

Life Skills Progression Evaluating Your Home Visitation Program



Program sustainability depends on demonstrating to funders, legislators and community partners that your program makes a measurable difference. In 2018 home visitation programs still show only moderate results. This is changing with the increasing use of a validated outcomes instrument that can show parents' progress toward higher functioning, the Life Skills Progression – the LSP.

The LSP is a quick, easy-to-use outcome measurement and intervention planning instrument designed specifically for use with low income parents during pregnancy and early parenting. It shows strengths, needs and progress on individual, family, caseload and program levels.

What is the LSP?

The LSP is an outcome measurement instrument designed for use by programs serving low income parents with children aged 0-3 years. There are 43 parent and child scales which describe a spectrum of skills and abilities over six major categories of functioning. The LSP is used to collect outcomes data, to monitor client strengths and needs, and to plan clinical interventions.

How is the LSP related to *Beginnings Guides*?

The LSP monitors progress toward developing the life skills and family functioning that the *Beginnings Guides* promote, including maternal health literacy. Linda Wollesen, author of the LSP, and Sandra Smith, author of the *Beginnings Guides*, are both ZERO TO THREE graduate fellows. With collaboration grants from ZERO TO THREE, they jointly developed the *Beginnings* Life Skills Development Curriculum for home visitors including content and materials (*Beginnings Pregnancy Guide & Beginnings Parents Guide*), teaching strategies and tools for promoting reflective skills and health literacy, and the LSP for intervention planning, reflective supervision, and program evaluation.

What is the purpose of the LSP?

The LSP tracks the progress of individual parents and children and of entire caseloads. In 5 -10 minutes, a home visitor completes and scores the instrument to produce a visual and verbal snapshot of a parent-child dyad's strengths and needs. Repeated every 6 months, the LSP shows progress toward higher functioning. The LSP results guide intervention planning for individual parents and reflective supervision of visitors. At the caseload level, data demonstrates effectiveness of individual visitors and the program.

What does the LSP measure?

LSP monitors 35 parental life skills in these areas:

- Relationships
- Education & Employment
- Parent & Child Health
- Mental Health & Substance Use
- Basic Essentials

Plus, the LSP tracks 8 aspects of child development, attachment and regulation. The LSP includes scales for measuring two aspects of maternal health literacy: Maternal Healthcare Literacy (use of information and services) and Maternal Selfcare Literacy (management of personal and child health at home)

Does the LSP replace our standardized assessments?

No. The LSP organizes and sorts information from visitors' formal assessments, observations and interviews in one place to create a 'snapshot' of the family's strengths, needs and progress.

How much staff time does the LSP take?

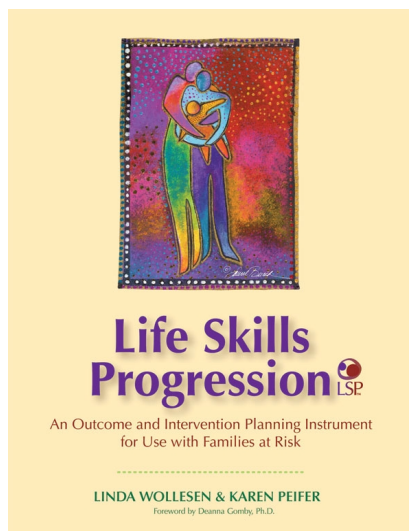
It takes only 5-10 minutes to complete and score the LSP. Typically, a home visitor completes the LSP for a family at intake, every 6 months, and at closure. This means the total time per case per year is less than 30 minutes. Since data entry takes only 3-5 minutes per completed LSP, that duty usually falls to current staff.

How can we make sense of the LSP data?

The MS-Access LSP Database software makes data entry fast and easy and generates reports at client, caseload and program levels. Telephone technical assistance is included in the purchase price. On site consultation, and help to integrate the database into existing data systems may be negotiated separately. For information list the [LSP website](#)

Is it the LSP reliable and valid?

Yes. Review by 45 experts in disciplines related to early child development show the LSP to have strong face validity, This means the tool measures what it says it does. Rigorous testing by independent investigators demonstrates the LSP has very high reliability. With training, the inter-rater reliability runs 80 to 90%. In other words, if 10 nurses or paraprofessional visitors each used the LSP to evaluate the same family at the same time, 8 or 9 would come up with the same score. In early 2018, over 400 programs are using the instrument. Early adopters have up to 12 years of data.



Is the LSP published?

Yes. The instrument with the history of home visitation outcome evaluation, theory, research, testing, and instructions for use is published in Wollesen, L. & Peifer, K (2006) *Life Skills Progression- An Outcome and Intervention Planning Instrument for use with Families at Risk*. Baltimore, Brookes Publishing Inc. The book comes with a CD containing all the necessary forms. Reading the handbook is an essential part of planning for managers interested in integrating the LSP into a program. This link takes you to the Brookes Website where you will find a table of contents and additional information. Copy & paste the entire link into your browser's address line

<http://www.brookespublishing.com/store/books/wollesen-8302/index.htm>

Is training required to use the LSP?

Yes. Training is required for reliable program evaluation and reporting. The LSP Training is a one-day (8 hours) hands-on training to ensure reliable, safe use of the Life Skills Progression instrument (LSP) for program evaluation, reflective supervision, and intervention planning. Training is conducted at your site by LSP author Linda Wollesen or her designate for up to 40 home visitors, supervisors, program managers, and trainers.

Objectives

At completion of the LSP Training, participants will have:

- Become familiar with the LSP format and terminology
- Learned to score each scale
- Practiced completing the instrument using their own anonymous case examples
- Practiced using data from their own anonymous case examples in reflective supervision and intervention planning
- Be prepared to complete the LSP on their clients and interpret results

We are considering using the LSP. What's the first step?

The first step to successful use of the LSP is good planning. Initial questions are:

- Will we use the LSP for program evaluation? For intervention planning?
- What funding and scheduling decisions will determine the timing of our implementation?
- How does the LSP fit with our existing forms, procedures and data
- How will we fund and manage data entry, initial and ongoing training, procedures and integration.

To begin exploring these questions, order and read the LSP handbook, and/or contact [Linda Wollesen](#)

"With the LSP we are able to provide funders with data that more clearly indicates growth across a broader spectrum of skills." —Carol Singley, R.N., M.A., Coordinator of Parent Education & Parents As Teachers, The Parent Center, Salinas Adult School

"Wherever there is a need to measure a client-population's progress across a wide variety of psychosocial issues, the LSP will be a useful and informative asset." —Olivia de la Rocha, Ph.D., Director, Research Support Services, Evaluation Consultant to the Children and Families Commission of Orange County