NB:

(1) This list of questions is designed to assist in obtaining confirming information to support claims that limitations in adaptive behavior exist -- either currently or in the past.

(2) The questions included in this list were generated by the author. Other lists have been developed -- for example, a list of questions was published in Equal Justice for People with Mental Retardation (Institute on Disabilities at Temple University, 2002) -- appearing in the "Training Guide for Attorneys" written by Edwards, Bryen, and Murphy.

(3) The questions are organized according to the 3 adaptive skills areas of the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD) and the 11 adaptive areas of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders -- Fourth Edition -- Text Revision (DSM-IV-TR) of the American Psychiatric Association. The 11 adaptive skill areas can be accessed in such a way to be used by any definition of mental retardation/intellectual disabilities that one is using.

The adaptive skill areas for two major professional sources are provided below.

- **AAIDD (2010):** conceptual, social, practical
- **DSM-IV-TR (2002):** communication, functional academic skills, self-direction, social & interpersonal skills, leisure, self-care, home living, health, safety, use of community resources, work

(4) Questions are phrased usually in the present tense -- it may be necessary to use the past tense, depending on the type of assessment that is being conducted.

(5) It is ESSENTIAL that the informant explain his/her responses on many of the questions, as most statements may need further explanation. Frequently a prompt for requesting more detailed information is provided. However, asking for explanations of specific occurrences of problems is strongly recommended. Contextual information (i.e., stories or specific examples) is extremely useful and should be obtained whenever possible.

(6) When obtaining information related to adaptive functioning, it is always important to be responsive to an individual's cultural and family background.

(7) Substitute the person's name for the symbol "X."
**Adaptive Skills**

**Specific Questions**

**[Conceptual Adaptive Skills]**

**Communication**

**Language**

(receptive)  * How well does X understand what is said to him/her?  [explain]
* How well does X pay attention when someone is speaking to him/her?
* Does X interrupt other people who are speaking to him/her?  [explain]
* Can X follow simple directions given to him/her orally?
* Can X follow multi-step directions given to him/her orally?
* Does X understand humor (e.g., jokes, funny stories) that others say?
* Can X answer simple questions?
* Can X retell a story that someone else has told
* Can X understand phrases like "dressed to the teeth" or "at rope's end"?

(expressive)  * Does X speak to others on a regular basis?
* Does X have any speech problems?  [explain]
* How well does X use words when he/she talks?
* Does X have trouble finding the right word for things?
* Does X have a large vocabulary when he/she speaks?
* How well does X talk using full sentences?
* When X talks, do others have problems understanding him/her? [explain]
* When X talks, does what he/she says make sense?  [explain]
* Can X tell others what he/she did that day?
* Can X ask questions about how things work?
* Can X tell jokes effectively?
* Does X tell others what he/she likes and dislikes?
* Can X explain his/her legal rights?
* Can X engage in conversation with a stranger?
* Can X explain his/her expectations of others?
* How well does X …
  * give directions to someone?
  * talk about current events going on in the community?
  * talk with someone he/she has just met?
  * convey his/her needs?
  * talk on the phone?

**Functional Academic Skills**

**Reading**  * What types of reading material (books, newspapers, magazines) did/does X like to read?  [details, specific examples]
* How often did X read as an child?  As an adolescent?  As a adult?
* When X was in school, how well did X read textbooks and other materials?
* In general, how well does X read?
* How well does X say the correct sound of letters he/she sees?
* How well does X read specific words?
* How well does X understand what he/she reads?
* How well does X read …
  * the newspaper?
  * mail or other notes written for him/her?
  * labels on cans of food or other materials?
  * directions on medication labels?
  * manuals that explain how to do something
  * notices or flyers that are put in public places?
  * menus in unfamiliar restaurants?
  * applications and other formal documents?
  * signs in the community?
  * books written for adults (novels)?

**Writing**

* In which situations does X write?
* In general, how well does X write?
* How well does X spell words?
* When X was in school, how well did X do when he/she had to write a paper that included many paragraphs?
* How well does X write sentences? Paragraphs?
* How well does X use writing to write …
  * a personal letter to someone else?
  * down a phone message on a piece of paper?
  * notes to himself/herself?
  * information on an application?
  * message on a birthday card?
  * short paper on a topic?
  * email or text message?

**Math**

* In general, how well does X do math?
* Can X count to ten? To one hundred?
* Can X add and subtract numbers?
* Can X multiply and divide numbers?
* Does X understand fractions and decimals?
* When X was in school, how well did X do in the area of math?
* When in school, was X able to solve math word problems?
* Can X …
  * use an ATM machine
  * use online or telephone banking features
  * tell time? [traditional clock, digital]
  * use a calendar?
  * understand a bus schedule?
  * recognize and count money?
* make change?
* understand how much change he/she should get back?
* buy items in stores without assistance? with assistance?
* pay bills? [explain]
* manage a checking and/or savings account?
* understand the information on a pay stub?
* use a tape measure or ruler?
* use measuring cups for cooking?
* weigh himself/herself accurately?
* use a thermostat in a house or apartment?
* keep score in a game?
* understand distances?
* tip appropriately
* estimate how long some event may take?
* complete a form requesting items (e.g., commissary request)?

**Self-Direction**

* How well does X manage his/her day-to-day life?
* Does X make key decisions in his/her life? [explain]
* How well does X make changes in his life to correct things that did not go right?
* How well does X know what his/her strengths and weaknesses are?
* How well does X follow his/her own schedule?
* Does X initiate activities on his/her own? [explain]
* Can X make his/her concern known to others?
* Does X know when to ask for assistance?
* How well does X work independently?
* Does X take responsibility for his/her own actions?
* Is X reliable?
* Can X set goals … and make plans to accomplish them?
* Can X solve various problems that arise in life?
* Can X make good decisions?

**[Social Adaptive Skills]**

**Social & Interpersonal Skills:**

Interpersonal

* How many close friends does X have?
* How much time does X spend with his/her friends?
* How well does X get along with his friends?
* Does X make new friends very often? [explain]
* Does X make new friends easily? [explain]
* Is X able to keep friends over time?
* Does X have a girlfriend/boyfriend?
* Does X go out on dates?
* Does X initiate social events or activities?
* What types of things do X and his/her friends like to do?
* Does X like to spend time with others who are younger than he/she is?
* Does X initiate group activities?
* How well does X handle competition?
* How well does X handle criticism from others?
* When in school, how did X get along with his/her …
  * classmates?
  * teachers and administrators?
  * other school staff?
* How well does X get along with his/her …
  * parents or caregivers?
  * siblings
  * wife/husband?
  * children?
  * girlfriend/boyfriend?
  * persons in the neighborhood?
  * co-workers?
  * supervisor/boss at work?
* How does X handle problems with his/her …
  * parents or caregivers?
  * siblings
  * friends?
  * co-workers?
  * boss?
* How would you explain X's anger?
  * Does X get angry often?
  * Does X get angry easily?
  * Does X's anger usually lead quickly to verbal or physical aggression?
    [explain]
  * Does X calm down quickly or does the anger last a long time?
  * Does X know how to manage his/her anger?
  * Is X able to move on or does he/she hold grudges?

Responsibility
* Do you remember any situations where X was given responsibility to take care of something?
  * If yes, can you tell me how X did?
* Was X ever in a position where he/she was the leader of a group or organization?
* How would you explain X's opportunities to be in charge of something or be responsible for something?
* Is X able to follow through with a task until it is completed?

Self-esteem
* In your opinion, how did X feel about himself/herself as a child? As an adolescent? As an adult?
* How confident is X in his/her abilities?
* Has X had experiences where he/she did well and was recognized
for doing well?  [explain]
* What accomplishment(s) do you think X is most proud of?
* Has X had experiences where he/she did not do well and was criticized for not doing well?  [explain]
* How did X feel about his/her performance in school?

Gullibility
* Was X ever taken advantage of when X was …  [explain, examples]
  * child?
  * adolescent?
  * adult?
* Can X easily be talked into doing things that others want?  [explain]
* Can X recognize the intentions of others?
* How much has X been influenced by others when he/she was in school?  In the neighborhood?  At work?  At home?  Elsewhere?
* If X is in a gang or other group, what is his/her role?
* Does X associate with persons who are much older that he/she is?  or who are much younger than he/she is?
* Does X say what others want him/her to say?
* Would you describe X more as a "leader" or a "follower"?

Naïveté
* How easily is X tricked or fooled by others?  [explain]
* How well can X identify when he/she is being put down or made fun of?
* How well does X understand what others are asking him/her to do -- especially when he/she could get into trouble?
* Has X ever been accused of doing something when he/she really did not do it?
* Have others often played jokes on X?  [explain]
* Did people make fun of X and he/she did not know it?

Follows rules
* When in school, how well did X behave in his/her classes?
* How well did X follow school rules?
* Did X get into trouble at school for not following the rules?  [explain]
* Was X ever suspended or expelled from school?  [explain]
* How well did X follow rules at home?
* Was X ever severely punished for not following rules at home?
* Did X ever have problems following rules in settings outside of the home such as on a sports team or participating at a community center?

Obeys laws
* Has X been in trouble with the law in the past?
* In your opinion, what are X's attitudes about obeying the law?

Avoids victimization
* Was X picked on by other students in school or on the school bus?
  By other children in the neighborhood?  By co-workers?  By others?
* When X is in situations where he/she might be picked on or taken advantage of, does he/she know how to prevent this from happening?  [explain]
* Does X avoid situations where he/she may be picked on or taken advantage of?
* Does X select friends using good judgement?

**Leisure**

* How well does X use his/her free time?
* Does X like to play any sports?
* Does X have any regular hobbies or interests?
* What does X do for entertainment?
* Does X understand the rules and procedures of various games?
* Can X keep score when playing certain games?
* Does X learn a new game, sport, or other activity easily?
* Can X identify local activities that are occurring?

*[Practical Adaptive Skills]*

**Self-Care**

Activities of daily living

* In general, how does X deal with common activities that we have to do on an everyday basis such as . . . [explore each in detail]
  * eating?
  * walking -- moving around?
  * toileting?
  * dressing
    * Can X select appropriate clothes to wear for weather
    * Can X select clothes that match or go together?
  * bathing?
  * grooming?
    * Does X wear clean clothes?
    * Does X present himself/herself in an acceptable manner?

**Home Living**

Everyday life skills

* How well does X do the following daily activities? [details]
  * prepares meals?
    * planning a meal (identifying and obtaining materials, etc)
    * preparing the meal (reading recipe, etc.)
    * cleaning up afterwards (knows where things go, etc.)
  * cleans his/her room, apartment, or house?
    * sweeps, vaccuums, etc.
    * keeps room organized
  * uses the telephone?
    * finds a number in a phone book
    * places a call
    * answers a call
    * knows how to find and use a public phone
  * can use household appliances?
* kitchen: stove, oven, microwave, toaster, etc.
* house: washing machine, dryer, air conditioning, etc.
* can do laundry?
  * organizes/sorts clothes
  * uses appropriate detergent, etc.
* can use basic household tools (e.g., pliers, screwdriver, etc.)?
* can perform basic home maintenance? (e.g., change filters
  * change filters of furnace
  * change light bulbs
  * change batteries in smoke detector
  * fix simple leaks
  * fix simple toilet problems
  * cut grass … rake leaves
* knows how to get household problems repaired by someone else?

**Health**

How well does X do the following?
* keeps healthy -- both physically and mentally?
* knows basic first aid?
* knows how to treat day-to-day ailments such as headache or stomachache?
* knows who to call in the event of a medical emergency?
* knows how to fill a prescription?
* takes prescribed medication as directed and in a timely fashion?
* understands the warnings on prescribed medications?
* knows how to schedule an annual physical or dental exam?
* knows how to handle food in a sanitary way?
* knows how to prevent getting catching an illness from someone else?

**Safety**

Maintains safe environment
* When X does things that involve risk, does he/she do things to make sure that he/she is safe?
* Did X know how to tell if another person was safe or not?
* In X’s living situation, is his/her room, apartment, house safe (e.g., dangerous materials are not available to children)
* Does X follow safety precautions at work (e.g., wears a hard hat)?
* How well does X do the following?
  * ride a bicycle?
  * cross a street?
  * buckle seat belt when in a car?
  * avoid dangerous materials (e.g., toxic material in the house)?
  * fix things that can be dangerous (e.g., remove a broken light bulb, bread that is stuck in a toaster)?
  * use extension cords appropriately?
* use portable heaters?
* respond to thunder storm with severe lightening?
* avoids putting objects near hear sources?

Use of Community Resources

How well does X do the following?
* gets around in the neighborhood and community (including driving or using public transportation)?
* recognizes street signs and local landmarks?
* knows which agencies can provide help?
* find and use stores in the neighborhood?
* uses a restaurant -- sit-down or fast-food?
  * order from a menu
  * order something new -- i.e., something other than what is typically ordered
* can use resources in the community such as … [details]
  * grocery store
  * department store (clothing, other items)
  * department of motor vehicles -- driver's license or registration
  * gas station/quick stop
  * bank
  * post office
  * recreational facilities
  * government offices (social security, etc.)
  * other public services (library, etc.)

Did X go to church on a regular basis?
Did X participate in any cultural events in the community?

Work

Occupational skills
* Has X had any full-time or part-time jobs? [explain]
  * if yes, how has X done in these jobs?
* Does X know what jobs really interest him/her?
* Did X have any specific job/vocational training?
* For any current job or any jobs in the past (full-time or part-time) ..
  * what was the job title?
  * what were the job requirements?
  * what were the job duties?
  * how did X … [details needed]
    * find/get the job? Was assistance required?
    * apply for the job?
    * interview for the job?
    * perform on the job? Any work evaluations/ratings?
  * did X require extra support/supervision on the job?
* did X get promoted?
* why did the job end?
* Does X have a good work attitude?
* Does X have the following general job skills: [explain]
  * arrived at work on time
  * got along with co-workers
  * followed the directives of his/her supervisor or boss
  * could work without assistance, support, or special help
  * understood employment policies
  * displayed dependability
  * was able to problem solve when facing new tasks
* Are you aware of any personnel issues that X might have had on a job?
* Has X ever been fired from a job? [explain]