

The Middle Childhood (6-10) HOME Inventories

Information for users when preparing reports

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General

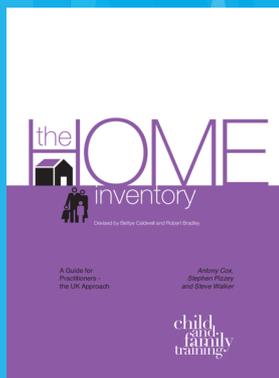
The HOME Inventory (Home Observation and Measurement of the Environment) (Caldwell and Bradley, 2003) is based on a substantial body of research regarding factors, which are supportive of positive child development. The HOME Inventory has an extensive research base that has gradually been expanded since the 1960s.

The Middle Childhood (6-10) HOME Inventories

There is a standard Middle Childhood (6-10) HOME inventory and disability-adapted versions for children with developmental delay and those with auditory, visual and orthopaedic impairments.

The Middle Childhood HOME Inventories include sub-scales (made up of several items), which assess different aspects of a child's experience. The sub-scales are:

- *responsivity*: the caregiver's emotional and verbal responsiveness to the child and warmth in the relationship;
- *encouragement of maturity*: the extent to which parents expect the child to demonstrate socially responsible and mature behaviour and conform to family rules;
- *emotional climate*: the extent to which the parent can accept negative emotional expressions from the child and also the parent's emotional composure;
- *learning materials and opportunities*: the availability to the child of developmentally enhancing materials;
- *enrichment*: the extent to which the parents consciously utilise family and community resources to enrich the development of the child with hobbies, recreation, museums, libraries, trips, etc.;
- *family companionship*: the extent to which the child is involved with the parents in activities providing companionship and mutual enjoyment - shopping ventures, visits to and from relatives, recreation, etc.
- *physical environment*: the adequacy of the household environment and its immediate surroundings.



The disability-adapted versions consist of the same sub-scales. Some items in the sub-scales have been modified and supplementary items added to take account of developmental needs of a child with the particular disability.

The UK Approach

The information required to complete the Inventory is obtained by use of a semi-structured interview schedule combining interview and observation and a review of the social, emotional and physical home circumstances (Cox, Pizzey and Walker, 2009).

The interview explores the nature and variety of a child's day-to-day experiences, the quality of their home environment and the parenting capacity of the caregivers.

The interview is structured in terms of a specific day; usually the previous day or previous weekday, and items are scored for both answers and observations. There are additional sections on areas such as play, toys, outings, dealing with difficult behaviour and contact with health professionals.

Scoring the HOME Inventory

The scores for the sub-scales are obtained from the completion of a record form that contains a number of items, which are defined by a glossary. The scores are compared to the median score for each sub-scale. The median score is the midway point of the scores in research on normal populations.

A sub-scale scores of two or three points below the median highlights a concern about that aspect of the child's experience. An overall score of seven points below the median raises a concern about the child's overall experience of care.

The HOME Inventory does not assess all aspects of a child's home environment, for example, family functioning. The sub-scales are scored on the basis of a home visit to the main caregiver and the child of concern. In practice the scores should not be used in isolation but must always be considered in the light of information from other sources.

The HOME Inventory discriminates better between "good enough" care and low-quality care for a child than between "good enough" and high-quality care. The qualitative information provided by the use of the semi-structured interview helps the practitioner identify whether the child is receiving high-quality care.

Summary

The HOME Inventory (Caldwell and Bradley, 2003) is well-established and tested and a good predictor of outcomes for children. *The HOME Inventory: the UK Approach* (Cox et al, 2009) is user friendly, provides a picture of the child's world from their perspective and is well received by families.

The Middle Childhood Inventories are useful in a range of situations including: initial and later stages of assessment; assessing the level of change following interventions; providing a detailed picture of the care needed by children in respite, foster and adoptive placements; and assessing the quality of parenting and support that might be required.

References

- Caldwell, B.M. and Bradley, R.H. (2003) *HOME Inventory: Administration Manual Comprehensive Edition*. Little Rock, AR: University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences.
- Cox, A., Pizzey, S. and Walker, S. (2009) *The HOME Inventory: A Guide for Practitioners – The UK Approach*. York: Child and Family Training.

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