



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE

Mary T. Bassett, MD, MPH

Commissioner



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To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in response to Information Collection Request Title: **Healthy Start Evaluation and Quality Improvement, OMB No. 0915-0338-Revision**. Overall, we at Healthy Start Brooklyn find these screening tools to be a tremendous improvement over the previous iteration. In particular, reducing the number of tools from six to three and shortening them dramatically will substantially ease the burden on home visitors and participants. Our chief recommendation is to support the recommendations of Lisa Bain, director of Healthy Start San Diego (attached), especially to:

- Focus on children born into the program and/or younger than 18 months (not 24 months), since that is the target population for the grant;
- Have participant complete a separate form for each child younger than 18 months of age;
- Adjust questions as appropriate to ensure that using these forms will provide all data needed for reporting on the Healthy Start performance measures.

In addition, throughout the tools, the word “couple” should be followed by “of”—“We’ll start with a couple of questions,” etc. Here are our additional suggestions:

Healthy Start Background Mandatory Questions

Question 6: Our Arabic clients do not feel represented by any of the current racial or ethnic categories. Therefore, we recommend changing this question to “What is your ethnicity?” Answers should include:

- Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish
- Middle Eastern/North African
- Other
- None of the above
- Don’t know
- Declined to answer

Question 7: We recommend adding “Other” as an answer option for race.

Question 25 should specify whether a pregnant woman counts as one person or two for the purposes of this question.

Questions 27 and 30: What additional information is being sought by asking whether the participant has answered the questions that the staff person asked?

Question 29: If this form is to be used with male participants as well as female, these sub-questions should be revised to “husband, wife, or partner.”

Healthy Start Prenatal Mandatory Questions

Questions 3: Add “including e-cigarettes and vaping,” as on the Background form. In addition, consider deleting mention of the impact of tobacco and alcohol on the developing baby, which may make the participant less likely to answer truthfully.

Healthy Start Mandatory Questions: Children

We recommend sequential numbering of all questions from the beginning to the end of the form, as on the Background tool.

Birth Intervals, Question 1: Change “Current Pregnancy?” to “Currently pregnant?”

Health at Birth: If only one form is filled out, it should focus on the youngest child—i.e., the one most likely to have been affected by Healthy Start services.

Health at Birth, Question 1: Change the third answer option to “Grandmother/grandfather.”

Health at Birth, Question 2: Delete “if adopted,” to account for non-mothers who are filling out the form.

Health at Birth, Question 4: Add an answer option of “Not yet, but I have an appointment.”

Health at Birth, Questions 4-6 should read “you or the biological mother,” “yourself/herself,” and “you/she.”

Infant Feeding, Questions 7-8 should read “you or the biological mother.”

Child Health Care, Question 13: Delete the word “So” at the beginning of this question, to make its tone match that of the others.

Family Life, Question 16: The question about reading should be asked for all children, not just those 6 months or older.

Family Life, Question 17: The introduction does not seem to match the question. We recommend either deleting the sentence about looking to others for support or restoring Question 58 from the Interconception/Parenting tool, about the types of support available to the participant.

Many thanks for the work that has gone into revising these questionnaires, and for considering our suggestions for improving them further.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Mary-Powel Thomas". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Mary" and last name "Thomas" being more prominent than the middle name "Powel".

Mary-Powel Thomas