

Infant/Toddler Home Assessment

Nikara Haroldsen

Brigham Young University - Idaho

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Sister Susan Norton

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Description and Validation of the Instrument

The HOME assessment is an acronym for Home Observation for Measurement of the Environment, and it is used to evaluate interventions (Totsika & Sylva 2004). More specifically Totsika and Sylva stated, “The primary goal of the instrument is to measure, within a naturalistic context, the quality and quantity of stimulation and support available to a child in the home environment” (p.1). The HOME assessment allows teachers and childcare workers to hone in on a child’s specific needs in areas like health, education, emotional and behavioral development, identity, family and social relationships, social presentation, and selfcare skills (Totsika & Sylva p.27).

The HOME assessment allows for a way to learn about the child’s attachment styles, cognitive development status, ethnic backgrounds, any medical problems, and much more. The responsivity section of the HOME assessment helps us to learn about the potential attachment styles of the child based on parent-child interaction throughout the interview. Teachers and childcare workers are better able to help children adjust, learn, and grow when they are aware of these things.

Administration of the Instrument

Permission to observe the child and interview the parent was obtained a week prior to when the interview should take place. When scheduling the visit, it was made clear that the visit would last about an hour, and it is important to visit at a time when the child is awake for ideal observation of the infant’s routine and behaviors. The child’s name is Jace, and he is about 6 months old. Jace is part of a nuclear family, where he has both biological parents in the household. They live in what appears to be a regular-sized home. The observation took place in the family’s living room. Both the mother and child appeared very comfortable in their environment, as well as with the interviewer. The conversation contained much laughter, smiling, and was an overall

positive interaction. The interview only ended up taking about seventeen minutes. After observing the physical environment, the total observation time would be closer to 20 minutes long.

Summary and Analysis of the Data

Responsivity. Responsivity is how and to what extent parents react to their child's behavior (Caldwell & Bradley 2003). It can also be described as communication, interactions, and discipline given from caregiver to child (Totsika & Sylva 2004). The score received from the responsivity section during the interview was a 10. The highest possible score is an 11, and this specific household falls above the average. Alyssa reacted to Jace multiple times including spontaneously and in response to his vocalizations. Alyssa was also very engaged in conversation with the interviewer as well and would initiate some conversation too. She also allows Jace to engage in messy play while he's in the bathtub; he will often splash in the water. One area that could be seen as a weakness was Alyssa failing to name an object to Jace during the visit. Naming objects to children is important to helping infants be able to encode, memorize objects, and understand symbols or representations (Anyaso 2020). A recommendation for Alyssa and her husband would be for them to find more opportunities to talk about the things that Jace sees and to name them. As they do this, Jace will begin to memorize or learn names of objects more easily.

Acceptance. Acceptance refers to "the way the caregiver disciplines the child" (Totsika and Sylva p.1). The score received from the acceptance portion of the interview was a 7. The average is a 6, so this category was also a little above average. Over the course of the interview, Alyssa was very loving towards Jace. She spoke to him gently and had only kind gestures towards him. When the visitor complemented her or the baby, she would always look down at the baby while saying thank you; this shows that she is very loving and comfortable with her child. Jace's parents are doing a wonderful job of keeping a positive energy around him by not yelling or using physical discipline. I would suggest that they continue this same pattern as Jace grows older and his behavior starts to be different. As they proceed to use positive language with Jace, he will feel

more empowered to make choices of his own and to grow a positive self-esteem (Foley 2018).

Organization. According to Caldwell & Bradley, “[organization] refers to the extent to which there is regularity and predictability (without monotony) in the family’s schedule, to the safety of the physical environment, and to the utilization of community services as part of the family support system” (Caldwell & Bradley p.5). The score earned from this section was a 5, which is exactly average. Jace’s parents do a wonderful job keeping him up to date on his appointments. Alyssa has also tried to take Jace on a walk outside every day. There is a whicker basket found in the living room where Jace has several toys. One important recommendation for Jace’s parents would be to help make Jace’s play environment a little safer. Although the space is very tidy, there are several outlets that are not covered, sharp corners, and loose objects (such as plants) throughout the living room and kitchen that might be within Jace’s reach. Some suggestions for improvement would be to use safety locks or latches on cabinets, window guards, furniture or appliance anchors, corner and edge bumpers, safety gates, and outlet covers (CPSC 2024). Having a safer environment can help improve the child’s development because it will prevent injuries. It will also encourage him to play with less necessary intervention from parents if the child is getting near something potentially harmful.

Learning Materials. Learning materials discussed from this category includes toys and materials that promote development and are age appropriate (Caldwell & Bradley 2003). For this section, they received an average score of 7. Jace’s parents were very deliberate about the toys they had bought for him. They have provided a bumby for him to use to help him until he can sit up on his own. He also has a teddy bear. They take Jace for walks in a stroller. However, they do not have any pull or push toys or complex hand-eye coordination toys for him yet. He is not at an age where he can easily use those yet, however it can potentially be useful to have some for when he begins to learn how to use those toys. Push and pull toys can help infants to improve muscle strength, coordination, and can increase the process of learning how to walk (Being the Parent

2024). My recommendation would be to have these toys available to Jace by the time he is 1 year old or is beginning to take his first steps.

Involvement. The term involvement refers to level of parental involvement in the child's learning and "stimulation of learning increasingly mature behavior" (Caldwell & Bradley p.8). For this portion of the interview, they scored above average with a 5. Again, Jace's parents are very deliberate about what toys they buy for Jace and how those will help his development. Alyssa also keeps Jace within sight throughout the interview. When she is accomplishing housework, Alyssa takes Jace with her; she will often talk to him about what she is doing. A recommendation for Alyssa and her husband would be for them to invest in a few more toys for Jace that encourage development and challenge him to develop new skills. According to the NAEYC, it's important for infants to have things to listen to, toys they can grab, and things to look at, such as unbreakable mirrors. As they get a little older, it is also important for them to have soft blocks or nesting toys (NAEYC 2024). As children and infants use different toys, it can help them to build both their fine and gross motor skills.

Variety. Variety for a child includes different people, places, and events into a child's daily life to create variety and learning experiences (Caldwell & Bradley p.9). For this category, Jace's family scored a 5, which is above average. Both parents spend time with their child daily. Alyssa's husband will watch Jace while she goes to the gym or is at work and vice versa. They make sure that Jace has variety throughout his day in different ways such as reading, eating, or inviting family over. They put in a lot of effort to eat together as a family daily, even if Jace isn't hungry at the time; they will have Jace at least sit with them during the meal. Alyssa had specifically mentioned sitting Jace in a bumbo while he eats rice cereal alongside his family. It's especially important for a child's development to have family meals because it is a great way to model healthy habits, increase mental health, can fuel the brain and body, and many other benefits (Muth 2024). A recommendation that I would suggest is to focus more and to continue to prioritize family dinners

to help Jace as he continues to build healthy habits with food.

Limitations of the Instrument

One thing that Alyssa mentioned that she likes to do with Jace is she will meet up with other mothers and let Jace and the other babies play together. At this age, babies are known to participate in solitary play, meaning that they play alone. Associative or cooperative play (interactive play) does not begin until closer to age 3 or 4 (Pathways Admin 2024). Regardless, this is great practice for Jace to become familiar with other people and infants.

Alyssa also mentioned that she attends the gym regularly, indicating that she is taking care of her physical well-being as well. This is important because a parent's health and mood can greatly impact their children. According to Jennifer E. Lansford, "From birth, infants pick up on emotional cues from others. Even very young infants look to caregivers to determine how to react to a given situation". This is known as social referencing. Babies rely on their parents on how to react and interpret the different things that are happening in their environment. This can potentially affect the child's amount of stress or cortisol they are receiving (Puglisi 2024).

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Appendix

Infant/Toddler HOME Bettye M. Caldwell and Robert H. Bradley Summary Sheet

Family name: Alyssa Family (no last name given)

Date: April, 2017 – watched May 1st, 2024

Visitor: Sis Olsen (Video)

Address: NA

Phone: NA

Child's name: Jace

Birth date: 10/26/2016

Age: approx. 6 months

Sex: Male

Interviewee: Alyssa

If other than parent, relationship to child:

Family composition:

(persons living in household, including sex and age of children)

Family ethnicity:

Language spoken:

Maternal education:

Paternal educations:

Is mother employed?

Type of work when employed?

Hours per week:

Is father employed? yes

Type of work when employed?

Hours per week:

Current child care arrangements:

Summarize past year's arrangements:

Other person(s) present during visit:

Notes:

Summary				
Subscale	Possible Score	Median	Actual Score	Comments
1. Responsibility	11	9	10	There weren't a lot of opportunities throughout the interview to see Alyssa name an object to Jace.
2. Acceptance	8	6	7	No mention of a pet
3. Organization	6	5	5	they do go outside everyday. The environment is mostly safe, except for some open outlets, sharp corners, and no door knob cover or childproofed cabinets.
4. Learning Materials	9	7	7	No push or pull toys or complex hand-eye coordination toys – mostly due to his young age.

5. Involvement	6	4	5	Both parents are very deliberate with what toys they buy for Jace and how those will help his development.
6. Variety	5	3	5	Both parents spend time with their child daily in different way such as reading, eating, or inviting family over.
Total Score	45	32	39	

Infant/Toddler HOME Record Form

Place a plus (+) or minus (-) in the box alongside each item depending on whether the behavior is observed during the visit, or if the parent reports that the conditions or events are characteristics of the home environment. Enter the subtotals and the total on the Summary Sheet. Observation (O), Either (E), or Interview (I) is indicated for each item.

I. Responsibility		24. Child has a special place for toys and treasures. (E)	+
1. Parent permits child to engage in "messy" play. (I)	+	25. Child's play environment is safe. (O)	-
2. Parent spontaneously vocalizes to child at least twice. (O)	+	IV. Learning Materials	
3. Parent responds verbally to child's vocalizations or verbalizations. (O)	+	26. Muscle activity toys or equipment. (E)	+
4. Parent tells child name of object or person during visit. (O)	-	27. Push or pull toys or equipment. (E)	-
5. Parent's speech is distinct, clear, and audible. (O)	+	28. Stroller or walker, kiddie car, scooter, or tricycle. (E)	+
6. Parent initiates verbal interchange with Visitor. (O)	+	29. Cuddly toy or role-playing toys. (E)	+
7. Parent converse freely and easily. (O)	+	30. Learning facilitators—mobile, table and chair, high chair, play pen. (E)	+
8. Parent spontaneously praises child at least twice. (O)	+	31. Simple eye-hand coordination toys. (E)	+
9. Parent's voice conveys positive feelings toward child. (O)	+	32. Complex eye-hand coordination toys. (E)	-
10. Parent caresses or kisses child at least once. (O)	+	33. Toys for literature and music. (E)	+
11. Parents responds positively to praise of child offered by visitor. (O)	+	34. Parent provides toys for child to play with during visit. (O)	+
II. Acceptance		V. Involvement	
12. No more than 1 instance of physical punishment during past week. (I)	+	35. Parent talks to child while doing household work. (I)	+
13. Family has a pet. (E)	-	36. Parent consciously encourages	+

		developmental advance. (I)	
14. Parent does not shout at child. (O)	+	37. Parent invests maturing toys with value via personal attention. (I)	+
15. Parent does not express overt annoyance with or hostility to child. (O)	+	38. Parent structures child's play periods. (I)	+
16. Parent neither slaps nor spans child during visit. (O)	+	39. Parent provides toys that challenge child to develop new skills. (I)	-
17. Parent does not scold or criticize child during visit. (O)	+	40. Parent keeps child in visual range. Looks at often. (O)	+
18. Parent does not interfere with or restrict child more than 3 times during visit. (O)	+	VI. Variety	
19. At least 10 books are present and visible. (E)	+	41. Father provides some care daily. (I)	+
III. Organization		42. Parent reads stories to child at least 3 times weekly. (I)	+
20. Child care, if used, is provided by one of 3 regular substitutes. (I)	+	43. Child eats at least one meal a day with mother and father. (I)	+
21. Child is taken to grocery store at least once a week. (I)	+	44. Family visits relatives or receives visits once a month or so. (I)	+
22. Child gets out of house at least 4 times a week. (I)	+	45. Child has 3 or more books of his/her own. (E)	+
23. Child is taken regularly to doctor's office or clinic. (I)	+		
Totals: I: 10	II. 7	III. 4	IV. 7
		V. 5	VI. 5

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