

Nevada Initial Assessment Supplementary Content Guidelines

Purpose for the Assessment Content Guidelines

The intended use of the assessment content guidelines is as follows:

Caseworkers/ Social Workers

1. The assessment content guidelines may be used to prepare for conducting interviews with family members and collaterals.
2. The assessment content guidelines may be used throughout the information collection process to help assure that sufficient information is obtained related to each of the six assessment areas.
3. The assessment content guidelines should be reviewed when documenting the six assessment areas. The use of the assessment content guidelines will be helpful to assure that all significant case information is recorded and described in adequate detail.

CPS/ Child Welfare Supervisors

1. The assessment content guidelines may be used by supervisors when reviewing the Nevada Initial Assessment Summary to determine the sufficiency of case information for CPS/ child welfare decision-making.
2. The assessment content guidelines may be used by supervisors when preparing for and providing consultative supervision.

Nevada Initial Assessment

The Nevada Initial Assessment is a neutral family centered evaluation. Information collection/ interviews should therefore be conducted in a neutral manner. Focused information collection that proceeds along a specified interviewing order and is consistent with practice protocol will result in an assessment where the family reveals itself in terms of areas of effectiveness and ineffectiveness. The interview order and practice protocol will enhance information collection that is important to gather and document for the purposes of child welfare decision-making.

When documenting family information related to the six assessment areas of the Nevada Initial Assessment, specify what information has been gathered concerning child, caregiver and family functioning, both positive and negative on the Nevada Initial Assessment Summary.

As you record the positive and negative conditions, you consider their effect in the family with respect to implications for risk of maltreatment, safety threats and a caregiver/ family's capacity for child protection.

Your information collection, documentation and analysis of family conditions associated with the six assessment areas will consider variation in caregiver, child and family functioning along a continuum:

- Strengths and enhanced functioning
- Appropriate level of functioning
- Acceptable/ appropriate functioning is inconsistent; sporadic
- Appropriate level of functioning is unpredictable
- Level of functioning is usually Inconsistent, unreasonable and inappropriate
- Dysfunctional

Nevada Initial Assessment Summary Guidelines

1. **Nature:** *What are the circumstances surrounding the alleged child maltreatment?*

Nature Assessment Content

Nature refers to the circumstances that accompany or surround the alleged maltreatment:

Circumstances

Thoroughly describe the event(s) leading up to and influencing the alleged child maltreatment. Consider and seek understanding regarding what was going on with the family, the caregiver(s) and/or the child(ren) that contributed, caused or resulted in the alleged abuse and/or neglect. It is important to include the caregiver(s)' explanation for what occurred related to the alleged maltreatment.

Relevant Areas of Assessment:

Consistent with caregiver's explanation
First time occurrence, unintentional, situational related
Substance usage or DV accompanying the alleged maltreatment
Deliberate
Use of an instrument

Duration of alleged maltreatment

How long has the alleged maltreatment been occurring? Is this an isolated incident or chronic in nature? The duration of the alleged maltreatment is an important influence on the likelihood of maltreatment occurring again in the future. It is necessary to note however, that the duration of alleged maltreatment is not in itself a determinant of the severity of maltreatment that may occur (i.e. chronic neglect situations). Worker analysis should also consider the extent or severity of maltreatment that has already occurred.

Relevant Areas of Assessment:

Isolated incident
History of maltreatment; previous CPS involvement; progressing in severity
Has occurred over a period of time without serious results
Long term with serious results

Caregiver's Reaction

It is important consider the caregiver(s)' reaction to the alleged maltreatment. Are caregiver(s)' remorseful (if applicable)? Do caregiver(s)' justify the maltreatment (if applicable)? Like the duration of alleged maltreatment, the caregiver reaction to the alleged maltreatment is another indicator of risk and depending on circumstances may be an indication of an unsafe child.

Relevant Areas of Assessment:

- Caregiver remorseful
- Caregiver does not accept responsibility
- Denies maltreatment occurred; blames others
- Maltreatment is justified by caregiver

2. Child Functioning: *How do the children function on a daily basis?*

Child Functioning Assessment Content

Child Functioning is concerned with how the child acts day in and day out. It is important to emphasize that the assessment should target a child's routine functioning, rather than the child's response to CPS intervention.

Assessment should include a consideration for a child's *physical, behavioral, emotional/ temperament and cognitive* functioning.

Relevant Areas of Assessment include:

- Capacity for attachment; attachment and bonding with other family members
- Academic performance (if applicable)
- Interaction with peers
- Hobbies and general activities
- Verbal and non-verbal communication; responsiveness to others
- Mental health
- Physical health
- Motor skills
- Perceptions of self; perceptions of others
- Expressions of feelings and emotions
- Self control

When gathering, documenting and analyzing child functioning information, consider the child's behavior, emotions, temperament, physical and cognitive functioning in terms of consistency, reasonableness, appropriateness with age and/or illustrative of the norm of expected development.

3. Adult Functioning: *How do the adults (primary caregivers) function on a daily basis?*

Adult Functioning Assessment Content

Adult General Functioning is concerned with how the adults in the family feel, think, and act on a daily basis with respect to life events and life management.

When completing information gathering and documentation related to Adult Functioning, focus on how the caregiver functions generally, rather than in relation to their response to intervention. Further it is important to distinguish between a caregiver's individual adult functioning separate from the parenting role. The Adult Functioning assessment area deals only with an adult caregiver's routine behaviors, emotions, temperament and cognitive functioning that is illustrative of who that person is as an adult. Note strengths.

Among the issues for consideration pertaining to adult functioning are as follows:

Relevant Areas of Assessment:

1. Behavioral Patterns
 - Substance usage; substance misuse; dependency
 - Self Control; impulsivity; aggression; violence
 - Relationship/ interaction with others; social isolation
 - Communication
 - Flexibility
 - Adherence to social norms
2. Emotional Patterns
 - Coping; stress management; stressors unmanageable
 - Emotional control
 - Stability
 - Mental Health
3. Cognitive Patterns
 - Problem solving
 - Judgment and decision-making
 - Reality orientation
 - Thought processing
 - Cognitive functioning
 - Self-concept; self awareness; self esteem
4. Life Management Patterns
 - Home management
 - Employment
 - Accessing resources
 - Finances
 - Self care
 - Physical health
 - Sense of purpose
 - Control of personal habits

4. Parenting-General: *What are the general parenting practices in this family?*

Parenting General Assessment Content

Parenting – General explores the general nature and approach to parenting. When considering this assessment area, it is important to keep focused on the overall parenting that is occurring and not a specific maltreatment incident or disciplinary approaches, which may influence your study and analysis pertaining to this question. Note parenting strengths. Among the issues for consideration pertaining to parenting-general are as follows:

Relevant Areas of Assessment:

1. Parenting style
 - . Source of parenting style
 - . Expectations
 - . Consistency in parenting
 - . Tendency toward positive parenting
 - . Control in parenting role
2. Feelings and perceptions about being a parent
 - . Reasons for being a parent
 - . Degree of satisfaction in caregiver role
 - . Motivated as a parent
3. History of parenting
 - . Parenting successes
 - . Perceived parenting challenges, struggles or failures
 - . History of protective behavior
4. Perceptions of children
 - . Viewpoint of child and influence on parenting practice

5. Emotional caregiver protective capacities
 - . Empathetic
 - . Demonstration of attachment and bonding
 - . Nurturing
 - . Sensitivity to child
 - . Aligned and supportive of child
6. Behavioral caregiver protective capacities
 - . Caregiver(s) ability to set needs aside in favor of the child
 - . Responsive
 - . Provides basic care
 - . Acts on child's strengths, limitations and needs
 - . Protectiveness
 - . Parenting skill
7. Cognitive caregiver protective capacities
 - . Recognition of child's needs
 - . Adequacy of parenting knowledge
 - . Understands child's strengths, limitations and needs

4a. Parenting- Discipline: *What are the disciplinary practices in this family?*

Parenting Discipline Assessment Content

Parenting -- Discipline focuses attention and evaluation on discipline only. This is a very distinct category of study, which targets and isolates one aspect of parenting: the disciplinary approach. No other parenting practices or issues are to be considered with respect to this assessment question. There are three general overriding areas of assessment pertaining to parenting discipline that must be understood by the completion of the assessment process:

Relevant Areas of Assessment:

1. What is the caregiver(s)' typical approach to discipline?
 - Disciplinary approaches are varied; creative; effective
 - Discipline is inconsistent
 - Avoids or abstains from apply disciplinary approaches
 - Use of negative approaches
 - Lack parenting knowledge related to disciplinary approaches
 - Harsh discipline; non-discriminating discipline
 - Unpredictable patterns
2. How do caregiver(s) maintain themselves when carrying out disciplinary measures?
 - Maintains self control
 - Discipline is applied if fair and just ways
 - Holds reasonable expectations for child's capacity
 - Sometimes reactive and when disciplining
 - Indications that caregiver(s) may occasionally lose control
 - Discipline may sometimes occur as a result of anger or frustration
 - May deliberately vent anger and frustration out on the child
3. What purpose does the discipline serve for both the child and caregiver(s)?
 - Recognizes child's growth and control needs
 - Appropriately balances setting boundaries and teaching
 - Attempts to balance teaching and punishing
 - Views discipline as primarily punishment
 - Demonstrates disciplinary expectations that child cannot meet
 - Discipline is used as a method for intimidation, control and compliance
 - Discipline is viewed as the primary, essential function of parenting

5. Maltreatment: *What is the extent of the child maltreatment and your finding?*

Maltreatment Assessment Content

Maltreatment refers to actual maltreating behavior and the current physical and/or psychological effects... what is occurring or has occurred and what are the results, e.g., hitting, injuries.

A finding of abuse and neglect is based upon information gathered related to indication that maltreatment has or is occurring. This is a factual discussion and relates the maltreatment to the laws and regulations.

When there is no indication of abuse or neglect, the Maltreatment question should describe what was found in relation to the allegation(s) that were made in the referral and how the determination was made.