

Evidence based  
approaches for assessing

# Children & Families

2009/2010

**Child and Family Training** run courses on a series of standardised assessment tools and approaches to analysis and planning to help professionals working with children and their families.

The courses provide professionals with essential skills in making evidence-based assessments of children's developmental needs, parenting capacity and family and environmental factors as well as planning how to intervene. The training is based on an action-based learning approach, with gaps between training days for participants to use the assessment tools in their work context as part of the training process. Working with managers to support, supervise and audit trail the effective use of the tools and approaches by their staff forms a further component of the training programme.

The training courses are designed for professionals in health, social care, education, the police and independent sector organisations who work with children and families. More information can be found on:

[www.childandfamilytraining.org.uk](http://www.childandfamilytraining.org.uk).

## Tools for Assessment, Analysis and Planning

**Child and Family Training** with others was commissioned by the Department of Health, to develop training materials to support professionals to use a range of standardised assessment tools when making assessments using the *National Assessment Framework*. Training in the use of the *Attachment Style Interview* was developed in partnership with the Lifespan Research Group at Royal Holloway University of London and Child and Family Training.

More recently a model of analysis, planning interventions and identifying and measuring outcomes using the Assessment Framework has been developed and is included in the training.

The assessment tools are referenced in a range of DCSF guidance and procedures linked to the Assessment Framework including:

- Initial and core assessments
- Working Together 2006
- Every Child Matters
- The Integrated Children's System
- Looked After Children Records
- Safeguarding Children materials
- Practice Guidance on Preparing and Assessing Prospective Adopters and on Assessing the Support Needs of Adoptive Families

The assessment tools can be used for a wide range of purposes including:

- Assessing children's needs, the quality of parenting and a range of family and environmental factors
- Exploring the children's experiences at home, at school and elsewhere
- Analysis, planning effective interventions and assessing change
- Initial and core assessments
- Safeguarding and specialist assessments – assessing the level/risk of significant harm and the possibility of rehabilitation
- Preparing reports for court in care proceedings under the Public Law Outline and in Private Law cases relating to residence and contact issues
- Planning for permanency and assessing and supporting adoptive parents, foster carers and kinship carers

Training can be tailored to link in with the *Getting it right for every child* in Scotland, *UNOCINI* in Northern Ireland and the *Framework for the Assessment of Vulnerable Children & their Families* in the Republic of Ireland.

Child and Family Accredited Trainers have been trained by the authors of each of the assessment tools and deliver training across the UK, Europe and elsewhere.

Training can either be commissioned for groups of staff in agencies or individuals can attend Open Courses organised by Child and Family Training.

## The Training Programme

---

### Assessing parenting and the family life of children, including disabled children, using the HOME Inventory and Family Pack of Questionnaires and Scales

This 3-day course trains participants to use the *HOME Inventory (Home Observation and Measurement of the Environment)* and the *Family Pack of Questionnaires and Scales*. The *HOME* assesses parenting and a child's experience of the care and home environment provided by their parent/carer, including disabled children. The *Questionnaires and Scales*, provide an economical and effective way of gathering information about emotional and behavioural difficulties in both children and adults, parenting problems, recent life events, mental health difficulties, alcohol problems and the quality of family life. A model of analysis and planning interventions and identifying and measuring outcomes using the *Assessment Framework* triangle is introduced and applied. The training is suitable for a wide range of staff including those involved in initial, core and parenting assessments as well as reports for court in care proceedings under the Public Law Outline, assessments for Private Law cases relating to residence and contact issues and in the fostering and adoption context.

### Assessing families in complex child care cases using the Family Assessment

This 3-day course trains professionals in the use of the *Family Assessment* which provides a systematic and evidence-based approach for observing, describing and assessing family life, relationships, parenting and the impact of family history. Course members also develop skills in engaging and working with children and families during the assessment process. A model of analysis and planning interventions and identifying and measuring outcomes using the *Assessment Framework* triangle completes the training. The *Family Assessment* is particularly helpful in complex childcare cases where an assessment of the impact of family relationships/parenting difficulties on children's development is required, e.g. core and safeguarding assessments and in care proceedings under the Public Law Outline or Private Law cases relating to residence and contact issues.

### Giving children a voice: direct work with children using the In My Shoes Interview

A 2-day course providing training in the use of *In My Shoes* - a computer-assisted interview for communicating with children, young people and vulnerable adults. Using a laptop together with a mouse each, the interviewer and child/young person work through a series of interactive modules which help facilitate communication about the child's experiences in the various settings in their lives. *In My Shoes* uses images to represent people, places and emotions and is therefore very useful for direct work with young children and those with attention, communication or learning difficulties.

It is an effective tool for:

- exploring and assessing a child's experiences related to home, school, their foster or adoptive families, friends and during contact
- helping children talk about troubling experiences (e.g. maltreatment, separation, loss and trauma)
- involving a child or young person in life story work
- gathering children and young people's thoughts, wishes and feelings about plans for their future
- enabling them to participate in reviews, planning meetings and preparing for moves

Course members are trained in the use of the *In My Shoes* software and specific interviewing skills that maximize the effectiveness of the interview.

Participants can become *Registered In My Shoes Interviewers* on successful completion of the course requirements. The *In My Shoes* software is supplied with the training. Free ongoing email support is provided. Refresher and update training sessions are available.

---

## The Training Programme

---

### Using the Attachment Style Interview in adoption and fostering or child care contexts

A 4-day intensive training in the use of the *Attachment Style Interview (ASI)* to assess the attachment style of adults, in terms of secure and insecure styles, the quality of their close relationships, including their partner/marital relationship, and their patterns of support and relating to others.

In the fostering and adoption context, the *ASI* is useful in assessing potential adoptive parents and foster/kinship carers, helping to identify suitable matches with children and planning how best to provide support.

In assessments of children in need and where there are safeguarding concerns, the *ASI* helps to assess strengths and vulnerabilities in adults' attachment styles and the nature of their close relationships, attitudes towards relating to others and access to and use of support.

Course members are trained to use the *ASI* categories, interview approach and rating system. The training also helps staff to plan how to implement and integrate the use of the *ASI* in either adoption and fostering or child care contexts.

---

### Evidence-based assessment, analysis and planning in complex cases where there are continuing safeguarding concerns

In this new training, course members will be trained to use the model for safeguarding assessments described in a newly published book *Safeguarding children living with trauma and family violence: evidence-based assessment, analysis and planning interventions* (2009) Arnon Bentovim, Antony Cox, Liza Bingley Miller and Stephen Pizzey. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers. The authors are all members of the Child and Family Training team.

The training will equip course members to:

- Evaluate the level of strengths and difficulties in the domains and dimensions of the *Assessment Framework* triangle
- Assess the impact of parenting on the child's needs and the level of harm or likelihood of harm to the child and create a profile of harm
- Make a systemic analysis of the factors and processes leading to harm as well as protective factors
- Assess the risks of further harm/re-abuse and prospects for rehabilitation and plan for intervention

This training builds on our foundation training in the use of standardised assessment tools (i.e. the *HOME* and *Questionnaires and Scales* or the *Family Assessment*) and the *model of analysis and planning based on the Assessment Framework*. There will be two levels of training:

- An advanced 2-day training for those who have successfully completed either the 'Assessing Parenting' or the 'Assessing Families' training described earlier.
  - A 5-day training (with gaps between training days) for those who have not completed this training.
- 

#### For further information please contact:

Liza Bingley Miller, National Training Coordinator  
liza.miller@childandfamilytraining.org.uk  
or +44 (0)1904 633417

Dr Arnon Bentovim  
arnon.bentovim@childandfamilytraining.org.uk

or write to:  
Child and Family Training,  
PO Box 723, York YO30 7WS  
www.childandfamilytraining.org.uk.

#### To apply for training, please contact:

Jane Phythian, Administrator  
jane.phythian@childandfamilytraining.org.uk  
or +44 (0)1904 424960

child  
and  
family  
training

*Child and Family Training is a non-profit organisation working to promote evidence-based assessments and interventions with children and families*  
Child and Family Training Limited  
Directors: Dr Arnon Bentovim and Liza Bingley Miller  
Registered in England and Wales  
Company Number 573868  
Registered Office 54 Bootham, York, YO30 7XZ

---