

Structuring the conversation:

During the assessment visit, the practitioner should construct the conversation with families in the following way:

1. Explain the purpose of the assessment, what information will be recorded and why, what the possible outcomes might be, issues of confidentiality and consent
2. Confirm basic information about the child, given at registration, their address, date of birth and full contact details. Include basic information on family members relevant to the child. It is very helpful if Dates of Births of siblings are recorded to assist in understanding positions within the family.
3. Collect details of who is working with family and their contact details. This must include a health practitioner i.e. a GP.

Common Assessment elements and domains:

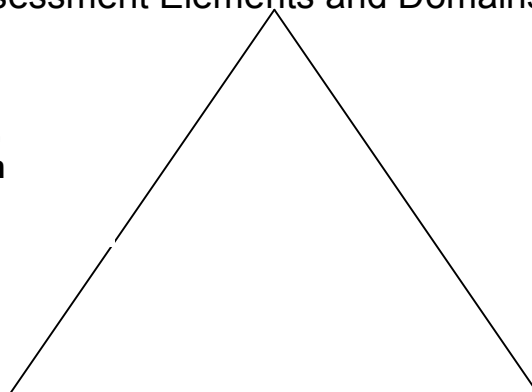
4. Consider and assess each of three themes or 'domains':
 - how well a child is developing, including in their health and progress in learning
 - how well parents or carers are able to support their child's development and respond appropriately to any needs
 - the impact of wider family and environmental elements on the child's development and on the capacity of their parents and carers.

Within each of these domains we want practitioners to consider the elements set out in Figure below. They have been developed by combining the underlying model of the Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families with the main elements used in other assessment frameworks, including the Connexions API

Common Assessment Elements and Domains

**Development of baby,
child or young person**

**Parents and
Carers**



Family and Environmental

1. DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON

A Health, including general health, physical development and speech, language and communications development

General health - The child or young person's current health condition e.g. conditions of relevance to, child or young person, including growth, development, physical and mental wellbeing.

Also includes consideration of:

- health conditions or impairments which significantly affect everyday life functioning, whether chronic or acute, including obesity
- access to and use of appropriate health services, such as those provided by a GP/dentist/optician, immunisations and appropriate developmental checks
- number and frequency of hospital admissions and accidents
- access to and use of appropriate health advice and information, for example including diet, sexual health and management of any health condition such as diabetes or asthma

Physical development - The child or young person's means of mobility, level of physical or sexual maturity / delayed development.

Also includes consideration of:

- being well-nourished, being active, rested and protected, gaining control of the body, acquiring physical skills
- vision and hearing
- fine and gross motor skills, including

- crawling, walking, running and climbing
- participation in football or other games
- ability to draw pictures, do jigsaws etc.

Speech, language and communications development - The ability to communicate effectively, confidently and appropriately with others.

Also includes consideration of:

- preferred means of communication
- use of first language
- ability to gain attention and make contact, access positive relationships, be with others, encourage conversation
- the impulse to communicate, exploring, experiment, labelling and expressing, describing, questioning, representing and predicting, sharing thoughts, feelings and ideas
- listening and paying attention to what others say, making playful and serious responses, enjoying and sharing stories, songs, rhymes and games, learning about words and meanings
- ability to communicate meaning, influence others, negotiate and make choices, understanding of others
- vision and hearing
- language for communicating and thinking
- linking sounds and letters
- reading and writing
- willingness to communicate
- articulation skills and language structure
- vocabulary and comprehension
- fluency of speech and confidence
- appropriateness of social and communications skills e.g. body language, excessive use of expletives or inappropriate language e.g. brusque manner

B Emotional and Social Development

The emotional and social response the child or young person gives to parents and carers and others outside the family

Also includes consideration of:

- the importance of being special to someone, being able to express feelings, developing healthy dependence, developing healthy independence
- nature and quality of early attachments
- self-harm or risk of self-harm
- phobias or psychological difficulties
- temperament, coping and adjusting abilities e.g. after experiencing domestic violence, bereavement or family relationship breakdown
- disposition, attitudes and motivation to change

C Behavioural Development

The way a child or young person behaves.

Also includes consideration of:

- lifestyle and self-control (including participation in reckless activity and need for excitement)
- behaviour in class or other environments where the child comes into contact with their peers
- substance abuse/misuse Error! Bookmark not defined.
- anti-social behaviour e.g. destruction of property, aggression towards others, harm or risk of harm to others
- sexually inappropriate behaviour and attempts to manipulate or control others
- offending behaviour and risk of (re) offending
- violent or aggressive behaviour at home or school
- attitudes to offending

D Identity, including Self-Esteem and Self-Image and Social Presentation

The growing sense of self as a separate and valued person.

Also includes consideration of:

- for younger children 0-4, being aware of “Me, Myself and Others”
- growing awareness of self, realisation of separateness and differences from others, recognition of personal characteristics and preferences, finding out what they can do
- importance of gaining self-assurance through a close relationship, becoming confident in what they can do, valuing and appreciating their own abilities, feeling self-assured and supported, a positive view of themselves
- knowledge of personal and family history
- access to recognition, acceptance and comfort, ability to contribute to secure relationships, understanding they can be valued by and important to someone, exploring emotional boundaries
- sense of belonging, being able to join in, enjoying being with familiar and trusted others, valuing individuality and contributions of self and others, having a role and identity within a group, acceptance by those around them
- race, religion, age, gender, sexuality and disability –may be affected by bullying or discriminatory behaviour
- understanding of the way in which appearance and behaviour are perceived and the impression being created

E Family and social relationships

The ability to empathise and build stable and affectionate relationships with others, including family, peers and the wider community.

Also includes consideration of:

- stable and affectionate relationship with parents or care givers
- sibling relationships
- involvement in helping others

- age appropriate friendships
- association with predominantly pro-criminal peers or lack of non-criminal friends
- understanding of others and awareness of consequences
- association with substance abusing/misusing friends/peer groups

F Self-care skills and independence

The acquisition of practical, emotional and communication competencies to increase independence.

Also includes consideration of:

- discovering boundaries and limits, learning about rules, knowing when and how to ask for help, learning when to say no and anticipating when others will do so
- discovering and learning about their body, demonstrating individual preferences, making decisions, becoming aware of others and their own needs
- early practical skills e.g. coping with routine such as washing, dressing and feeding (including swallowing, chewing and weaning in the case of the very young)
- opportunities to gain confidence and practical skills to undertake activities away from the family
- independent living skills for older children e.g. appropriate use of social problem solving approaches

G Learning, including Understanding, Reasoning and Problem Solving, Participation, Progress and Aspirations

Understanding, reasoning and problem solving - the ability to understand and organise information, reason and solve problems.

Also includes consideration of:

- the impact of any disability or impairment or special needs and of any potential for these outcomes
- making connections through the sense and movement, finding out about the environment and other people, becoming playfully

engaged and involved, making patterns, comparing, categorising, classifying

- being creative, exploring and discovering, experimenting with sound, other media and movement, developing competence and creativity, being resourceful
- being imaginative, imitating, mirroring, moving, imagining, exploring and re-enacting, playing imaginatively with materials using all the senses, pretend play with gestures and actions, feelings and relationships, ideas and words
- exploring, experimenting and playing, discovering that one thing can stand for another, creating and experimenting with one's own symbols and marks, recognising that others may use marks differently
- play and interaction
- demonstration of a range of skills and interests
- numbers as labels and for counting
- calculating
- shape, space and measures
- progress in learning, including any special educational needs identified
- knowledge and understanding of the world

Participation in learning, education and employment - the degree to which the child or young person has access to and is engaged in education and / or work based training and, if he / she is not participating, the reasons for this.

Also includes consideration of:

- attendance
- the degree to which prior non-participation has led to current needs and circumstances
- access to appropriate and consistent adult support
- access to appropriate educational resources e.g. books
- access to independent, professional careers guidance at key decision points

- access to transition support from each Key Stage

Progress and achievement in learning - the child or young person's educational achievements and progress, including in relation to their peers.

Also includes consideration of:

- adult interest in the child or young person's educational activities and achievements
- progress e.g. measured against prior attainment in learning, national curriculum levels achieved, and their peers
- basic skills – the ability to read, write and speak in English and use mathematics at a functional level
- key skills – the ability to learn, work with others, carry out tasks
- participation in opportunities to take part in activities in the community and / or develop particular strengths or skills e.g. in sports, arts or vocational training
- special educational needs – whether the child or young person has significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children or young people of their age
- whether the child needs help to catch up when education has been disrupted
- disability – whether the child has a disability and reasonable adjustments are being made to support their access to the curriculum and school life generally

Aspirations - the ambitions of the child or young person, whether their aspirations are realistic and they are able to plan how to meet them. Note there may be barriers to a child or young person's achieving their aspirations e.g. the child or young person's other responsibilities in the home

Also includes consideration of:

- the child or young person's view of progress
- motivating elements
- the child or young person's level of self-confidence

- perseverance
- access to careers education from Year 7 and timely guidance and support from a professional when required

2 PARENTS AND CARERS

A Basic care, ensuring safety and protection

To what extent the child or young person's physical needs are met and how they are protected from harm or danger (including self-harm).

Also includes consideration of:

- provision of food, drink, warmth, shelter, clean and appropriate clothing, personal and dental hygiene
- level of engagement in securing universal services e.g. doctor, dentist, optician
- provision of a safe environment, where family members and other carers act to safeguard the safety and welfare of the child or young person and the child or young person is not exposed to domestic violence, substance abuse/misuse^{Error! Bookmark not defined.}, sexual exploitation or other abusive experiences
- recognition of hazards and danger both in the home and elsewhere
- quality of care
- parental substance abuse/misuse^{Error! Bookmark not defined.}

B Emotional warmth and stability

A stable family environment provides emotional warmth and a sense of being valued.

Also includes consideration of:

- parent or carer's feelings about looking after this child or young person
- ensuring the child or young person's requirements for secure, stable and affectionate relationships with significant adults, with appropriate sensitivity and responsiveness to the child or young person's needs

- appropriate physical contact, comfort and cuddling sufficient to demonstrate warm regard, praise and encouragement
- maintenance of a secure attachment to the primary caregiver(s) in order to ensure optimal development
- ensuring the child or young person keeps in contact with important family members and significant others, when it is safe to do so
- frequency of moves of house and / or early years provision, school or place of employment

C Guidance, boundaries and stimulation

Enabling the child or young person to regulate their own emotions and behaviour while promoting the child or young person's learning and intellectual development through encouragement and stimulation and promoting social opportunities.

Also includes consideration of:

- modelling appropriate behaviour and control of emotions and interactions with others
- provision of clear, consistent and appropriate guidance, boundaries and discipline such that a child or young person can develop a positive internal model of value and conscience
- appropriate stimulation of learning
- effective discipline
- ensuring the child or young person's safety while encouraging independence and avoiding overprotection
- encouraging their children to participate in and benefit from education and leisure activities
- supporting children's personal and social development so they are independent, self-confident and able to form positive relationships with others.

3 FAMILY AND ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENTS

A Family history, functioning and well-being

How family situations and experiences impact on a child or young person.

This element includes consideration of:

- culture, size and composition of the household – including changes in the people living in the accommodation since the child's birth
- family history – including any concerns about inheriting illnesses from a parent
- family routines
- disorganised / chaotic lifestyle
- failure to show care or interest in the child or young person
- impact of problems experienced by other family members such as physical illness, mental health problems, bereavement or loss
- allowing the child or young person to witness violent behaviour, including domestic violence (both physical and verbal)
- involvement in criminal activity / anti-social behaviour
- experience of abuse
- family relationships – including all people important to the child or young person e.g. the impact of siblings, absent parents and any serious difficulties in the parents' relationship
- history of family breakdown or other disruptive events
- parental physical and mental health (including depression) or disability
- involvement in alcohol misuse
- involvement in substance abuse/misuse^{Error! Bookmark not defined.}
- whether anyone in the family presents a risk to the child

B Wider family

How the family gets on with relatives and non-relatives.

It includes consideration of:

- formal and informal support networks for the child or young person

- formal and informal support networks for the parents or carers
- wider family roles and responsibilities e.g. including employment and care of others
- appropriate level of support from family members

C Housing, employment and financial considerations

Housing – What are the living arrangements? Does the accommodation have appropriate amenities and facilities?

This element includes:

- who has the child or young person been living with
- the exterior of the accommodation and immediate surroundings
- the interior of the accommodation with specific reference to the child or young person's individual living arrangements
- water, heating, sanitation, cooking facilities, sleeping arrangements, cleanliness, hygiene, safety
- reasons for homelessness

Employment – who is working in the household, the pattern of their work and any changes in their work.

This element also includes:

- the impact of work upon the baby, child or young person
- how work or absence of work is viewed by family members
- how does work affect the family's relationship with the child or young person?

Financial considerations – income available over a sustained period of time.

This element also includes:

- the family's entitlement to and receipt of benefits
- sufficiency of income to meet the family's needs
- the ways in which the family's income is used

- how the family's financial circumstances affect the child or young person e.g. inadequate legitimate personal income
- whether the family is suffering financial hardship due to an emergency, e.g. loss of possessions/homelessness

D Social and community elements and resources, including education

Explores the wider context of a child or young person's neighbourhood and its impact on the child or young person, including details of the facilities and services available.

Also includes consideration of:

- neighbourhood characteristics e.g. levels of crime, disadvantage, employment, high levels of substance abuse/misuse, trading of illegal drugs, etc.
- relationship with neighbours
- availability and accessibility of universal services, including schools, day-care, primary health care, places of worship, transport, shops and leisure activities and family support services
- quality of the learning environment and educational support services
- physical access to facilities and services
- degree of child or young person's social integration or isolation
- the influence of peer groups, friendships and social networks e.g. substance abuse/misuse