

Using Early support and CAF

The Common Assessment Framework(CAF) should be the first step in assessing the needs of disabled children In accordance with [early support](#). A Common assessment within early support is a universal offer to all disabled children.

The CAF process is the same for all children regardless of needs. Each child should be given the opportunity to be heard, listened to and invited to engage, using a communication method appropriate to the child. Every child has the ability to contribute to their own individual assessment. It is only how we, as practitioners, react to their needs that creates a barrier.

A Common Assessment that involves the child should be a helpful experience and result in identifying achievable goals and clarify what needs the child has, first as a child and secondly relating to their disability, remembering that a child's disability may not be the focus of the family's needs. The CAF should highlight the needs of the parents or carers as well as the child's individual needs.

Use open questions and a solution focused approach to phrase questions and identify need. A CAF is not a list of things a child can not do but what the child would do if they had the right support.

Do not make promises regarding service allocation, guarantees of funding or resources from outside agencies.

The CAF can provide a holistic assessment of a child's needs which can either be met by Universal and Targeted services or enhances a referral to a specialist service i.e. within Health, Education and Social Care.

When planning an assessment involving a disabled child it is important to:

- think about your own understanding of disability;
- take into account the child's experience and understanding of assessment;
- take into account the family's experience and understanding of assessment;
- be clear about the focus of an assessment;
- Set aside time for consultation and participation in a suitable environment;
- find out who else is currently involved with the child;
- gather information from existing assessments;

For further advice in completing a common assessment with a child with a disability use the links below.

[Disabled children and the common assessment framework](#)

[Early support](#)

[Exemplar CAF](#)