

H.A.T.C.H

Hoarding Assessment Tool in Children's Homes

The Hoarding Assessment Tool in Children's Homes (HATCH) has been developed with parents with hoarding tendencies and other practitioners. It is designed to help identify families where there may be signs of hoarding and unsafe space to the child/children so that prompt action can be taken to address and support families to improve home conditions and safety for their children.

The effects of hoarding on children's learning and development can be significant and vary according to their age. Young children may struggle with cognitive and social skills, while older children may experience challenges in academic performance and emotional well-being. Ultimately, the implications of hoarding can hinder a child's growth and overall development throughout different stages of their life.

The H.A.T.C.H should be considered in scenarios where there are concerns about the presence of hoarding tendencies or when they reside with a parent or primary caregiver who has hoarding behaviours within their shared living environment.

It is essential to prioritise children's rights within the home, as it directly impacts their ability to grow up in a secure, encouraging, and care-providing environment, which is important for their overall well-being and development.

Consent:

The assessment tool should be collaboratively completed with families to foster transparency and a shared understanding of any potential concerns. Obtaining consent is an essential part of this process. The questions within the assessment tool have been phrased positively to reduce any anxiety families may experience regarding the assessment. Furthermore, the manner in which the assessment is conducted should offer reassurance that a supportive approach is being implemented.

If consent cannot be obtained from individuals involved, it is essential for practitioners to document the circumstances surrounding this.

Scoring system

This assessment tool will be scored using a 1-5 grading scale

Key grading

1 – no concerns

2 – somewhat

3 – moderate

4 – some severity

5 – severe



H.A.T.C.H

Assessment

1 2 3 4 n/a

Comments

Is there enough space for the child to crawl/learn to walk and play (2 metre square)						
Clear pathways for the child within the home						
Items stacked 2.5ft or above (age 0 – 3)						
Items stacked 4ft or above (age 3+)						
Safe space to sleep						
Space to prepare the child nutritious food and drinks						
Is the child able to pick up rotten food arm's length						
Is there notable urine and faeces within the home						
Space to bathe and wash						
Space to toilet train in younger children						
Is the toilet accessible to older children						
Is the home warm						
Is there access to hot water						
Is there concern for the child to walk/crawl/pick up sharp items i.e – glass, broken pottery, sharp kitchenware						
Is there medication within reach						

What next?



Concerns should be communicated to the parent or guardian to identify appropriate and supportive measures that will assist the family in implementing necessary improvements. An action plan will be collaboratively developed between the parent/guardian and the practitioner to facilitate these enhancements within the home environment, and appropriate referrals can be made.