ABSTRACT
          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
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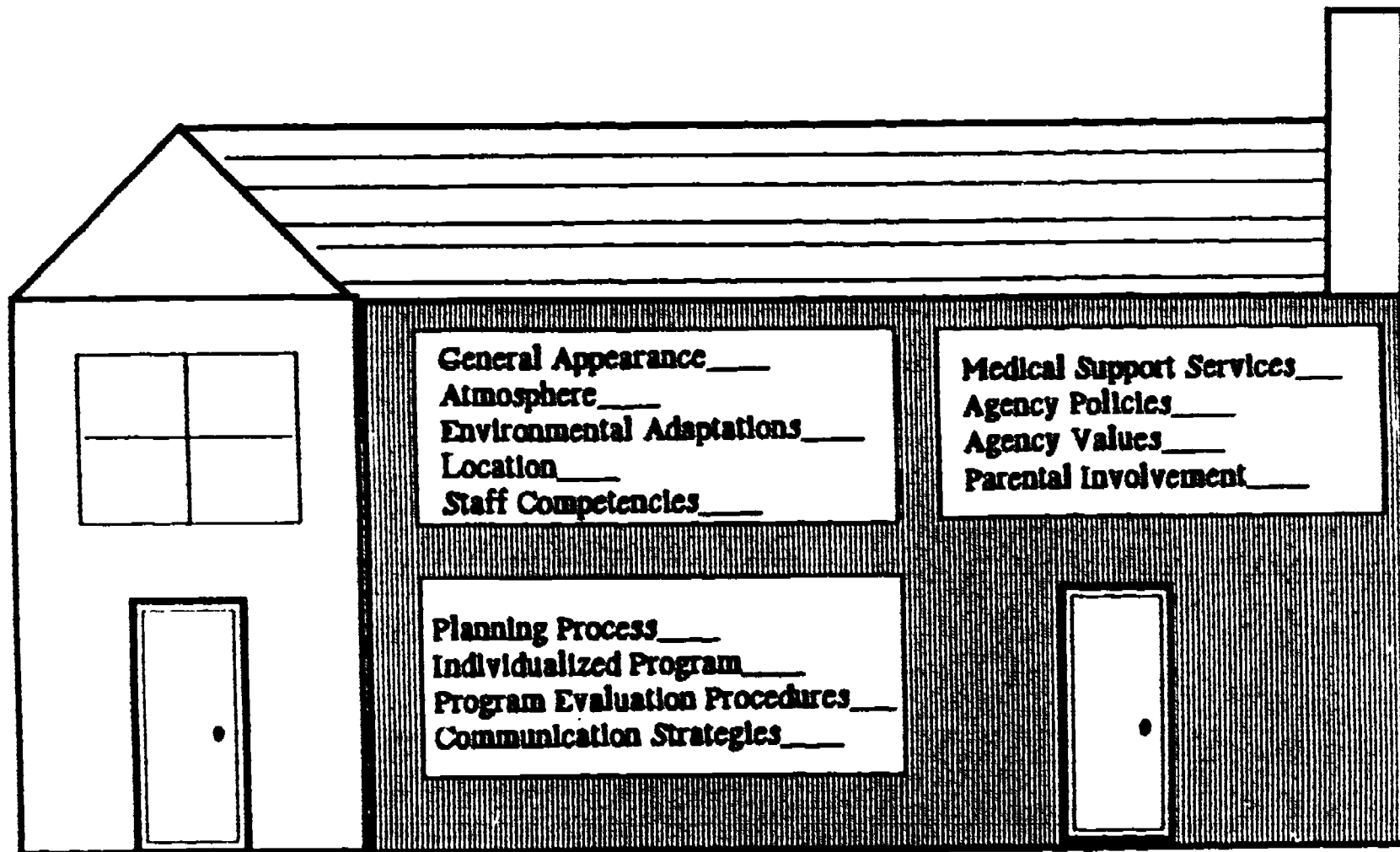
(September, 1991)

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

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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	*Comments:*				
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	*Comments:*				
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	*Comments:*				
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
	Comments:				

Rating of Location	[ ] Excellent	[ ] Very Good	[ ] Good	[ ] Fair	[ ] Poor
OVERALL RATING OF PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES	[ ] Excellent	[ ] Very Good	[ ] Good	[ ] Fair	[ ] Poor

II. 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
	Comments:				

Rating of Staff	[ ] Excellent	[ ] Very Good	[ ] Good	[ ] Fair	[ ] Poor

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	*Comments:*				
Rating of Planning Process	[ ] *Excellent*	[ ] *Very Good*	[ ] *Good*	[ ] *Fair*	[ ] *Poor*

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	*Comments:*				
Rating of Program	[ ] *Excellent*	[ ] *Very Good*	[ ] *Good*	[ ] *Fair*	[ ] *Poor*

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES					

Things to consider:
How "personal connections" are established
Staff rapport with residents
Examples of clients making choices and
    demonstrating preferences
Evidence of staff awareness of the different
    communication styles of each resident
Evidence of the staff using a variety of methods
    of communication; e.g.,
    sign, pictures, objects, gestures
Evidence of clients using a variety of methods of
    communication; e.g., sign, picture books,
    objects, gestures; calendar box
Willingness of staff to wait for a resident to
    communicate - even if it takes a while
Integration of communication in all activities
	Comments:				

Rating of Communication Strategies	*[ ] Excellent*	*[ ] Very Good*	*[ ] Good*	*[ ] Fair*	*[ ] Poor*

EVALUATION PROCEDURES					
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:*				
Rating of Evaluation Procedures	*[ ] Excellent*	*[ ] Very Good*	*[ ] Good*	*[ ] Fair*	*[ ] Poor*

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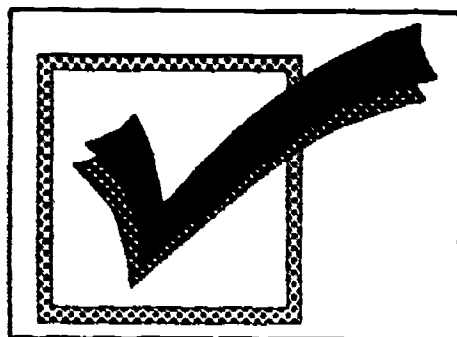| MEDICAL/SUPPORT SERVICES					

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
	Comments:				

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
	Comments:				

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:
	Comments:				

Rating of Values	[ ] *Excellent*	[ ] *Very Good*	[ ] *Good*	[ ] *Fair*	[ ] *Poor*

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	*Comments:*				
Rating of Realization of Values	[ ] *Excellent*	[ ] *Very Good*	[ ] *Good*	[ ] *Fair*	[ ] *Poor*

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

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.
	Comments:				

Rating of Parental Involvement	[ ] Excellent	[ ] Very Good	[ ] Good	[ ] Fair	[ ] Poor
OVERALL RATING OF LIFESTYLES	[ ] Excellent	[ ] Very Good	[ ] Good	[ ] Fair	[ ] Poor

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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	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Comments:
General Appearance						
Atmosphere						
Environmental Adaptation						
Location						
Overall Rating						
II. RESOURCES FOR PROMOTING CAPABILITIES	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Comments:
Staff						
Planning Process						
Program						
Communication Strategies						
Evaluation Procedures						
Medical/Support Services						
Overall Rating						
III. PHILOSOPHY	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Comments:
Policies						
Values						
Realization of Values						
Residents						
Parental Involvement						
Overall Rating						