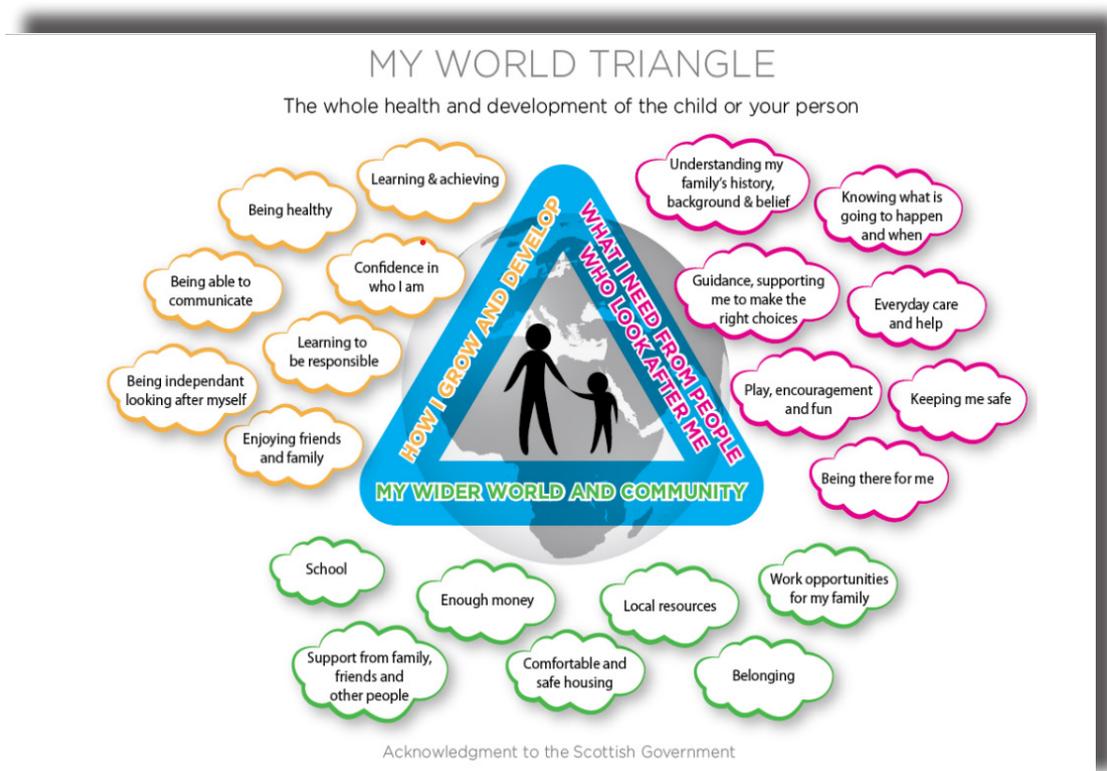


Guidance Notes for Lead Practitioners when completing the Strengths and Needs Record Form with Parents/Young People



The Strengths and Needs Record Form is a tool designed to look at all aspects of a child's development. It is used to explore three connected areas of the child's world in a structured way:

1. How the child grows and develops (their health and development)
2. What the child needs from the people who care for them to develop (parenting capacity)
3. What the child needs from the wider world and community (extended family and the community)

You can only complete the form with a parent's direct participation and if possible the child/young person's. You should use the form and the process of completing the form to help parents share their own knowledge, expertise and concerns about their child and the child/young person to express their views. The ultimate goal is to enable parents, children/young people and practitioners to work together to achieve a better life for the child. When you use the form, it is important to identify strengths within the three areas above. This will be important in developing a plan for the child's or young person's growth and development.

There is an additional box at the end of Section 5: 'Anything else you would like to add?' to allow parents/children/young people to mention anything that wasn't covered by the three My World Triangle sections.

Always try to base the strengths and needs on facts. If you are recording opinions, make this clear in your notes. A number of practitioners in the Meitheal Group may be sharing the Strengths and Needs Record Form. Remember, you are not expected to be an expert in all areas outlined in the Strengths and Needs Record Form, just your own field.



My World Triangle Supporting Questions *(from Meitheal Toolkit, 2015)*

Please note that these questions are suggestions/prompts and don't all have to be asked. The type of language can be adapted depending on the age and stage of the child.

SECTION 1: HOW I GROW AND DEVELOP

Health



For parents of younger children (0-5yrs) have they a personal health record for their child?

Have you or your PHN expressed any concern within their child's health record? Are you happy with the child's development, progressing well?

Have you good access to medical services, GP, dentist etc.?

Has your child any major medical conditions that impacts on their health and/or development?

Do you have any concerns around alcohol/drug misuse? Do you have any concern about your child's diet, exercise etc? How would you describe your child (happy, sad, outgoing, shy, etc.)?

Has your child any additional needs (disability, speech & language etc.)?

Educational Development: Learning & Achieving

Does your child attend pre-school/school etc?

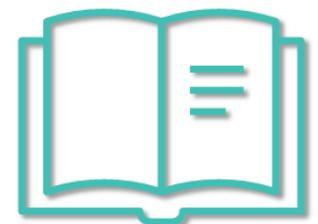
How is your child at pre-school, school, jobs etc.?

Is your child able to keep up with the work, homework etc.?

Do they attend regularly?

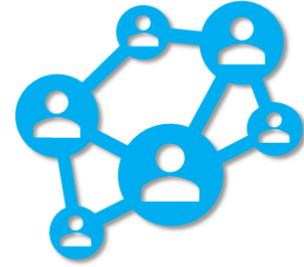
Do they have any difficulties?

Are they involved in activities after school (sports, music, clubs etc.)? What is their favourite activity?



Social development: Being able to communicate, enjoying friends & family

How are your child's language skills?
Do they have any difficulties with language?
If so, are there any reasons for this (hearing difficulties etc.)?
What language do they use for everyday communication?
Is your child able to express their thoughts and feelings?
Is there a particular person that they go to share their worries?
Does your child make friends easily?
Do they have many friends?
Do they have close friends?
Do you know their friends?
How do they get on within the family?
Does your child have a good relationship with you and other members of the family?



Emotional development: 'becoming independent, looking after myself', 'confidence in who I am' and 'learning to be responsible'



How would you describe your child (for example, generally happy, sad, outgoing, loner etc.)?
What makes your child happy?
Does your child have the appropriate skills for their age (e.g. toilet training etc.)?
Does your child take pride in how they look (for example, social presentation)? If they have to deal with a difficult situation, how do they deal with it?
Do you have any concerns around their behaviour (substance misuse, anti-social behaviour, sexually active)?
If asked to be home at a given time, does your child generally tend to be home at that time?
Does your child have a good understanding of right from wrong?
Would you consider your child responsible?

SECTION 2: WHAT I NEED FROM PEOPLE WHO LOOK AFTER ME?

If the parent has expressed concern regarding their child, ask what they have done to try and address the concern? What would be your suggestions in meeting your child's needs?
What do you find most enjoyable about being a parent?
What do you find the most challenging?
Are there factors that impact on your ability to parent (for example, working parent, tired, a lot of other children, partner has different views or parenting, addiction, mental health etc.)?
What are your ambitions/hopes/dreams for your child?
How do you support this?



SECTION 3: MY WIDER WORLD AND COMMUNITY



Do you like where you live?

What is good/or not so good about your community?

Do you have many services to support your family?

What services do you find the most useful for you and your family?

Have you any housing concerns?

Have you any financial concerns?

Do you have good family support (i.e. extended family)?

What are your ambitions/hopes/dreams for your child?

How do you support this?

Knowing the Child

Who gets child up in morning and to school/pre-school/minder?

How does child spend morning?

Is child adequately supervised?

What happens at lunch-time, is lunch provided?

How does child get home?

How does child spend afternoon?

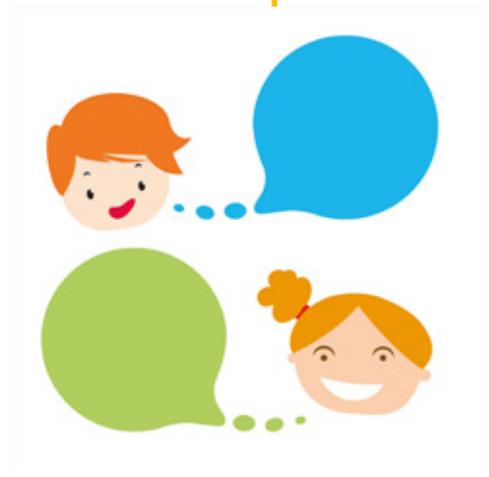
Who is present?

Who arranges child's evening meal?

How does child spend evening?

Who puts child to bed?

Who stays in the house overnight?



Adapted from the work of Buckley et al, 2006

Services/professionals that support children/young people and their families

This list is not exhaustive but an aid for completing sections 4 and 7.



Adult Disability Services	
Adult Mental Health Services	
CAMHS (Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services)	
Children's Disability Network Team	
Crèche or Early Years Services	
Domestic Violence Support Worker	
Drug and Alcohol Service	
TESS (Tusla Education Support Service)	
EWS (Education Welfare Service)	
SCP (School Completion Programme)	
HSCL (Home School Community Liaison Scheme)	
Family Resource Centre	
Family Support Service	
GP/Doctor	
Housing Service or Local Authority	
JLO (Juvenile Liaison Officer) or Gardaí	
NEPS (National Educational Psychological Service)	
Paediatric Occupational Therapy (OT)	
Paediatric Physiotherapy	
Parent and Toddler Group	
Probation Services	
Psychological Service	
PHN (Public Health Nurse)	
Social Worker (medical, disability, mental health, primary care or other)	
SLT (Speech and Language Therapist)	
Sports Clubs	
Teacher/School or Training Centre	
Tusla Social Worker	
Youth Service including mentoring	
Other	

Some key tips for Lead Practitioners working with children and young people

- based on national consultations with children and young people -



1

Ask the child/young person who they'd like to do their Strengths & Needs Form with. In our consultations, young people told us that the relationship they have with the person asking them about their wishes is the most important thing, most often naming a parent or family member as their preference.

2

They asked that we spend time building a relationship with them, so they feel safe to speak openly with us. This trust building might make the Strengths & Needs process a bit slower but is worth it to get an honest input from the child/young person.

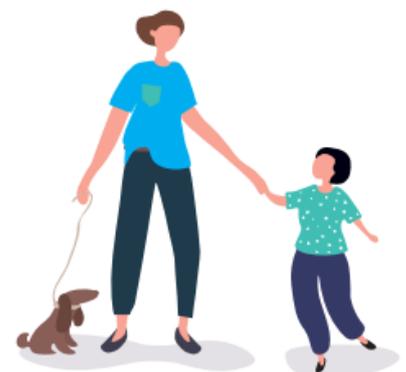


3

Don't necessarily complete the form with the child/young person at the time. Have a conversation and then complete the form yourself. Show the child/young person what you have written and tell them what you are going to do with their information.

4

Think about the age and stage of the child/young person when you are asking them about their wishes and give them a choice about how they are recorded e.g. to draw pictures to attach to the Strengths & Needs form.



5

There is no one way of consulting with children/young people. That's probably why children/young people told us that they want a choice about who they speak with. Someone they know well is most likely to be familiar with what works best for them.



WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE WANT ADULTS TO KNOW

INFORMATION FOR THE KEY MESSAGES GATHERED THROUGH YOUTH LED RESEARCH BY MAYO CHILD AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE



GET TO KNOW THE YOUNG PERSON PRIOR TO MEETING THEM FOR THE FIRST TIME.

Some young people felt they would be nervous meeting a professional for the first time. A phone call, picture and biography online and some information about what might happen was recommended.

“AFRAID YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO ANSWER THE QUESTIONS”

“DON'T KNOW WHATS GOING TO HAPPEN”



A COMFORTABLE MEETING PLACE

A small room with comfortable seating and colours on the walls with no interruptions. Wifi and charging sockets are a bonus.

“THE PLACE SHOULD BE COLOURFUL AND COSY”

“I WON'T FEEL LIKE THEY ARE LOOKING DOWN ON ME IF THEY ARE ON A COUCH”



REASSURE THE YOUNG PERSON

Let them know its OK to be nervous or upset. Understand it will take time for them to trust a new adult in their life.

“IT TAKES TIME TO TRUST SOMEONE, YOU'RE NOT GOING TO TELL THEM EVERYTHING THE FIRST TIME YOU MEET”

“I WOULD FEEL SAFER IF THEY (ADULT) REALLY ASSURED US ABOUT WHAT (INFORMATION) THEY WOULD GO TO PARENTS WITH”



DON'T LOOK TOO PROFESSIONAL BUT ACT IN A PROFESSIONAL MANNER

Young people feel more comfortable if you don't look like an authoritative figure.

“IF THEY WERE IN A SUIT, JACKET AND TIE THEY LOOK A BIT STUFFY, THEY WOULD SEEM DISINTERESTED LIKE THEY WERE GOING TO A BUSINESS MEETING”

“EASIER TO TALK TO SOMEONE NOT DRESSED IN A SUIT”

“IT CAN BE INTIMIDATING IF THEY ARE TOO DRESSED UP”



HAVE PATIENCE AND AVOID INTERRUPTIONS

“DON'T RUSH INTO THE TOPIC JUST TAKE IT SLOW”

“LISTEN. IF THEY COME TO YOU ABOUT SOMETHING.... THEY ABSOLUTELY TRUST YOU”



WATCH YOUR TONE AND ATTITUDE

Take into account the young persons maturity level. Try to avoid being condescending.

“DON'T TREAT THEM LIKE A CHILD IF YOU WANT THEM TO TAKE YOU SERIOUSLY”

“DON'T SUGAR COAT ANYTHING”



TAKE YOUNG PEOPLE'S FEELINGS AND OPINIONS INTO ACCOUNT

Most young people understand they can't always have things the way they want them but it's important they trust their feelings and opinions are being listened to.

“THEY SHOULDN'T LOOK DOWN ON YOU IF YOU HAD A PROBLEM THEY SHOULD JUST ACKNOWLEDGE IT AND HELP”

“ASK THEM WHAT THEY WOULD LIKE TO TALK ABOUT, DON'T ASK THE PARENT ALL THE INFORMATION, ASK THE KID”

“LISTEN.... JUST LISTEN”



HAVING SNACKS HELPS

Having food available is a treat and helps to relax young people. Supply snacks, drinks and fruit.

“LISTEN.... JUST LISTEN”