

Think Family

**Intervening at the right time
In the right way
With the right families**

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Welcome to the Workshop!

- Active participation is encouraged
- Discussion is vital
- There are no silly questions: we may not be able to answer everything asked of us – but we will endeavour to find someone who can!
- Please remember – for some whole family working is a day to day skill – for others a new challenge
- Slides will be made available after the event so don't feel pressured to take notes unless you like to

Society must be willing to tolerate very diverse standards of parenting, including the eccentric, the barely adequate and the inconsistent.

It follows too that children will inevitably have both very different experiences of parenting and very unequal consequences flowing from it. It means that some children will experience disadvantage and harm, while others flourish in atmospheres of loving security and emotional stability.

These are the consequences of our fallible humanity and it is not the provenance of the state to spare children all the consequences of defective parenting. In any event, it simply could not be done.

Hedley J in Re L (Care: Threshold Criteria) [2007] 1 FLR 2050, para 50:



But for some families we do need to intervene so what do we need to think about to work effectively?

- As some children and families need ongoing support, while others may have their needs met sufficiently by an 'earlier' intervention to prevent later interventions, a continuum of services is needed to identify the most appropriate intervention to match specific needs at a particular point
- The ability to recognise the problems that families themselves often face and to develop strategies that build confidence and capacity to enable parents to properly fulfil the crucial role they play
- The ability to engage parents in a collaborative approach, building on their strengths and taking account of their views and experiences



- A shared vision, clear understanding of needs and identification of gaps, sharp focus on improving outcomes for children, young people and families Effective intervention with children depends not only on the fact of involving their parents, and sometimes wider family, but also on the way of doing so

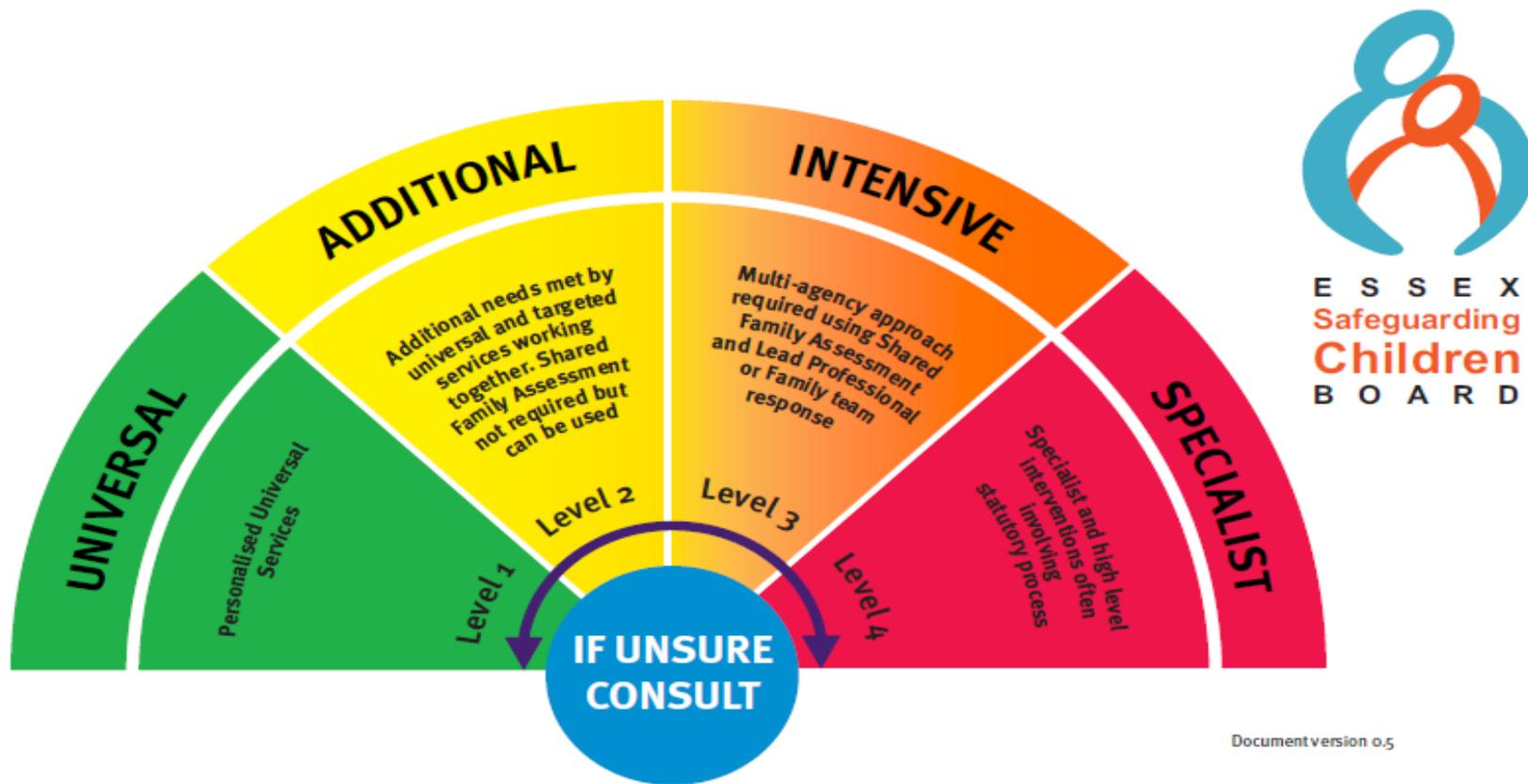
BUT.....

- When resources are scarce, and the workforce feels under pressure, there is a tendency to defend (or at least cling to) the status quo which can make innovation and change harder to implement; **it is only by doing things differently that better outcomes will be achieved**
- *Evidence suggests that professionals in all kinds of settings may lack confidence and experience in working directly with parents and families, particularly if they are disadvantaged*



The Essex Effective Support Windscreen

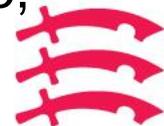
Multi Agency Guidance: Working in partnership to help children and families improve their lives



All partners working with children, young people and their families will offer support as soon as we are aware of any additional needs. We will always seek to work together to provide support to children, young people and their families at the lowest level possible in accord with their needs

Shared Family Assessment (SFA)

- It's not rocket science, scary or there to catch you out!
- It's a simple and consensual way of helping a family tell their story and identify what the family want to change, how they can do it, and who can offer help and support through a Team Around the Family approach
- The SFA was developed with a group of families under the Essex pilot programmes and is the core assessment at Level 3 Family Solutions and is available for all partners to use
- The SFA once completed can be logged at the Family Operations Hub so all professionals can see who is involved / has been involved in the family and crucially the *family's self identified strengths and challenges*
- Using one assessment with one family reduces the need for families to keep repeating their story and aids a cohesive, holistic, whole family view for partnership working



What families say.....What works for them

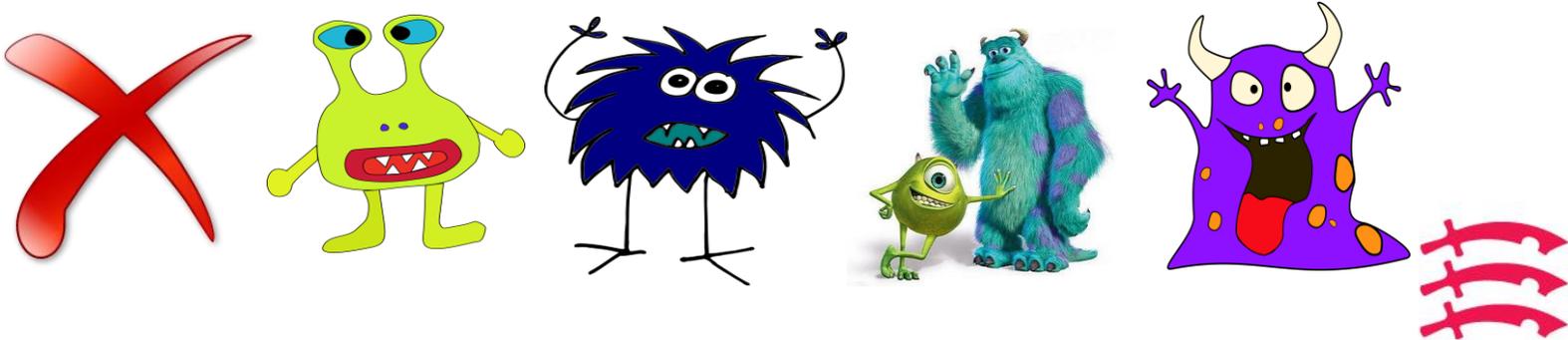
- Consistency and stability through having a single point of contact
- Being honest and open about what was/was not possible to achieve – no ‘promising the earth’ and not delivering
- Taking active steps to get to know the family and to gain their trust
- Persistence and tenacity particularly around those resistant to change
- Responsiveness in effectively doing what workers said they would and being there for families when it mattered the most
- Positive reinforcement by valuing families’ strengths/recognising their ability in coping in the face of adversity, as well as focusing on their problems



Beginning those family conversations!

- What factors do we need to consider before having those conversations?
- What has worked well when you have had those conversations in the past?
- How can you help colleagues who may not be as experienced or confident in working with families?

Five minute chat on your tables / groups



Don't forget.....

- Relationship – who is in the best place to engage the family – to have the difficult conversation.
- Context – where is the best place for the conversation? What information (written, on-line, video testimonials etc.) are available?
- Starting point – concerns – transparency with family/acknowledge where they are/what they are going through/what has changed?
- Communication – how the language used pontificates the need for clarity and congruence (*or how we ensure what we say is clear both in what we ask and how we ask it!*)
- Focus on the Strengths – willingness to change, recognition of the problems, positive things the family are doing
- Positioning – we work with the family enabling them to take ownership – depending on the subject matter we may need to walk with them through the process, model/lead them through the process
- Empathy is vital



Activity: Case Study

Look at the following case study information and identify:

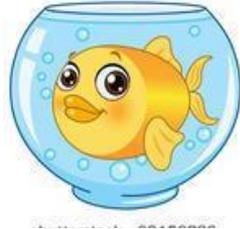
- Your key concerns
- The level of support needed for those concerns – are the issues all at the same level?
- Are the concerns: New? Historic? Current? Enduring?
- The different conversations that need to be had and with who? What about consent from the family?
- How would you have the different conversations within a Team Around the Family approach

Hold those thoughts.....



Activity: Mock TAF

Mum and Dad



Young Person



Participants



Referee



From TAF to eternity.....things to think about!

- How does the family know what will happen next?
- How does the family know who is doing what, and crucially what their own part is within the Team Around the Family approach?
- How will the team around the family come together and share progress? Review of SFA and plan?
- How does the family and its support group know when things are going well? Not going so well? Need reviewing?
- Next steps?



Final thoughts?

- On line resource directory is available to all on the ESCB web site www.escb.co.uk and at click on **Effective Support for Children & Families, Directory of Services** is to the left of the page
- <http://essexpartnership.org/content/directory-services>
- If family conversations indicate an *immediate risk of significant harm* then make a call to:-
Family Operations Hub
0345 603 7627 and ask for the priority line
- FORS form for other issues where the suggestion of Level 3 or Level 4 service provision may be indicated
- CONSENT – think first of an open, honest and transparent approach to supporting children and their families.

