

# *Beginnings Guides*

*It matters what a mother knows  
It matters more what she does*



**Life Skills Progression**

## ***Life Skills Progression -Evaluating Your Home Visitation Program***

*"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

## **Frequently Asked Questions** *Program Evaluation*

### **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. 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, the *Beginnings Life Skills Developer Training*, 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 about 5 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.

## **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 3-5minutes 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 contact [stillmnttwo@gmail.com](mailto:stillmnttwo@gmail.com)

## **Is it the LSP reliable and valid?**

Yes. Review by 45 experts in disciplines related to early child development show

the LSP to be valid. 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.

### **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.

### **Is training required to use the LSP?**

Yes. Training is required for reliable program evaluation and reporting. The one-day (8 hours) LSP training covers data collection, scoring and clinical use for reflective supervision and intervention planning.

### **Can our trainers present the LSP training?**

Yes. Linda Wollesen, author of the LSP is currently training trainers. Contact her for information [stillmntwo@gmail.com](mailto:stillmntwo@gmail.com)

### **What costs are associated with the LSP?**

LSP Handbook from Brookes Publishing \$44.95, includes CD of the instrument & forms

LSP Database: \$1500-3000 per site, includes 12 months telephone technical assistance

LSP Training: \$2500 plus trainer expenses & photocopying of training materials

### **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 [stillmnttwo@gmail.com](mailto:stillmnttwo@gmail.com)

### **What People are Saying**

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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