10b) or 5(a,10b). Remember that you need 2 reasons to score a 10.

Question: How is 10b under #5 different from 10e under #6.

Answer: The score of 10b under #5 goes to the person who is afraid—being afraid is a type of stressor. The score of 10e under #6 goes to the person who might be violent—but only if the person has NOT been violent yet. If they have been violent, then they would score 10b or 10c.

#7 - Expectations of Developmental Milestones and Behaviors

Question: How does 5a differ from 5c and 5b from 5d?

Answer: Both 5a and 5b refer to a parent’s flexibility or rigidity around developmental

milestones. Once a parent has shared their expectations, asking them how important it is for their child to meet those expectations may help you to determine how flexible or rigid s/he is. Both 5c and 5d refer to expectations outside of the timeframes listed—if a parent has unreasonable expectations outside of what is listed, then s/he would score 5c or 5d.

#8 - Plans for Discipline

Question: Why do we have to use scenarios and how many scenarios do we need to use?

Answer: Scenarios can help us to think concretely about various situations and respond more realistically. It is important to use at least 2 scenarios: 1 for a child under 1 year of age and 1 for a child over 1 year (e.g., a toddler). Using a 3rd scenario (preschooler) can provide important information for the home visitor.

Always remember to escalate the scenario: “You said you were going to use time out, but what would you do if that didn’t work.”

Question: 10e - When would I score a parent 10e?

Answer: Just because a parent was spanked as a child and plans to spank his/her own child doesn’t mean that 10e would apply—perhaps they just don’t know any other way to discipline their child. A score of 10e is reserved for the parent who says something like, “I was spanked as a child and I turned out just fine—if it was good enough for me, it’ll be good enough for my kid.”

Question: What if a parent says they don’t plan to spank, but are then observed hitting another child?

Answer: 5b says the parent “plans to use, or uses, physical punishment as primary response...” so a parent who is observed hitting would score here. (If implements are used or bruises/injuries/discomfort are left, then score of 10 would apply.)

#9 - Perception of New Infant

Question: What are we looking for here and how do we score it?

Answer: Here we are looking for a parent to describe the baby’s personality or temperament. “How would you describe your baby’s personality or temperament in 2-3 words?” It is important to ask both prenatal and postnatal parents their perceptions.

As has always been the case, postnatal parents will be scored 0, 5, 10, or unknown, based upon the parents’ responses.

Prenatal parents can be scored 5 or 10, if their response indicates a negative perception of the unborn baby. However, if the parent does not yet have a perception of this baby or has only positive things to say, they will be score N/A.

Regardless of the score, be sure to document what the parent says, even if they say they don’t know. Remember that this is a perfect place to use quotes—documenting the parents’ own words can provide lots of good information for the home visitor.

General

Question: What score does a parent need to be offered home visiting?

Answer: Most programs use a score of 25 as the cut-off for offering home visiting services—families scoring 25 or above are offered HFA home visitation. This number is based on the original validation study, which showed that rates of mild neglect rose significantly among women who scored 25-35 on the Parent Survey. However, some programs use a score of 40 as the cut-off—families need to score 40 or above. This higher number is based on the original validation study, which showed that 52% of women who scored 40 or above showed evidence of child abuse/neglect 1-2 years later.

A small number of sites set an upper limit on the score a family can receive and still be offered home visiting. This is a program decision that may also be made on a case-by-case basis. Keep in mind that Healthy Families America was designed to work with high-risk families. Whether or not you choose to work a particular family, be sure that they are connected with other appropriate supports within the community.

Question: Where would sexual assault as an adult be scored?

Answer: There is no rating indicator specifically for sexual assault, so you will want to explore the impact of the assault on the parent. If the assault was by their partner, then it might be scored under #6 (10c). If the assault continues to cause much stress to the parent, it might be scored under #5. If it has led to depression or anxiety, it may be scored under #2, or under #4 if it impacts the parent's coping skills. The key to scoring will be to continue to explore.

Question: When can I use third-party information?

Answer: The Parent Survey should always be considered the parent's story. They share what they feel comfortable and safe to share at that moment. It is not our role to prove or disprove what the parent says. Therefore, the only 3rd-party information that can be used is something that is absolutely factual, such as a positive drug screen from the hospital. It is best to share with the parent that you have that information so that you do not set up a situation where you have access to information but the parent says something different. The factual information can be documented in the Parent Survey but should NOT be used to score. No other 3rd-party information should be documented in the Parent Survey summary, but can be shared with the supervisor and home visitor privately.

Rebeca McMillan (to All - Entire Audience): 12:58 PM: would unemployment count if a client is on house arrest or in a situation where they are not permitted to work?

Lynn Kosanovich (to All - Entire Audience): 1:00 PM: Rebecca, yes, you would score as unemployed even if the parent cannot work. So someone on SSI who can't work also can be scored here.

Alivia Sturgill (to All - Entire Audience): 1:04 PM: if the parent has 1 steady job and has changed a part time job several times in the last year does that score?

Lynn Kosanovich (to All - Entire Audience): 1:05 PM: Alivia, you might want to explore that situation more, but would probably not score it. You can often tell by the content of the discussion in the home whether or not a particular rating indicator applies.

Dawn Taylor (to All - Entire Audience): 1:34 PM: how about flicking the head?

Dawn Taylor (to All - Entire Audience): 1:35 PM: *hand

Lynn Kosanovich (to All - Entire Audience): 1:35 PM: Sara, 2 scenarios are required--scoring differs whether you plan to use physical discipline for an infant vs over 12 months. However, 3 scenarios would provide you with better information and would be useful to the home visitor.

Maritza Noriega (to Organizer(s) Only): 1:36 PM: dawn has a question

Sara Lowell (to All - Entire Audience): 1:36 PM: Thank you Lynn! That is helpful!parent makes verbal threats to child re: potential physical discipline if the child does not stop behavior... this does not score, does it?

Lynn Kosanovich (to All - Entire Audience): 1:36 PM: Flicking the hand is physical punishment.

Karin Hardin (to All - Entire Audience): 1:36 PM: Can you repeat how we should score when a parent says I was spanked and turned out just fine?

Tiffany Lee (to All - Entire Audience): 1:36 PM: Thank you!

Maritza Noriega (to Organizer(s) Only): 1:36 PM: Patti, can you repeat, per Karin's request?

Rebeca McMillan (to All - Entire Audience): 1:38 PM: parent says they will not use physical discipline when parent survey is being done, but at same home visit, parent is seen spanking an older sibling as primary discipline...how to score?

Lynn Kosanovich (to All - Entire Audience): 1:38 PM: Rebecca, if a parent is observed spanking an older child, that can be scored 5b, which says that the parent "plans to use or uses" physical punishment.

Rebeca McMillan (to All - Entire Audience): 1:38 PM: ok. Thanks Lynn!

Lynn Kosanovich (to All - Entire Audience): 1:39 PM: Sara, you might escalate that situation. What if you threaten and the child doesn't stop what they are doing? Then what would you do?

Sara Lowell (to All - Entire Audience): 1:44 PM: thank you Lynn :)

MARIA .C SOSA (to All - Entire Audience): 1:45 PM: Can you please repeat PS#9 score for prenatal

Maritza Noriega (to Organizer(s) Only): 1:46 PM: repeat.. request from Maria