

Child's Comprehensive Assessment

I. Birth, developmental, medical history

- A. Known genetic risks including family history of psychiatric illness and substance abuse
- B. Prenatal and birth history including risk factors such as malnutrition, inadequate prenatal care, drug/alcohol exposure, premature birth, delivery complications
- C. Developmental information: physical & motor, intellectual, language, and psychosocial development; developmental delays
- D. Serious illnesses, hospitalizations, disabilities or health issues

II. Pre-placement experiences

- A. Family
 - 1. Family configuration - parents' significant history; strengths; significant events in family
 - 2. History of family functioning and challenges present in parents that compromise caring for child; quality of parenting over child's life
 - 3. Siblings and relationship dynamics
 - 4. Cultural norms, values, kinship patterns, communication, and socialization influences in family
 - 5. Nature of relationships with extended family

*National Adoption Competency Mental Health Training Initiative (NTI)
A Service of the Children's Bureau, Administration on Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services*

- B. Attachment history
1. Early nurture and quality of attachments to caregivers
 2. Significant attachment figures/ to whom did child feel close, including siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles?
 3. Changes in caregivers before placement
 4. Primary losses and child's perceptions & reactions; extent that these have been processed with child; who does child need to grieve?
 5. Healthy attachments that need to be supported/maintained
 6. Attachment challenges
- C. Trauma history (neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, exposure to violence, significant losses)
1. Types of trauma experienced
 2. Age of child when each occurred
 3. Frequency, duration, severity
 4. What specifically happened? Who, what, where, when (details of traumatic experiences help to identify triggers)
 5. Messages received from adults about traumatic events
 6. Child's perceptions & beliefs related to important events
 7. Behavioral reactions and symptoms of trauma (emotional dysregulation, maladaptive beliefs, behavioral problems, unresolved trauma)
 8. Triggers - What problematic behaviors or emotional responses appear to be associated with specific times, places, events, people or other stimuli

*National Adoption Competency Mental Health Training Initiative (NTI)
A Service of the Children's Bureau, Administration on Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services*

III. Placement experiences

- A. Reason for entering care, age at entry, trauma or loss experience associated with the removal
- B. Moves in care (including returns home) and experiences of separation or trauma while in care
 - 1. Nature of ongoing contacts with birth family and other attachment figures
 - 2. Child's perceptions of significant events, hopes and fears, attitudes related to permanency
- C. Potential permanency resources, extended family, (ICWA compliant homes for AI/AN children)

IV. Current functioning and presenting issues

- A. Developmental issues, including learning challenges
- B. Child's psychosocial functioning at home, in school, with peers, in neighborhood, and within their own cultural setting
- C. High risk behaviors – sexualized behaviors, drug/alcohol use, history of self-injury, criminal activity
- D. Mental health functioning, including internalizing and externalizing problems, diagnoses, treatment history, medications
- E. Child's fears, concerns, and hopes, cultural identity, gender identity
- F. Strengths and positive experiences
- G. Child's primary support system, cultural resources, extended family, (tribal services for AI/AN children)
- H. What are child's key needs in relation to a permanent family & child's attitude related to adoption or guardianship
- I. Child's experience with discrimination and their capacity/coping skills to mitigate the negative impact of racism

National Adoption Competency Mental Health Training Initiative (NTI)

A Service of the Children's Bureau, Administration on Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services