

# **The Child HCAHPS Narrative Item Set**

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# Why Gather Patient Narratives on a CAHPS Survey?

- Patient narratives can provide a rich source of ***valuable information*** to complement responses to close-ended survey questions
  - **Integral:** Concrete and actionable aspects of care already being measured
  - **Proximal:** Aspects of care relevant to measured domains but not captured in composite measures
  - **Distal:** Domains of care important to patients but not included in CAHPS core
- Eliciting this information in a thoughtful way can engage patients in describing what mattered most in their care experience
- Narratives gathered via standardized surveys are more representative of the full range of patient experiences
- CAHPS Narrative Item Sets have been developed for the CAHPS Clinician & Group Survey, CAHPS Health Plan Survey, and now Child HCAHPS

# Child HCAHPS Narrative Item Set

1. First, we'd like to focus on any experiences during your child's hospital stay **that went particularly well**. Please explain what happened, how it happened, and how it felt.
2. Next, we'd like to focus on any experiences during your child's hospital stay **that you wish had gone differently**. Please explain what happened, how it happened, and how it felt.
3. Please describe how doctors, nurses, and other hospital staff **interacted with your child** and how they got along with your child.
4. Please describe **your own interactions** with doctors, nurses, and other hospital staff and how you got along with them.
5. How well did the doctors, nurses, and other hospital staff involved in your child's care **share information with each other and work together** to care for your child. What went well? What could have gone better?

# Steps In the Development of the Child HCAHPS Narrative Item Set

- Drafting of an initial protocol
- Pilot testing of draft items and gathering of stakeholder input
- Evaluation study (Martino et al., 2023)
  - 163 parents of hospitalized children drawn from a national online panel
  - Completion of Narrative Item Set (by phone or online) followed by in depth interviews with a subset (n = 47)
  - Evaluation focused on (a) scope of experiences, (b) balance of positive and negative feedback, (c) actionability of information, (d) match between narrative and interview content
- Cognitive testing in English and Spanish
- Field testing (Quigley et al., 2023)
  - Administered by mail in English and Spanish at a large urban children's hospital
  - Evaluated participation rates, item completion rates, and compared responses between survey versions that included the Narrative Item Set (n = 77) and the single, standard open-ended question (n = 548)

# Key Findings from Evaluation Study



- Median time for respondents to complete the item set online was 5.4 minutes; median time by phone was 6.7 minutes
- Average narrative was 248 words
- Most content was positive (63% when provided by phone, 68% online)
- About 8 in 10 narratives mentioned topics covered by closed-ended items; about 9 in 10 mentioned topics not covered by those items
- On average, narratives included one or two actionable pieces of information
- Narratives gathered by phone ( $n = 34$ ) were longer than ones gathered online ( $n = 129$ ; 749 vs. 127 words), contained more codable content, and corresponded more closely to long interview content (75% vs. 59% correspondence)

# Key Findings from Field Study



- Two-thirds of parents who completed a Child HCAHPS survey that included the Narrative Item Set provided a response to at least one item in the set; 56% completed two-thirds or more of the items
- Parents who completed the Child HCAHPS Narrative Item Set wrote narratives that were over five times longer than parents who responded to the single item

|   | <b>Narrative Item Set</b> | <b>Single-item</b> |
|---|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Narrative contained positive content                        | 4 in 10                   | 6 in 10            |
| Narrative mentioned topics not covered by close-ended items | 9 in 10                   | 8 in 10            |
| Narrative contained actionable content                      | 7 in 10                   | 4 in 10            |

# Example response

| Question                           | Parent response  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| What went well?                    | When we first arrived at the hospital my son was in a lot of pain and very scared but the emergency physician calmed him down and quickly alleviated his pain. He actually had him smiling by telling him some of the worst jokes in creation. Now that guy was made for that job. |
| What do you wish went differently? | My son is allergic to aspirin and the attending physician did not pay attention to the records and was about to issue my child something that contain aspirin. I was truly seething with anger   |
| Interactions with parent           | My provider made dealing with the hospital very easy. Other than the one doctor, it was fine.  |
| Interactions with child            | Nurses got along well with my son also he enjoyed his time with them. The provider swooped in got the info and was gone.   |
| Care coordination                  | Providers all seemed the same quick in quick out. The staff did a stand up job except one physician.   |

# Resources



- English and Spanish versions of Child HCAHPS Narrative Item Set:  
<https://www.ahrq.gov/cahps/surveys-guidance/item-sets/ch/suppl-narrative-items-child-hospital-survey.html>
- User guide: <https://www.ahrq.gov/sites/default/files/wysiwyg/cahps/surveys-guidance/item-sets/administering-child-hcahps-narrative-items.pdf>
  - Inviting and encouraging thoughtful responses
  - Considerations regarding anonymity
  - Survey mode considerations
  - Reviewing and analyzing the data
- Reports on the evaluation and field studies:
  - Martino SC, Reynolds KA, et al. Evaluation of a protocol for eliciting narrative accounts of pediatric inpatient experiences of care. *Health Serv Res.* 2023;58(2):271–281.
  - Quigley DD, Predmore Z. Parents have more to say: comments from the Child HCAHPS single question versus a narrative item set. *Hosp Pediatr.* 2023;13(4):345–356.