

## Preparing a Survey or Questionnaire

There are advantages to using a survey or written questionnaire to collect certain kinds of CA data. It can be administered easily; it can reach many people; it can ask for specific information. The simplest type of question asks for a yes/no response. For example, a survey question for parents might be: Did you use any legal services this year? There are other ways of asking questions that many Head Start programs have used, including a rating scale, a rank order and a root and contingency method. You may find that a combination of these types of questions will elicit the information you need.

### Rating Scale

Sometimes referred to as a Likert scale, a 5-point scale often is used to collect data although sometimes the rating consists of only 3 points. In the example in Table \_\_\_\_\_ responses range from (1) very satisfied to (5) not satisfied. Scales can be used to gather opinions about the quality of the Head Start services. For example, one program asked formerly enrolled families to express their opinion about the services for children and for families in order to assess where they needed to improve their service delivery.

How satisfied were you with the Head Start services you received?

Instructions: Check the appropriate box

Children's Services	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Service Not Used
Information about my children's progress						
Classroom program						
Hearing						
Dental exams						
Vision services						

### Rank Order

In this case, the respondent puts the answers in order with 1 = first choice, 2 = second choice, and so on. The advantage to this approach is that more information is gained than from a yes/no response. For example, a Head Start program might ask current Head Start parents and Head Start eligible parents (not enrolled) a question about which preschool options they prefer; in addition, Head Start staff could be asked their opinion about which preschool options would be most helpful to families. The responses



from families and staff could guide decision-making about Head Start program options, partnering with other child care institutions, or using additional funding streams to meet families' needs.

PRESCHOOL OPTIONS	RATING
Full day (open 6 hours or more, M–F, Sept. to May)	
Half-day (open for 3½ hours either morning or afternoon, M–Th, Sept. to May)	
Wraparound (open from 7 am–6 pm, M–F, full year)	
Home-base (a home visitor visits the home once per week for 1.5 hours, twice a month there is a socialization activity with other families, full year)	

### Root and Contingency

With this method, a respondent is asked a general question (the root) and then detailed questions follow (the contingencies) that are based on the initial response. For example, respondents are asked whether their family has needed or used health or human service assistance and the barriers they experience in seeking help. First, respondents answer the root question: whether they or their families needed a service in the past year.

	A In the past year have you or anyone in your family needed...		B If you found help, did you have transportation to get to it?		C If you found help, did it feel comfortable?		D If you found help, did you use the services you found?	
Please check the correct box	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Income assistance; for example, welfare, SSI, unemployment insurance								
Legal assistance; for example, immigration, custody								

If they answered affirmatively, they are asked three subsequent contingency questions: (1) whether they had transportation to access the service they needed; (2) whether the help they sought felt comfortable; and (3) whether they used the services they found.

