



How to ask questions

Quick guide

For further information access:

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/public-site/integrated-childrens-services>

A number of toolkits, resources and training materials are available to help children and young people contribute to assessments, reviews and planning meetings, e.g. the *I'll go first* toolkit produced by the Children's Society

<http://www.widgit.com/symbols/publications/publications/gofirst.htm>.

1. General

Some questions you may want to ask:

Emotional and social development

- What makes you happy or sad? Tell me who you go to for help if you feel unhappy.
- When you are frustrated, angry or upset, how would people around you know that something was wrong?
- Do you ever do things because they are exciting without thinking about what might happen or that it might get you into trouble?
- Do you find it easy to talk to people about how you feel? How do you feel?
- Have you ever been bullied?
- Tell me who you spend most of your time with
- What sort of things do you do with other people?
- What do you like doing best?
- How much time do you spend on your own?

Behavioural development

- How would you describe your behaviour today/usually?
- How do you think other people would describe your behaviour today/usually?
- If you sometimes get into trouble because of your behaviour, tell me what happened last time.
- Can you tell me about a time when you helped somebody?

Identity, including self-esteem, self-image and social presentation

- Who is the most important person in your life?
- If you had to name one special thing about yourself, what would that be?
- Is there anything about yourself that you don't like?
- What do you think other people most like about you?
- Do you feel you are different from other people?
- Do you feel you "fit in" with family and friends?
- Can the child point to family on a picture or respond to their own name?
- Does the child respond differently to different family members or siblings?

Family and social relationships

- Whom do you call family? How often you see them?
- What do you enjoy doing with your family?
- How important are your friends to you?
- Do you have a 'best friend'? If so, who is that and why are they so special for you?
- Do you have to help to look after anyone?

Self-care skills and independence

- How independent are you? What can you do for yourself?
- Do you need any help with day to day living? How do you feel about the help you receive?
- Who will help you learn to be more independent as you grow up?
- Do you get to do what you like to do?
- How do you cope with big changes in your life?
- Tell me what you did yesterday?
- Are your friends mostly the same age as you, or are they mostly younger or older than you?
- Imagine someone treated you unfairly; what would you do?
- Do you like reading? If so what do you like to read?
- How are you at sorting out day to day problems?
- What types of resources/toys are provided for your baby/child?

Participation in learning, education and employment

- What school or college do you go to? How regularly do you attend?
- Do you enjoy school/college/training?
- What might stop you going to school/college?
- If you don't go to school/college at all, why is that, and how long have you been out of school/college?
- What are you studying?
- What do you think you are good at doing?
- If you need help and advice about education and learning who can you go to?
- If you are working, what is your job? Do you enjoy your job?
- What do you want to do long term?
- Does the child attend a nursery or play group?
- How does your baby/child interact with others of a similar age?
- If you think you need additional help, how would you like to get this?
- What learning opportunities does the child have?
- Do they have a favourite game or book?
- Does anyone read books to the baby/child?
- What do you hope that learning will help you do?

2. PARENTS AND CARERS

Basic care, ensuring safety and protection

- Is the place where you live warm enough for you not to need to wear outdoor clothes (like coats and hats) when you are inside?
- Can you make warm food and drinks where you live?
- Can you keep yourself clean where you live?
- Do you have a least one other set of clothes, which are the right size for you, and suitable for this time of year?
- Is there anything about the place you live that makes you feel unsafe?

- If you share the place you live with others, can you be in private when you need to be?
- In an emergency how would you call the services you need?
- Do you feel able to look after your baby, toddler, child and make sure they're safe?
- Do you feel your home is in good repair and a safe place to bring up children? If not, what would make your home a better place to live?

Emotional warmth and stability

- Who lives with you at home? How long have they lived there?
- Who cares for you and takes responsibility for you?
- If you were upset or frightened who would look after you, and make sure you were all right?
- If you do something well, who would be proud, and praise you?
- How long have you lived where you do now, and how many times have you moved home in the last year or so?
- How often do you give your baby, toddler a cuddle?
- How are you coping/managing at the moment?
- How are you coping with looking after your baby/toddler?

Guidance, boundaries and stimulation

- In general are your parents/carers interested in you and involved in what you do?
- Do your parents/carers usually encourage you with your learning; for example, giving you the space and time you need to complete school or college work?
- Do you have a quiet place where you can do your college or school work?
- Do you think your parents/carers sometimes overprotect you, and treat you as younger and as less able than you are?
- If you do something wrong, what happens, and how do the people around you respond?
- How do you react when people ask you to do the things that you don't want to do?
- Does the child respond to NO?
- What rules or boundaries do you think are important for young children?

3 FAMILY AND ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

Family history, functioning and well-being

The impact of family situations and experiences

Who lives in the household and how they relate to the infant, child or young person, including any changes since the child's birth; family routines; and anything about the family history, such as family breakdown, illnesses (physical or mental) or problems with alcohol or other substances that are having an impact on the child's development.

- When you want to know something about your family, whom might you ask?
- Is there some predictable routine to your family life at home, for example, in relation to meal times, bed times and who will be at home when?
- Tell me what you did for your last birthday?
- Think about a really good time you enjoyed with your family. What was it, and what made it so special for you?
- Is there someone in your family that you know and trust that you could turn to for help if you needed to?

- Is there someone in your family that your parents/carers know and trust that they could turn to for help if they needed to?
- How does your baby indicate what he/she needs?
- How does your baby respond to different family members?

Wider family

Discuss the family's relationships with relatives and non-relatives. Whether there is an appropriate level of help for the infant, child, young person or parents/carers from relatives and others.

- Other than your family, who is important to you in your life?
- Are there people in your neighbourhood or community that you know and trust that you could turn to for help if you needed to?
- Are there people in your neighbourhood or community that your carers know and trust that they could turn to for help if they needed to?
- Can someone who is not really a member of your family, feel like family and be just as important, and do you have anyone like that in your family?

Housing, employment and financial considerations

- What are the living arrangements?
- Does the accommodation have appropriate amenities and facilities?
- Who is working in the household, the pattern of their work and any changes. Income over a sustained period of time.
- Whether the accommodation has everything needed for living safely and healthily, and the effect on the infant, child or young person of the work and financial situation of the family or household.
- What is it like to live in the area you do?
- At home, who is working and what do they do?
- Does anyone in your family work away from home or at night, such that you don't see them very often?
- Does their work mean that your family are always too tired to give you the attention you need?
- Is there enough money, from work and any benefits, to meet your family's needs?

Social and community elements and resources, including education

- Tell me what local facilities you use (for example schools, day nurseries, sports, play and leisure centres, nurseries, libraries etc).
- Are there any local facilities that you would like to use but can't for some reason?
- If so, why can't you use these facilities (for example cost, transport, inaccessible to disabled people) ?
- When you are out and about locally with friends or family, what sort of things do you do?
- What is the best thing about living where you do?
- What is the worst thing about living where you do?
- Are you aware if drugs are bought and sold in your area?
- Do you think there is a lot of crime in your area?
- What local facilities like pre-natal clinics, child care services such as day nurseries or play schemes, support groups or Sure Start programmes are available? Do you use them?