

Appendix : F

The Home Inventory

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**For the User :**

This observation inventory is to be used to assess the level of stimulation children receive in their homes and thereby identify children who are likely to face, or are already facing, learning difficulties in school. It can be used with children in grades I to IV, belonging to any socio-economic strata.

Each item is to be marked present or absent, and gets a score of 1 or 0 respectively. The total score is obtained by simple summation. Different levels of stimulation are as follows:

0 - 10	:	Poor, lacking
11 - 19	:	Moderate
20 - 24	:	High

Children from homes falling in the lowest category are likely to face, or may already be facing, learning difficulties.

Observation should be carried out for at least an hour, after an initial visit for establishing rapport. The child is to be observed with the main caretaker, who need not necessarily be the mother. The observer must judge the time at which interaction may be highest and, therefore, during which time of the day observation will be most meaningful.

Specific areas of lack or of strength can be gauged by looking at item and sub-scale scores, which will be of special relevance in planning home-based programmes for the caretakers of children facing learning problems.

Some items may be posed as questions because they were not observed or because they are not directly observable; these are marked with an asterisk (\*). The latter section of this booklet includes a description of each item and a few guidelines for using this inventory.

Sub-scales and Items	Scores 1/0
I. Language stimulation.	
1. Mother answers child's question and requests verbally.	
2. Mother converses with child at least twice during visit.	
3. Mother usually responds verbally to child.	
4. Mother gives instruction in a positive tone.	
5. Mother talks about interviewer to child.	
* 6. There are some newspapers, books, or magazines visible in the house.	
7. Mother has at least one non-instructional verbal exchange with child.	
<u>Subscale Score</u>	
II. Physical Environment.	
1. The interior of the house is not very dark.	
2. The interior of the house is well ventilated.	

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Sub-scales and Items	Scores 1/0
*3. There are some toys, tins, balls, dolls. slate -pen visible in the house.	
*4. There is some space-structure in the house.	
<u>Subscale score :</u>	
III. Encouragement of Social Maturity	
*1. Mother asks child to do some housework.	
*2. Mother asks child to take care of younger siblings/ neighbourhood children.	
<u>Subscale score :</u>	
IV. Variety of Stimulation	
*1. Child is helped with academic tasks.	
*2. Child tells mother of school activities.	
*3. Child is told stories by mother.	
*4. Child is taken out at least once a month.	
*5. Child has been for outing to zoo/park etc., within last three months.	
*6. There is some time-structure/routine in the home.	
<u>Subscale score :</u>	
V. Maternal Attitude and Disciplining	
1. Mother does not threaten to punish/ scold child during visit.	

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Sub-scales and Items	Scores 1/0
*2 Mother does not give in to child's tantrums/wilfulness.	
3. Mother does not discuss child negatively in front of him/her.	
*4. Mother believes that child's behaviour can be modified/changed.	
5. Mother spontaneously praises child's good behaviour/qualities during visit.	
<u>Subscale score</u>	
Total Score	

#### Description of Items

Each item is discussed here to make its meaning clear. However, special instances are bound to arise when the observer will have to use his/her judgement and discretion.

#### I. Language stimulation

1. This item is to be scored 1 only if the child initiated the exchange and the mother responded verbally.
2. This item is scored 1 if the mother addressed the child twice during the visit and the child responded verbally, even if it is only an instruction (e.g. Get me a plate from the kitchen).
3. If the mother usually responds verbally rather than with gestures or other non-verbal means of expression, this item is scored 1.
4. This item requires that the mother's tone not be harsh, forbidding and unpleasant, or even monotonous and neutral.
5. This item is often not observable, especially if the child was not present during the initial visit, so it may be posed as question (e.g. Does X know who I am/what I've come for ?)
6. This item may not be observed if such material is tidied away out of sight or is in another room so a question may be asked.

7. This supplements item 2, being scored 1 only if there is an actual verbal interchange, not involving instructions or factual questions ( e.g. where is your tiffin box ?).

## II. Physical Environment

1. This item gets a score of 1 if the light is sufficient for the activities going on, and if it can be increased (When the light is observed as dim ). For example, if the child is studying in dim light the item is scored 0.
2. The air should not be stuffy and stale; there should be at least one window.
3. This item gets scored 1 if there are any objects that the child may use to play with, not necessarily conventional toys. These should be age appropriate.
4. The area within the house should have a somewhat permanent organization with a specific area to eat in, another to study in, etc.

## III. Encouragement of Social Maturity

1. This includes any chores in the home, from putting away the newspapers to sweeping the floor, filling water, etc.
2. This includes the ability to take care of any child younger than the subject . If the mother asks but the child does not or is not able to do this, the item is scored as 0 .

## IV. Variety of Stimulation

1. This implies active involvement of the mother : if the child goes for tuition every day but the mother takes no interest and does not give encouragement, thus is scored as 0.
2. This item requires that the child tells the mother about what happens in school, not only about the home work given or the tests to be held.
3. For this item the mother should be telling the child a story at least once in two weeks, from whatever source (mythology, story books, etc.).
4. This item is scored 1 if the child has been out of his/her neighbourhood to visit relatives/friends, go to the bazaar, etc.
5. This item is scored 1 if the child has been taken to some place of special interest to children, e.g. zoo, park, fair, magic-show, planetarium, etc.

6. This means that there are timings followed (e.g. lunch at 11.30 a.m., homework from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m.) and that the household does not run haphazardly (e.g. dinner at 7.30 p.m. or 9 p.m. depending on if it is ready).

V. Maternal Attitude and Disciplining

1. This item is scored 0 if the mother scolds or punishes harshly, or if she threatens to do so in a measure out of proportion with the child's misdemeanor.
2. This requires that the child is not over indulged and spoiled, that the mother is able to say " No" firmly and stick by her decision.
3. This means that the mother does talk about the child in a manner that will hurt or embarrass him/her (e.g. discuss his/her bedwetting problem with the observer while the child is present).
4. For this item to be scored 1 the mother should believe that the child is capable of doing better at school, being better behaved, being less disruptive, etc., and not make statements like, "She is rude and naughty and does not listen to me, so what else can she do but fail in school ?"
5. This item is scored 1 if the mother praises the child to the observer spontaneously, with a degree of pride and warmth.

Guidelines

1. Good rapport establishment is specially important for an inventory requiring observation, with an emphasis on being non-threatening and non-judgemental or critical.
2. The observer will often have to use her judgement and discretion in scoring. For example, if some areas of caretaking are shared by the mother and the father, this must be taken into account.
3. If questions have to be asked, they must follow the period of observation so as not to ~~be~~ sensitize the mother to the issues involved.