Sibling Assessment

Children:

**Introduction**

*This is where you need to introduce the children and provide a BRIEF overview of the current circumstances including placements and timelines. You can provide information of the child’s experiences i.e. are they subject to pre proceedings? Care proceedings? And provide an overview of the concerns.*

*Explain the purpose of the assessment and how you have carried out the assessment. Have you observed sibling contact? How many and what dates? Observations in the family home/ placement/ school? When? Interviews/ direct work with the child/ren? Have you considered historical information? Are there other assessments that you have considered such as previous sibling assessment or psychological assessments? What evidence based have you used to support your assessment? What other professionals, including parents, have fed in to your assessment such as school, health, carers and other significant adults in the children’s lives. Use the guidance from Together or Apart (Lord, J and Borwith S, 2008).*

**The children’s needs**

*Each child should be written about separately. Described the child’s physical, emotional, social and education needs as you would within any other assessment. Consider the points of the framework for assessment for Child’s developmental needs. You may at this stage include information from other assessments such as educational psychology reports, psychological assessments etc.*

*You should also include the child’s relationships with parents and other significant adults such as foster carers, other family members or professionals*

**Evidence of sibling relationships**

*In this section it is helpful to separate the siblings out if you have more then 2. For example talk about Child A’s relationship with Child B, Child B’s relationship with Child C and Child A’s relationship with C. You can also describe the sibling groups as a whole. Given examples of typical behaviour you see and include when and where you have observed this.*

**The dynamics of the sibling relationships**

*‘Together or Apart’* (2014: p.22), Lord and Borthwick, cite Furman and Buhrmester (1985) which highlights four key factors which need to be assessed in a sibling relationship. These are:

* The degree of warmth
* The degree of conflict
* The degree of rivalry
* The degree to which one of the siblings nurtures or dominates the other.

**Warmth**

*Describe whether you and/ or others have observed warmth towards one another. Make sure you support with examples of this including when and where observed*

**Conflict**

*Describe whether you and/ or others have observed conflict between any of the siblings. Be specific about examples of how this conflict has been observed and what behaviours the child/ren displays as a result of such conflict. How is the conflict resolved? Is it proportionate sibling conflict or do you deem it above what would be expected of a typical sibling relationship?*

**Degree of sibling rivalry**

*Describe whether you and/ or others have observed sibling rivalry between any of the siblings. Be specific about examples of how this rivalry has been observed, what behaviours the child/ren display and how is this responded to by other siblings? Is it proportionate sibling rivalry or do you deem it above what would be expected of a typical sibling relationship?*

**The degree to which one of the siblings nurtures or dominates the other**

*Describe whether you and/ or others have observed nurturing or domineering behaviour between any of the siblings. Be specific about examples of how this has been observed, what behaviours the child/ren display and how is this responded to by other siblings? Is it proportionate sibling conflict or do you deem it above what would be expected of a typical sibling relationship?*

**The long term options for THE CHILDREN**

*Explain all of the possible options for the children. Please remember this assessment is in relation to whether the children should be placed together or apart NOT whether they should be returned to or remain in the care of their parents.*

Consider Lord & Borthwick (2014) cite Gerrilyn Smith, clinical psychologist, who sets out a number of circumstances which indicate that siblings may need to be placed separately:

* Intense rivalry and jealously, with each child is preoccupied with and unable to tolerate the attention their sibling may be getting.
* Exploitation, often based on gender, e.g. boys may have been seen and see themselves as inherently superior to their sisters
* Chronic scapegoating of one child
* Maintaining unhelpful hierarchical positions
* High sexualised behaviour
* Acting as triggers to each others traumatic material potential re- traumatising each other

*Do any of the above apply to the sibling relationships? Again be specific and provide examples of such characteristics including supporting evidence to why any of the above a noted.*

**Analysis**

*In your analysis you need to triangulate all of the information you have gathered throughout the assessment. Are there any hypotheses to why certain characteristics are observed in the sibling relationships? Is there any support that could be implemented to improve the sibling relationships? What would the impact of any proposed separation have on the siblings and balance with what outcome? You need to clearly justify why siblings cannot be placed together if this is the outcome of your assessment. Equally, if you are of the view the children should not be separated, you need to outline why separation would have a negative impact on the children. You are not required to talk about the long term plan for the children and the analysis should focus only upon the sibling relationships and whether they should be placed together or apart.*

**Recommendation**

*This needs to outline, regardless of long term plans for the children, what your assessment recommends for whether the children should be placed together or apart. You need to also include if you are recommending separation, which needs to be clearly evidence as to why it would be necessary in your analysis, what you would recommend regarding sibling contact; frequency, length of time and to be facilitated by who.*

Signed…………………………………… date………………….

Name

Job title

**References**

Burnell,A., Castell,K., & Cousins, G. (2009) *Siblings, Together or Apart ,*Families Futures Practice Paper Series, Family Futures

Lord, J. & Borwith,S. (2008) *Together or Apart,* London. BAAF