



Child/Youth Assessment

Practitioner Check List

- ✓ Begin the assessment process with a review of all child protection services and foster care case records available to you, including the birth and hospital/medical records, the family case record and the siblings records who are, or who have been, in foster care. Remember it is your professional responsibility to disclose all possible information on the child/youth to the adopting parent(s).
- ✓ Get to know the child or young person. This will help you to understand his or her strengths, needs, feelings, relationships, and preferences.
- ✓ Gather as much information as you can from schools and service provider reports. Interview current and previous caregivers, maternal and paternal family members, community supports, and other significant people in the child's life.
- ✓ Make note of gaps. Try to obtain the missing information and, if this is not possible, point out significant gaps in your final report. For instance, no information on a child's father means that half of the genetic and family history information is also unavailable. Consider reaching out to a grandparent for this information. Bring a picture of the child/youth and make the interaction beneficial to both parties.
- ✓ When caseload demands threaten your enthusiasm for the child assessment process, remind yourself that this task will result in much more than just another item of paperwork. The information you collect and document may truly be life-changing! The knowledge you share may give a prospective parent the confidence to make a lifelong commitment to a waiting child. Years from now, your written report could be the most reliable source available to a young adult seeking the truth about early life events, family, or medical history.

Coaching Tips for Supervisors

- Account for the time necessary to complete quality, individualized, and comprehensive child assessments when assigning work. If necessary, advocate with agency leaders for caseload sizes that will allow your staff to do this important work well.
- Model how child assessment conclusions can be used to inform the process of making placement decisions. For example, make sure that case planning meetings begin with a review of the child/youth's strengths and needs, as captured in the child assessment report.
- Team experienced workers with new staff to teach the "art" as well as the "science" of child assessment and profile writing.
- Collect examples of excellent child assessment profiles to share with staff.
- Review worker's drafts assessment profiles carefully for thoroughness, accuracy and presentation, and provide staff with timely feedback.