

Family Outcome Measures Tool*

Definition Dictionary: consultation and trial version

January 2009

*(*based on NCFAS: North Carolina Family Assessment Scale for Intensive Family Preservation Services Programs)*

FAMILY OUTCOME MEASURES TOOL

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the FOM

- to capture the holistic structure of family functioning
- to allow for the assessment of family strengths as well as challenges
- to be capable of detecting small changes in family functioning during an intervention period
- to meet the information and data needs of both services, program management and evaluation.

How to use the FOM

It is expected that, when assessing families against these measures, both at the intake stage and at case closure, service providers will:

- Use their professional judgement.
- Use cultural sensitivity and critically examine the imposition of his/her own values and cultural assumptions.
- Recognise that outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse, and Refugee families going through interventions may well be different to those identified for other groups.
- Be flexible in the interpretation of definitions at various points in the scale when assessing a family with member/s who have a disability, that is, assess according to potential.
- Recognise that this is a family assessment scale and, as such, the family system may be affected even if all members do not experience the challenges to the same degree.
- Recognise the strengths and potential of families, and the vital contribution each member makes to individual and family capacity.
- Focus on the capacity of the family to manage their situation rather than assessing systemic factors that are beyond the family's control.
- Enter their initial assessments gradually as information through discussion with the family becomes evident, but note that this must be done within the first two months after intervention commences ie. no initial assessments should be added or changed after this time.
- Enter final assessments in collaboration with families at the time of case closure, using the FOM to assist with case reflection.
- Recognise that the given definitions for each outcome measure will most likely be interpreted somewhat differently between professionals, but aim to apply his/her own interpretation consistently within each individual family assessment from intake to case closure.
- Address each domain but only complete those sub-sections that are relevant to the family.

What data from the FOM can tell us

When used in conjunction with other information gathering processes (case plans, case conferences, etc) the Family outcomes measure tool aims to:

- Demonstrate the impact of service interventions for families within each of the domains, demonstrating shifts and achievements over time
- Indicate what can be achieved within the service intervention length
- Provide a profile of families to demonstrate complexity of need.

DEFINITION DICTIONARY

A. Environment

| | Challenge | | Adequate | | Strength |
|--------------------------------|---|--|---|--|--|
| Financial Management | Serious financial management issues which are having severe impacts on all or most aspects of family functioning. | | Adequate financial management which allows for the family to function at a moderate level to meet basic needs, but with some ongoing financial problems evident. | | Finances are generally well managed which allows for family needs to be consistently met. |
| Habitability of Housing | Highly unsanitary and hazardous living environment which is caused by the domestic behaviours of family members and which significantly degrades family health and safety. | | Basic safety and hygiene precautions are taken within the home, such that the safety and well-being of family members are not immediately threatened. However, there are still some ongoing important sanitation and safety concerns evident. | | The house is generally clean and safe for all family members. |
| Housing Stability | Existence, or high probability, of eviction or homelessness (includes staying with family or friends) and/or a high level of transience. | | The family is likely to be able to remain in the same residence that is dedicated to the family. Occasional external assistance may be required to sustain this stability. | | Stable housing arrangements with the family being able to sustain this stability with minimal external support. |
| Nutrition and Health | There are ongoing health or nutritional issues which require intense external assistance as the caregivers lack basic nutritional knowledge and awareness. | | There is evidence that the caregivers are taking steps to keep their child physically and nutritionally healthy but a moderate level of external assistance is required. | | The nutrition and physical health needs of the family are generally being met and the caregivers take the necessary steps to keep their child healthy. |
| Transport | Transport use or availability is extremely limited which, in turn, inhibits work, increases social isolation, and/or limits access to services, and/or prevents regular school attendance | | Transport use or availability is moderately limited but the family maintains some level of mobility, although some external assistance may be required. | | The family regularly manages the use of available transport. |
| Overall Environment | Families on average receive low ratings in the following areas: financial management; housing habitability and stability; nutrition and health; and transport. | | Families on average receive moderate ratings in the following areas: financial management; housing habitability and stability; nutrition and health; and transport. | | Families on average receive high ratings in the following areas: financial management; housing habitability and stability; nutrition and health; and transport. |

FAMILY OUTCOME MEASURES

B. Parental Skills

| | Challenge | | Adequate | | Strength |
|--|---|--|--|--|---|
| Nurturing of children | Caregivers lack the skills for nurturing their child and do not understand its importance for child well-being. The caregivers are detached from their child and are not responsive to their emotional needs. | | Caregivers demonstrate an adequate level of skill in giving attention and affection to their child. Caregivers have some understanding of the importance of nurturing their child. Open demonstrations of emotional attachment and responsiveness may be limited and/or inconsistent. | | Caregivers attend to their child, read and respond to their cues, and provide warmth and security. Caregivers demonstrate emotional attachment to, and protection of their child, and contribute to their self esteem. |
| Child behaviour management techniques | Caregivers lack knowledge of positive child behaviour management techniques resulting in the use of either excessive or insufficient discipline. Caregivers disagree on parenting strategies and present mixed messages to the child. Caregivers have unrealistic child behaviour expectations. | | Caregivers understand appropriate child behaviour management techniques and provide adequate discipline and guidance most of the time. Caregiver's expectations of child behaviour are generally realistic. | | Caregivers implement age appropriate child behaviour management techniques with consistent and effective discipline based on realistic expectations of child behaviour. Caregivers agree on child behaviour management strategies and support one another. |
| Provision of play/ learning activities | Caregivers lack understanding of the importance of play and learning activities and do not have the skills to make a positive family environment for these. There are no opportunities or routines for the child to play and learn at home with toys, games and books being absent and/or age inappropriate. Caregivers are detached from their child's activities. | | Caregivers have some understanding of the importance of play and learning activities and provide opportunities for their child to engage in these activities some of the time. However, these activities may not always be age appropriate or consistently available. Caregivers have some engagement in their child's play and learning activities. | | Caregivers understand and value the importance of play and learning and respond to changing developmental needs. They make a positive family environment for this including routines which support play and learning activities such as planned reading and homework time; the provision of games, toys and books; and engage with their child in these activities. |
| Provision of life skills learning (eg. critical thinking, problem solving, self management, self care, and interpersonal skills) | Caregivers do not have sufficient life-skills and adaptive and positive behaviours themselves in order to be positive role models for their child. Caregivers require intensive external assistance in developing their own life-skills and in teaching these to their child. | | Caregivers possess adequate life-skills although gaps and limitations in some skill areas are evident. Caregivers understand the importance of role-modelling and teaching life-skills to their child but may need a moderate level of external assistance for increasing their life-skill capability, including skills to teach these to their child. | | Caregivers provide positive role models and teach their child the values, attitudes and skills that will lead to adaptive and positive behaviours which enable the child to deal effectively with everyday life challenges. |
| Overall Parental Skills | Families on average receive low ratings in the following areas: nurturing of children; child behaviour management techniques; and provision of play/ learning activities and life-skills. | | Families on average receive moderate ratings in the following areas: nurturing of children; child behaviour management techniques; and provision of play/ learning activities and life-skills. | | Families on average receive high ratings in the following areas: nurturing of children; child behaviour management techniques; and provision of play/ learning activities and life-skills. |

FAMILY OUTCOME MEASURES

C. Family Interactions

| | Challenge | | Adequate | | Strength |
|--|---|--|---|--|---|
| Parent/ carer and child relationships | The relationship between the caregivers and child is highly dysfunctional. | | Although the relationship between caregivers and child is generally functional there are ongoing issues that require external assistance. | | The caregivers and the child generally demonstrate a warm and trusting relationship and skills to address basic relationship breakdowns are evident. |
| Maintaining the family | Caregivers lack motivation for building family functioning and cooperation and require intense external assistance. | | Caregivers generally demonstrate the motivation for building family functioning and cooperation but may require outside assistance. | | Caregivers are consistently motivated to maintain the family unit and address basic family breakdowns. |
| Relationship between siblings | The relationship between siblings is dysfunctional and not age appropriate. Behaviour is destructive and impacts on family functioning. | | The relationship between siblings is generally functional, however, some ongoing issues are evident that may require attention. | | Siblings demonstrate a relationship that is age and developmentally appropriate. |
| Overall Family Interactions | Families on average receive low ratings in the following areas: parent/carer and child relationships; maintaining the family; and relationship between siblings. | | Families on average receive moderate ratings in the following areas: parent/carer and child relationships; motivation to maintain the family; and relationship between siblings. | | Families on average receive high ratings in the following areas: parent/carer and child relationships; motivation to maintain the family; and relationship between siblings. |

FAMILY OUTCOME MEASURES

D. Family Safety

| | Challenge | | Adequate | | Strength |
|--|--|--|---|--|---|
| Absence of family and domestic violence | Violence in the family (sexual, physical, or emotional) has occurred in the past and the legacy of this is still impacting on family functioning. No current steps are being taken by the family to address these impacts and therefore extensive external intervention is required. | | There is recognition within the family that violence (sexual, physical, or emotional) has occurred and that it has had a negative impact on family safety. The family have taken steps to stop the family violence. | | Violence is not occurring in the family, with ongoing family safety evident. |
| Absence of child abuse | Child abuse (sexual, physical, or emotional) has occurred in the past and the legacy of this is still impacting the child. No current steps are being taken by the family to address these impacts and therefore extensive external intervention is required. | | There is recognition within the family that abuse has occurred and that it has had a negative impact on the child. The family has taken adequate steps to stop the occurrence of abuse. | | Child abuse is not occurring in the family, with ongoing stability in family safety. |
| Absence of child neglect | There is evidence that neglect (including inadequate supervision relating to the safety of child) has occurred in the past and the legacy of this is still impacting on child well-being. | | There is recognition within the family that neglect has occurred and that it has had a negative impact on family safety. The family has taken adequate steps to meet the needs of the child. | | Child neglect is not occurring in the family, with ongoing stability in family safety. |
| Overall Family Safety | Families on average receive low ratings in the following areas: absence of family and domestic violence, child abuse and child neglect. | | Families on average receive moderate ratings in the following areas: absence of family and domestic violence, child abuse and child neglect. | | Families on average receive high ratings in the following areas: absence of family and domestic violence, child abuse and child neglect. |

FAMILY OUTCOME MEASURES

E. Child Well-Being

Note: this section pertains to the referred child, however in some cases (for example when the referred child is an infant) it may be more relevant to complete this section on another child within the family. The case worker is encouraged to use their professional judgement in making this decision.

| | Challenge | | Adequate | | Strength |
|---|---|--|---|--|---|
| Child Behaviour | The child displays highly uncooperative and negative behaviours for their developmental level which pose risks to self and others. The child lacks the capacity to internally control and manage their own behaviour and emotions, and needs intensive intervention. | | The child usually displays cooperative and positive behaviours for their developmental level. The child has some capacity to internally control and manage their own behaviour and emotions. The child could benefit from a moderate level of intervention. | | The child generally behaves well and appropriately for their developmental level. The child is cooperative, displays some internal control of their own behaviour and emotions and generally follows instructions. |
| Relationship with peers | The child consistently shows an inability to maintain age appropriate and positive relationships. The child may be isolated or ostracised from peer group. | | The child displays some age appropriate social skills with peers, but may occasionally be isolated or ostracised from peer group. | | The child displays age appropriate social skills with peers and has the ability to form positive relationships. The child is generally socially included amongst their peers. |
| Achieving developmental milestones | The child has significant developmental delay in one or more areas in relation to their potential. Extensive developmental intervention is required for the child, with major support to caregivers to address delays. | | The child has moderate developmental delays in one or more areas in relation to their potential. A moderate level of intervention is required for the child, with some support to caregivers to address delays. | | The child is achieving age appropriate development milestones in relation to their potential. The child may require occasional time limited support to maintain developmental progress and the caregivers actively seek this when needed. |
| Provision of opportunities for social activity | Caregivers provide limited or no social activities for the child and lack understanding of the importance of social activities for child well-being. Conversely caregivers are overly demanding of their child's participation and progress in social activities which impacts on child well-being. | | Caregivers provide some social activities for the child although the range and frequency has limitations. Caregivers may not fully understand the importance of social activities for child well-being. | | Caregivers provide a range of positive social activities for the child and the child can exercise choice in their selection and engagement. The caregivers understand the importance of social activities for child well-being. |
| Overall Child Well-Being | Families on average receive low ratings in the following areas: child behaviour; relationship with peers; achieving developmental milestones and provision of opportunities for social activity. | | Families on average receive moderate ratings in the following areas: child behaviour; relationship with peers; achieving developmental milestones and provision of opportunities for social activity. | | Families on average receive high ratings in the following areas: child behaviour; relationship with peers; achieving developmental milestones and provision of opportunities for social activity. |

FAMILY OUTCOME MEASURES

F. Connections

| | Challenge | | Adequate | | Strength |
|---|---|--|--|--|---|
| Relationship with family, friends and neighbours | There is evidence that the family has no access to supportive relationships through family, friends, or neighbours. There is a high level of social isolation. | | The family has some connections to family, friends and neighbours and recognise that these relationships are/or can be a source of support, by seeking and sustaining these connections. | | There is evidence that family, friends, or neighbours provide positive support for this family. |
| Knowledge of local support networks | The family has little or no connection with local support networks and no knowledge of available support services. The family has little or no understanding of how to access services or willingness to do so. | | The family accesses some services but there are gaps in their knowledge and use of support systems, or the family is reluctant to use some services or finds them not appropriate. | | The family has a sound knowledge of the local services which they may or may not choose to access; and they have identified and/or developed a support network |
| Overall Connections | Families on average receive low ratings in the following areas: relationships with family friends and neighbours and knowledge of local support networks. | | Families on average receive moderate ratings in the following areas: relationships with family friends and neighbours and knowledge of local support networks. | | Families on average receive high ratings in the following areas: relationships with family friends and neighbours and knowledge of local support networks. |