GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

Introduction

StimQ-Preschool is a 49 point scale for measuring cognitive stimulation in the homes of young children ages 36 to 72 months. It is based on a questionnaire that is administered to the child's primary caregiver by trained interviewers in an office setting. StimQ-Preschool 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.

Reliability in administering this scale requires following these instructions exactly. It is also recommended that all persons planning to use the StimQ-Preschool practice its administration beforehand on at least ten occasions.

Identification of the primary caregiver

The first step in the administration of StimQ-Preschool 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-Preschool, 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-Preschool, 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-Preschool- 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 36 and 59 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 36 and 59 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.

Give credit if the toy is made available to the child, but the child chooses not to play. Give credit if the toy is kept out of reach of the child (e.g., a paint set), but the child plays with the toy regularly.

Note, however, that if the parent spontaneously states that 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. Symbolic play

Doll or action figure: In order to receive credit, the doll or action figure 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. "Superheroes" can be given credit. However, stuffed animals and "transformers" would not be credited.

Puppets: Give credits for hand puppets or marionettes used by parents in interactive play with the child. If puppet is home made, it must have a "face" to be credited.
**Costumes:** Give credit for old adult clothing set aside for pretend play for this child, for costumes bought specifically for dress-up play, sets of occupational hats (e.g. police officer, firefighter, construction worker, etc). Do not give credit for "Halloween" costumes, unless they are used throughout the year.

**Housekeeping toys related to home maintenance and cleaning:** Give credit for toy versions of appliances and tools related to cleaning, such as brooms, vacuums, carpet sweepers, lawn mowers, etc. Do not give credit for discarded real housekeeping equipment.

**Toy pots pans or dishes or other items related to cooking or serving food:** Do not give credit for discarded kitchen utensils because these items are not generally used for symbolic play.

**Imaginary play activity set:** Give credit for any miniature play environment which includes the appropriate figures and props (people, animals, furniture, vehicles). Examples of toys that would receive credit include Fisher Price barn, house or garage, or a dollhouse.

**Toy telephone:** Toy must have buttons or rotary that can be manipulated. Give credit for a discarded phone only if it now belongs to the child and is used for symbolic play.

**Toy food:** Give credit for any toy food. Examples of toy foods are plastic fruits and vegetables.

**Toy camera:** Give credit for any camera or videocamera made for children. Do not give credit for discarded adult cameras or for children’s viewing devices for slides/pictures (e.g., “viewmasters”, which are credited under language toys).

**Toy comb/brush/mirror set:** Give credit if the toy is intended primarily for use with dolls.

### 2. Art

**Crayons:** Give credit for a set of at least five crayons.

**Coloring book:** Give credit for a book with simple pictures appropriate for young children. Do not give credit if the child does not have materials for coloring the books (e.g. crayons, markers, colored pencils).

**Chalkboard:** Give credit for a chalkboard that is hand-held or on an easel that child is able to reach.

**Colorful clay:** Give credit for soft pliable colorful clay such as Playdoh. Also give credit for homemade "Playdoh". Modeling clay or plasticine may also be given credit. Do not give credit for "silly putty".
Set of tools for use with clay: Give credit for toy plastic tools that can be used for molding or shaping clay. Also can give credit for cookie cutters if they are not sharp and are available for the child’s use as a toy.

Magic marker set: Give credit for a set of differently colored felt-tip markers or a set of colored pencils. Do not give credit for markers shaped like pictures, stars, letters, etc. here (credit for these can be given under stamps / inkpads below).

Finger paints or other paints made for children: Paints must be children’s nontoxic, washable paints. Brushes must be at least 1/4” thick.

Colorforms: Thin plastic shapes or pictures that can temporarily be stuck to a related background. Do not give credit for stickers. *(see description on box)*

Etch-a-sketch: Magnetic drawing board that is erasable by shaking. Do not give credit for pull-up plastic sheets. Do not give credit for miniature versions of this toy, such as ones that attach to a key chain, since these are not generally used for art.

Children’s scissors: Scissors with dull edges that cannot hurt the child. Do not give credit for real scissors.

Rubber stamps/ inkpads: Must have both stamp and working inkpad to receive credit. Also, give credit for markers with shapes such hearts and stars here.

3. Adaptive / Fine Motor

Puzzles: Give credit only for puzzles made for young children with approximately two through twenty-five pieces that combine to make a picture.

Nesting / Stacking toys: Give credit for cups or beakers of graduated sizes that stack on top of each other to make a tower, or nest inside each other. These should be made of plastic. If the caregiver states that she gives a set of plastic measuring cups or beakers to the child for this purpose, only give credit if this set of cups has been given over to the child as a full-time toy, is no longer used for its original purpose, and contains at least three graduated sizes.

Plastic or wooden beads for stringing: Give credit for a toy that includes jumbo wood or plastic beads at least one inch in diameter, with a central hole allowing the child to string them with a rope or shoelace.
**Buttoning or lacing toys:** Give credit for a toy that enables the child to learn to button or lace, including dolls or clothing for dolls or boards or books with laces. Do not give credit for actual clothing.

**Set of wooden or plastic blocks:** Give credit for a set of at least 8 cubic blocks which are one inch or more in length.

**Pail and shovel:** In order to receive credit for this item, the child must have both a pail and a shovel. In addition, the shovel cannot be a spoon or other kitchen utensil, but a child-sized play shovel. Do not give credit for an adult-sized pail or backyard shovel that the family allows the child to play with.

**Colorful interlocking building blocks:** Give credit for simple interlocking plastic building blocks, such as Duplo, Lego or Mega Blocks.

**More complex building blocks:** Give credit for a set of blocks of various shapes, such as arch, rectangle, wedge, or complex blocks such as Tinker-toys, Waffle blocks or Lincoln Logs.

**Toy musical instruments:** 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. While musical instruments may provide actual music instruction, the major learning activity for a toddler is adaptive (learning how to make the instrument produce the sound) and manipulative, and we have therefore included it under adaptive / fine motor learning materials.

**4. Language**

**Set of toy letters and/or numbers:** Give credit only if there is either a complete set of 26 letters, or a complete set of the numbers 1-9. These must be made of plastic, wood, rubber, or foam and allow individual manipulation by the child. A set of alphabet/number blocks or puzzles are acceptable. A complete set of magnetized letters, if it is intended for the child to play with, is also acceptable. A toy with a similar set of all the letters or numbers attached to push-buttons is also acceptable. Computer games that teach all of the letters of the alphabet or all of the numbers can also receive credit here. Do not give credit for posters, blankets or wall-hangings with the alphabet on them.

**Child’s Card Game:** Give credit for a set of cards made for young children involving activities such as matching or naming pictures, or identifying or matching shapes, colors, letters, numbers, addition, subtraction, etc.
**First board games:** Give credit for any simple board game made for young children, such as Chutes and Ladders, Candyland, etc.

**Workbooks made for preschoolers:** Give credit only for books that are designed to teach preschoolers concepts such as shapes, numbers, letters, colors, matching. Give credit only for books that the child can write in.

**Toys that teach number concepts:** Give credit for 10 x 10 pegboard, beads that fit on rods or in counting frame, cuisinaire rods, computer games that teach counting or addition or subtraction.

**Children’s record player / tape player:** Give credit for a toy intended specifically for the child's use. Do not give credit for family audio equipment, or discarded adult record and tape player.

**Records, tapes or CD's made especially for children:** Give credit for records, tapes or CD's which contain children's songs, stories, or games and therefore may enhance language development.

**Toy clock:** Give credit only for a toy clock with hands that the child can manipulate. Do not give credit for a real clock.

**Toy magnets:** Give credit for individual, manipulable magnets, such as horseshoe or bar magnets, that are designed to teach children about magnetism. Do not give credit for refrigerator magnets or for toys in which the magnets are secondary, such as train cars that attach by magnet.

**Children’s viewing device for slides/pictures (e.g., “viewmaster”):** Device that allows child to look in viewfinder to see pictures such as planets, wonders of the world, animals, etc.

**READING Scale**

Before you begin asking individual questions, ask the caregiver: "Do you ever read children's books to your child 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 young children that the caregiver has available in the home and reads to the
child. Books appropriate for young children are picture books, which can be either simple or relatively complex. 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 toddlers, and that the mother can name or describe. 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 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 3:** Give credit for any children’s book related to cultural or religious beliefs, including holidays. Do not give credit for a book that is written for adults, such as a standard, adult Bible or Koran.

**Question 4 - 9:** These questions are used to determine whether the caregiver reads books that are designed to focus on specific learning concepts such as counting, colors, shapes, letters, daily activities (e.g., eating, sleeping, playing and toilet training), and opposites (such as big-little, up-down, inside-outside, etc.). 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 10:** Give credit for any book that deals with family relationships or friendships, in a storybook format.

**Question 11:** Give credit for any story of the “Once upon a time...” format, or folk tale, or classic tale written for children. Examples include “Goldilocks”, “Hansel and Gretel”, “Cinderella”, “The Three Little Pigs”, etc.

**Question 12:** Give credit only if the caregiver considers parts of the book to be funny and states that he/she tries to convey this humor to the child (e.g., “This is silly!”). Examples include Dr. Seuss and Curious George.
**Question 13:** In order to receive credit, the child must have at least one book that is determined to be a favorite because the *child* asks for it to be read on a regular basis, at least several times a week. The parent must be able to name the book and tell something about the story and why the child likes it.

**Question 14:** Give credit for this item only if the caregiver goes to the library or bookstore at least once a month *and* lets the child pick out books to read. Reading the book in the store or library is sufficient; the caregiver need not purchase the book.

**Question 15:** Give credit for this item if the caregiver says that she/he "usually" or "always" reads bedtime stories. Do not give credit if the caregiver reads "occasionally", "sometimes", or for unsuccessful attempts.

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

This scale measures the number of different interactional activities occurring between the caregiver and the child that promote cognitive development. Although the word "teach" is utilized, the questions seek to elicit information about "playing" one-on-one with the child and helping the child 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. Note also that if the caregiver *spontaneously* states that she had previously engaged in an activity, but that the child is now too old or already knows how to perform the activity without assistance (e.g., pushing buttons or turning knobs in a 36 month old), credit should be given *(needs to be rewritten).*

**Question 1:** In order to receive credit, the caregiver must teach the child to write letters. Ways in which parents do this include teaching the child to “connect the dots”, tracing or copying letters that the parent writes, or sitting with the child and doing workbooks together. Capital or small letters both receive credit. The parent need not be teaching the child all of the letters of the alphabet to receive credit.

**Question 2:** In order to receive credit, the caregiver must teach the child to write his or her name or other words. Ways in which the parent might do this include teaching the child to “connect the dots”, tracing or copying words that the parent writes, or sitting with the child and doing workbooks together.

**Question 3:** Give credit if the caregiver teaches the upper and lower case forms of at least one letter. This must be done using either visual or toy representations of the letter(s).
**Question 4:** Give credit if the caregiver uses a visual or toy representation of the letter, and then demonstrates the sound for the child.

**Question 5:** Give credit if the caregiver points to a written word and then explains that this is the word for an adjoining picture. Parents will typically do this using books or flashcards with pictures and words.

**Question 6:** Give credit if the caregiver teaches the child about the names of the different days of the week and their sequence. This can be done verbally, with or without a simple calendar. Do not give credit if the caregiver only tells the child the current day, without explaining the sequence.

**Question 7:** Give credit only if the caregiver teaches the child to tell time using a clockface or a visual representation of a clockface on some regular basis. In order to receive credit, the caregiver must on a regular basis sit with the child and explain how to read the clock and tell time. Do not give credit if this is only done intermittently, for example by telling the child what time it is when walking past a clock, or when it’s time to do something.

**Question 8:** In order to receive credit, the caregiver must actually sit with the child and work together cutting out shapes. Do not give credit if the child does this on her own.

**Question 9:** Give credit if the caregiver teaches addition using visual representations or flashcards or objects such as coins or blocks. The caregiver must teach this with numbers, and not just with concepts such as more and less.

**Question 10:** Give credit if the caregiver teaches subtraction using visual representations or flashcards or objects such as coins or blocks. The caregiver must teach this with numbers, and not just with concepts such as more and less.

**Question 11:** Give credit if the parent teaches the child to read written numbers on paper, in books or on flashcards. Do not give credit if the parent only teaches numbers verbally.

**Question 12:** Give credit if the parent teaches the child to recognize shapes using visual representations on paper, in books, in workbooks or on flashcards, or with toy shapes, such as blocks.

**Question 13:** Give credit if the caregiver teaches the child to connect the dots using paper or workbooks.

**Question 14:** 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 street or in the home. Do not give credit if this is done "occasionally" or "sometimes", or for unsuccessful attempts.
Question 15: Give credit if the parent uses visual representations or toys or objects that are of differing size and compares them.

PVR Scale: Parental Verbal Responsivity

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: In order to receive credit, the caregiver must be able to name or describe the game that she/he plays with the child. Examples include: "Eeentsy Weeentsy Spider", "This Little Piggy", "Where is Thumbkin", "Little Jack Horner", "I'm a Little Teapot", and "Pop Goes the Weasel".

Question 3: Ask the caregiver if he/she plays games together with the child. If the caregiver does play games, ask the name of the game and what are the rules. Give credit if the caregiver both plays together with the child and teaches the child the rules on a regular basis. Examples of rules include counting to ten before looking in hide and seek, or not running during red light in “Red-light Green Light One, Two, Three”, or performing an action only when allowed during “Simon Says” or “Mother May I”. Board games may be counted if the board game is at a low enough level for a preschool child and the parent teaches the child the rules.

Question 4: Ask the caregiver if mealtimes are a time to be quiet or a time to talk. In order to receive credit, the caregiver must be engaging the child in conversation. It is not sufficient for the parent to state that the child is always talking. In order to receive credit the caregiver must talk to the child about 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 5: Give credit only if the parent sits with the child and talks with the child while the child is playing with toys. In order to receive credit, the parent must initiate conversation with the child. Talking here will usually relate to the play that is occurring, such as “What is Barbie doing?” Do not give credit if the parent is not actually involved with the child’s play, or if it is the child that is primarily engaging in conversation with the parent. Give credit only if the caregiver states that she/he “usually” or "often" does this. Do not give credit if this is done "occasionally" or "sometimes", or for unsuccessful attempts.

Question 6: Give credit only if the parent engages in an activity with the child while singing a song. Examples might include “Ring Around the Rosie” or “Hokie Pokie” or “Miss Mary Mack”. This question is a problem, since it is really the same in many cases as #2.
**Question 7:** Ask the caregiver if travel times are a time to be quiet or a time to talk. In order to receive credit, the caregiver must be engaging the child in conversation. It is not sufficient for the parent to state that the child is always talking. 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 “conversation” in fact represents the caregiver’s encouragements of the child to eat.

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