

Argyll and Bute's Children

getting
it right
for every child

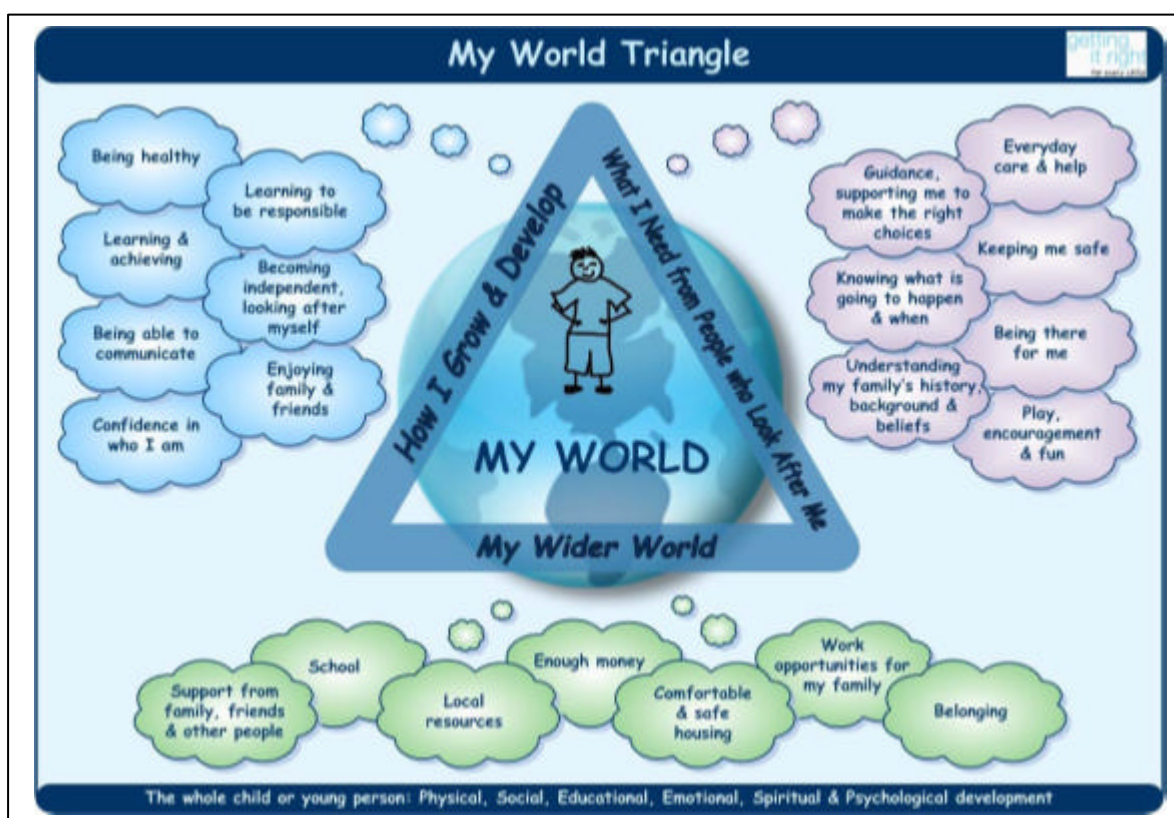


Early Years

September 2011

Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)

Getting it Right for Every Child is about improving outcomes for children and making sure that all agencies respond appropriately and, when required, work together to address the needs and risks for children and young people. It provides mechanisms for identifying and planning how we help children and young people grow and develop. It seeks to improve services and measures the impact services have on a child's well-being and development. Assessment of the needs of children and young people is based around the My World Triangle. The My World Triangle illustrates the complex relationship between factors impacting on a child's development and well-being, and provides a mental map for those working with children and their families. Attention is given to strengths as well as any areas of concern and any risk factors highlighted.



GIRFEC at the Early Years

Many agencies can be involved in the care and education of children under five years of age and it is important that they have the opportunity to meet together, with parents, to help reach conclusions about children who may need additional support. GIRFEC Early Years provides such a forum.

Within Argyll and Bute GIRFEC Early Years teams are made up of representatives of the services most closely involved in the support of young children, namely, Health, Education and Social Work and parents. The aim is to help build up a clear assessment of the child's additional support needs. A key function of GIRFEC Early Years meetings is to provide a coordinated approach to planning for transfer in to preschool and then on to school education.

Typically initial referrals come from health visitors, family doctors, social workers and community child health doctors. Other people such as speech and language, occupational and physiotherapists, preschool staff and parents may also suggest that a meeting should take place.

Each team meets with parents, or carers, so that the child's educational and developmental needs can be carefully considered and recommendations made to ensure that support is in place to address those needs. All children discussed by the GIRFEC Early Years team will have been identified as being in need of this meeting following initial discussion with their parents or carers, and only with the parents' permission.

Each child is an individual with individual needs and the discussion is aimed at identifying and agreeing on any needs based on the My World Triangle. This would include delayed development in language and communication, sensory abilities, cognitive abilities and physical development. Factors arising from medical conditions, general immaturity or social / emotional needs would also be considered in any assessment.

Discussion of children's needs should include a review of the well-being indicators which are as follows:

Safe	Protected from abuse, neglect or harm at home, at school and in the community
Healthy	Having the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health, access to suitable health care and support to make healthy and safe choices
Achieving	Being supported and guided in their learning and in the development of their skills; confidence and self esteem at home, at school and in the community
Nurtured	Having a nurturing place to live, in a family setting with additional help if needed or, where this is not possible, in a suitable care setting
Active	Having opportunities to take part in activities such as play, recreation and sport, which contribute to healthy growth and development at home and in the community
Respected & responsible	Should be involved in decisions that affect them, where appropriate, should have their voices heard and should be encouraged to play an active and responsible role in their schools and communities
Included	Having help to overcome social, educational, physical and economic inequalities and being accepted as part of the community in which they live and learn

Child Development Teams

GIRFEC Early Years teams will have close links with **Child Development Teams** which operate across Argyll and Bute. Within health services, Child Development Teams, led by paediatricians, also offer a coordinated team approach to assessing children's needs and planning any necessary treatments. The professionals involved in the Child Development Teams would include community children's nurses, occupational therapists, paediatricians, physiotherapists, public health nurses and speech and language therapists. In addition, links are made with

professionals in other agencies. Children who attend Child Development Teams are often those whose complex needs have been identified at a very early stage and require multidisciplinary assessment in a clinic. Children may be discussed at a Child Development Team before it is agreed that there would be a benefit in convening a GIRFEC Early Years meeting.

Organisation

The **named person** for children from 10 days until school entry is the health visitor. As the named person, the health visitor has the following responsibilities in relation to children who may require a GIRFEC Early Years meeting:

- To be the first point of contact for parents and carers
- To make sure parents and carers give their consent to any sharing of information and let them know when information is shared
- To identify any extra help that may be provided from within health services
- To contribute to planning for transition to preschool education or from preschool to school education
- To contribute to multiagency support when required based on the GIRFEC practice model
- In consultation with others, including Child Development Teams, to convene a GIRFEC Early Years meeting when required

Convening a GIRFEC Early Years meeting

- *Those children not in educational establishment or 0-3 years of age*

The health visitor, community paediatrician and allied health professionals will liaise to establish the needs of the child from within health services. Where there is a need for multiagency planning, the health visitor, with the consent of the parent/carer, coordinates a GIRFEC Early Years meeting. Invitations should be sent to the parent(s) or carers, educational psychologist, early years' team and other professionals involved with the child and family.

- *Those children attending a preschool establishment*

Where a child is identified as having significant additional support needs that require to be addressed by more than one agency, preschool staff will liaise with the health visitor. Following discussion with the health visitor, and with the

consent of the parent/carer, the preschool staff will set up a GIRFEC Early Years meeting. Invitations should be sent to the parent(s) or carers, educational psychologist, early years' team and other professionals involved with the child and family.

Each member of the GIRFEC Early Years team will bring the information they have gathered. All present have the opportunity to express their views about the child's strengths, difficulties and needs, or to report on any assessment of the child already completed. As information is shared, a clearer picture of the child's strengths and needs will emerge. It may become apparent that there are gaps in the assessment information and this can be pursued with the appropriate agency.

At the meeting, it should be agreed whether it is appropriate to identify a **lead professional**. The prime function of the lead professional is to co-ordinate ongoing multi-agency planning and make sure that the different services provide a network of support around the child in a seamless, timely and proportionate way.

The role of the lead professional includes the following:-

- To act as the main point of contact with the child and family for discussing the plan for support, progress and any arising issues
- To act as the main point of contact for all practitioners to feedback progress or raise any issues
- To ensure that provision of specialist help and assessments are co-ordinated and not duplicated
- To monitor how well the child's plan is working, especially in relation to improving the child's situation

Involving and engaging with parents and carers

Parents and carers should play a key role in contributing to the assessment of their child. Parents will be given an opportunity to express their views, asks questions and discuss approaches to support. As a result, information should be provided in advance about the GIRFEC Early Years meeting including the format of the meeting and those people who will be in attendance. Some parents may find formal meetings difficult and therefore it is good practice for either the named person or a

member of the early years staff to check with parents and carers if they would like help to contribute their views or ask questions at the meeting. Parents should be given the opportunity to bring a relative, friend or other person to support them if they wish to do so. The number of people attending meetings should be restricted to those with a direct role to play.

Education (Additional support for Learning) (Scotland) Acts 2004 and 2009

As the GIRFEC Early Years process is put in place when more than one agency is involved in supporting a child, for children 3 years and over consideration should be given to whether the eligibility criteria for a Coordinated Support Plan (CSP) would be met. Guidance on the eligibility criteria is found in Chapter 4 of the Code of Practice. Where it appears that a CSP should be considered, links should be made with the Area Principal Teacher in line with Argyll and Bute protocols.

Outcomes and recommendations

The team will aim to reach an agreement about any support needs the child may have and will make recommendations regarding any action necessary to promote the child's educational and developmental progress. Action points should be identified at the meeting with a clear indication of who should complete this action and the required timescale. Where necessary this should be formally drawn together in to a child's plan. A date for the next GIRFEC Early Years meeting should be set. Where the child is at the point of transition, staff from the preschool establishment or primary school should be invited to attend.

A minute of the GIRFEC Early Years meeting is taken and circulated to everyone present. Copies of the minute should be sent to the Quality Improvement Manager: Early Years and Quality Improvement Manager: Pupil Support.

Pathway to Getting it Right for Every Child: Early Years

