

Considerations for Assessment Tools in Child Welfare

Effective case service to families involved in child welfare involves an assessment of risks and strengths. Sometimes, additional assessment needs to take place outside of traditional casework. When a child is brought to a place of safety and a parent is asking for reunification but has not addressed the protection concerns, the service team should be developing a solid plan for what goals need to be met and how they will know that change has been made. Access is often the place for assessment to occur but is sometimes not the entire answer. Below is a (not exhaustive) comparison of three possible assessment tools: Therapeutic Access, Parenting Capacity Assessments, and Psychological Assessments, to help workers consider which path is best for the family they are servicing.

	Therapeutic Access	Parenting Capacity	Psychological
WHEN ASSESSMENT TOOL IS NEEDED:	<p>Need an assessment of parenting skills and/or parenting behaviours</p> <p>Need teaching/intervention</p> <p>Need to organize/formalize the assessment you have</p>	<p>Need assessment of parent's capacity to parent</p> <p>Interventions or teaching during family visits have NOT been successful or cause stress to the child</p> <p>Parents are unable to engage in working with the Society</p> <p>Previous children have been involved or removed and outcomes do not appear improved</p>	<p>Need assessment of parent's mental health</p> <p>Need assessment of parent's ability to learn and cognitive functioning</p> <p>Need assessment of parent's ability to form relationships</p>
ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED:	<p>Does the parent see the need for change and their role and responsibility in it?</p> <p>What is the parent's attachment style?</p> <p>What are the risks and strengths in the parent-child relationship?</p> <p>What are the parenting behaviours impacting safety?</p>	<p>Does the parent have the capacity to understand their roles as a parent and enact them?</p> <p>Does the parent have the capacity to understand and apply safety?</p> <p>Does the parent have the capacity to learn?</p>	<p>Does the parent have any mental health or personality challenges that are impeding parenting?</p> <p>Does the parent have the ability to learn or any challenges preventing?</p>
FACTORS TO CONSIDER:	<p>Worker time and skill</p> <p>Agency Support</p>	<p>COST</p> <p>Waiting lists?</p> <p>Who chooses the assessor?</p> <p>How long does it take to complete?</p>	<p>COST</p> <p>Waiting lists?</p> <p>Who chooses the assessor?</p> <p>What measures will be used?</p>