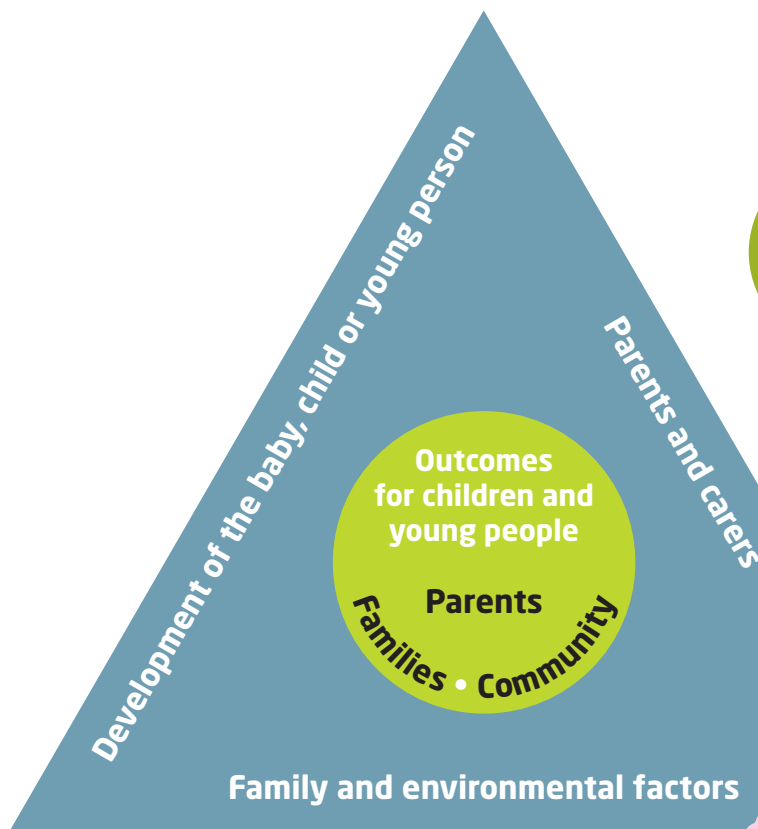


Holistic assessment in Richmond upon Thames



"Joining up services is not just about providing a safety net for the vulnerable it is about unlocking the potential of every child"

Helen Walker
Department for Children,
Schools and Families

This booklet is the first on a series of guides aimed at practitioners working with children and young people in Richmond upon Thames.

The holistic assessment of a child or young person creates a picture of what is happening in their life at the time of assessment, highlighting their strengths as well as their needs. It allows you to identify timely effective integrated support, encouraging information sharing and joint working between agencies, and ensuring better outcomes for children and young people.



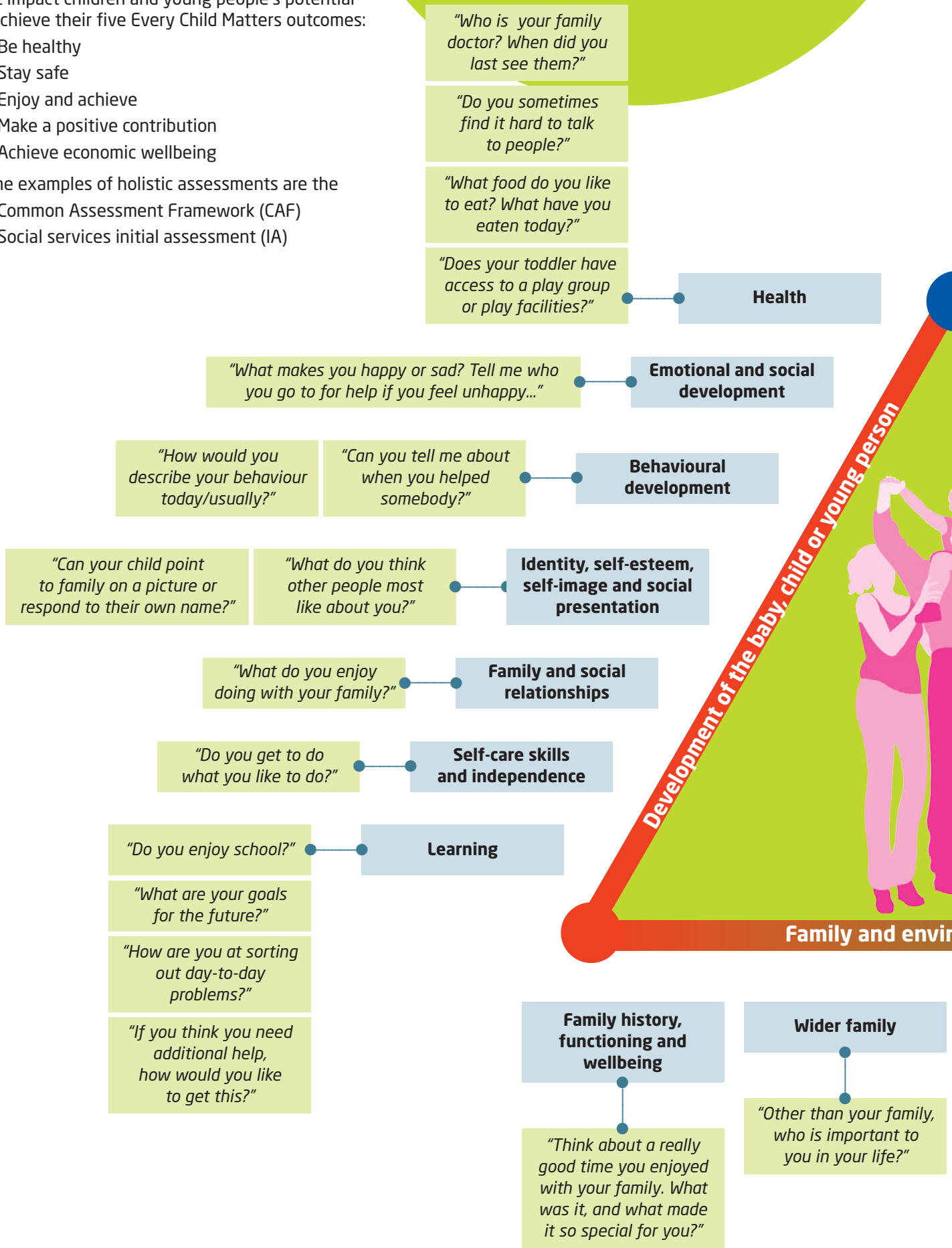
Holistic assessment

Holistic assessment addresses three main areas that impact children and young people’s potential to achieve their five Every Child Matters outcomes:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic wellbeing

Some examples of holistic assessments are the

- Common Assessment Framework (CAF)
- Social services initial assessment (IA)



Undertaking a common assessment

When undertaking a common assessment with a child or young person and their family, make sure they understand the information you are recording in the CAF form, and what is going to happen.

- You should consider each of the elements and explore strengths as well as the areas around your immediate concern, so as to look behind the presenting issues and come up with a more holistic view.
- You do not need to comment on every element; include only what is relevant and base your comments on evidence, not just opinion.

On these pages you can review some of the questions practitioners have been asking while conducting CAF assessments.

Note: To accompany the CAF form there is a guide to definitions which gives a general description of signs to look for in relation to each of the CAF elements in each of the three domains. These elements have been developed by combining the underlying model of the Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families with the main elements used in other assessment frameworks. The full definitions guide is available online www.richmond.gov.uk/caf



Basic care, ensuring safety and protection

"Is there anything about the place you live that makes you feel unsafe?"

"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?"

Emotional warmth and stability

"If you were upset or frightened who would look after you, and make sure you were all right?"

"How are you coping with looking after your baby/toddler?"

Guidance, boundaries and stimulation

"How do you react when people ask you to do the things that you don't want to do?"

"Do you have a quiet place where you can do school work?"

Housing, employment and financial considerations

"Is there enough money, from work and any benefits, to meet your family's needs?"

Social and community elements and resources

"What is the best thing about living where you do? The worst?"

Involvement

Once the CAF has been completed you will have a clearer picture of the agencies that you will need to involve and that you may work with as the Team Around the Child (TAC).

Involvement in Richmond upon Thames means:

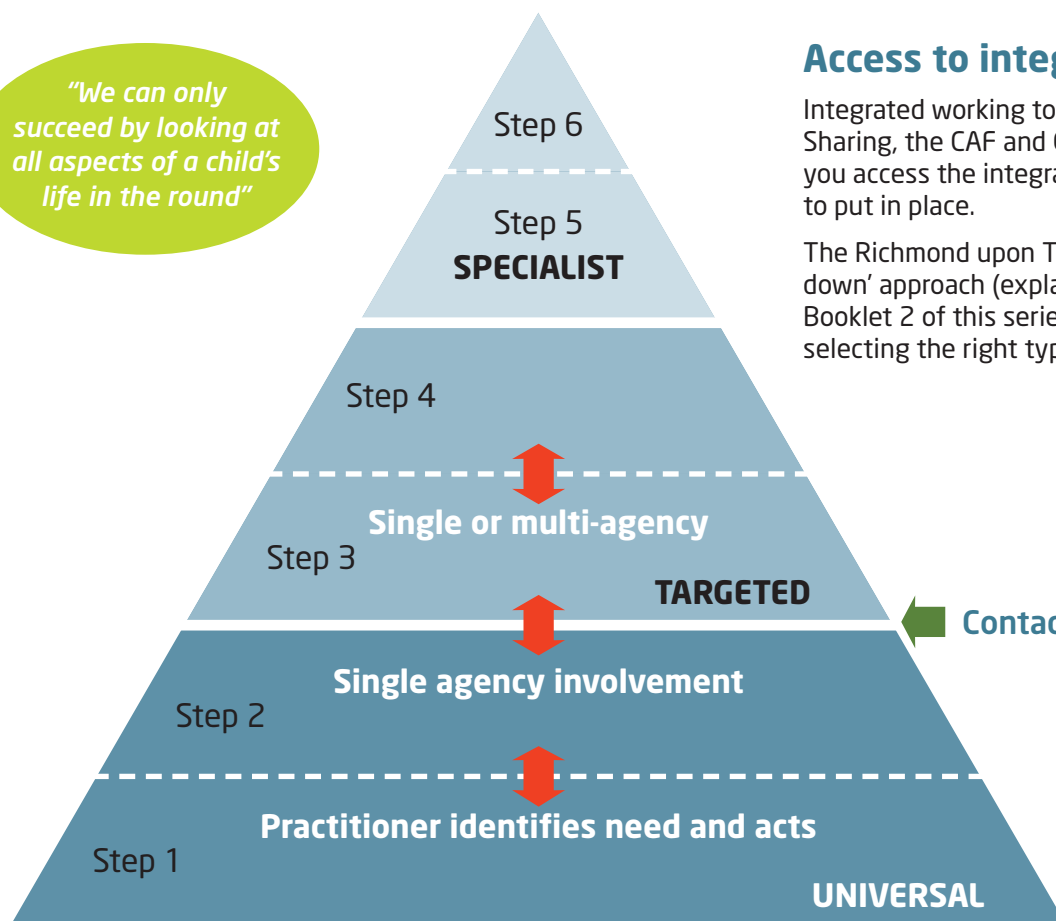
- information
- advice
- consultation
- assessment
- intervention
- training

Key points to remember about your discussion during a common assessment:

- It is collaborative - you are working with the child or young person and their family to find solutions, and they will often know better than you
- You should consider the child or young person's and family's strengths as well as needs, and these should be recorded in the CAF form
- You should make use of information you have already gathered from the child or young person, parent or other practitioners so they don't have to repeat themselves
- If the child or young person and/or their parent/carer don't want to participate, you can't force them - it is a voluntary assessment
- If you are concerned about the safety or welfare of a child or young person you should contact the Initial Response Team immediately on 020 8891 7969
- If you are worried about your own safety, act accordingly. If you are not sure, seek immediate advice
- At the end of the discussion, you should be able to understand better the child or young person's and family's strengths and needs, and what can be done to help



"We can only succeed by looking at all aspects of a child's life in the round"



Access to integrated support

Integrated working tools, such as Information Sharing, the CAF and ContactPoint, will help you access the integrated support you need to put in place.

The Richmond upon Thames 'step-up step-down' approach (explained in depth in Booklet 2 of this series) will guide you selecting the right type of help.

Integrated Working Team contacts:

CAF Co-ordinator 020 8891 7973
 IW Trainer 020 8487 5372
caf@richmond.gov.uk
www.richmond.gov.uk/caf