

# Continuum of Need Level Indicators

- The Continuum of Need is intended to provide practitioners with a shared understanding and common language around needs and risks surrounding children and their families
- It is to be used alongside the Continuum of Need windscreen which provides an overview of the levels
- The Continuum doesn't replace professional judgement or assessment and planning tools

## Development Needs of unborn child, child & young person

Early years level	Level 1 - Achieving Expected Outcomes (Universal)	Level 2 - Children with additional needs (Universal Plus)	Level 3 - Children with Multiple and complex needs (Universal Partnership Plus)	Level 4 - children with acute needs, including protection (Safeguarding)
Health	Physically well	Susceptible to minor health problems	Severe/chronic health problems	Severe/chronic health problems & appropriate services not being accessed. Life threatening health problems
	Balanced healthy diet/good hygiene/clothing	Adequate diet	Problematic diet e.g. obesity, faltering growth	Severe health effects from problematic diet
	Developmental checks/immunisations up to date, health appointments kept, incl. ante-natal	Slow in reaching developmental milestones. Starting to default on appointments	Slow in reaching developmental milestones. Non attendance for appointments	Developmental milestones unlikely to be met. Non organic faltering growth
	All physical health needs met	Minor concerns regarding diet/hygiene/clothing	Escalating concerns regarding diet/hygiene/clothing	Regularly unfed. Very unclean/dirty, clothing smell
	Speech & language development appropriate	Emerging speech & language difficulties	Failure to access / engage with some speech & language services.	Significant impact of not accessing or engaging with speech and language support
	Dental and optical care as required	Defaulting on dental and optical appointments	Dental and optical concerns not being met	Severe impact from dental and optical concerns not being met
	Sexual activity and awareness appropriate for age	Emerging concerns around sexual activity and awareness	Increasing risk of vulnerability from sexual activity and awareness (inc teenage pregnancy)	Sexual exploitation/abuse
	Good state of mental health & emotional well-being	Emerging concerns around mental health & emotional well-being	Significant concerns not being met. Failure to access support and services	Serious mental health issues. Serious risk to self or others. Sustained bouts of depression/self harm. Threats of suicide
	No use or exposure to substances	Exposure to substances which impact on health and development	Exposure to problematic use. Experimental use by adolescent	Problematic and chaotic use of substances which impact significantly on the health and well-being of the child. Class A drug use or daily use of any substance by an adolescent
Learning & Education	Success/achievement. reaching educational potential	Not thought to be reaching educational potential. Some identified learning needs that require school-based support	Identified learning needs that are not being met. Evidence of non-engagement with appropriate support	
	Regular school attendance and good punctuality	Pattern of regular school attendances	Some fixed term exclusions. Permanent exclusion. High percentage of non-attendance	Repeated permanent school exclusion. Permanent school exclusion with other risk factors
	Age appropriate cognitive development. Positive and stimulating environment	Reduced access to books/toys. Not always engaged in learning, e.g. poor concentration, low motivation & interest	No access to leisure activities/stimulation. No interests/skills displayed	Denied access to stimulation
Emotional & Behavioural	Feelings & actions demonstrate appropriate responses	Some difficulties with peer group relationships & adults. Evidence of inappropriate responses & actions	Difficulty coping with anger, frustration & upset	Regularly involved in anti-social/criminal activities
	Good quality attachment with caregivers	Disrupted attachment due to parental or child factors. Can be overfriendly or withdrawn with strangers	Disruptive/challenging behaviour by parent or child linked to poor attachment	Dysfunctional attachment between parent and child leading to significant harm
	Behavioural difficulties well managed	Emerging difficulties around managing challenging/disruptive behaviour	Challenging / disruptive behaviour impacting on daily life, achievement & relationships etc	Challenging / disruptive behaviour putting others or self in danger
Identity	Positive sense of self & abilities. An ability to express needs	Some insecurities around identity expressed, e.g. low self esteem for learning	Subject to discrimination e.g. racial, sexual or due to disabilities. Demonstrates significantly low self esteem	Experiences persistent discrimination e.g. based on ethnicity, sexual orientation or disability. Alienates self from others
	No young caring responsibilities within family network	Some appropriate responsibility for providing care	Caring responsibilities impacting on daily life, achievement & relationships etc	High level of caring task impacting on life chances and emotional well-being
	Good relationship with siblings	Has some difficulties sustaining relationships	Some level of risk to or from siblings.	Family breakdown related to child's behavioural difficulties
	Positive relationships with peers	Has some difficulties sustaining relationships with peers	Isolated from peers. Peers also involved in challenging behaviour. Missing school or leisure activities	Isolation affecting development. or increasing risk of exploitation. No access to appropriate peer group
	Family support child in development of self-identity	Family struggling to accept child's self-identity	Family very negative about child's developing self-identity	Family's negative response to child's self-identity impacting significantly on child's well-being
Social presentation	Appropriate dress for different settings	Frequently inappropriately dressed for setting	Presentation leads to isolation from peer groups and is impacting on development	Presentation is significantly impacting on development or leading to severe isolation
	Good level of personal hygiene	Level of hygiene causing concern	Poor hygiene manifesting in physical difficulties (e.g. sores)	Experiencing significant issues or clear impairments. No engagement with services to address concerns
Self Care Skills	Growing level of competencies in practical & emotional skills such as feeding, dressing and independent living skills	Appears to be lacking appropriate self-care	Carer expectations or living circumstances not age or developmentally appropriate. Inappropriate young caring responsibilities	Child or young person neglects to use self-care skills due to alternative priorities or parental factors such mental health or substance misuse

## Continuum of Need: Level Indicators

### Parenting Capacity

	Level 1 - Achieving Expected Outcomes	Level 2 - Children with additional needs	Level 3 - Children with Multiple and complex needs	Level 4 - children with acute needs, including protection
Basic Care	Provide for children's physical needs; food, drink, appropriate clothing, medical & dental care	Inconsistent meeting of child's needs by parent	Parent failing to engage & sustain engagement with services that could assist in meeting child's needs. Parent consistently not meeting basic care needs. Parent resistant to change	Parents unable to provide "good enough" parenting that is adequate and safe
	Parenting history supporting positive parenting	Parental history beginning to impact on care of own children	Parental history impacting on ability to care for child	Parental history impacting significantly on ability to care for child
	Parents meeting own health needs	Parents failing to attend to own health needs	Parents' failure to attend to health needs impacting on child or unborn child	Unmet health needs of parents seriously impacting on child or unborn child
	No parenting issues identified	Parent requires advice on parenting issues	Parent is struggling to provide adequate care. No improvement despite provision of adequate early help services	Parents unable to care for previous children. Parenting significantly impacting on child's well-being
Ensuring Safety	Able to protect from danger or significant harm in the home & elsewhere	Some exposure to dangerous situations in home/community. Parental stresses starting to affect ability to ensure child's safety.	Perceived to be a problem by parent.. Family coming to the attention of agencies due to risk. Parents not acknowledging risk or responding to advice and support	Instability & risk in the home continually. Parental lifestyle exposing child to significant risk. Lack of response to early help intervention leading to increased risk
Emotional Warmth	Shows warm regard, praise and encouragement	Inconsistent responses to child by parents. Emerging attachment difficulties	Erratic/inconsistent care leading to negative impact on child. Parental instability affects capacity to nurture	Parents inconsistent, highly critical or apathetic towards child or pregnancy
	Able to develop positive relationships	Parent appears to be isolated in the community	Inability to retain positive relationships	Parental isolation impacting significantly on child's emotional development
Stimulation	Facilitates cognitive development through interaction and play	Limited development and failure to access universal services	Not receiving positive stimulation - lack of new experiences and activities. Engagement with support unsustainable. Not attending pre-school setting	Child development adversely affected by lack of stimulation and support
Guidance & Boundaries	Appropriate guidance and boundaries consistently in place	Appropriate guidance and boundaries lacking or inconsistent	Absence of appropriate guidance or boundaries putting child at risk. Child experiencing difficulties or putting themselves at risk in other settings	No effective boundaries or guidance set by parents placing child at significant risk. Beyond parental control
Stability	Consistent parenting leading to secure attachment	Parents not prioritising child's needs due to parental stresses	Frequent change of care-giver leading to instability. Lack of focus on child	Parent not prioritising child's needs above their own, significantly impacting on child

### Family and Environmental Factors

	Level 1 - Achieving Expected Outcomes	Level 2 - Children with additional needs	Level 3 - Children with Multiple and complex needs	Level 4 - children with acute needs, including protection
Family History	Good relationship with family, including where parents are separated	Child not able to access full range of family relationships. Acrimonious divorce/separation	Dysfunctional relationships between family members	Significant parental discord e.g. persistent domestic violence, or serious physical or mental health difficulties
Wider Family	Sense of larger family network. Good relationships outside the family	Family has poor relationship with extended family/little communication	No effective support from extended family	Destructive/unhelpful involvement from extended family
Housing	Accommodation has basic amenities and appropriate facilities	Poor state of repair, temporary or overcrowded	Physical accommodation impacting on child health and parents taking no action. Family at risk of becoming homeless (intentionally or other)	Physical accommodation places child in danger and experiencing significant neglect. Family at immediate risk of homelessness
Employment	Parents are able to manage the working or unemployment arrangements & do not perceive them as unduly stressful	Parents stressed due to overworking or unemployment	Chronic unemployment that has severely affected child & parent's aspirations and engagement with education & employment.	
Income	Reasonable income over time, with resources used appropriately to meet individual needs	Poor allocation of funds & resources that impact on child. Poor debt management. Lack of take-up of benefits and available resources	Serious debts/poverty impact on ability to have basic needs met	Extreme poverty/debt impacting on ability to care for child. Family requires emergency financial assistance. No access to public funds
Social Integration	Family feels integrated into the community	Some tension exists preventing the family feeling fully integrated into the community.	Family socially excluded and / or vulnerable in the community, e.g. are experiencing frequent or persistent anti-social behaviour or hate crime	Family experiencing frequent or persistent anti-social behaviour / hate crime / racist incidents which is having a significant impact on family well-being
	Good social network exists	Lack of support network	No supportive network	
Community Resources	Good use of available universal services in the neighbourhood	Poor use of available universal services in the neighbourhood	Lack of access to universal services impacting on family	