StimQ-T
Instructions for Administration

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

Introduction

StimQ is a 39 point scale for measuring cognitive stimulation in the homes of young children ages 12 to 36 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 12 and 36 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 12 and 36 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. Symbolic play

Doll or action figure: Be sure that 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. 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.

Housekeeping toys: Give credit for toy versions of brooms, vacuums, carpet sweepers, etc. Do not give credit for discarded real housekeeping equipment.

Toy pots pans or dishes: Do not give credit for discarded kitchen utensils because these items are not generally used for symbolic play.
**Small car, truck or train:** Give credit for any toy vehicle with wheels that is small enough to be pushed by the child's hand.

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

**Toy schoolbus or other vehicle that little people fit in:** The toy must contain "little people" that can be easily placed into and removed from a vehicle. If parent says "yes" to this question, then also give credit for item 6 (small car, truck or train).

**Toy animals:** Give credit for a set of related animals such as farm animals, zoo animals, animal families, etc. Do not give credit for stuffed animals.

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".

**Magic marker set:** Give credit for a set of differently colored felt-tip markers or a set of colored pencils.

**Finger paints or water paints with large brush:** For water paints, give credit only if the brush has bristles at least 2" wide.

3. Adaptive / Fine Motor

**Wood Puzzles:** Give credit only for puzzles made out of wood, thick plastic, or rubber. The puzzles should be specifically made for very young children, and therefore have large pieces, few in number (no more than seven). These may or may not have knobs on the pieces to assist the child in picking them up. A form board may also be given credit.
**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, although older children may have shape sorters with more complex shapes as well.

**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.

**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.

**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.

**Pop-up toy:** Give credit for any toy which requires the child to turn or press a knob or button in order to make an object (such as a "little person", animal, Sesame Street or Disney character) pop out. Do not give credit for traditional jack-in-the-box toys with cranks unless you can determine that the toddler can manipulate it successfully on her own.

**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.

**Large colorful building blocks:** Give credit for interlocking plastic building blocks (Duplo or other similar blocks, which are large Lego). Do not give credit for regular Lego blocks, since these are too small for a child less than three years old.

**Toy cash register:** Give credit for any toy cash register that has buttons to press, plastic coins that drip in slots, numbers that pop-up when buttons are pressed, etc. While this toy may be used in symbolic play by the caregiver (e.g. supermarket pretend play), the manipulative aspects of this toy are important enough for us to include it under adaptive/fine motor learning materials. Some toy cash registers may also qualify as pop-up toy.
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.

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: Give credit only if there is a complete set of 26 letters. The letters must be made of plastic, wood, rubber, or foam and allow individual manipulation by the child. A set of alphabet blocks or alphabet puzzles are acceptable. Do not give credit for posters, blankets or wall-hangings with the alphabet on them.

Set of toy numbers: Give credit only if there are at least the numbers 1-9, they are made of plastic, wood, rubber or foam, and they may be separately manipulated by the child.

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 or numbers. Do not give credit for playing cards, or for flash cards with activities too advanced for a toddler (e.g. mathematical problems).

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.

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.
5. Life-size

**Tricycle:** Give credit for any three-wheeler with pedals that is small enough for the child to ride.

**Big toy car or animal:** Give credit for any big toy car or animal that child can sit on and ride or rock.

**Life-size toy play area:** Give credit for child-sized play environment in which child can pretend to perform household tasks (e.g. Little Tykes Kitchen, Workshop, Toolbench, Laundry Center, etc.). Do not give credit for playpens or other fenced-in play areas.

**Child-size table and chair:** Give credit only if child has both a table and a chair. Do not give credit for an adult table and chair that the child uses for play.

**Large toy that child can push around to carry things:** Give credit for any large toy with wheels that has a place to carry objects and that the child can push around. Examples include a toy shopping car, toy wheelbarrow, toy wagon or toy stroller.

**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 toddlers that the caregiver has available in the home and reads to the child. Books appropriate for toddlers 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 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:** 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 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:** 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.

**Question 6 - 10:** 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, and daily activities (e.g., eating, sleeping, playing and toilet training). 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 11:** 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.
Question 1: In order to receive credit, the caregiver must use visual representations of letters of the alphabet. Letters that the caregiver draws may receive credit. Alphabet letters that are used for this activity must be at least one inch long. It is not necessary for the caregiver to be teaching the child the complete alphabet. Do not give credit for oral teaching of letters unaccompanied by visual reinforcement, such as the singing of alphabet songs.

Question 2: 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 3: The caregiver must take the child 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 4: Give credit if the caregiver teaches counting in any of the following ways: with a set of toys, such as blocks; with a set of real objects, such as cups or plates; or with books that have pictures that can be counted. Do not give credit for counting with fingers or for counting aloud without any specific toys or teaching materials.

Question 5: Give credit for any stacking activity that the caregiver does with the child involving blocks, stacking beakers, or other similar toys.

Question 6: Give credit if the caregiver teaches the concept of color by using sets of toys or objects, or by using children's books. The caregiver must try to teach at least three of the following colors: red, blue, yellow, or green. Do not give credit for pointing to objects in the house, street, or store and labeling those objects with colors.

Question 7: 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 8: 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 9: In order to receive credit, the caregiver must help the child place blocks or other objects into a container.
**Question 10:** Give credit if the caregiver sits with the child and pretends to serve food or feed dolls, toy people, or stuffed animals.

**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:** This activity is usually done with children at the younger end of the age group addressed in this scale. Therefore, you may give credit if the caregiver spontaneously states that they had previously played peek-a-boo games together, but that the child is now too old for this activity. Also, you may give credit for hide-and-seek games.

**Question 3:** 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: "Eentsy Weentsy Spider", "This Little Piggy", "Where is Thumbkin", "Little Jack Horner", "I'm a Little Teapot", and "Pop Goes the Weasel".

**Question 4:** 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.

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