An Assessment Instrument for Families: Evaluating Community-Based Residential Programs for Individuals with Deaf-Blindness.

Helen Keller National Center - Technical Assistance Center, Sands Point, NY.

Department of Education, Washington, DC.

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Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

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This community living assessment tool for parents of children with deaf-blindness was developed to help parents identify the strengths and weaknesses of their child's residential program using a user-friendly instrument. Three areas of assessment are covered: physical attributes of the home, available resources for promoting capabilities, and philosophy of the service agency.

Physical attributes of the home involve general appearance, atmosphere, environmental adaptations, and location. The section on resources for promoting capabilities emphasizes evaluation of staff, the planning process, the individualized program, communication strategies, evaluation procedures, and medical/support services. The philosophy of the agency is evaluated through consideration of policies, values, realization of values, residents, and parental involvement. At the beginning of the book, users prioritize each area of the assessment in rank order, and a summary sheet at the end of the book then provides an overall picture of the quality of the program. (JDD)
An Assessment Instrument for Families: Evaluating Community-Based Residential Programs for Individuals with Deaf-Blindness

Developed by:
Helen Keller National Center - Technical Assistance Center
Hilton/Perkins Project
Members of the National Parent Network Advisory Committee
September, 1991
AN ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT FOR FAMILIES:
EVALUATING COMMUNITY-BASED RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMS
FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DEAF-BLINDNESS

Developed by:

Helen Keller National Center - Technical Assistance Center
Hilton/Perkins Project
Members of the National Parent Network Advisory Committee

(September, 1991)
The Helen Keller Nation Center - Technical Assistance Center (HKNC-TAC) is pleased to share this community living assessment tool for parents of children with deaf-blindness. The idea for such an assessment originated with parents from the HKNC National Parent Network Advisory Committee and was pursued in collaboration with the Hilton/Perkins Project. Our goal was twofold: one, to create an instrument that would help parents identify the strengths and weaknesses of their child’s residential program; and two, to ensure that the instrument was user friendly for parents.

With these goals in mind, we have created an evaluative list of considerations that parents may wish to keep in mind when selecting or monitoring their child’s home. This tool offers three areas of assessment. They are: 1) Physical Attributes of the Home; 2) Available Resources for Promoting Capabilities; and 3) Philosophy of Agency.

This instrument can be used in many different ways. For example, it could be used as a checklist to organize the many questions that must be asked when discussing quality programming, or it may stimulate thought about issues not previously considered. Similarly, the frequency of application may differ; one parent may choose to use it once a year in its entirety, another may target specific sections to address monthly. The instrument is meant to be flexible and thereby capable of meeting a wide variety of needs. Foremost among these would be use of the instrument to assist parents in determining the quality of programming their child enjoys.

Kathy McNulty
Program Associate
HKNC-TAC
Please take a few minutes to think about your child's home and the following areas:

- General Appearance
- Atmosphere
- Environmental Adaptations
- Location
- Staff Competencies

- Medical Support Services
- Agency Policies
- Agency Values
- Parental Involvement

- Planning Process
- Individualized Program
- Program Evaluation Procedures
- Communication Strategies

Which one of these areas is most important to you? Which one is least important? They are all areas you will be evaluating as you use this instrument. You may find it useful to rank each of these items in order of priority before proceeding with your assessment. [1 = most important 13 = least important]
# L. Physical Attributes of Home

## General Appearance

**Things to consider:**
- Maintenance of the house
- Upkeep of grounds
- Condition of furniture
- Attractiveness of decor
- Residents' preferences reflected in decor

**Rating of General Appearance**

- [ ] Excellent
- [ ] Very Good
- [ ] Good
- [ ] Fair
- [ ] Poor

## Atmosphere

**Things to consider:**
- Homelike atmosphere
- Morale of staff
- Sufficient space for residents and staff
  - at peak times of day
- Residents' preferences displayed in bedroom
  - and living areas
- Space for recreation both indoors and outside

**Rating of Atmosphere**

- [ ] Excellent
- [ ] Very Good
- [ ] Good
- [ ] Fair
- [ ] Poor

## Environmental Adaptations

**Things to consider:**
- Safe environment; obstacle-free environment
- Wheelchair accessibility
- Physical layout of house
- Adequate lighting; use of colors
- Alarm system; e.g., vibrating bed
- TTY
- Use of adaptations
- Available funding for adaptations

**Rating of Environmental Adaptations**

- [ ] Excellent
- [ ] Very Good
- [ ] Good
- [ ] Fair
- [ ] Poor
### Location

**Things to consider:**
- Atmosphere of neighborhood; traffic patterns
- Available nearby resources; e.g., stores, parks, restaurants, churches, temples
- Community recreation programs
- Involvement of neighbors
- Transportation capacity of home

**Rating of Location**

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### Overall Rating of Physical Attributes

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### Resources for Promoting Capabilities

#### Staff

**Things to consider:**
- Number of staff working on weekdays/weekends
- Ratio of staff to residents
- Ratio needed by your son or daughter
- Turn-over rate of staff
- Average length of time current staff has been working in program
- Type of certification, if any, needed by staff
- Level of staff experience relative to your son/daughter's needs
- Frequency of training offered to staff
- Type of training offered to staff relative to your son/daughter's needs
- Training resources available to agency relative to your son/daughter's needs

**Rating of Staff**

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## Planning Process

**Things to consider:**
- Planning process is person-centered
- Level of client involvement
- Level of parent involvement
- Access to on-going decision making process

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<th>Rating of Planning Process</th>
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<td>[ ] Excellent</td>
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## Program

**Things to consider:**
- Evidence of flexibility and creativity in offering diverse activities
- Examples of recreation/leisure activities from the past several months
- Comparison of recreation/leisure activities offered with your child's preferences and abilities
- Access to orientation and mobility instruction
- Integration of orientation and mobility in most daily activities
- Residents' participation in the daily functions of the home; e.g., cooking, cleaning, gardening, shopping
- Choice-making opportunities are integrated in routines and activities
- Strategies used in working with behavioral challenges
- Behavioral programs reflect a sensitivity and respect for residents' preferences and right to make choices

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<td><strong>COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Things to consider:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>How &quot;personal connections&quot; are established</td>
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<td>Staff rapport with residents</td>
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<td>Examples of clients making choices and demonstrating preferences</td>
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<td>Evidence of staff awareness of the different communication styles of each resident</td>
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<td>Evidence of the staff using a variety of methods of communication; e.g., sign, pictures, objects, gestures</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evidence of clients using a variety of methods of communication; e.g., sign, picture books, objects, gestures; calendar box</td>
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<tr>
<td>Willingness of staff to wait for a resident to communicate - even if it takes a while</td>
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<td>Integration of communication in all activities</td>
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**Rating of Communication Strategies**

| Excellent | Very Good | Good | Fair | Poor |

**Rating of Evaluation Procedures**

| Excellent | Very Good | Good | Fair | Poor |

**Things to consider:**

How the program is evaluated
Frequency of evaluations
Who evaluates the program
Existence of a quality assurance process
Availability of evaluation results to parents
Follow-through on recommendations
Who funds the program
How donations are made; how they are spent
What, if any, were the conditions for this funding
Written contract for the program

**Comments:**

**Comments:**
### MEDICAL/SUPPORT SERVICES

**Things to consider**

- Frequency and extent of medical services required by your son/daughter
- Availability and accessibility of medical services needed
- Adequate dental care
- Physical therapy
- Psychological counseling
- Staff capability of providing follow-up; e.g., therapy; seizure monitoring; extensive medications
- How medications are monitored
- Agency policy on infection control
- Transportation to medical appointments

**Rating of Medical Support Services**

| [ ] Extremely satisfied | [ ] Very Good | [ ] Good | [ ] Fair | [ ] Poor |

**OVERALL RATING OF RESOURCES FOR PROMOTING CAPABILITIES**

| [ ] Excellent | [ ] Very Good | [ ] Good | [ ] Fair | [ ] Poor |

### IL PHILOSOPHY

**POLICIES**

**Things to consider:**

- Agency's mission statement, if written
- House manuals, if available
- Agency's statements on human rights, client dignity
- Agency's written goals for integration and ongoing education
- Agency's adherence to licensing codes
- Agency's policy of selecting residents
- Agency's policy on termination of placements

**Rating of Policies**

| [ ] Excellent | [ ] Very Good | [ ] Good | [ ] Fair | [ ] Poor |
## VALUES

**Things to consider:**
- How agency values match with your values/hopes/dreams
- Examples of values:
  - providing opportunities to learn and grow
  - treating people with respect and dignity
  - right to privacy; right to make choices
  - respecting religious beliefs
  - having fun; having friends
  - providing a safe clean environment
  - individual opportunities for community interaction

**Examples of other values:**

### Rating of Values

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## REALIZATION OF VALUES

**Things to consider:**
- Examples of choices that residents' make
- Listing of new things learned by resident's
- Evidence that residents' feelings are taken seriously
- Diversity of activities offered
- Age-appropriateness of activities
- Examples of how individual preferences are respected
- Examples of how staff promotes self-esteem
- Open door policy to visitors and guests
- Respect for individual sexual needs
- Promotion of social relationships with:
  - housemates; staff; neighbors; acquaintances
- Instances of resident's laughing; smiling or showing pleasure

### Rating of Realization of Values

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### RESIDENTS

**Things to consider**
- What the other resident's in the home are like
- Number of resident's living in the home
- Housemate's compatibility in interests and capabilities
- Possibilities of peer support
- Residents' feelings toward their home
- Residents' access to their own money

**Rating of Residents**

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### PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

**Things to consider:**
- Level of parental involvement
- How parents are invited/encouraged to participate
- Communication mechanisms between staff and parents and opportunities for expressing concerns, support, questions, etc.

**Rating of Parental Involvement**

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### OVERALL RATING OF LIFESTYLES

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HKNC-TAC/Hilton-Period project, September, 1991
IN ORDER TO OBTAIN AN OVERALL PICTURE OF THE QUALITY OF YOUR CHILD'S HOME, COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING SUMMARY SHEET. COMPARE SUMMARY RESULTS WITH THE AREAS YOU IDENTIFIED AS HIGH IN PRIORITY
# SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT

## I. PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES OF HOME

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## II. RESOURCES FOR PROMOTING CAPABILITIES

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