

Checklist for Parenting Skills and Abilities

a) In terms of a general overview of parenting skills:

- Does the person have a good enough understanding of a child's physical needs at various stages throughout childhood.? If not, give examples.
- Is the person able to provide for the child's physical needs? If not, give examples.
- Does the person provide a good enough level of basic care? If not, in what ways?
- How is the person able to keep a child safe from harm, hazards or danger, including:
 - unsafe care
 - contact with unsafe people
 - home and environment safety
 - safety from self-harm
- Does the person have a good enough understanding of a child's emotional needs at various stages throughout childhood? If not, in what areas? Give examples.
- Is the person able to provide for the emotional needs of the child(ren)? If not, in what areas? Give examples.
- Have there been any previous concerns regarding the person's parenting?
- What is the person's parenting experience?
- Is there anything about the person's parenting skills and style which places the child at risk of significant harm?

b) In terms of the specific child:

- Describe the person's relationship with the child.
- Does the person provide a stable, settled, consistent environment for the child?
- Is there evidence of good enough physical care?
- Is there evidence of the appropriate use of parental authority?
- Is there evidence of emotional warmth?
- What is the level of attachment between the child and the parent?
- Does the person respond appropriately to the child's emotional needs?

- Does the child present particular difficulties which the person does not recognise?
- How would the person deal with difficult behaviour?
- What methods of behaviour management/discipline would the person use?
- Does the person use positive reinforcement or negative sanction in respect of the child's behaviour?
- Does the person find parenting the child stressful?
- How is the person likely to respond in a crisis?
- Does the person have overall skills and ability to parent the child?
- Is the person able to prioritise the needs of the child over their own needs at all times?
- Does the person have the physical and emotional resources to parent the child safely at all times?

c) In terms of the combined parenting skills and abilities:

- Are there parenting skills/styles in one parent which compensate for lack of skills in the other parent?
- What aspects, if any, of the combined parenting skills/styles complement each other?
- What aspects, if any, of the combined parenting skills/styles contradict each other, and what impact does this have on the care of the child? Give examples.
- Do the combined skills/styles and abilities enable a good enough, safe enough level of care to be maintained?
- Are there any relationship issues which impact on the parenting skills and abilities?
- Are there any relationship difficulties which place the child(ren) at risk of significant harm?
- Is the person or are the couple able to parent the child(ren) in ways which would always safeguard and promote their welfare?

from, '*A Practitioner's Tool for Child Protection and the Assessment of Parents*' by Jeff Fowler (2003): Jessica Kingsley Publishers: London