GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

Introduction

StimQ-I is a 43 point scale for measuring cognitive stimulation in the homes of infants ages 5 to 12 months. It is based on a questionnaire that is administered to the child's primary caregiver by trained interviewers in an office setting. StimQ measures only the role of the child's primary caregiver in providing cognitive stimulation for the child. Although many people (including other parents, relatives, friends, babysitters and siblings) may also play a very important part in the life of a child, the benefits provided by these individuals are not measured by this scale.

Identification of the primary caregiver

The first step in the administration of StimQ is the determination of who is the primary caregiver for the child. The primary caregiver is the person who spends the most time interacting with the child in the child's home. For the purposes of StimQ, you are only interested in what the primary caregiver provides in the child's home for the child.

In most cases, the primary caregiver is the mother. A working mother is still usually the primary caregiver for her child, even if a babysitter or a grandmother regularly watches the child.

Occasionally, the father will be identified as the primary caregiver. You may accept the father as the primary caregiver if he states that he spends more daytime hours with the child than the mother does, and if he sees as his responsibility the care of the child during the day. Most of the time, this will occur in households in which the mother works full time and the father is either unemployed or works part-time or works in the house.

On rare occasions, a non-parent (such as a grandmother, aunt, sibling or foster parent) will be identified as the primary caregiver; normally, this will be the case only for those children whose mothers do not live at home.

In the administration of StimQ, give credit only for those activities and learning materials provided by the primary caregiver. You must always be careful to distinguish between what is provided by the primary caregiver from what is provided by any other members of the household. For example, if the primary caregiver is the mother, do not give
credit for those activities and learning materials that are provided for by other people such as older siblings, the father, or a grandmother. However, it is important to support any of these activities, even if you cannot give credit for them. For example, you might say, "It is very good that your husband does these things with your child. Right now, however, I'm mostly interested in the things that you do with your child." Similarly, if the father is the primary caregiver, then give credit only for his activities with the child, and not those provided by the mother. On rare occasions, both the mother and father jointly and equally share responsibility for the child's care. If both parents are present at the interview and they both state that they have equal responsibilities for the child, you may give credit to what both provide for the child. However, no other combinations can be accepted in this way. For example, for the purposes of this scale, mother and grandmother cannot be considered to share equally in the care of the child; one must be identified as the primary caregiver. Finally, a babysitter can never be considered to be a primary caregiver.

**Administration of StimQ- General Introduction**

After introducing herself/himself by name and job title, the interviewer should provide a general introduction to the parent such as what is printed at the beginning of the questionnaire: This questionnaire is designed to find out the different types of toys and games that you have for your child in the home, and the kinds of activities that you and your child do together. These questions will help me to understand what your child's home life is like. I know that many people (including other parents, relatives, friends, babysitters and siblings) also may have the opportunity to play very important roles for your child. However, in this questionnaire, I am only interested in the kinds of toys and activities that you provide for your child.

**Availability of Learning Materials (ALM) Scale**

This section consists primarily of a list of toys and games appropriate for children between 5 and 12 months old. Before asking the parent about each toy, read the introduction to the parent: I am now going to name some toys and games and ask you to tell me which ones your child has for himself/herself. Since this questionnaire is given to parents of children between 5 and 12 months, many of the toys will be either too easy or too advanced for your child. Nevertheless, I will ask you all the questions on the questionnaire. If your child had a toy or you used a toy or book with your child at a younger age, please tell me about it. Most parents have only some of these toys in their homes, so you should not feel that I expect you to have more than a few of these toys for your child.

Next, ask the parent about each toy. Give credit only for those toys for which each of the following is true:

1. The toy must belong to the child.
2. The toy must be kept in the child's house.
3. The child must have free access to the toy.
4. The child must play with the toy.

Do not give credit if the toy actually belongs to a sibling, even if the child is allowed to play with it sometimes. Do not give credit if a sibling must give permission if the child is to be able to play with the toy. Do not give credit if the toy is kept in a location other than...
the child's home (such as the home of a cousin or babysitter). Do not give credit for an "advanced" toy that the parent has never tried to use with the child.

Note, however, that if the child has now outgrown a toy that previously belonged to him and that he did in fact play with when he was younger, credit should be given even if the toy now belongs to a sibling. Alternatively, if the child has an advanced toy that the parent does attempt to help the child use, credit may be given even if the child refuses to play with it. If the caregiver has removed a toy because of convenience, safety concerns or because it is broken, do not give credit. Finally, in the rare case in which the parent insists that the toy is completely shared by siblings (i.e. belonging to neither one), give credit only if the child has easy access to and plays with the toy.

In general, do not simply accept simple "yes" answers. Determine whether the parent understands the question and whether the toy is truly in the possession and use of the child by asking questions, such as: "Which one do you have?" "Tell me more about that toy." "Does your child like playing with it?" After asking these sorts of questions for the first few toys, most parents will realize what is being asked of them and you should be able to precede more rapidly through the rest of the list.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ADMINISTRATION OF INDIVIDUAL ITEMS

ALM SCALE -- Availability of Learning Materials

1. First infant toys
Many of these toys will be outgrown by the time the infant is at the upper age limit of the scale. However, you should still give credit if the caregiver states that the toy was previously available and used but is now outgrown.

Stuffed toy with human face: Give credit if the toy is soft, has a human face and is either in or near the crib. Toys that have human-like facial features (e.g., "Elmo" or "Big Bird") are also acceptable.

Mirror: Give credit for any toy mirror that the child can use to look at herself. The mirror can either be attached to the inside of the crib, or must be available for the infant or caregiver to hold. Do not give credit for ordinary room or wall mirrors.

Soft cloth toy or picture cards with black and white pattern: To receive credit, the toy must be highly contrasted, with only black and white (or sometimes red). An example of this is a soft clown. Cards with patterns (often faces) may also receive credit if they are hung in the crib or infant seat. Do not give credit for a sock rattle (see below).

Soft animal that makes noise when squeezed: These are soft cloth toys shaped like animals and are usually fairly small. They make a high pitched sound when they are squeezed. Do not give credit for soft blocks with pictures of animals.
**Rattle:** This is a toy that makes a noise when it is shaken. It must be small enough to be held by the infant.

**Sock rattle:** This is a sock that has a rattle attached, so that it makes noise when the infant moves his legs. Often, the sock and rattle are highly contrasted (black, white, and red), so that the infant fixates on them. This toy is typically used only by infants at the lowest end of the age range.

**Small plastic toys for the child to hold:** These are small plastic toys that the child can hold on to, such as keys or cards on a ring.

### 2. Activity / manipulation toys:

**Toy in which button pushed or door opened causes something to move or turn or make noise:** The most typical examples of this are the busy box or activity center. Usually, the toy contains between two and five activities. Examples of activities include a button that makes a squeak when the infant pushes it, a large colorful knob to spin, or a door that makes a noise when it is opened.

**Toy musical instrument:** Give credit for any toy musical instrument, such as a toy xylophone, toy drum, or toy piano / keyboard. Real musical instruments cannot receive credit, except in the unusual circumstance that the instrument is small enough to be independently accessible to the child and has been given over to the child for his exclusive use. For example, a small keyboard or maracas given to the child may qualify, whereas a family piano would not.

**Large spinning toy:** When the baby pushes down on a button at the top of this toy, something spins or a carousel goes around. Sometimes, colorful balls spin and pop up and down at the same time.

**Set of wooden or plastic blocks:** Give credit for a set of at least 3 cubic blocks which are one inch or more in length.

**Colored plastic rings on a pole:** Give credit for any toy which requires the child to stack rings on a pole or cone. The rings are usually in different colors and graduated diameters. This toy may be made of wood or plastic. Occasionally the rings are rectangular, rather than circular. Fisher-Price Rock-a-Stack is a commonly available version of this item.

**Large plastic beads or links that snap together:** Give credit for any toy involving large beads or links that snap together or interlock to form a chain or simple construction, and then may be pulled or popped apart by the child. Examples include snap-lock beads and kiddi-links.
**Shape-sorter:** Give credit for any toy that requires the child to pass simple three-dimensional shapes (e.g. disc or sphere, cube, and triangular solid) through an appropriately shaped opening. There should be at least three shapes.

3. **Imagination toys**

**Toy radio with knobs:** The radio does not have to work. However, it must have dials or knobs to turn. A toy tape or CD player would be equally acceptable.

**Rubber animal made for use as a bath toy:** Any rubber or plastic floating animal (e.g. rubber duckie, whale, set of fish) gets credit.

**Floating boats for the bath:** These are colorful plastic boats made for use in the bath.

**Small car or truck:** Give credit for any toy vehicle with wheels that is small enough to be pushed by the child's hand.

**Toy telephone:** This can be either rotary or push-button. The toy must be big enough so that it could conceivably be used as a phone for symbolic play. Do not give credit for tiny rattles shaped like phones. Do not give credit if the child is only allowed to play with a real, working phone, or for discarded phones.

**Toys which say names, letters or sounds:** Give credit for any toy (or "book") which says names of objects, or letters of the alphabet, or makes animals sounds when lever or string is pulled or button is pushed (e.g. See and Say or any similar toy). Do not give credit for stuffed animals or dolls that say words, make sounds or talk.

**Stuffed animal:** Any stuffed animal is okay. However, do not give credit for a squeaky toy (above), a black and white toy (above), a stuffed toy with a human face (above), or a doll with a human face (below).

**Doll with human face:** Be sure that the doll is at least as long as the width of a standard page (8.5”). You may use the questionnaire page to demonstrate this length to the mother. In addition it has to be "human" in form. Stuffed animals, squeaky toys, "transformers", non-human characters such as Elmo, would not be credited.

**READING-VERBAL Scale**

Before you begin asking individual questions, ask the caregiver: "Do you ever read children's books to your infant or is she/he too young for that?" If the caregiver answers "yes", ask each of the questions that follow. If the caregiver answers "no" (i.e., she/he does not read to the child), you should enter an "N" and skip all of the reading questions.
**Question 1:** The goal of this question is to determine the number of children's books appropriate for infants that the caregiver has available in the home and reads to the child. Books appropriate for infants are picture books, usually containing familiar objects and a few simple words, or a simple story or rhyme. It is important to converse with the caregiver about the reading activities and the individual books that are read. Have the parent name several of the books that are used; ask which ones are the favorites of the child; talk about where and when these activities occur. You should continue conversing with the caregiver until you are sure that the intention of the question is understood. After this brief conversation, you may then ask: "How many books altogether do you have at home that you read to your child?" and enter the number in the space provided. Give credit for library books that are presently in the home, appropriate for infants, and that the mother can name or describe; however, most libraries carry very few infant books, and we would anticipate that library books would only rarely get credit. Each book in a set or series of books counts separately as one book. Do not give credit for magazines and comic books.

**Question 2:** This question seeks to determine if the caregiver has "board" books for the child. Board books are books with pages that are made of thick cardboard so that the young child can turn the pages more easily. In order to determine the number of books, please refer to the instructions in reading question #1.

**Question 3:** This question is used to determine the number of days on an "average" or "usual" week that the caregiver reads children's books to her child. If the caregiver presents a significant variation in reading on different weeks, ask about a typical week in the past month. Unsuccessful attempts at reading do not receive credit. An example of a description of an unsuccessful attempt would be: "I try to read to him, but he won't sit still long enough." However, if the parent reads to the child despite uncertainty about the child's understanding of what is being read, credit should be given.

**Question 4:** Give credit for any book that contains one or more nursery rhymes such as "Mother Goose" or other short and simple rhymes.

**Question 5 - 8:** These questions are used to determine whether the caregiver reads books that are designed to focus on specific learning concepts such as daily activities (e.g., eating, sleeping, playing and toilet training), body parts, shapes and common household items (e.g., pots and pans, bed). If the caregiver states that she/he teaches these concepts but does not generally use books to teach these concepts, praise this activity and state that you will be asking questions about those teaching activities later; however, do not give credit for this item.

**Question 9:** Give credit for any book that has pictures of toys (e.g., ball, rattle) or other favorite things.
**Question 10:** Give credit for any book that has pictures of animals. Alphabet books that have pictures of animals (e.g., “D is for dog”) would be acceptable here.

**Question 11:** Give credit for any book that has colorful pictures of babies.

**Question 12:** This question seeks to determine if the caregiver does more than simply read the text in the book to the child, using the reading experience to expand the child's vocabulary by naming and talking about pictures.

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**PIDA Scale: Parental Involvement in Developmental Advance**

This scale measures the number of different interactional activities occurring between the caregiver and the infant that promote cognitive development. Although the word "teach" is sometimes utilized, the questions seek to elicit information about "playing" one-on-one with the infant and helping the infant successfully master new skills.

Any "yes" answer must be explored with the caregiver. In order to receive credit, the caregiver must give an example of a specific activity that demonstrates the teaching asked about in the question and must have done this more than once or twice. Often it is helpful to differentiate between activities the child does by himself vs activities the mother does with him or shows her how to do.

**Question 1:** The purpose of this question is to determine whether or not the caregiver routinely incorporates naming objects as part of daily activities. Give credit if the caregiver states that she/he "usually" or "often" names objects in the home. Do not give credit if this is done "occasionally" or "sometimes", or for unsuccessful attempts.

**Question 2:** The caregiver must take the infant to the grocery store at least once a week as well as point to and name objects in the store. Give credit if the caregiver states that she/he "usually" or "often" names objects in the grocery store. Do not give credit if this is done "occasionally" or "sometimes", or for unsuccessful attempts.

**Question 3:** Give credit for any stacking activity that the caregiver does with the child involving blocks, stacking beakers, or other similar toys.

**Question 4:** Give credit for any activity in which the caregiver teaches body parts using either the child's own body or visual cues, such as the caregiver's face or body, a picture, a doll, or a stuffed animal.
**Question 5:** In order to receive credit, the caregiver must be able to provide an example of an appropriate toy with knobs or buttons that the caregiver and child play with together. Do not give credit for toys which teach the skill of "buttoning" clothing. The button must be pressed to produce some response.

**Question 6:** In order to receive credit, the caregiver must help the child place blocks or other objects into a container.

**Question 7:** Give credit if the caregiver sits with the child on the floor or in bed and tries to teach the child to play a game in which a ball is rolled back and forth. This is not about teaching a child to throw or catch; it is about a reciprocal activity using a ball (e.g., “I roll the ball to you, then you roll the ball to me”).

**PVR Scale: Parental Verbal Responsivity**

This scale measures the degree to which the caregiver and child interact verbally. Any "yes" answer must be explored with the caregiver. In order to receive credit, the caregiver must engage in the interaction described on a regular basis, not just once or twice or occasionally.

**Question 1:** In order to receive credit, the caregiver must play with the child during the bath; it is not sufficient for the child to play with toys in the bathtub on his own.

**Question 2:** Give credit for games in which the caregiver hides her face or her baby’s face, which is then revealed with a verbal statement of discovery or surprise.

**Question 3:** In order to receive credit, a verbal interaction between caregiver and child must occur while in front of the mirror (e.g., who’s in the mirror?). In addition, this must occur on a regular basis, most or all of the days of the week.

**Question 4:** In order to receive credit, the caregiver must make an active effort to participate in the baby’s sound-making, e.g., by repeating the sounds, or responding in some other verbal manner. Give credit only if the caregiver states that most of the time, when the child is making sounds, she is verbally responding to the child. Do not give credit if most of the time, the child makes sounds either alone or without the caregiver responding.

**Question 5:** Give credit if the caregiver sings a lullaby or other song at bedtime and naptime, most or all of the time. The lullaby must be a song with words, not just humming. If the caregiver states that she used to sing a lullaby when the infant was younger, but now puts the baby to sleep awake, you should still give credit.
**Question 6:** Give credit if the caregiver sings songs (with words) on a regular basis at times other than bedtime or naptime.

**Question 7:** In order to receive credit, the caregiver must be able to name or describe a hand-clapping game, such as pat-a-cake, that she tries to play with the infant. The hand-clapping game must be potentially reciprocal, with a desired repetition of the activity by the child. However, the child need not have mastered the game for the caregiver to receive credit.

**Question 8:** In order to receive credit, the caregiver must be able to name or describe a finger game that she/he plays with the child. Unlike pat-a-cake (question 7), finger games are not typically reciprocal, like pat-a-cake, but must involve a song or rhyme or story. Examples include: "Eeentsy Weentsy Spider", "This Little Piggy", "Where is Thumbkin", "Little Jack Horner", "I'm a Little Teapot", and "Pop Goes the Weasel".

**Question 9:** In order to receive credit the caregiver must talk to the child about their home or family, events of the day, plans for after the meal, etc. If the caregiver is unclear about the frequency of these activities, ask the caregiver to choose between "most of the time" and "some of the time". Give credit for "most of the time"; do not give credit for "some of the time". Also, do not give credit if the caregiver talks only about the food or meal.

**Question 10:** Give credit if the caregiver uses hand puppets or marionettes to “talk” with the child. If puppet is home made, it must have a “face” to be credited.

**Question 11:** Give credit for games where the caregiver pretends not to know where someone or something is, then acts with surprise when the baby turns or points to the person or object.

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