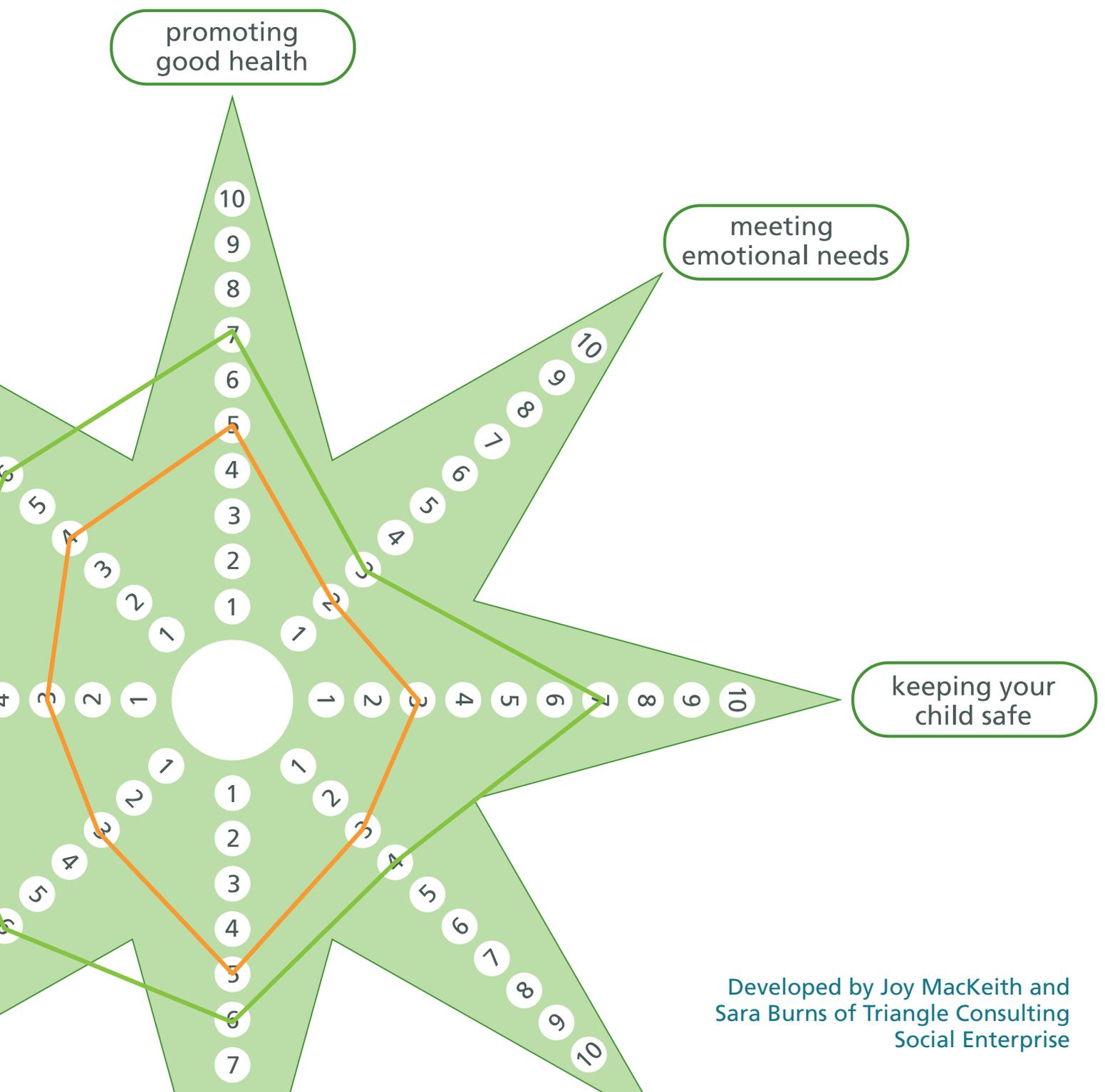




Family Star™

The Outcomes Star for parents



Published by

Triangle Consulting Social Enterprise Ltd
Registered address (not for correspondence):
Preston Park House
South Road
Brighton
East Sussex
BN1 6SB
020 7272 8765

Copyright © 2010 Triangle Consulting
Social Enterprise Ltd
All rights reserved



Authors

Sara Burns and Joy MacKeith
Triangle Consulting Social Enterprise Ltd
www.triangleconsulting.co.uk

Designed and edited by Jellymould Creative
www.jellymouldcreative.com

First edition published 20th September 2010

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 2.0 UK: England & Wales Licence.

The Family Star is the intellectual property of Triangle Consulting Social Enterprise. In order to promote the use of the Star and facilitate effective keywork and outcome measurement, the copyright holders give you permission to copy, distribute and display this publication under the following conditions and any use that does not comply with these conditions shall be considered a breach of our rights:

- You copy, distribute and display the publication in its entirety
- You do not alter the design or text or create IT software based on or in anyway incorporating the tool
- You do not use this work for commercial purposes including offering training whether paid or not.

This is a Creative Commons Attribution, Non Commercial, No Derivatives licence. For more information about Creative Commons and to see the full licence visit www.creativecommons.org/licences.

Other licences are available for those wishing to translate the document into other languages or to include aspects of the Star in their software applications, paperwork or publications. Please contact info@triangleconsulting.co.uk for more details.

The Outcomes Star™

The Family Star is part of a family of Outcomes Star tools. Each tool includes a Star Chart, scales and guidance on implementation and some have visual and other resources. For other versions of the Outcomes Star, good practice and further information see www.outcomesstar.org.uk. To find out about using this Star as an online tool visit www.staronline.org.uk. To enquire about training please email training@triangleconsulting.co.uk. To find out about purchasing a license to include elements of the Family Star in your paperwork or IT system please contact info@triangleconsulting.co.uk.

Triangle was originally commissioned to work on an outcome measurement system by St Mungo's, with financial support from the London Housing Foundation, and recognises St Mungo's vital role in the development of the Outcomes Star.

Acknowledgements

The Outcomes Star has a long history of development and we would like to thank all the managers, workers and clients who have contributed their feedback and made it possible for Triangle to develop such an accessible and effective set of tools. We would particularly like to thank:

- Camden Council Children's Schools and Families (CSF) Directorate for making this version of the Outcomes Star possible
- The Camden family services and consultant-parents that formed the working group with whom we developed the Family Star:
 - Camden consultant-parents
 - Managers and workers from Elfrida Rathbone, Euston Children's Centre, Hopscotch, Coram and the Youth Offending Service
 - Family Action.
- Hampshire local authority parenting services and Family Action for piloting and feedback
- The London Housing Foundation and St Mungo's for their respective roles in the creation of the original Outcomes Star concept in homelessness.

Welcome to the Family Star™

Looking after a family is one of the most challenging things any of us will ever do

Children need love, attention, patience, meals, clothes, guidance and boundaries – and often all before 8:30 in the morning! Sometimes special circumstances like disability, unemployment, moving to a new area or mental health problems can make the challenges even greater. It's not surprising that many of us sometimes find it hard to cope.

The Family Star™ helps us focus on what is important for our children to thrive

It looks at eight areas where parenting support may be needed at different times:

1. Promoting good health
2. Meeting emotional needs
3. Keeping your child safe
4. Social networks
5. Supporting learning
6. Setting boundaries
7. Keeping a family routine
8. Providing home and money.

Becoming an effective parent doesn't happen overnight

Most parents find that it takes time, support and effort for their family to make positive changes in these areas, especially if there have been problems. It can help to be aware of the steps along the way, to recognise where you are now and the steps you are taking.

The Star helps you do that by mapping out five main steps to being an effective parent. Not everyone starts at the beginning and people can move back as well as forwards.

The Steps to Effective Parenting

At the beginning we may feel **stuck** - things aren't working well and our children can't thrive but we don't recognise there is a problem or can't face it so things are stuck.

The first big step is to become **aware** that our children need something different. This can feel difficult because we are aware something needs to change but we don't know where to start.

Then we start **trying** to do things differently. Sometimes we do things in a positive, skillful way and other times we don't manage to. Making changes is hard so we need lots of support and encouragement.

The next step is **finding what works**. Some of the things we have tried start to work and other things don't. We learn from and build on the successes and we learn to balance our needs with our children's. They start to benefit from the changes we've made.

As we build on what works, we move towards **effective parenting**. We are not perfect and parenting always brings challenges but our children have what they need to do well. We can balance our needs with theirs most of the time and handle the ups and downs of family life.

There is a detailed description of these underlying Steps to Effective Parenting at the back of this guide, which you can read if you want to find out more.

To complete the Family Star™, think about where you are at the moment and what your next step might be

For each of the eight areas of parenting shown on the Star, there is a summary of the steps towards more effective parenting as well as some more detailed descriptions of each step. They are on pages 6 to 21 and describe the journey one step at a time.

There are two options to choose from within each of the five main steps. If, when you read a description, you feel it fits well for you at the moment, give yourself the first number for that stage (1, 3, 5, 7 or 9). If you are nearly at the next step then choose the higher number (2, 4, 6, or 8). A score of 10 means that you can keep up effective parenting in this area without any help from a family support worker or other parenting service. At this stage you may also be an inspiration or support to others.

Although you can do this on your own, people usually find it helpful to talk it through with a family support worker or other person you trust to help you. Together, you can agree which step you are at and get an accurate picture of how things are for you at the moment in relation to your family, including aspects that are working well in areas that are otherwise difficult.

Create a picture of where you are now in your journey to effective parenting

When you have decided where you are at the moment, you can mark that number on the Family Star Chart. When you have completed them all you can connect the points to create your own personal Star.

This picture will help you and your worker to agree what to focus on in the next few weeks or months. From there you can start thinking about the actions you want to take and the support that would help you.

Continuing your journey

You and your family support worker will come back to the Star at regular intervals. You can look at the steps again, agree where you are and plot a new shape on the Chart. Over time this will help you build a picture of how things are changing for you and your family. This can help you see things in a new way – to put the ups and downs of each week into a bigger picture.

It also helps us to get an idea of whether the service is giving the right support.

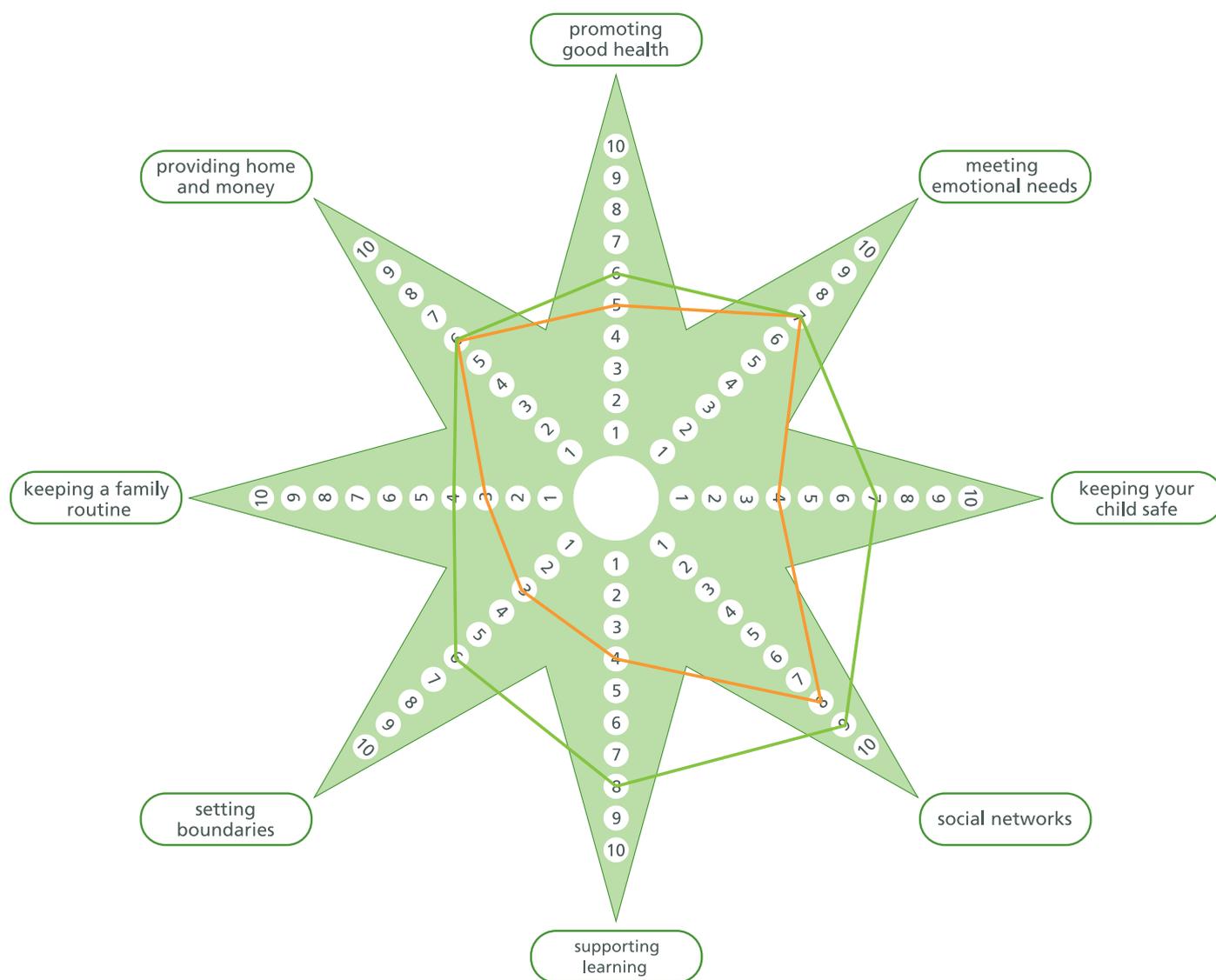


Figure 1: A completed Family Star

1 Promoting good health

This scale is about how well you are looking after your children's health. It is about getting treatment when they have health problems, including mental health problems or disabilities, if there are any. It also covers doing things that build good health, like making sure they have regular exercise, enough sleep and a good diet.

9 - 10 Effective parenting

My children have a healthy lifestyle and receive any medical treatment they need

7 - 8 Finding what works

I am finding ways of building a healthy lifestyle for my child

5 - 6 Trying

I try and do things to make sure my child is healthy but it's hard

3 - 4 Aware

I know I need to do more to look after my child's health

1 - 2 Stuck

I don't think I need to do anything about my child's health though other people say I'm neglecting it

1 Promoting good health (detail)

9 - 10 Effective parenting

My children have a healthy lifestyle and receive any medical treatment they need

- You look after your child's health, including treating minor problems at home and getting appropriate help, as needed
- You have created healthy habits and routines for you and your children. You have a reasonably healthy, balanced diet and take exercise yourself as well as ensuring your children do
- If you have an older child, you encourage them to take responsibility for their health, including sexual health for teenagers
- If your child has a disability or health condition, you have a good understanding of their needs and are keeping them as well and healthy as possible. You may even be helping others in a similar position.

7 - 8 Finding what works

I am finding ways of building a healthy lifestyle for my child

- You are making an effort to give your child a healthy diet, exercise and healthy sleeping patterns. Some things go well, others don't go so well but you are learning what works. You may be finding it works best if you have a healthy diet and lifestyle, too, but that can be hard to stick to
- You notice when your child is unwell and make sure they have what they need to get better
- If your child has a disability or health condition you have a reasonable understanding of their needs and are learning ways of managing the condition. It is challenging and you may need a lot of support.

5 - 6 Trying

I try and do things to make sure my child is healthy but it's hard

- When your child appears to be ill you do something about it, though you may not be sure it is the right thing
- You take your child to the doctor or nurse and dentist for some routine checks but not all and don't always follow their advice
- From time-to-time you try giving your child more healthy food or getting a good sleep routine but it's a struggle and it usually doesn't last long
- If your child has a disability or health condition you are getting help but you may find it hard to accept and may not follow through with treatment.

3 - 4 Aware

I know I need to do more to look after my child's health

- This stage is similar to 1-2. You don't attend routine appointments and your child's lifestyle is not healthy but you can see there are issues and will accept help around your child's diet and health.

1 - 2 Stuck

I don't think I need to do anything about my child's health though other people say I am neglecting it

- You don't attend routine appointments or get medical help for your child or baby unless you think it is an emergency
- Your child has an unhealthy diet or not enough exercise or sleep. They may be overweight, obese or under-nourished
- If your child has a disability or health condition, you don't know much about it and are not finding out – maybe you are in shock or can't acknowledge it
- If they are a healthy child, they may be OK for now but there is a high risk of them developing health problems. If you have teenagers, they may be neglecting or taking risks with their own health, including sexual health
- You may also be neglecting your own health
- You don't see this as a problem or are unable to do anything about it or accept help.

2 Meeting emotional needs

This scale is about ensuring your child can grow up happy and able to deal with life's ups and downs. This means giving them love, attention and a sense of connection to you. It is also about your own emotional well-being as this has a big impact on your child. If you aren't coping or are depressed or anxious then it can be harder to give your child what they need. There is also space here to discuss alcohol, drugs or domestic abuse if these are affecting your well-being and having an impact on your children.

9 - 10 Effective parenting

I respond well to my children's emotional needs and give them what they need to be happy and able to deal with life's ups and downs

7 - 8 Finding what works

I am responding to my child's emotional needs but there are a few problems

5 - 6 Trying

I am trying to be there for my child but it's really hard – things keep getting in the way

3 - 4 Aware

I know I don't give my children the emotional support they need and I would like to change that

1 - 2 Stuck

If my children have problems, it's not my fault. We don't want any help

2 Meeting emotional needs (detail)

9 - 10 Effective parenting

I respond well to my children's emotional needs and give them what they need to be happy and able to deal with life's ups and downs

- You can empathise with your child
- You feel close and connected and enjoy their company but are also able to allow them to be separate from you when they need to be
- If you have a mental health issue or use drugs or alcohol, this is not having a negative impact on your child
- Your own emotional well-being is good enough for you to be able to be there for your children.

7 - 8 Finding what works

I am responding to my child's emotional needs but there are a few problems

- More often than not you feel able to respond well to your child but that isn't always the case. You have learnt some new approaches and are noticing a positive impact on your child when you use those
- You have made progress with any issues that were affecting your well-being.

5 - 6 Trying

I am trying to be there for my child but it's really hard – things keep getting in the way

- You are actively addressing any issues that prevent you responding positively to your child – you might be getting help for depression, tackling alcohol or drug misuse or trying to get out of an abusive situation. It is early days and your children may not be seeing the benefits yet
- You try to give them attention and to be responsive to them and sometimes it goes well but you find it hard to keep it up
- If your relationship has been very distant or over-close then you are making a conscious effort to change this
- Your children may experience you as inconsistent but you are engaged with them, at least some of the time.

3 - 4 Aware

I know I don't give my children the emotional support they need and I would like to change that

- Emotionally you are not able to be there for your child, with similar issues to 1-2. Here you recognise that there is a problem but you don't know what to do
- You may feel upset, angry or other emotions about this and want to make things better.

1 - 2 Stuck

If my children have problems, it's not my fault. We don't want any help

- Emotionally, you are not able to meet your children's needs
- You may feel very distant from them or you may be so close that you depend on them a lot to meet your emotional needs
- You may be feeling very depressed, critical of yourself, anxious or hopeless, and/or you may be experiencing domestic abuse
- If you are drinking or using drugs, this may be having a negative impact on your family
- You are not aware of, or can't face, thinking about any negative effect on your children.

3 Keeping your child safe

This scale is about how safe your child is in your care. This includes whether they receive appropriate supervision, whether you take measures to ensure your home is safe and protect your child from accidents. It is also about protecting yourself and your children from bullying, racial harassment, abuse and domestic violence.

9 - 10 Effective parenting

My child is safe in my care

7 - 8 Finding what works

My child and I are mostly safe but there are a few issues

5 - 6 Trying

I am changing things so that I can protect myself and my child

3 - 4 Aware

My child is not safe and I need to do something about this

1 - 2 Stuck

People say my children are not safe. I wish they would stop interfering

3 Keeping your child safe (detail)

9 - 10 Effective parenting

My child is safe in my care

- You teach your child about all aspects of safety including how to avoid accidents at home, on the roads, bullying and crime, drugs, alcohol, sexual health and the Internet, as appropriate for their age
- Your home is safe, the people who visit are safe for your child and you don't need outside help to keep it that way
- If your child is old enough to go out without adult supervision, you know what they are doing when not with you and that their peer group is mostly safe
- You think about new situations in advance to anticipate risks and act straight away if you see a risk to your child's safety.

7 - 8 Finding what works

My child and I are mostly safe but there are a few issues

- You talk to your child about safety issues, as appropriate for their age
- You put in place the strategies needed to keep your child safe
- If there have been safety issues, such as domestic abuse or inappropriate visitors, then this has now stopped but you still need some help with managing the situation.

5 - 6 Trying

I am changing things so that I can protect myself and my child

- This could include making your home safer, changing your behaviour and the people who visit, being around more, finding new childcare, or having new rules about when and where they can go out
- If there has been domestic violence, or you or your child has experienced bullying or racial harassment, then you are seeking help
- If your child has been abused then you are getting help for them
- Making changes is hard. You have the right intentions but are finding it difficult to follow through. You haven't seen many benefits yet and you may need a lot of support to keep going.

3 - 4 Aware

My child is not safe and I need to do something about this

- You are aware that your child is not safe in any of the ways described under 1-2. A crisis, accident or social worker may have made you aware, or you have realised for yourself
- It may feel awful to acknowledge that your child is not safe
- You may feel unsafe as well due to bullying, racial harassment, domestic violence or other crime
- You will accept services that can help but you may feel under pressure.

1 - 2 Stuck

People say my children are not safe – I wish they would stop interfering

- Your child is not safe for one or more of these reasons:
 - They are left unsupervised and at risk of accidents and maybe letting themselves out of the home
 - They are getting in trouble with crime or drugs or are a victim of crime
 - They are victims of physical, sexual or emotional abuse or there is a risk of abuse by a relative, carer or visitor
 - They are the victims, or perpetrators, of bullying or racial harassment
 - Your behaviour at home, or people who visit, put them at risk
- You can't face thinking about this or don't think there is a problem.

4 Social networks

This scale is about you as a parent having the social contact and support you need and want and your children being able to develop friendships and social skills through spending time with other children. It is also about feeling settled and happy where you live and having access to places of religious worship or other facilities important to you and your family.

9 - 10 Effective parenting

I have the social contact I need and want and my child spends time with other children and is developing social skills

7 - 8 Finding what works

My family has some support and connections but not enough

5 - 6 Trying

We are getting to know people or seeing more of friends or family

3 - 4 Aware

We are isolated. I want us to feel more at home here

1 - 2 Stuck

We don't need other people

4 Social networks (detail)

9 - 10 Effective parenting

I have the social contact I need and want and my child spends time with other children and is developing social skills

- Friends, neighbours and/or wider family meet your needs for support and communication
- Your children spend time with peers and friends and have or are developing social skills, appropriate for their age
- You are reasonably settled and happy living where you are and have access to places of worship or other community services or facilities that are important to you.

7 - 8 Finding what works

My family has some support and connections but not enough

- Your child has friends they spend time with
- You have friends, neighbours or wider family you spend time with and maybe people you can call on for support, favors and childcare but you would like to feel more rooted and connected
- Perhaps you have joined in some local activities and got to know people but don't yet feel confident with them
- Maybe you have got help with harassment or bullying issues but still need support around this.

5 - 6 Trying

We are getting to know people or seeing more of friends or family

- You are making efforts to connect with people locally and/or to see more of family or friends living further away
- You are thinking about your child's social network – whether they have positive friendships and opportunities to develop social skills
- You are trying to find out about local facilities that matter to you
- You are finding it difficult and aren't sure you are getting anywhere – it is hard getting to know new people or finding people you like.

3 - 4 Aware

We are isolated. I want us to feel more at home here

- The situation is the same as in 1-2 but you are aware that you and/or your children are isolated or the people you are mixing with are having a negative influence
- You want to do something about it but don't know where to start.

1 - 2 Stuck

We don't need other people

Either

- You have little in the way of family and friends to support you and your children don't have friends they spend time with or the opportunity to develop social skills
- Perhaps you are a long way away from your family and/or friends who have supported you in the past, or you don't speak much English and no one around speaks your first language
- Perhaps you feel that your family is not welcome. Maybe people steer clear of you and your family because of issues you have experienced such as drugs, domestic abuse or disability or something about your house they don't like
- Perhaps you have been threatened or feel unsafe
- There may have been complaints about you or your address

Or

- The people you are mixing with are a negative influence on the family (for example because they are drinking, involved in crime or behaving inappropriately when the children are around)

And

- You don't see this as a problem – perhaps it is just the way it has always been and you can't imagine things being any different.

5 Supporting learning

This scale is about supporting your child's learning and aspirations. For younger children, it is about stimulating play and activities including messy play and opportunities for creativity and risk-taking. For school-age children, it is also about them attending school and about you taking an interest in their education. For teens and older children, it is about supporting aspiration, continued learning, having role models and encouragement for a fulfilling working life in adulthood.

9 - 10 Effective parenting

My child is learning well and developing positive aspirations for the future

7 - 8 Finding what works

Some things are working well but there are still problems to address

5 - 6 Trying

There are problems around learning and aspiration but I am trying to sort them out

3 - 4 Aware

I am concerned that my child is missing out. I would like to do something about it but I don't know where to start

1 - 2 Stuck

I'm not thinking about my child's learning or aspirations

5 Supporting learning (detail)

9 - 10 Effective parenting

My child is learning well and developing positive aspirations for the future

- Your child has the stimulation and encouragement they need for learning
- They are reaching their potential. You are proud of your child's progress and celebrate their achievements
- They use local facilities and you prioritise learning, play, reading and other stimulation. If your child is of school age, their school attendance is good and you attend the main school events. If they are over 16, you are supporting them with continued education, training or getting into work and helping them to take responsibility for their learning and make positive choices
- There are people in or around your family who work and provide role models for a positive working life.

7 - 8 Finding what works

Some things are working well but there are still problems to address

- Your child is getting some positive input on education and learning and, if they are of school age, they are attending school regularly
- They understand that you see education and learning as important and you are encouraging them to make positive choices around their own learning
- You have made some positive changes, such as playing more or choosing childcare that supports their learning, if you have younger children. For older children, you may be making sure that they are at school and there are work-related role models around the family
- There are still problems in some areas but you are getting help.

5 - 6 Trying

There are problems around learning and aspiration but I am trying to sort them out

- You are trying to make a difference to your child's education or early development but they are missing out on learning opportunities
- You try new things, for instance sanctions if your child misses school, praise for good work, playing or reading with them at home or taking them to activity groups but you find it hard or uncomfortable and don't always do it
- There are still problems and sometimes you feel you aren't getting anywhere.

3 - 4 Aware

I am concerned that my child is missing out. I would like to do something about it but I don't know where to start

- Your children are not taking part in stimulating activities, school or training and you are concerned about this
- You are talking to the health visitor, social worker or school about improving things but may feel helpless or unable to support your child.

1 - 2 Stuck

I'm not thinking about my child's learning or aspirations

- If your child is pre-school you aren't giving them stimulating things to do, playing with them or taking them to environments that support their development. Maybe there are few toys in the house, maybe none.
- Your child is behind other children in their development but you haven't recognised this or don't see it as a problem
- If your child is of school age or above, they aren't attending school or further education regularly or receiving home education and you don't think there is a problem
- Maybe you had a negative experience of being at school yourself or you don't know how to support them to do well at school, or you see no point because you don't believe there are jobs for them anyway.

6 Setting boundaries

This scale is about giving your child clear boundaries so that they understand what is expected of them and the consequences of negative behavior. It is about communicating clearly what you expect, dealing with difficulties calmly and constructively and providing incentives for behaving well.

9 - 10 Effective parenting

I am able to maintain effective boundaries

7 - 8 Finding what works

I set appropriate boundaries and have some skills to help my children keep within them but there are some difficult areas

5 - 6 Trying

I am learning about appropriate boundaries and how to enforce them

3 - 4 Aware

My child's behavior is a problem – I need help to deal with them

1 - 2 Stuck

I don't feel there is a problem with boundaries or discipline though I know others are concerned about my child's behaviour

6 Setting boundaries (detail)

9 - 10 Effective parenting

I am able to maintain effective boundaries

- You have firm, fair boundaries and expectations within the family that work most of the time
- You are consistent and mostly feel able to deal with difficult behavior if and when it arises, using assertive parenting
- Your child usually respects the boundaries you set and you are able to adapt and negotiate these appropriately as your child grows and changes
- You look ahead, anticipate problems and find ways around them.

7 - 8 Finding what works

I set appropriate boundaries and have some skills to help my children keep within them but there are some difficult areas

- Mostly you are able to tell your child why certain behavior is unacceptable and what the consequences are without becoming upset or aggressive
- You are reasonably consistent and your incentives and sanctions work most of the time but sometimes other things get in the way
- If there is another parent or carer involved, you are talking about how to work together and you both give the child a consistent message
- There are still some problem areas where you need help.

5 - 6 Trying

I am learning about appropriate boundaries and how to enforce them

- Your child's behaviour causes difficulties but you are actively trying new ways of dealing with difficult behaviour
- You are talking to your child about what you feel is acceptable behaviour and listening to what they say – you may be introducing clearer boundaries or loosening them if they have been rather strict
- This may mean focusing more on incentives for good behaviour rather than punishments
- You may be attending a parenting course and finding it helpful. You are hopeful things will get better but they may not have improved much
- It's hard doing things differently. You often don't follow through or go back to how you used to do things, so your child may feel uncertain about what is expected and test out whether you really mean it.

3 - 4 Aware

My child's behavior is a problem – I need help to deal with them

- Your child's behaviour causes difficulties and you are aware that your approach is not working and that things can't go on as they are
- You are open to help but may feel hopeless or awful that things have got so bad and you need help with this.

1 - 2 Stuck

I don't feel there is a problem with boundaries or discipline though I know others are concerned about my child's behaviour

- Your child's behavior causes difficulties. They may be regularly in trouble with the law or at school or, for younger children, concerns may have been raised in a nursery or drop-in, or by a child-minder
- You may feel others are over-reacting and there isn't a problem, or you may feel there is nothing you can do about your child's behaviour. Either way you don't want help with parenting skills
- Your child may feel that there are no rules or that the rules are too strict, unfair and inconsistent, or may even be copying some of their negative behaviour from the way you behave at times.

7 Keeping a family routine

This scale is about providing your children with the basic care they need each day – making sure they get up at a regular time – except during holidays and weekends and that they have clean suitable clothes, regular meals and baths or showers and ensuring they get to school or nursery on time where appropriate. With teenagers and young adults, this is also about encouraging them to take responsibility for their basic care and routine.

9 - 10 Effective parenting

My family has a positive routine that supports us all

7 - 8 Finding what works

My family has a positive routine but there are a few difficult areas

5 - 6 Trying

I am trying to create a positive routine for the family

3 - 4 Aware

My children need a better family routine but I don't know how to make that happen

1 - 2 Stuck

We don't have a family routine and I don't see that as a problem

7 Keeping a family routine (detail)

9 - 10 Effective parenting

My family has a positive routine that supports us all

- Your children have regular meals. They get up and dressed at a regular time and get to and from where they need to be during the day. They are clean enough, have suitable clothes, get enough sleep and the house is clean enough
- You eat together as a family at least once a week
- Older children are doing appropriate tasks to help in the home or in the care of younger siblings
- Exactly how you do this will depend on your culture. The important thing is that your children's basic needs are met.

7 - 8 Finding what works

My family has a positive routine but there are a few difficult areas

- There are some problems but there is a clear sense of routine for the family. Your children have at least one meal at a regular time each day; wash often enough and get up at the same time most days (except during holidays)
- There is a lot of trial and error. You may be getting advice from friends and family as well as professionals and choosing what works for you.

5 - 6 Trying

I am trying to create a positive routine for the family

- You are trying to put supportive routines in place. For example you may be trying to stick to regular meal times or bed times
- Your children may not like the change and may rebel against it. You are finding it hard and quickly slip back to old ways.

3 - 4 Aware

My children need a better family routine but I don't know how to make that happen

- As for 1-2 below but you recognise that the current situation is not working for your children and you want help to change it
- You probably have someone working with you who is giving you advice on what could change and how to do it. You may be feeling criticised and might not want to do things their way but you may feel under pressure and that you don't have much choice.

1 - 2 Stuck

We don't have a family routine and I don't see that as a problem

- Either there is no family routine or the routine that you have is having a negative impact on your child
- You are not doing one or more of the following:
 - Providing regular meals
 - Making sure your children are up and dressed at a regular time
 - Making sure they get to and from school, if relevant
 - Making sure they wash, have clean, suitable clothes and the house is adequately clean
- Or, you are relying on older children to do this for younger children without appropriate support
- And, you don't see this as a problem. Perhaps you don't like routines and you feel your children are fine without them or you may think they are old enough to decide what to do for themselves.

8 Providing home and money

This scale is about providing your child with the security of a stable home that is adequate for your needs and the money you need to care for them. It covers whether you are able to manage financially and regularly pay your bills, including your mortgage or rent, without any risk of losing your home. It is also about how you spend the money you have so that you provide for your family's basic needs.

9 - 10 Effective parenting

Our home is secure, adequate for our needs and we manage on our income

7 - 8 Finding what works

Our home is secure and adequate for our needs and we usually have money for food and basics but there are a few problems

5 - 6 Trying

I am trying to sort out our housing and finances but it's hard to make progress

3 - 4 Aware

We don't have a stable, adequate home and/or enough money – I want to change that but I don't know where to begin

1 - 2 Stuck

We don't have a stable, adequate home and/or enough money to buy food and other basics – there's nothing I can do about that

8 Providing home and money (detail)

9 - 10 Effective parenting

Our home is secure and adequate for our needs and we manage on our income

- Your home is adequate for your needs and there is no risk of eviction
- You are managing your money reasonably well and have enough for the basics and to save a bit at times
- You are making positive choices about how to spend the money you have, for instance paying bills before buying a new mobile phone
- If you have debts you are making regular repayments and the debt is reducing or staying stable.

7 - 8 Finding what works

Our home is secure and adequate for our needs and we usually have money for food and basics but there are a few problems

- Your home is reasonably secure and adequate for your needs but there may still be problems, for example with furniture
- You are getting the benefits you are entitled to and, if you have debts, you are making enough repayments to prevent threats or court action. But you aren't very good with money and run into problems, which may cause you anxiety.

5 - 6 Trying

I am trying to sort out our housing and finances but it's hard to make progress

- If your housing is inadequate, you are making an effort to improve the situation. If you've applied for a new home and are waiting to be offered one, you're trying to find ways to manage better in the meantime
- If you have problems with money, you are getting advice or help with benefits and taking more responsibility for managing your money
- If there is eviction risk you are taking action.

3 - 4 Aware

We don't have a stable, adequate home and/or enough money – I want to change that but don't know where to begin

- Your situation is the same as in 1-2 below but you recognise this is bad for you and your children and want help to change things
- It may be that a crisis has brought things to a head or that a professional has expressed concern.

1 - 2 Stuck

We don't have a stable, adequate home and/or enough money to buy food and other basics – there's nothing I can do about that

- One of more of these apply to you and your children:
 - Your housing is temporary or inadequate for your needs Overcrowding, damp or lack of basic facilities, such as a cooker or heating, is having a severe impact on your family
 - There is a significant risk you will be evicted due to non-payment of bills or members of your family being involved in anti-social behaviour
 - You don't have money to buy food and other basics and may not be making positive choices about how you spend money. Maybe you are spending it on alcohol or drugs
 - Someone is withholding money from you. Maybe you are a victim of financial abuse
- You don't want to think or talk about these problems. This maybe due to mental or emotional health issues, substance misuse, lack of understanding or because you feel overwhelmed.

Detailed description of the Steps to Effective Parenting

1 - 2 Stuck

Others are concerned about your child, or, if you have more than one child, all or one of your children. Perhaps they are a long way behind other children in their development, their health is poor or there are behaviour problems but you don't want to talk about it. Perhaps there are other things that are taking your attention, or your own needs are so great that you haven't got anything to give, or perhaps you are really worried about them but don't want to talk to others about it.

People are offering to help but you don't want others involved. You may feel criticised and that they have no idea what it is like to bring up children in your situation.

Because you aren't aware of your children's needs or can't face them, things are stuck. Just acknowledging problems would be a big step forward.

3 - 4 Aware

Your children are not developing as well as they could and you are both aware and concerned about this but not sure what to do. Sometimes you seek help but often it is to deal with an emergency and when the emergency passes the basic problems are still there.

You may feel guilty because you know your children need something different but you don't know how to give it. You may feel angry with others for failing your children. You may feel resentful towards your children. You may feel all three!

This is a difficult place to be because you are aware of problems but you are not yet finding ways to address them. The next step is to accept the help being offered and try some new things. It may feel like a step into the unknown but there will be help for you.

5 - 6 Trying

You know that your behavior has a big impact on your children and are trying to address their needs and deal with problems but you find it difficult. Sometimes you do things in a positive and skillful way but at other times you don't manage to.

Your child may feel unsettled because things are a bit inconsistent and it may be that neither you nor your child is feeling the benefits of your efforts yet.

The next step is to do the positive things more consistently, which may mean getting more support for yourself so that you have the resources to be there for your children. Also try to notice the impact on you and your children when you do things in a positive way. You will begin to find glimmers of hope that will help you keep going.

7 - 8 Finding what works

You are parenting well in many areas and your children are benefiting from this. More of your own needs are met so you are more able to give to your children and you are thinking about the whole family and how to make things work for everyone. You are learning from experience about what works and what doesn't with your children and you are managing to be reasonably consistent in some areas.

There are some things that are not working so well and you may find it hard to cope when there is a crisis or lots of demands come at once.

The next step is to build on the things that are working well, learn from your successes and get help when you need it. You have every reason to feel confidence in your abilities as a parent.

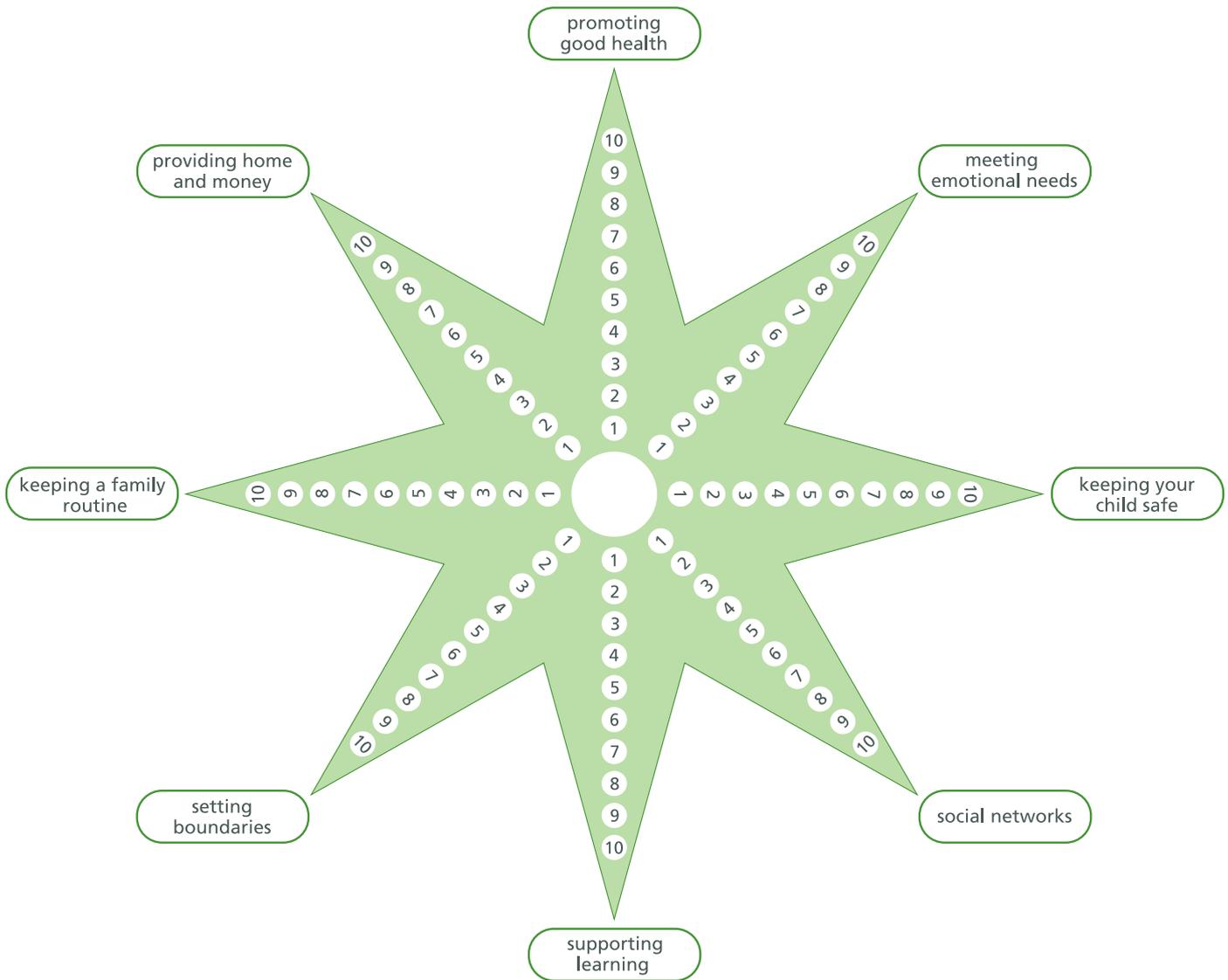
9 - 10 Effective parenting

You are an effective parent and your children can do well in your care without specialist outside help.

You can put your child first when necessary but you also find ways to meet your own needs so that you have the sense of well-being and balance needed to be a good parent and cope with the ups and downs of family life at least most of the time.

Reflecting on your journey, you may feel that you have learnt new skills and become a wiser, stronger person as a result of the difficulties you have experienced. You may be an example and an inspiration to others.





The Outcomes Star™ is a family of tools developed by Triangle Consulting for supporting and measuring change when working with people.



The web application for Outcomes Star users

- intuitive and easy to use
- Enter Star scores and notes
- Create action plans
- Report on Star data
- Replace paperwork

Sign up for a free trial at www.staronline.org.uk

Training is vital

Our trainers can support your team to:

- Support service users to make changes
- Score in a consistent way
- Take a holistic approach to keywork
- Learn from successes
- Provide data for analysis & reports

Email training@triangleconsulting.co.uk
or visit www.outcomesstar.org.uk