



Team Around the Family

Guidance notes for holding a
Team Around the Family Meeting

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1. Introduction

A Team Around the Family (TAF) is a meeting between a child, young person, their family and the group of practitioners who are working with them. The purpose of the Team Around the Family meeting (TAF) is to share information and to create a solution focussed plan that will support the needs of the child and their family. The meeting provides an opportunity to consider how appropriate, effective and timely support can be secured enabling family's needs to be met. The focus of the meeting is to build on the strengths identified within the Early Help assessment whilst addressing the current worries/concerns.

A Team Around the Family meeting is an opportunity for families to work together with professional to gain confidence and skills to develop their family/friend networks to ensure future support is effective and sustainable.

Team Around the Family meetings should always be solution-focused and build on the families' strengths to promote positive change.

2. Key Principles

- The child/young person's needs and rights are paramount.
- The child/young person and family should be present at the Team Around the Family meeting (if it is deemed appropriate for the child/young person to attend).
- The parents/carers views must be considered.
- Meetings follow the same format; pro-formas are provided so plans are clear, understandable and provide consistency.
- The child/young person's safety, welfare and well-being are everyone's responsibility.
- A Team Around the Family meeting needs to be helpful, timed to suit the family and only as long as it needs to be.
- Those professionals/practitioners who are already or likely to be a part of the 'personalised package of support' should be present, those that aren't shouldn't be!

3. Team around the Family Meeting (TAF)

The template (attached) can be used to record the main points of the meeting. There is no need for formal minutes or to record everything verbatim. The main purpose of the meeting should be to develop a solution focussed action plan. It is important that the views of the child, young person and family are heard within the meeting and that the actions are based on these views. Schools and settings should use the meeting to further develop the Early Help Action Plan using the Ladder of Intervention.

Welcome and introductions	Please ensure the child and family know everyone present and what their role is. This should be explained in simple language, not complicated job titles.
Purpose of the meeting	Be succinct and use clear language.
Ground rules	Always discuss confidentiality and information sharing. Be clear that everyone should be allowed to participate and clear language should be used. Discuss the timing and agree things like mobile phones off, and to break if needed. Encourage respect and sensitivity, and how people will challenge appropriately.
Identify the strengths and needs of the child/family	Using a systemic approach, where everyone's views are heard and respected, identify the strengths and needs of the child and their family to ensure supportive actions can be put in place. Use the information from the Early Help Assessment as a starting point and then ask everyone present to add contributions as appropriate to develop a better understanding of the current issues.
What are we concerned/worried about?	Start by asking the family what they are worried about. Refer to the worry statements from the Early Help Assessment. Ensure that worries from all attendees are captured. You may want to add additional worry statement/s or review the original statement/s dependant on the discussion.
What needs to happen?	These should be the goals that the meeting have agreed to improve the child/family situation and forms the basis of the action plan.
Complicating Factors?	These are things that make the situation worse or harder to deal with, that are not the main problem, yet impact significantly on sorting it out.
Scaling questions?	These questions should be used to establish how concerned each person is about the worries/concerns identified. Everybody needs to score separately so that there is an understanding of the different levels of concern from their point of view. Then review the scaling question/questions on the EH assessment in order to track movement.
Identification of the Early Help Champion	In most cases the Early Help Champion will be the person who has coordinated the meeting.
Child's comments about the meeting	This should be completed in the child/young person words wherever possible. Where the child is not present, they should always get feedback at a level that is appropriate to them.
Set a date for a review	Agree a date to come together to review progress made with the action plan. If possible within the next 6 weeks.

4. Scaling Questions

The scaling question/s are intended to highlight concerns. The concern needs to be phrased in a way which indicates the best and worst case scenario, and requires you to define the concern numerically.

Scaling question/s:	Safety scale:											
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Completing the scale will provide a picture of where the child and family are at the time of the meeting, and will help to ensure that the action plan and interventions are relevant to the family's needs. Examples of scaling question/s are contained in Appendix 1.

Remember:

- Be very clear about what you want to scale
- Clearly define both ends of the scale
- Ask for the families rating
- Explore the reason why they have scored at their chosen level. Ask all attendees to give their scoring and then come to an agreement as to the overall score
- Ask what would be the next smallest thing that would increase the score by one point. The lower people are on a scale the smaller the step.









5. Child and Families' Views

It is essential that the voice of the child is captured during the meeting, even if the child is under 5 or non-verbal. There are a number of tools to help you to capture the voice of the child and examples of these are included in Appendix 1.

Team Around the Family meetings can only be effective when they are conducted with children and their families in a true sense of partnership. This involves hearing and incorporating the views of family members within the meeting and any plans for the child. It also involves maintaining respectful, open and honest relationships with parents, carers and children. Good information sharing and communication with all family members is essential to keep them aware of timescales and next steps.

Central to all this is the importance of keeping the child's needs in focus at all times.

6. Visual Agenda

	1. Welcome, Chairperson opening statement, introduction and apologies
	2. Agree Ground Rules
	3. Outline the structure of the meeting
	4. Discussion of Early Help Assessment and Previous Minutes
	5. Plan – who will do what and when (including family members)
	6. Confirm EH Champion
	7. Set review date, time and place
	8. Circulate plan to all at the meeting

7. Early Help Champion

The role of the Early Help Champion is to ensure that there is a well-coordinated plan with agreed actions. It is important that this practitioner has a good relationship with the child and their family and is best placed to support them in taking the lead in implementing and coordinating this action plan.

Remember: It is important that the family feels they have ownership of the meeting and are involved as much as possible in following up the tasks that have been identified.

Early Help Champion – Hints and Tips

- Always ensure that the family and other workers involved have your contact details.
- Ensure you have the contact details of the other practitioners.
- Set a review date at your first TAF meeting and subsequent dates at next meetings.
- Plan your contacts with the child/family so that they know when you will be actively involved.
- Regularly check with colleagues to see how things are going.
- Remember you are part of a team, you are not expected to do everything.
- Be prepared to re-convene a meeting if things are not going to plan. If another practitioner is not carrying out what was agreed, raise this with them and find out the reason. Hopefully this will focus them back on the plan, if this continues raise it with your manager.
- An Early Help Consultant is available to provide further guidance and support.

8. Review

Use the action plan agreed in the last meeting.

Make sure that positive changes/outcomes are acknowledged and celebrated.

Discuss with the family whether all needs have now been addressed. Can the Early Help Assessment be closed? If there are no further outcomes and the family are happy to do so the assessment can be closed.

If not and there is still a need for an action plan then review the plan and add any other actions. Any new identified actions will need to be added to the bottom of the Actions column. Go through the new outcomes one by one and invite those present to suggest ways they can work together to address them.

9. Further support

For further information, guidance and support with the Team around the Family process, contact your local Early Help Consultant:-

Early Help Central	Selby, Hambleton, Richmondshire	01609 534829
Early Help West	Harrogate, Knaresborough, Ripon, Craven	01609 534842
Early Help East	Scarborough, Ryedale, Whitby	01609 534852

10. Appendices

No	Appendix	Document link
1.	Initial Team Around the Family Meeting Template	Initial Team Around the Family Meeting Template
2.	Plan Template	Plan Template
3.	Team Around the Family Closure Form	Team Around the Family Closure Form
4.	Early Help Leaflet	Early Help Leaflet
5.	Team around the Family Leaflet	Team Around the Family Leaflet
6.	Ladder of Intervention	Ladder of Intervention

