

Prompts for Early Conversations

Parenting Capacity

- What are the parental factors? i.e. substance misuse, mental health, domestic abuse – what is the impact on the child?
- Has either parent/ carer disengaged with the other?
- Are there indicators of parental conflict? What does this look like and how is impacting on the child?
- Who or what is driving the conflict?
- Child's interactions with professionals / other children / parents / carers / other – are they appropriate?
- Who visits? Who comes to the house? Who lives within the property? What do these relationships look like and how does this impact on the child?
- What are the indicators of neglect?
- What do the family functions tell you? Are there appropriate boundaries in place?

Parental capacity to change

- What does parent's engagement look like?
- What are you seeing and experiencing as a professional?
- Where is the evidence to support what parents/ carers are telling you?
- Consider what questions you need to ask of the family network?
- Who do the family say are supporting them? *Family/ Friends/ services—housing, charity, School, Drug and Alcohol services, Mental Health, Health Visitor, School Nurse, GP?*
- Does the carer have a diagnosis of a learning difficulty? Has this been supported?
- Consider parents childhood experiences and how this has shaped their parenting.

Child's Development Needs

- What are the child's presenting needs? Are they meeting their milestones? Are they age/stage developmental milestones or are they doing more than is expected for example are they carrying out a young carer role?
- Are they late for school? What does attendance look like? 95% is the national benchmark. Does the parent/carer engage with school?
- Is the child eligible for 2 & 3 year nursery entitlement? Are parents aware if they can access this?
- Is the child presenting as hungry, dental decay, missed health appointments, history of A&E attendances?
- Is the child wearing suitably clean clothing?
- Is the child appropriately dressed for age and weather?
- Does the child look underweight or overweight?
- Does the child look tired, fatigued or frightened?
- Does the child smile/laugh?
- Does the child actively engage with you? (too familiar, or distrustful?)
- How is the child stimulated? Is there age-appropriate toys and games? Are toys able to be played with or are they broken?
- Parent/Adult to Child (any hiding, grabbing, aggression)
- Child to Parent/Adult (any hitting, yelling)
- What do the observations of the child and their behaviour tell you?

What I need from people who look after me.

How I grow and develop.

My wider world.

Family and Environmental Factors

- What do the home conditions look like? Observations. What can you see, hear, smell? What do the children's bedroom look like? Is there adequate bedding? Is it clean?
- Is there adequate heating and lighting? (thinking about winter months)
- Are there good levels of food in the fridge/cupboard?
- Is there any evidence of substance misuse?
- Accessibility to family network, school, amenities, main roads and access to work?
- Are the family struggling financially?
- Does this impact housing, food, clothing needs?
- Is there a pet in the home - Is the pet safe? Is it being cared for? How does the child interact with the pet?

The child should always be at the centre of your decisions.

Professional curiosity is the capacity and communication skill to explore and understand what is happening within a family rather than making assumptions or accepting things at face value.

Consider where the prompts fit into strengths.

Always consider the impact on the child.

Get the child's voice by talking to them as well as observing their interactions and behaviour

