

Baseline Assessment Guidance

Introduction

The aim of the baseline assessment and subsequent monitoring templates is to provide a picture of a child's developmental functioning at the point of their placement with adopters and at intervals linking to the Review process i.e. at four and ten months and thereafter bi-annually. This allows an objective measure of how a child is progressing developmentally from the point when the first assessment was completed and also the progress the child is making in building attachments with their adopters.

There is a range of supplementary documentation available providing support in completing the assessment and monitoring templates and to inform potential strategies for addressing any identified actual or perceived issues. (Appendices A - C) For children over the age of 3 years it may also be helpful to complete the Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire in order to highlight immediate concerns for the child or carer.

Completion of the initial baseline assessment

The Initial baseline assessment should be completed at the point of matching by the child's social worker and current carer. This will then form part of the information provided to adopters. Ideally this should be repeated after the first 28 days in placement so that the results from this can be discussed in the adoption review to inform the support plan required.

Completion of the four month and subsequent bi-annual assessment

Four months after the completion of the baseline assessment a further monitoring template should be completed in conjunction with the Adopters. Again the information gained from this should be fed into the adoption review to assist in care planning and identifying any additional support required in order to progress to adoption application. The monitoring should then be completed on a bi-annual basis up to the point of adoption order, with the changes recorded.

An analysis should then be made of the changes over time in order to encourage the adopters that progress is being made or to inform an assessment of adoption support needs should additional resources be required.

Benefits of completing Baseline Assessments

- 1) Completing the baseline assessment allows adopters an opportunity to meet with the Post Adoption Support staff at the point when the placement is settled. Thus helping adopters feel more comfortable to ask for help and work with the team at the point of crisis.
- 2) Parents have an opportunity to ask questions about child development and attachment behaviours to further their understanding in relation to the individual needs of their child. Revisiting learning from preparation training helps them to make it meaningful to their family.
- 3) At these visits, staff can discuss in depth the support on offer, including training opportunities. Again adopters have felt more able to sign up to training knowing the facilitators will be familiar.
- 4) Adopters have fed back that they appreciate the time to think about different strategies and techniques as they talk through the individual needs of their child. Parents can receive advice in relation to behaviour, attachment and other problems. Consequently, low level support such as activity groups and links with a buddy from ARC's Buddy Scheme can be implemented and support can be preventative rather than reactive.
- 5) Staff have taken the opportunity to demonstrate short Theraplay sessions at these visits and this model links with the attachment section of the assessment. Further sessions can then be offered along with opportunity to attend a one day training course to learn more about the principles of Theraplay.
- 6) Adopters equally appreciate the time to reflect at the reviews of the baseline assessment and have said having progress documented in this way can be a real confidence boost, adopters have commented they have found the assessment reassuring when they can see the progress they have all made together as a family as well as the progress their child has made in their care. This has been particularly helpful when adopters feel they are in difficulty and have a crisis of confidence where they can't see the wood for the trees.

Baseline Assessment

Name of Child	
Date of Birth	
Date of Placement	
Name of Foster Carers	
Date Baseline assessment completed and by whom	
Proposed date of placement	
Date of 28 day Monitoring Assessment / Date Due	
Name of prospective adopters	
Name of Adoption Social Worker	

Please identify the child's current functioning and any issues to address. Future comparison will give an overall progress measure

Measure - Developmental Charts	Functioning within 'normal' range? YES/NO	What aspect needs to be improved	Strategy agreed to address any concern	Timeframe / frequency	Specialist Service required? YES/NO Which Service?	Progress measured
Emotional, Personal Social Development						
Fine Motor Skills						
Gross Motor Skills						
Sleep / Rest						

Diet / eating habits						
General health						
Assessed level re: education (if appropriate)						
Additional developmental issues relevant for the individual child						

Attachment and Bonding						
Attachment behaviour	Functioning within 'normal' range? YES/NO	What aspect needs to be improved	Strategy agreed to address any concern	Timeframe / frequency	Specialist Service required? YES/NO Which Service?	Progress measured
Eye contact						
Physical contact						
Ability to give and receive affection						
Vocalisation / use of language						

Feeding / Eating habits						
Sleep pattern						
Stranger Danger						
Conscience development						
Ability to manage emotions appropriately						
General Interaction with and responsiveness to carers						
Interaction and relationship with siblings or other children in the household						

Interactions with others						
Additional Attachment / Bonding issues relevant for the individual child						
Analysis of Attachment and Bonding						