

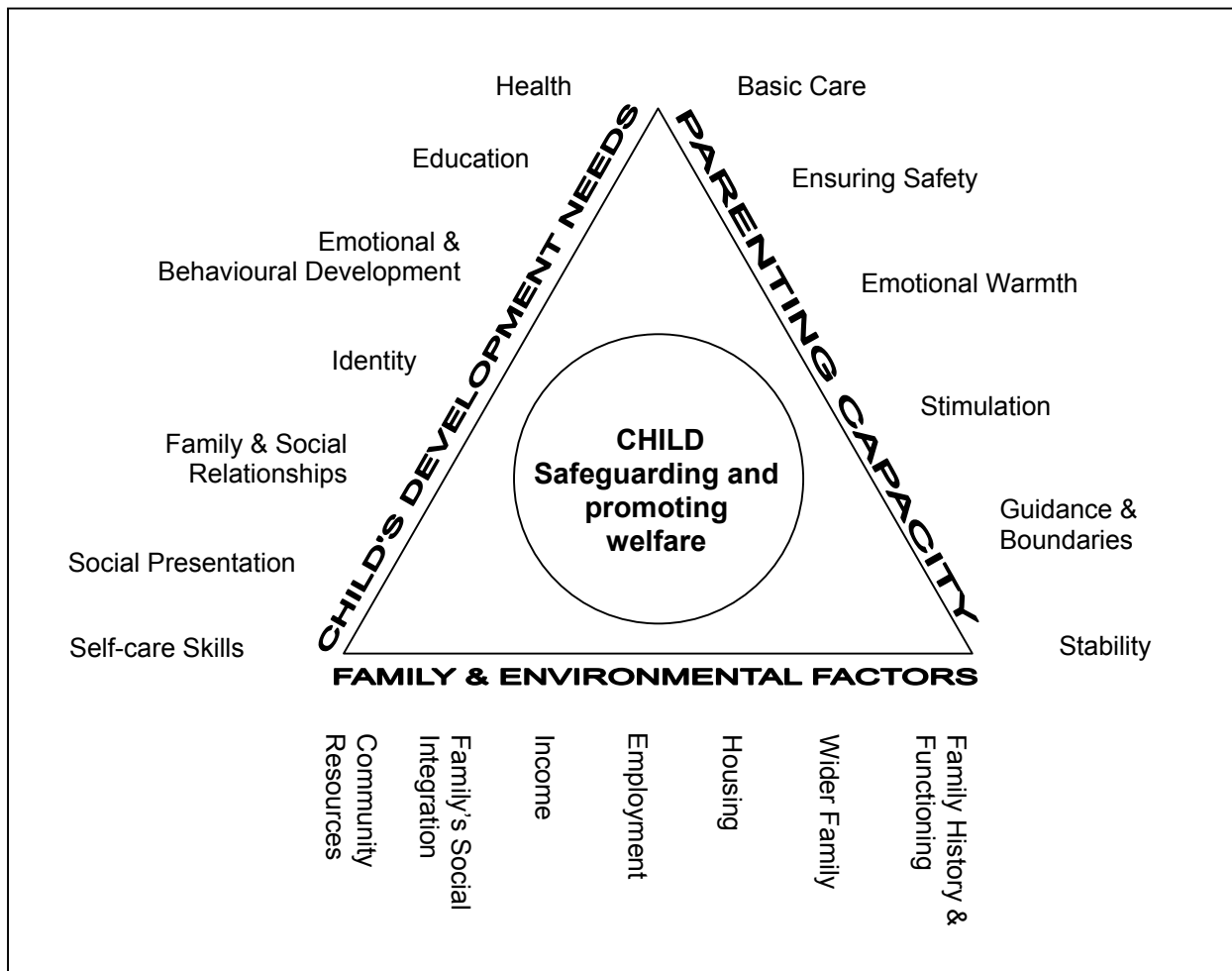
Service: Children and Young People's Services
Title: Assessment - Children in Need
Manual: Children in Need
Procedure Number: CIN/012
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INTRODUCTION

The Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families provides the assessment and care planning framework that underpins these procedures.

Different assessment tools have been developed to reflect the differences in level and complexity of assessment that are needed in different situations. The level of assessment that is undertaken will be appropriate to the circumstances, and to the age/developmental stage of the child. Assessments in relation to children in need will broadly consider problems and strengths in the following areas:

- The Child's Developmental Needs.
- Family and Environmental Factors.
- Parenting Capacity.



Assessments will be completed in accordance with the procedures for processing referrals and the timescales set out in the Eligibility Criteria i.e. 7 days from referral for an Initial Assessment and 35 days from referral for a Core Assessment.

The assessment will be made with the child and family. It will respect the independence of individuals and their right to self-determination, providing this does not place a child at risk of significant harm.

All assessments should include drawing on information from and the involvement of other agencies where appropriate.

INITIAL ASSESSMENT

“The initial assessment is a brief assessment of each child referred to LA children’s social care, in which it is necessary to determine whether the child is in need, the nature of any services required, and whether a further, more detailed core assessment should be undertaken. The Initial Assessment should be completed by LA children’s social care, working with colleagues, within a maximum of seven working days of the date of referral. The initial assessment period may be very brief if the criteria for initiating s47 enquiries are met. The initial assessment should be undertaken in accordance with the Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families”

Department of Health 2000; Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families

Where a Common Assessment has been completed, this information should be used to inform the initial assessment. Information should be gathered and analysed within the three domains of the Assessment Framework (see above), namely:-

- the child’s developmental needs
- the parents’ or caregivers’ capacity to respond appropriately to those needs

and

- the wider family and environmental factors.

The Initial Assessment should address the following questions:-

- What are the developmental needs of the child?
- Are the parents able to respond appropriately to the child’s identified needs? Is the child being adequately safeguarded from significant harm, and are the parents able to promote the child’s health and development?
- What impact are family functioning and history, the wider family and environmental factors having on parents’ capacity to respond to their child’s needs and the child’s developmental progress?
- Is action required to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child?

The initial assessment should identify whether:-

- this a child in need? (s17 of the Children Act 1989); and
- there is reasonable cause to suspect that this child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm? (s47 of the Children Act 1989)

CORE ASSESSMENT

The Core Assessment should be led by a Children in Need Team social worker, (or YPS worker) in collaboration with relevant agencies, when the outcome of the Initial Assessment is that the child/young person has been assessed as being "in need". It should consider both the needs of the child/ young person and the parenting capacity of the family, and should cover the totality and complexity of the needs and strengths of the child and the family, to produce a broadly based, holistic assessment of need and risk. It must inform the Care Plan for the child. Core Assessments should not be single agency but should always be multi-disciplinary and undertaken and planned by the care team, led by the child’s social worker.

The Core Assessment identifies:

- the needs of the child that are not being addressed.
- the types of problems that are affecting the parent’s capacity to meet the child’s needs.
- the objectives and outcomes it is important to achieve for the individual child in relation to those needs.
- any issues of culture/religion/disability/age/sexuality that need to be taken into account

The Core Assessment should:

- use an appropriate assessment tool encompassing all the dimensions of the child's needs, in a way that also recognises the child and family's strength and aspirations.
- be precise and targeted on outcomes
- take account of the LSCB Guidance on Neglect
- foster working in partnership with and in support of families.
- include information held by other professionals

INTEGRATING SPECIALIST ASSESSMENTS

It will be the responsibility of the Social Worker to ensure that assessment is an integrated process and to bring together and co-ordinate contributions from all relevant professionals and agencies so that the needs of the individual child and family are considered as a whole. This should include appropriate contribution from agencies providing services to adults.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN IN ALL TYPES OF ASSESSMENT

Pending the completion of any assessment, necessary services should be provided for the child and other family members.

The assessment process:

- must involve parents, carers and the wider families of children and young people in the assessment, and be responsive to them.
- will listen to the child and be responsive to the child's wishes, views and feelings and, having regard to their age and understanding, ensure that their wishes have been properly ascertained and given due consideration.
- should draw upon information and expertise from other professionals

Where the child and family member's first language is not English appropriate arrangements must be made to use an interpreter - see the related guidance "Safeguarding Children from Abroad", which is part of the Durham LSCB Child Protection Procedure.

Where children or other family members have specific communication needs appropriate assistance must be provided to enable them to express themselves fully.

Any disagreements must be discussed and any conflicting information clarified as part of the assessment process. Any unresolved disagreements relating to information included in the assessment should be recorded.

Related documents

LSCB Neglect Guidance

The following services are available:

Advocacy:

NYAS 0800616101

Interpreting:

Written and oral translating service ITL (Interpreting Translation Line) 0845 055 2197

Telephone translating service "Language is everything" 01430 435301 /08007317878