

The HOME Inventory - the UK Approach

General information

Professor Antony Cox, Emeritus Professor of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at Guy's King's and St Thomas' School of Medicine, and Stephen Pizzey, Director, Child and Family Training

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The HOME Inventory

The HOME Inventory (Home Observation and Measurement of the Environment) (Caldwell and Bradley, 1984; 2001; 2003) is based on a substantial body of research regarding factors, which are supportive of positive child development.

There are four standard age-related versions of the Inventory for children and young people aged 0-3, 3-6, 6-10 and 10- 14; versions for children in family child care settings aged 0-3 and 3-6 and disability-adapted versions for children with developmental delay and those with auditory, visual and orthopaedic impairments aged 0-3, 3-6 and 6-10.

The Inventories comprise scales that reflect the home environment - it's strengths and weaknesses. The scales vary with each age range and assess different aspects of a child or young person's experience.

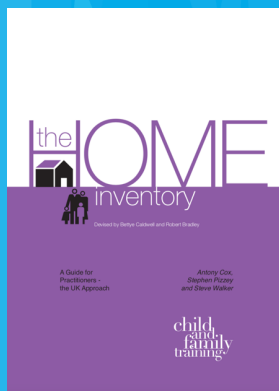
The disability-adapted versions consist of the same sub-scales as the standard version. Some items in the sub-scales have been modified and supplementary items added to take account of developmental needs of a child with the particular disability.

The HOME Inventory does not assess all aspects of a child or young person'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 or young person 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.

HOME scores have been found to discriminate effectively between "good enough" care and low-quality care for a child or young person providing an indication of potential areas for support and intervention.

The UK Approach

Caldwell and Bradley (2003) suggested that a review of the previous 24 hours was one approach to gathering relevant information though no specific interview schedule was developed. In the United Kingdom a semi-structured interview schedule combining interview and observation and including a review of the social, emotional and physical home circumstances was developed to gather relevant information (Cox and Walker 2002; Cox, Pizzey and Walker, 2009).



The semi-structured interview helps understand the child or young person's perspective and assess their experience of care with their carer. It explores the nature and variety of a child or young person's day-to-day experiences, the quality of their home environment and the parenting capacity of their caregivers.

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

The qualitative information provided by a semi-structured interview approach helps the practitioner identify whether the child or young person is receiving high-quality care as opposed to 'good-enough'.

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 or young person's world from their perspective and is well received by families.

The HOME Inventory is 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. (1984) *Home Observation for Measurement of the Environment: Revised Edition*.
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