

Chronology Guidance

Chronology-What is it?

A chronology is an ordered, dated record of the significant events in a child's journey through life. It is not a record of agency involvement.

The purpose of a chronology is to have a record of the significant events, concerns, and positives that have had, or continue to have, significance to the child/young person's development.

Good Practice

- Look beyond your own agency or specialism for what is significant. Try seeing things from the child/young person's perspective.
- Ask parents/carers to contribute what they consider to be significant.
- Ask the young person. What is important to them may not be apparent to other people.
- Normally a chronology will start in the present (at the top) and work backwards through time. This way it can easily be updated.
- A full chronology is most helpful. A full chronology will often refer to events before the child was born, where these are relevant.

Uses

- A Chronology can identify patterns of events, concerns, positives, strengths and unmet needs. A good chronology is an essential and inherent part of assessment.
- It indicates strengths that may help resolve problems.
- It gives pointers towards action that may be necessary to help the child reach his/her potential.
- It gives a sense of perspective. It will highlight improvements or adverse circumstances over time.

Who is the Chronology about

- The child/young person is the focus of the chronology.
- Because children /young people are by definition dependent on adults for their care, events in the caring environment are potentially events to be recorded in the chronology.
- Professional involvement is potentially part of the chronology, but consideration must be given to what is significant for the child/young person, rather than what is routinely recorded by the professional.

What should be recorded in a Chronology?

- A significant event is one having an impact on a child's development, either directly to the child or through the child's environment.
- It may help to consider that events occur within a context. It is the combination of "event plus context" that results in "significance".
- Ultimately this is a matter of judgment.

Examples

(**Note** -these are examples. A definitive list is not possible, because any entry into a chronology is a matter of **judgement**).

For Child

Starting school, changing school or class

Successes, talents and achievements-academic, sporting, activities, interests, learning to talk/walk, overcoming obstacles/disadvantages, etc

Health events other than routine

Evidence of attachments or issues with attachments

Relationships, positives, conflicts, changes

Changes of main carer, for example being cared for by a relative: entry into foster care; a change of foster carer

Losses and separations -friends, family, other people of significance (e.g. class teacher, pets, places)

Referrals and assessments

Agency involvements

Incidents, crises, reports

Changes to legal status, legal orders, etc

Things, events etc, which are significant from the child's point of view

Through the Environment

Births, marriages, deaths

Household composition, change in carer's life, divorce, separation, new members of the household

Lifestyle changes - health, employment, unemployment, financial, material changes

Moving to another address

Domestic violence, substance misuse, mental health issues