

# Family Assessment Manual



**FOUNDATIONS**

HELPING FAMILIES BUILD A BRIGHTER FUTURE



**PROGRESSIVECARE**



## Family Assessment Manual

### Purpose of Assessment

#### Principle Standard

- Parents receive assessments of their parenting skills and capacity, which are robust, fair and evidence based
- The child's welfare and needs are the focus of the assessment and final report
- The assessment clearly links to court instruction and/or Local Authority requirement

#### Residential Family Centres, National Minimum Standards

Foundations® provide a safe and supportive environment whereby in-depth 12-week Assessments are carried out with families which cover all aspects of the Department of Health Assessment Framework, as well as other specific issues based on their individual needs. Our assessments are objective and facilitated by a registered Social Worker.

#### All Assessment Reports are overseen by a Doctor of Education, Dr. Sue Ekins.

All staff work closely with families, giving them appropriate support, advice and guidance, to provide families with the best opportunity to demonstrate their ability to meet their child's needs, whilst also ensuring that the wellbeing of the child is being promoted and safeguarded. This is carried out through observations, direct work, key-work sessions and monitoring.

Parenting assessments focus on identifying strengths and weaknesses in relation to the three domains of the assessment framework; child development, parenting capacity, the wider environmental factors and assessing a parent's capacity to change.

Progressive Care recognises the importance of ensuring a positive environment when undertaking an assessment. Therefore the staff team ensures that:

- Family members are treated with respect and courtesy at all times.
- The workers use positive body language at all times.
- The worker avoids negative body language.
- Negative responses, such as head shaking, are avoided.
- Workers present themselves professionally.
- The views and opinions of the family are received in a neutral and non-judgemental way.
- Family members are made to feel involved.
- Furniture, for example a table, is not be used as a barrier.

# Model of Assessment

## 12 Week Parenting Assessments

Foundations® offers a 12-week Assessment period but can also offer longer term placements if appropriate. These are comprehensive, in-depth assessments which cover all domains of the Department of Health (DoH) assessment framework as well as any other specific issues (historical or current) that exist within the case.

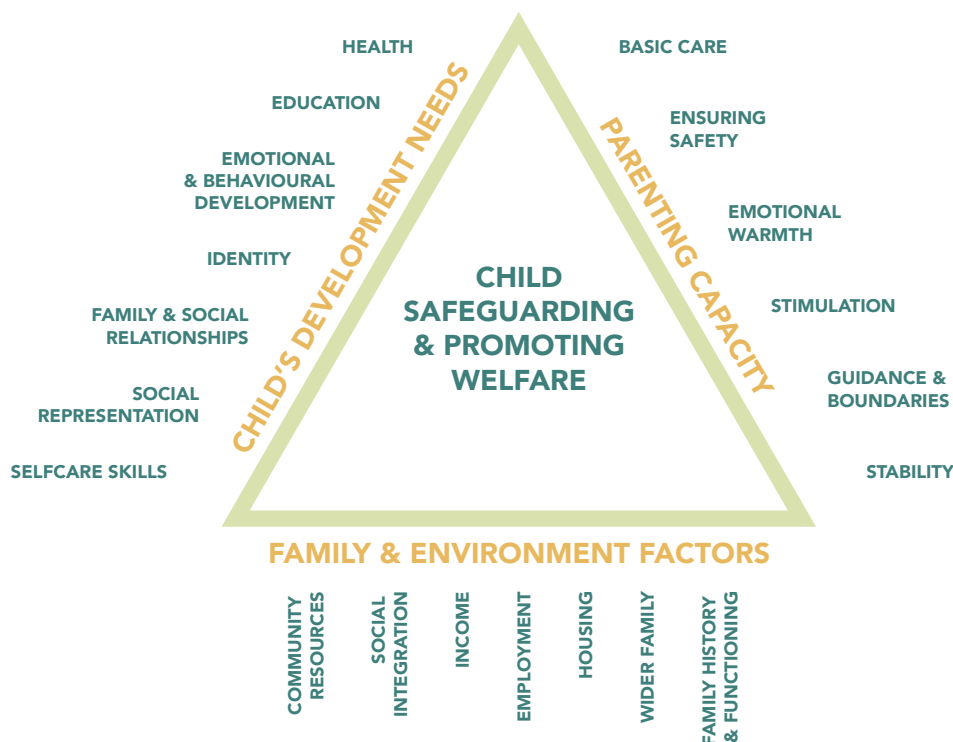
All DoH assessments are completed by registered Social Workers, and are consistent with the national guidance, Working Together to Safeguard Children.

## Viability Assessments

A Viability Assessment is another option offered at Foundations®, usually conducted over a 4-6-week period. These assessments are useful in order to inform future assessment and/or offer an initial assessment of risk. These assessments inform the Courts and Placing Authority of further work/assessment required to enable planning to take place within the child's timescales.

## Interim Report

An interim report is written for the purpose keeping all involved including parent's informed of the assessment. This is an overview of the work undertaken to date and further work that is to be completed. There are no recommendations made at this stage, other than to inform of if the placement is safe to continue.



## PAMS Assessments

The PAMS assessment covers: child care and development, behaviour management, independent living skills, safety and hygiene, parents' health, relationships and support, and the impact of the environment and community on parenting. Each parenting skill area within a domain is assessed for 'parental knowledge', 'quality of parenting skills' and the 'frequency of parenting practice'. By breaking elements of parenting down into testable components, PAMS starts to make an assessment of quality that is evidence-based. After completion, the assessor has a clear visual family profile of functioning that targets parenting support needs, as well as child protection issues.

## Support Plan

The purpose of the support plan is to ensure that all involved in the assessment including the parents, has a good understanding of what is expected of them and the Centre. This supports the parents to provide “Good enough care” to their children and keep them safe whilst being assessed. The Support Plan is written in consultation with the family and is shared with them following completion. The Support Plan is written and shared with the Placing Authority within 7 days of the family’s admission.

### Overview of Family

This section is an overview of the information that the Assessing Social Worker has been made aware of at the admission point. The Assessing Social Worker should utilize the following documentation:

- Progressive Care Referral
- Progressive Care – Adults Risk Assessment
- Progressive Care – Children’s Risk – Assessment
- Any support documents providing by the Placing Authority

### Placement Expectations and Objectives

The section is to clearly evidence transparency between all surrounding the expectations and objectives of a family’s placement at Foundations. This question needs to be discussed within the family’s admission meeting and clear evidence recorded of the expectations and objectives of the placement by the:

- Family
- Placing Authority
- The Service

### Supervision and Protection

This section is to clearly evidence the level of monitoring that the family requires. This specifically discusses:

- Whether or not a family is monitored via CCTV
- Frequency of physical checks
- Frequency of basic care observations
- Unsupervised timeout
- Contact

This section must be updated in line with any changes surrounding the monitoring of a family. All changes in monitoring must agree

### Learning Needs Identified

Before commencing the assessment, it is essential that there is a clear understanding surrounding parent’s:

- Ability to read and write
- Level of understanding
- Learning difficulties e.g: dyslexia
- Issues of race, culture, and religion
- Difficulties where English may not be the family’s first language

### Assessment of Family’s Needs

This section provides an overview.

### Assessment Plan

### Review

## Assessment Sessions

Details of undertaking assessment sessions Assessment session are undertaken by a Registered Qualified Social Worker. These are formal sessions and are conducted in private with the family. Records of these sessions are kept on file.

These sessions are for the purpose of collating information regarding the family, to enable a thorough evidenced based report to be written. This enables all involved to have an understanding of any further work that may be required to enable the parents to parent to the best of their ability. Thus ensuring the best outcome for the child.

## Assessment of Information

Collecting the information is one aspect of the assessment. Evaluating and interpreting that information enables the decisions to be made about how best to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children.

“Research, the findings of Inquiry Reports and Social Service Inspectorate inspections have frequently highlighted weaknesses in this area of assessment. A great deal of time and effort goes into the information gathering stage. This results in an assessment that focuses on describing what is happening. However, often less attention is given to the analysis of the information gathered.” (D of H 2000, Guidance Notes and Glossary for Core Assessment Record, page 10.)

This guide places a clear emphasis on the systematic evaluation of the information which has been collected.

The worker is provided with a checklist, in the form of a series of questions and these are designed to ensure that the information is comprehensively analysed and recorded in the assessment document. The checklist is not exhaustive and workers are encouraged to use it in a flexible way depending on the needs of each case.

## Assessment Reports

**Interim Assessment Report**

**Final Assessment Report**

## Appendix One – Assessment Session Guidance (Jeff Fowler)

1. Information about the Family
2. Information about Each of the Adults in the Home
3. Information about Each Child
4. The Family Structure
5. Chronology
6. Education
7. Employment
8. Experiences from Childhood
9. Perception of Self
10. Rigid and Flexible Thinking and Behaviour
11. Dominant and Submissive Behaviour
12. Self-Esteem
13. Alcohol Abuse
14. Drug Abuse
15. Aggressive Tendencies
16. Anger/Violence within the Adult Relationship – Perpetrator
17. Anger/Violence within the Adult Relationship – Victim
18. Accepting Responsibility for Violent Behaviours
19. Ideal Self
20. Criminal History
21. Persons Posing Risk to Children
22. Health
23. Previous Relationships
24. Present Relationship
25. Statements about Current Relationship
26. Relationship Issues
27. Parents perception of the Child
28. Perceptions of Parenting
29. Stress Management
30. Parental Stress
31. Knowledge of a Child's Needs and Parental Knowledge
32. Finances
33. Child Protection Concerns