



North East Lincolnshire

Team Around the Family (TAF)

Guidance and Support Handbook



Our Children, Our Future

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**North East
Lincolnshire**
Our Children, Our Future

Introduction

The Team around the Family project are passionate about improving outcomes for our children, young people, and their families at the earliest opportunity.

Working together in a restorative way, we believe that we can achieve positive change within our community and improve outcomes by supporting you in your role.

This handbook serves as a go to guide for all professionals working with children and families in North East Lincolnshire and aims to enhance practice by providing opportunities to develop confidence and strengthen the Team around the family.



Our Children, Our Future

How can the TAF Project Team help you?

- ✓ They will help to raise awareness and knowledge across agencies, Professionals, Communities, Children, young people and Families regarding Team Around the Family and wider Early Help.
- ✓ They can support professionals in completing Early Help Assessments and plans to support families at the earliest opportunity
- ✓ They can support professionals to embed Signs of Safety Methodology across wider Early Help which underpins Early Help Assessments.
- ✓ They will provide professionals with support on the TAF process
- ✓ They can deliver and provide targeted sessions to enhance awareness.



Roles and Responsibilities

If you have a good relationship with the child and family, you will probably be the best placed person to be appointed the lead professional, however, we will support you with this, so do not worry.

Your role will be supported to:

- ✓ Be the first point of contact
- ✓ Coordinate and hold Team Around the Family (TAF) meetings
- ✓ Ensure that the Voice of the Child (VOC) is sought beforehand and throughout the process effectively.
- ✓ Signpost lower-level need to external organisations
- ✓ Be confident in your judgements and seeking additional support.
- ✓ Complete Early Help Assessments and send to either **TAF@nelincs.gov.uk** for lower-level concerns or the Integrated Front Door (IFD) if needs are more complex and need additional support from the Local Authority.
- ✓ Review Team Around the Family meetings and measure outcomes.

What is a TAF?

All Children need a strong support network of people that care about them to feel safe, secure, and valued. At times families may need additional support from professionals, which will create a '**Team Around the Family**' or '**TAF**'. A TAF meeting can take place when there are two or more professionals/ services involved, for example, Education and health or a voluntary organisation within the community.

When holding a TAF, it is important that we firstly explain to the family what a TAF is and what role they will play in the overall process. Establishing a good understanding around the process will promote good working relationships based on trust and transparency.

The Team around the Family will work together in an open and honest way so that they can identify the needs of a child, young person and their family and provide best solutions/ interventions to target areas of concern. Adopting a restorative approach to practice enables professionals to share ideas openly and honestly which establishes an inclusive working climate which places the child, young person, and family's needs at the core of the process.

Working inclusively ensures that everyone's voices are heard, this is the first step of the TAF process. It is essential that an open and honest discussion is held with everyone all together or separately.

The discussion will include highlighting areas of strengths in addition to identifying areas of concern/worries.

Once needs are identified, the next step is to set realistic goals and targets that everyone can work towards. This will ensure that the Team are working together to improve the outcomes for children and their family in a timely manner. It also allows the identification of the best placed person and service to address a particular need, drawing on skill sets, and service offers.

The TAF then has all the ingredients that will serve to empower the family to create a plan. This will highlight who is doing what and why and enable the professional to track progress. It is important here that review dates are set, this will allow celebration of successes and identify any factors that are preventing the family from moving forward, which is key if a plan needs modifying and for the TAF to be proactive rather than reactive.



TAF Process Checklist

Introductions	Introduce the child and family to everyone present and what their role is. Introductions should be simple and avoid the use of jargon.
Purpose of the Meeting	Using clear language explain what the meeting aims are.
House keeping	Discuss the importance of confidentiality and information sharing. Ensure that everyone is aware that the meeting relies on the participation of everyone. Encourage respect and sensitivity.
Identify the strengths and current needs of the child and their family	Working restoratively, where everyone's views are heard and acknowledged, highlight the strengths and current needs of the family, this will enable a supportive wrap around approach when identifying actions. You may use information sourced within the Early Help Assessment to support with this part and add any further contributions, to enable a deeper understanding of current issues.
What are we all worried about?	It is important that the family are firstly asked what things they are worried about. This provides an opportunity for the family to share/reflect upon their lived experience and address any power imbalances. If an EHA has been carried out, refer to the worry statements that have been captured within to prompt. Although, it is imperative that the family have opportunity to discuss their worries, it is also essential that any worries from all attendees is documented.

What needs to Happen/ Actions?	This part should focus upon the goals that have been agreed and set by the TAF Team to improve the Child/ Young Person and their family's outcomes and should feed into the plan.
Complicating Factors	You will need to consider any complicating factors that may negatively impact the family and prevent them from moving forward.
Scaling questions and level of concern	This will require input from all in attendance, which will form a consensus and benchmark when tracking progress.
The Lead Professional	The child/ young person and their family will be given an opportunity to decide who they would like their lead professional to be. It is important that we respect choice and empower our families to be actively involved in the process
Voice of the Child	This should be captured throughout the process.
Set a Review Date	Review dates should be set within 8 weeks of the first TAF meeting.



Early Help Assessment

If it is identified that an Early Help Assessment is needed due to more complex needs, an assessment should be completed as soon as possible by a professional. This can be in relation to health, developmental concerns, welfare or if the family raise a concern with you.

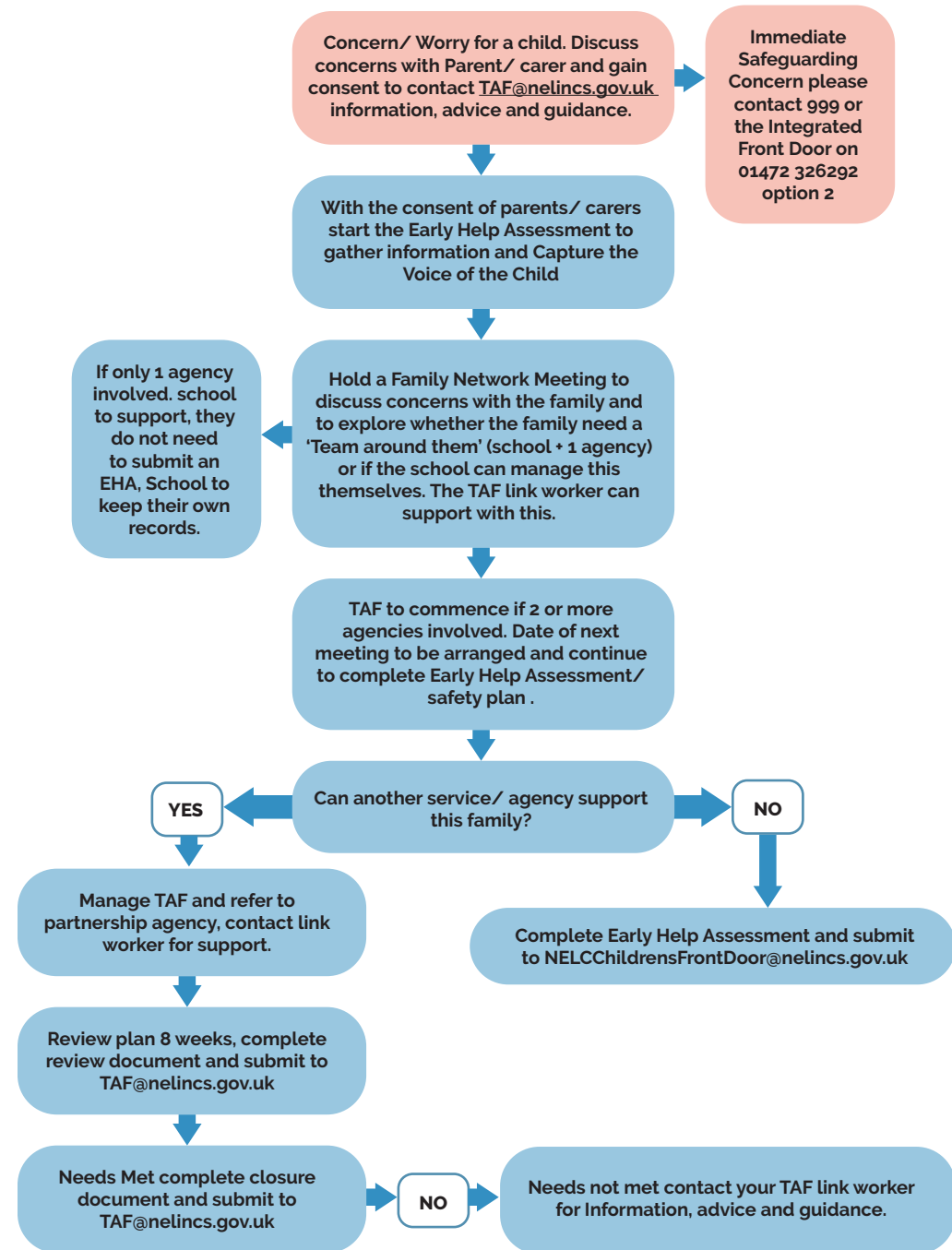
Before you start to complete the Early Help Assessment it is important that you firstly gain consent from the family. This will then enable you to also liaise with other professionals that may be supporting the family already in addition to, the family's support network. These steps allow us to start building a picture of circumstance and the lived experience of the family that we are supporting.

When completing the EHA make sure that you get as much information as possible, a good Early Help Assessment captures a holistic view of the child's life and will aid in the signposting of support at the earliest opportunity.

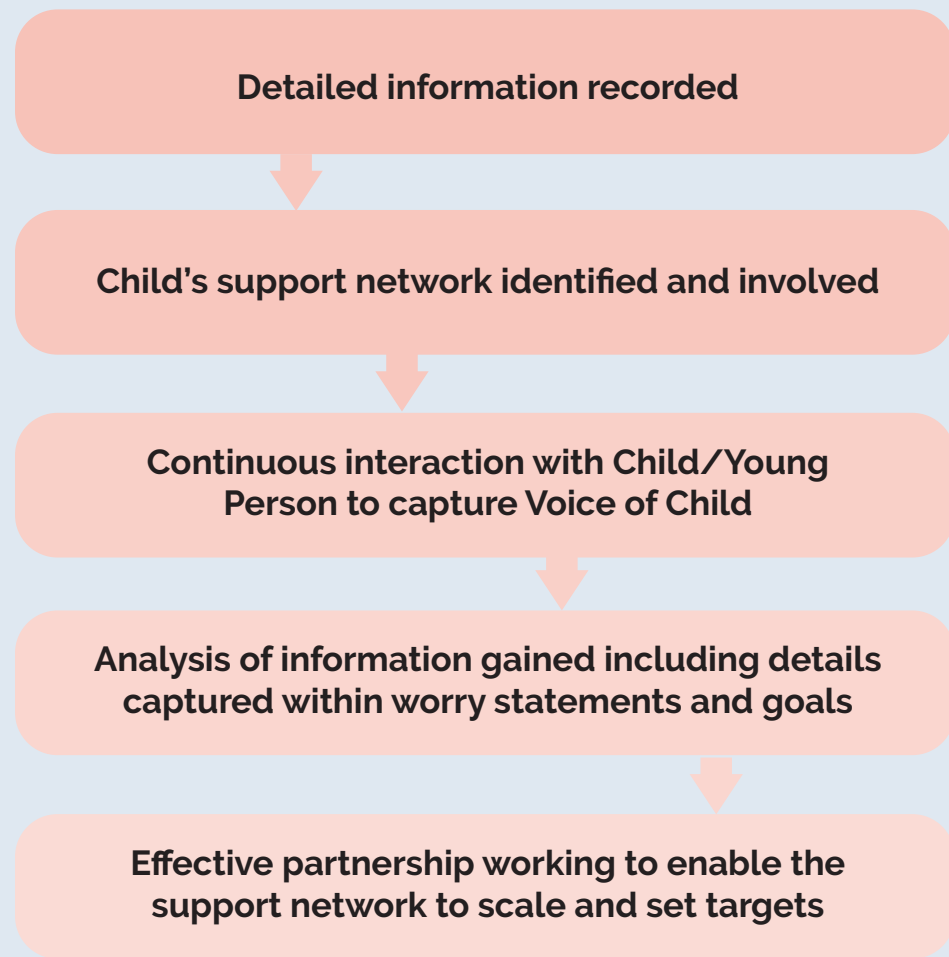
The Early Help Assessment is underpinned by the Signs of Safety Methodology. Developed in Western Australia by Andrew Turnell and Steve Edwards it is evidenced based and effective when working with children and young people. This approach not only provides a template to support a meaningful Assessment but also provides clear focus to aid in application of an effective intervention.



Early Help TAF Process



Quality Assessment Checklist



Review of the Plan

Lead Professional

- The review will be carried out by the lead professional that completed the assessment
- During the review the child, young person and their family will decide who they want their lead professional to be

Concerns

- If you are concerned about being the lead professional, please don't worry, they have chosen you for a reason
- If you would like to discuss your concerns please contact TAF@nelincs.gov.uk

Opportunities

- The review of the plan will ensure that the needs of the child, young person and their family are being met, in addition to, highlighting any additional concerns surrounding the family
- Opportunities for further intervention to be implemented

Celebrate

- It is really important that during the review we celebrate the successes of the family. Adopting a strengths based approach will empower the family and create stronger partnerships within the TAF team.
- Focus on the positives should be family led. Conversations should capture the voice of the child, include worry statements, goals, scaling and best questions

Support

- If further support is needed with the review, please do not hesitate to contact TAF@nelincs.gov.uk



Closures and Planning Ahead

A Child, Young person and their family can be supported by their TAF for a long or short period of time. From the goals set throughout the process you will be able to have a clear focus on what a closure looks like and when it would be an appropriate time to cease intervention. Discussions should have taken place leading up to the closure, this will ensure that everyone is aware of the next steps and allow for any contingency plans to be put in place prior the withdrawal of additional support. We acknowledge that families need support from wider family and friends throughout their life, so it is essential that when we are closing a TAF that we make sure the support network is still intact to ensure that the Child or Young person feels happy, loved, is safe and secure.

The closure summary should document and celebrate the successes so far, in addition to capturing the views of the child, family and professionals. This allows the family to reflect upon their journey and be content with their achievements. Once the family agree that the closure can take place, all paperwork should be sent to TAF@nelincs.gov.uk.



Embedding Signs of Safety and Capturing the Voice of the Child



It is important that when we are working with children, Young People and Families that we are mindful of the language we use. Quite often families can feel a power imbalance when working with professionals and this can result in non-engagement and lack of trust. It is, therefore, essential that we are open and honest with our families and be innovative to promote strong relationships.

The Signs of Safety Methodology recognises that the Voice of the Child is paramount and should be placed at the heart of everything we do, a notion closely supported within Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). It is essential that we take not only what we hear into consideration but also what we observe, such as a change in behaviour, interactions with family and friends and a change in presentation.

There are tools that can support professionals to gather the Voice of the Child such as Three Houses, the Fairy and Wizard and Three Islands tool. The tools can be used to guide and support those initial conversations; however, it is important that we are creative to capture this as sometimes the best

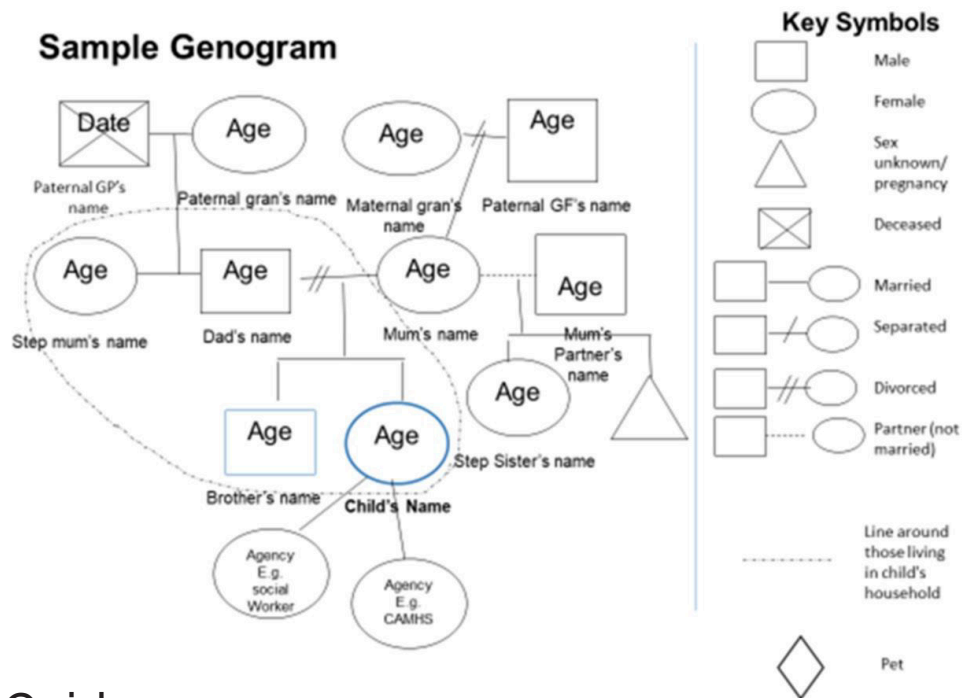
questions cannot be found on a set worksheet and require us to think outside the box.

The following pages contain resources and guidance that can support you in practice, to develop and capture the Voice of the Child.

If you require additional support, please contact your TAF link worker @ TAF@nelincs.gov.uk



Genogram



Guidance

Start with a basic family tree and talk about each person as they are added, this additional information makes a good genogram. The initial aim is to identify all the important people involved with the family. This means it can include individuals that do not live locally but are in regular contact with the family, they may not be related or may be a neighbour or a teacher.

Asking about where connected people live, about their experiences and how they are involved with the family helps you to get a good understanding of the family dynamics and how the child is being supported in their community.

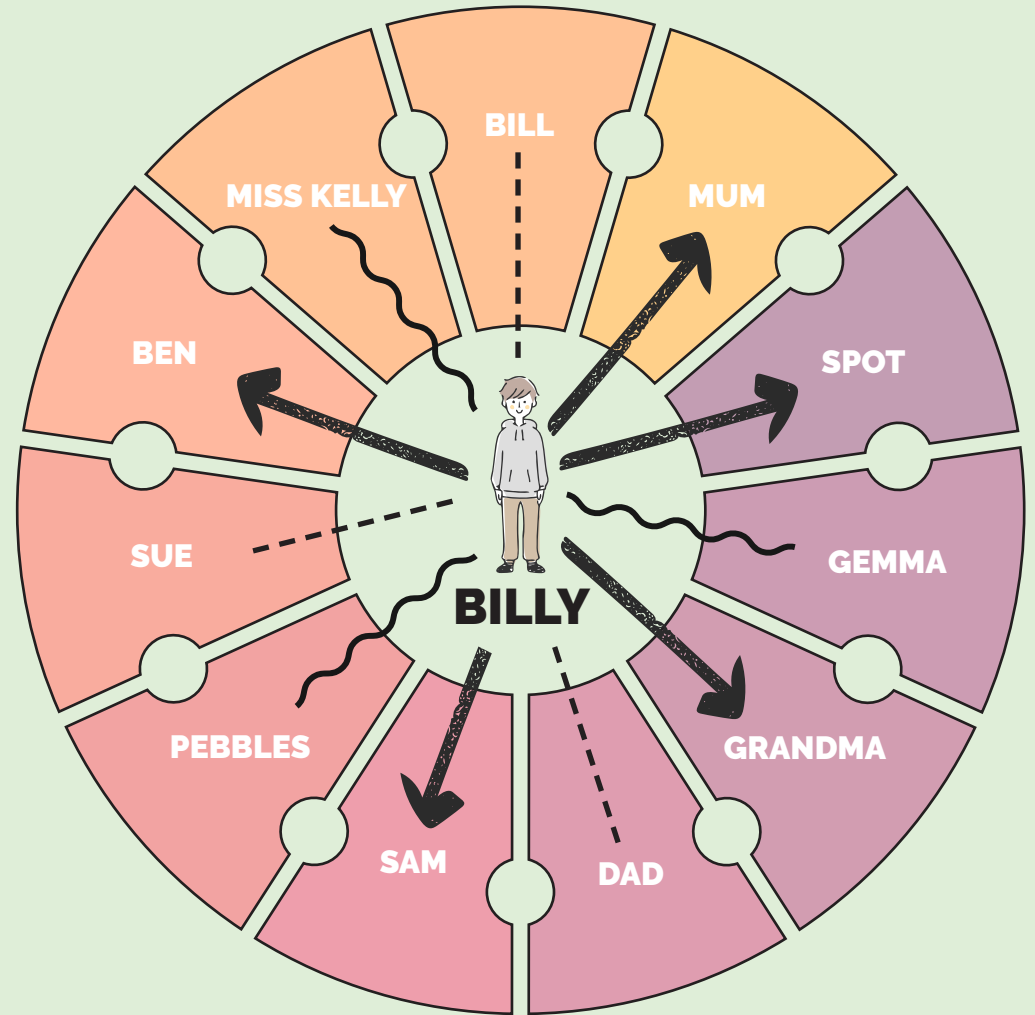
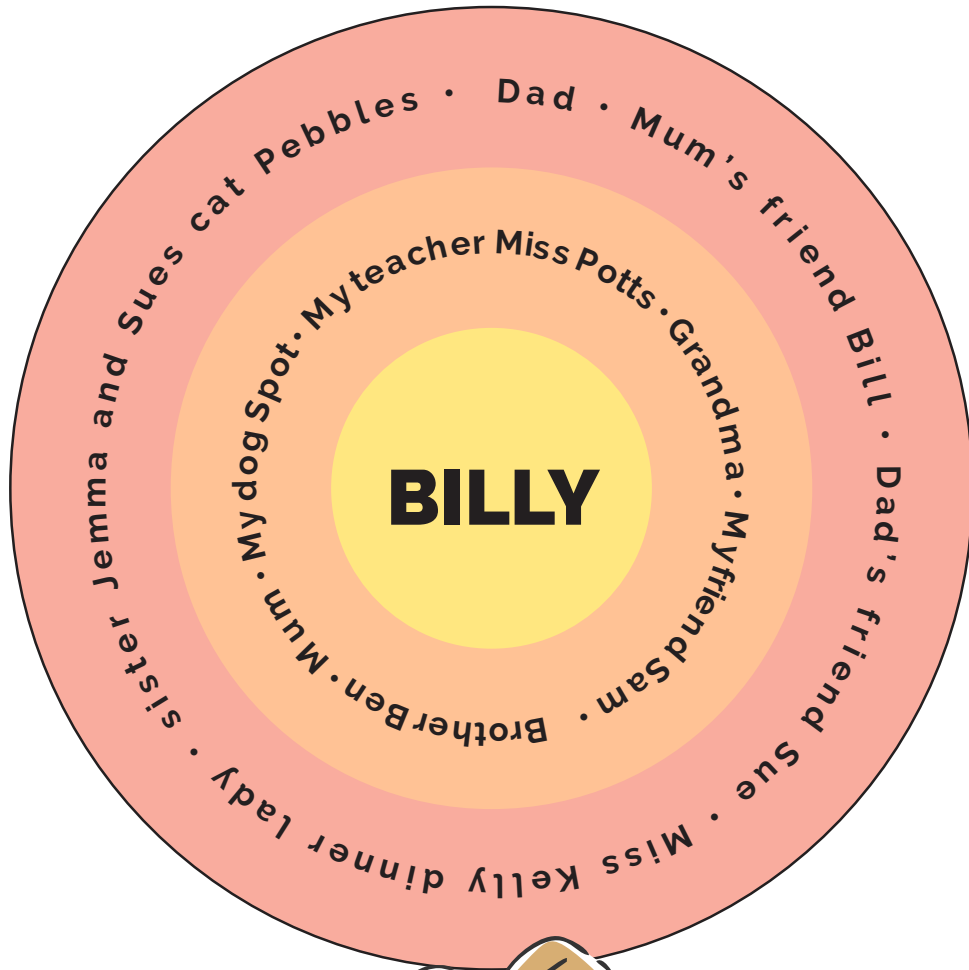
Do not worry about the symbols! Usually, a square represents a male and a circle represents a female, however, with all else, be creative and use first names and ages. Ensure you are clear what your symbol means, and ensure they are listed in your key.

Genograms are an open tool which can be added to over time as you get to know the young person/family.


Do not forget to date your genogram.





Ecogram



KEY

Strong relationship 

Relationship not so good 

We don't get on 



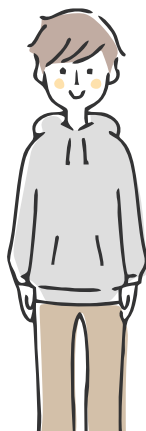
ECOGRAM Guidance

Ecograms aim to delve a little bit deeper into each of those relationships to help understand the family, by considering “Who helps”, “Who hinders”.

Once you have completed the genogram which will have identified the person’s/child support network, ask them to think about who would be the most important people they would want to invite to their family network meeting if there was a crisis in the family? Who would you not invite?

Remember that this work is the most important part of getting to know our families and aids in building an understanding of family dynamics and how they operate.

Remember this is all about taking a position of enquiry with families and really being interested in them, trying to get them to think about what barriers they must have inviting family members and what would change their mind?



Thinking about the child/teenager and the family situation

What are we worried about?	What's working well?	What needs to happen?
Harm	Existing Strengths	Safety Goals
Complicating Factors	Existing Safety	Next Steps
Danger / Worry statements		

On a scale of 0-10 where 10 means the child/teen is safe enough and we can close the case and zero means things are so bad for the young person we must remove them into care immediately, where do you rate this situation today? Put different judgement numbers on scale for different people, e.g. different professionals, child, parents etc.

0



10

Case mapping tool/3 columns

The three columns are intended to be a structured tool used to gather information from individuals and can be adapted to address a number of issues. The three columns format can be used during visits with children, home visits with parents, resource providers and family network meetings. This will help gather information to map a case and/or develop the Family Safety Plan.

Case mapping is a simple process which uses the 3 columns to help map out the circumstances surrounding a vulnerable child, including.

- What we are worried about (past harm, future danger, complicating factors)
- What is working well (existing strengths and existing safety)
- What needs to happen (family/child/child protection authority and other professionals' safety goals and next steps for future safety).
- And lastly the scaling question to make judgments about how safe the child is, from the perspective of the Local Authority, the family, their networks, and other professionals. This will to bring the case to judgment, develop understanding between the parties and to drive change.

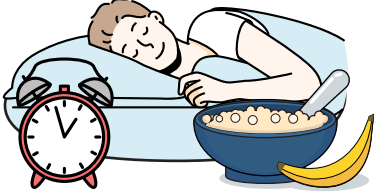


Scaling is from 0-10 with 0 being extremely worried about the child and they're not safe in the home and 10 is being, the child is safe, and you are not worried at all.




A Day in the Life Tool with guidance

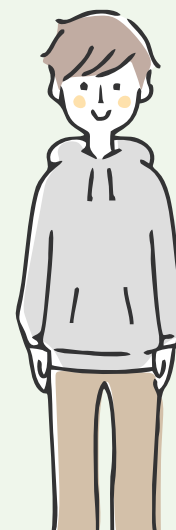
A day in the life



Question?	Answer?
<p>6 - 8am What time do you get up?</p> <p>Is it different on a weekend? What do you have for your breakfast?</p> <p>Do you make it yourself?</p> 	
<p>6 - 8am How do you get to school, walk, bus or car? Who takes you to school or do you go on your own?</p>  	

Question?	Answer?
<p>9 - 3pm</p> <p>Do you like school? What do you do on a weekend? What do you like to do that's fun?</p> 	
<p>3 - 6pm</p> <p>Who cooks your tea? What's your favourite tea? What do you do after school? Do you go out or stay in? Where do you like to go?</p> 	

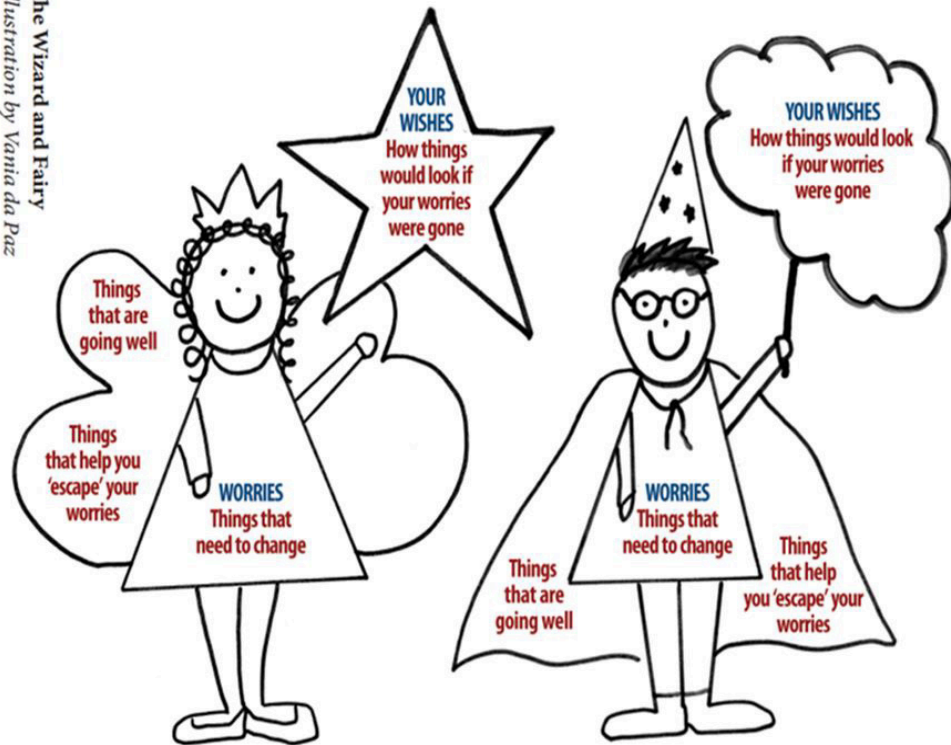
Question?	Answer?
<p>6 - bedtime</p> <p>What do you do on an evening before bed? What time do you go to bed?</p> 	




**A day in
 the life**

Fairies and Wizard Tool Guidance

The Wizard and Fairy
Illustration by Vania da Paz

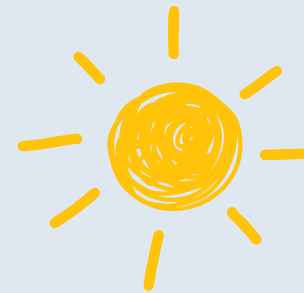


The Fairy/Wizard tool explores the same three questions as the Three Houses, using a drawing of a fairy with a magic wand or a wizard figure. The same process for using the Three Houses tool applies in using the Wizard/Fairy tool.

This can be a good way of working with young children as they often engage quickly with the picture of the wizard or fairy. The Practitioner can present the child with the wizard or fairy or draw the wizard or fairy with the child, asking the child to help, depending on what best suits the situation. The fairy/wizard's clothes (which

represent what can/should be changed, just as we change our clothes) are used to explore together with the child, the problems/worries from

the child's perspective or "what needs to be changed". The fairy's wings and wizard's cape represent the good things or what's working well in the child's life, since the wings enable the fairy to "fly away" or "escape" her problems; and the cape "protects" the young wizard and "makes his problems invisible for a little while". The star of the fairy's wand, and in the spell bubble at the end of the wizard's wand, are where the Practitioner/child records the child's wishes, and vision of their life, the way they would want it to be with all the problems solved; the wand represents "wishes coming true" and explores hope for the future



The Three houses tool

The Three Houses tool represents the three key assessment questions of the Signs of Safety Framework:

- What are you worried about?
- What's going well?
- What needs to happen?

When introducing the Three Houses to the child, Practitioners can either use the worksheets provided or encourage the child to draw an outline of three houses on separate pieces of paper. An explanation for the child is that in the first house, this is where you write your worries, in the second house, this is where "your good things go - everything that you like in your life". In your house of dreams this is where you can include "what you would like things to be like in your life if all your worries were solved or gone away".

Offering the child, a choice of which house, house of worries or good things, they start with a good strategy, however, often it is easier to start with the good things, especially if the child is anxious or uncertain, or the Practitioner is concerned the child has been told by the adults not to speak. Starting with the good things is a positive place to start as it would be unusual for a child to be told not to talk about the things, they are happy with in their life and family.

The child and practitioner can use words or drawings which are most appropriate to the situation and the child. If writing, the Practitioner can offer the child the choice of who writes, if the Practitioner is doing the writing, it is important that they use the child's own words.

The Practitioner can provide prompts or cues to assist the child.

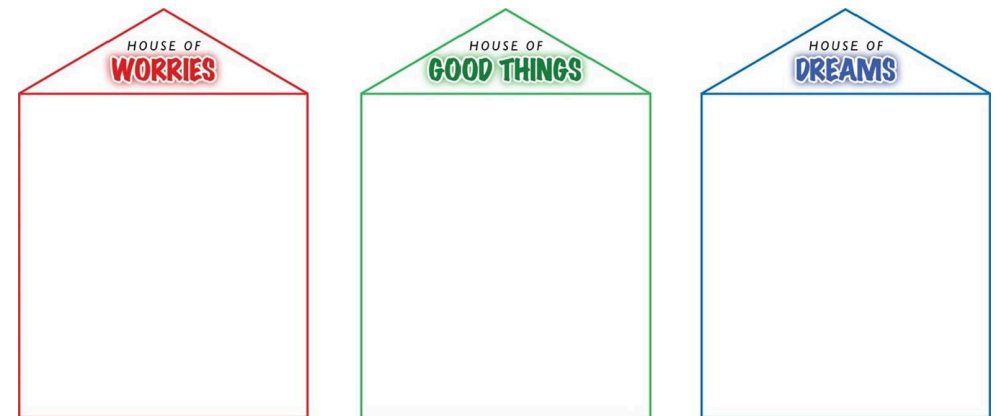
For example:

What is good about living in your home? What is good about school?

What is good about your family?

Exploring the things the child feels are positive in their life often provides access to explore what is not so good, and what they are worried about.

To give the child every chance to express what they want to say, it's a good idea, to read back what the child has said, asking the child if there is anything they want to add to any of the houses.



Three Islands Tool

The 3 islands activity work sheet can be used, or Practitioners can draw the 3 islands with the child. It may be helpful to have some small toys or models to use, or the Practitioner or child can draw family/friends on the worksheet.

First label the islands, the first one is 'The Island of Always', the second island is 'The Island of Sometimes' and the third island (the one with rocks and sharks) is 'The Island of Far Away'. Explain that this is a game and that they live on the first island, and this is where they are all the time (the island of always). Ask them to draw themselves on the island or use a toy to be them. Then ask them to draw who/what else they want to be on this island with them all the time. This could be people, animals, or objects. So, they could put family, friends, pets, a cuddly toy etc... Anything that's important and which they really like and want to have with them all the time.

On the second island, ask them to draw or put who/ anything that they want to see or do sometimes, (the island of sometimes). Explain that they have a boat, on the first island so that they can go and visit the people/objects on the second island, whenever they want to.

On the third island, ask the child or young person to draw or put anything that they want to be far away from them or never see again (the island of faraway). When they are drawing or putting toys on the islands, ask them who or what they are and why they have put something on a particular island. The Practitioner should write down the things they say so you have a record later. When writing things down for the child, always try and use their exact words and ideas. It's a good idea to read everything back to them before you finish each island. This gives an opportunity to explore an issue further if needed



On My Desert Island...





If you require additional information, advice and guidance please contact your TAF link worker or email TAF@nelincs.gov.uk

North East Lincolnshire

Team Around the Family (TAF)

**Guidance and Support
Handbook**

2023

If you need this document as plain text please contact North East Lincolnshire Council Communications and Marketing Team

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