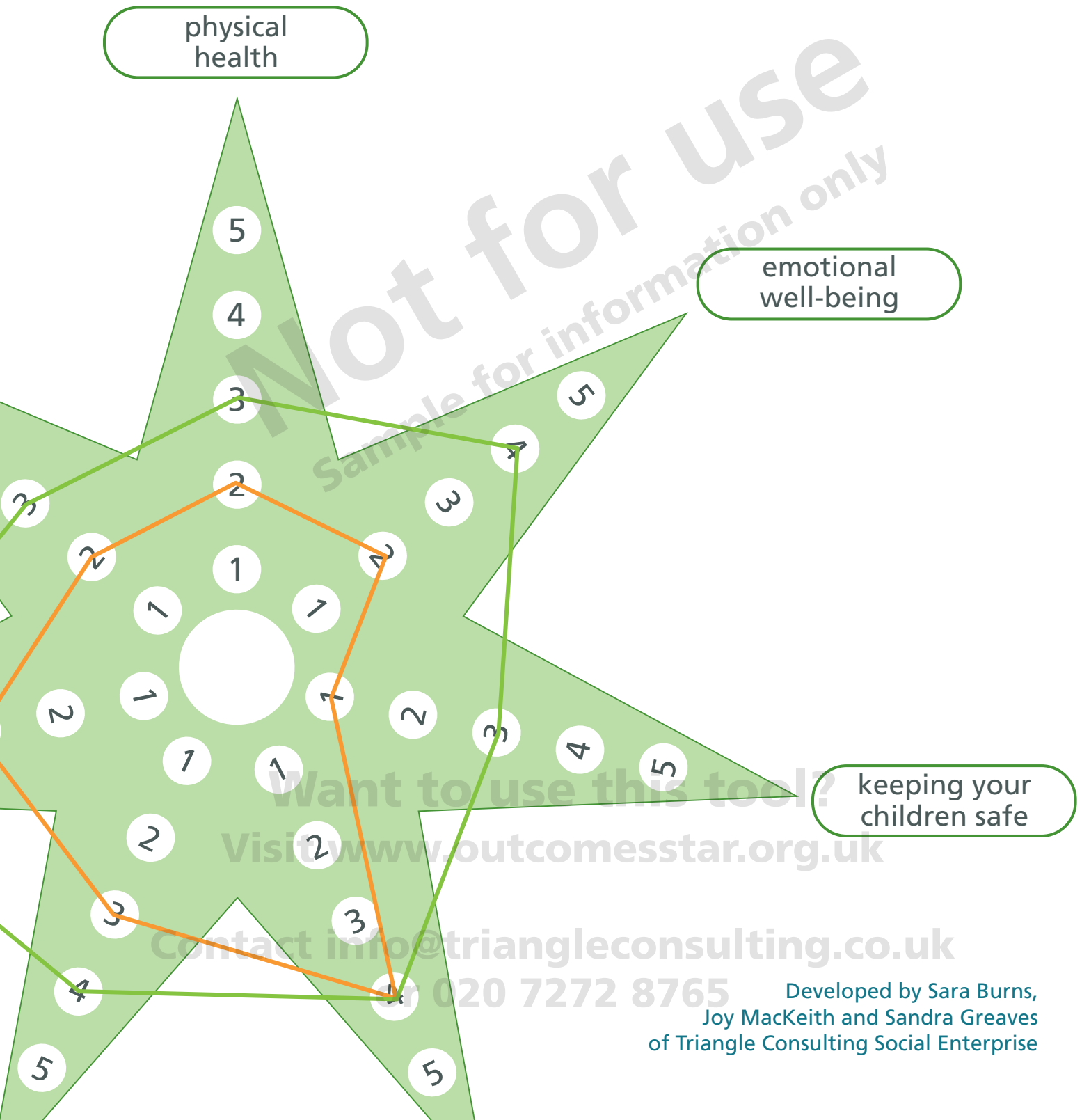




Family Star (Early Years)™

The Outcomes Star for parents of young children



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Please contact info@triangleconsulting.co.uk to enquire about buying a licence and training.

Licences are also available for those wishing to translate the document into other languages.

The Outcomes Star™

This Star is part of a family of Outcomes Star tools. Each tool includes a Star Chart, User Guide or Quiz and guidance on implementation and some have visual and other resources. For other versions of the Outcomes Star, good practice and further information see www.outcomesstar.org.uk.

Acknowledgements

Many people have contributed to the development of the Outcomes Star over its long evolution and we would like to thank all the clients, workers, managers, funders, academics and commissioners who have generously given their time and expertise.

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We would particularly like to thank the following people and organisations for their contribution to this version of the Star:

- The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Early Help and Children's Centres Services for making this variant of the Family Star possible, including all the workers and managers in the children's centres who participated in the working group and piloted the Family Star (Early Years)
- Camden Council Children's Schools and Families (CSF) Directorate for making the original Family Star possible and the Camden family services and consultant-parents that formed the working group with whom we developed the Family Star.

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Introduction

Raising a family is one of the most challenging things any of us will ever do.

Children need love, attention, patience, meals, clothes, guidance and boundaries – often all before 8.30 in the morning! Sometimes as parents we have our own issues to deal with as well. Circumstances such as disability, moving to a new area, or family conflict can make the challenges even greater. It's not surprising that many of us find it hard to cope.

The Family Stars are versions of the widely recognised Outcomes Star tools for supporting and measuring change when working with people. The Family Star (Early Years) is a shorter version specifically for parents of young children. It is recommended for use where parents are receiving one-to-one support in brief or relatively light-touch interventions, though it can work well in any early years service.

About this guide

This guide gives guidance to workers who will be using the Star with parents. It also contains the detailed scales for the Family Star (Early Years).

Outcome areas

The Family Star (Early Years) focuses on seven areas that are key to effective parenting:

1. Physical health
2. Emotional well-being
3. Keeping your children safe
4. Social networks
5. Boundaries and routines
6. Child development
7. Home, money and work.

These areas are shown as detailed scales in part 2 of this guide.

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The Journey of Change

Steps to effective parenting

Change doesn't happen in one go – it is a journey. All the Family Star (Early Years) scales are underpinned by a five-step Journey of Change:

1. **Stuck (red)**

People are concerned about one or more children in a family – perhaps about their development, behaviour or health – but the parent is not acknowledging problems or doing anything to change the situation. Maybe they are really worried but don't know what to do. Perhaps their own needs or other things are taking their attention so they don't meet their children's needs. Maybe they don't want others involved or feel criticised or afraid to talk about problems. They do not accept help so things are **stuck**.

2. **Accepting help (orange)**

There are problems with their children's development, behaviour or health, as above, but at this stage the parent goes along with help when it is organised for them and the initiative comes from workers. They still lack confidence and may feel unable to cope or obliged to co-operate, but this stage is a positive place to be because they are engaged and change is possible.

3. **Believing and trying (yellow)**

The parent recognises that it is up to them to improve things for their children and starts to take responsibility. There is a shift from an external locus of control (feeling that others have the power to sort things out) to an internal locus of control (feeling that they have agency and there are things that they can do). They may or may not say this explicitly but there is a change in the way they talk about their issues and they will try new things on their own initiative. However at this point they haven't yet learnt what works or the skills to put it into practice.

4. **Learning what works (green)**

The parent is learning from experience what works and what doesn't work with their children. Sometimes this goes well, but often it doesn't, and their children may resist the changes, so things can seem worse for a while. This is a difficult place to be and it is easy to give up so parents need lots of support. However as time goes on, the parent will gain confidence, and the children will start to benefit from the changes. More of the parent's needs are met so they are able to give to their children and think about the whole family and how to make things work for everyone.

5. **Effective parenting (blue)**

The children can thrive in the parent's care and so the parent does not need the help of a specialist service. They put their children first when necessary but also find ways to meet their own needs so they can be a good enough parent and cope with the ups and downs of family life, at least most of the time. Although for most parents this will not be the end of the journey, they are able to reflect on what they have learnt and continue to improve their parenting and learn new skills as their children get older, without professional input. They may have become a wiser, stronger person and an inspiration to others.

These stages in the Journey of Change are colour-coded as well as numbered. The Journey of Change is also reproduced in the Family Star (Early Years) Scales in a form that can be shared with parents if you wish.

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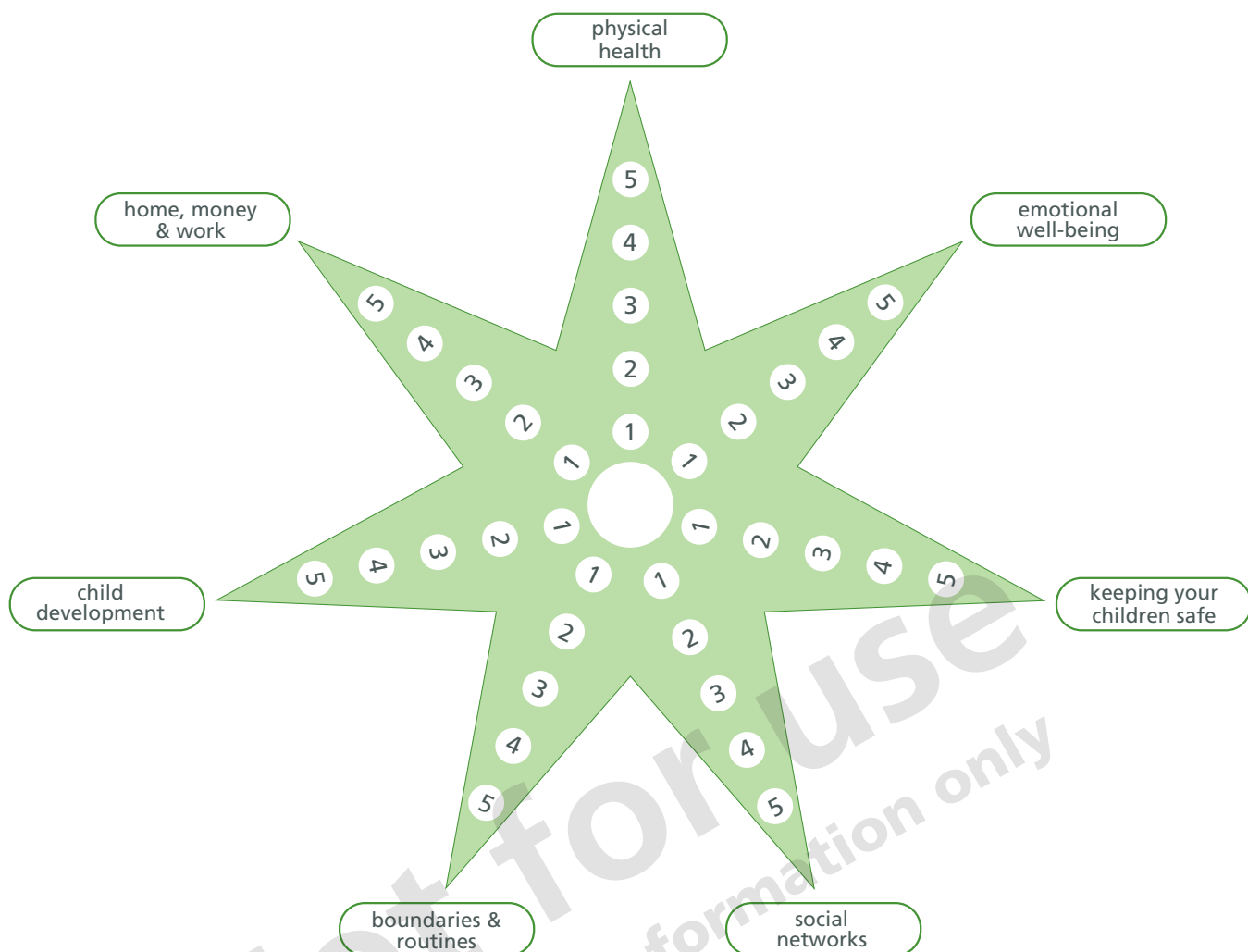


Figure 1: The Family Star (Early Years)

Family Star (Early Years)TM resources

- The Family Star (Early Years) Chart, Notes and Action Plan
- The Family Star (Early Years) Scales (for parents)
- This Worker Guide
- An Implementation Guide, for those in a management role
- A web application for online completion at www.staronline.org.uk
- Further information at www.outcomesstar.org.uk

The Family Star (Early Years) was developed by Triangle Consulting Social Enterprise in collaboration with the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Early Help for Families Service. It builds on the earlier work on the development of the Family Star and the Family Star Plus.

All workers need training before using the Family Star (Early Years), from Triangle or a licensed Star trainer.

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There are a number of versions of the Star that may also be applicable within Children and Families support work, including My Star for children, the Young Person's Star for young care leavers, and the Family Star Plus for more intense work with families and those with older children. We are on hand to help services work out which version(s) to use and how to use them most effectively. For information about other versions or on how to use the Family Star (Early Years) alongside the CAF or other risk assessment or outcomes tools, please see www.outcomesstar.org.uk or contact Triangle on 020 7272 8765 or info@triangleconsulting.co.uk.

Not for use
Sample for information only

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Part 1: Using the Family Star (Early Years)TM

The Family Star (Early Years) is designed to be used by one or both parents together with a family support worker an integral part of family or parenting support.

The process of completing it is meant to be positive and helpful, stimulating and focusing discussion and providing a useful basis for creating or reviewing a support plan.

The Star is a flexible tool that relies on the judgement of the professionals using it, as well as on a degree of understanding and trust between parent and worker. It should never be used in a way that undermines the effectiveness of your work with parents – the aim is to support a genuine interaction with them.

The Star is to be used collaboratively with parents, and the Star materials are designed to encourage and support discussion between worker and parent(s). It can be used in a wide range of settings and the length of time it takes to complete depends on the needs of the parent(s) and any practical constraints.

It's helpful to have the Star as part of an open process, allowing the parents time to talk about themselves, for instance about their own childhood.

**Family support worker,
Camden**

Using the Star has led to a fundamental change in casework. We now look at the service user holistically. This was difficult for workers at first but the result has been very positive.

**Manager,
Single Homeless Project**

The Star helps engage service users in their own process. It helped us develop and improve our needs assessment and reinforced the importance of really engaging with service users.

**Manager,
Croftlands Trust**

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How the Star helps to improve work with families

- It provides a clear focus for conversation and so engages people in the process of identifying what support they need
- It has a therapeutic value and can encourage parents to reflect on their parenting and its effect on their children
- It helps demonstrate and reinforce progress at reviews – seeing the change set out in a visual way is encouraging both to parents and family support workers
- It can help with goal-setting and the Journey of Change helps to break change down into small, manageable steps
- It supports a holistic approach because the Star requires conversations about all aspects of family life and focuses on the whole family and on parenting, rather than on one or more “naughty children”
- It helps to structure the work and encourages a systematic and consistent approach to parenting support by setting out the key areas that the service is there to help the family with and providing a consistent framework for the sessions.

1 Before you use the Family Star (Early Years)™

It is essential that all those using Family Star (Early Years) receive training from Triangle or a licensed trainer – as a minimum the one-day Introduction to the Outcomes Star course. This will help provide the essential knowledge and skills you need before you use the Star, including:

- A good understanding of the five stages on the Journey of Change underlying the scales – **stuck**, **accepting help**, **believing and trying**, **learning what works**, **effective parenting**
- Familiarity with the seven scales for parents, so that you can unpack and rephrase them if the parent is having trouble understanding them. Part 2 of this guide provides fuller descriptions of each of the scales
- Familiarity with the steps for parents and the detailed scale-point descriptions. Practise using the scales by thinking of one or two parents you have worked with and consider where you would place them on the scale. It is helpful to do this together with a colleague who has experience of using the Star and to check your understanding with theirs
- Knowing how the Star is used in your organisation, including:
 - When it is first completed with new parents
 - How often readings are taken
 - What happens to the completed Star Chart and its associated data
 - What to do if you need help with any aspect of using the Star

- Familiarity with the Star Online, if your organisation is using it
- How the Star fits with any other tools used in your organisation
- Knowing how to introduce the Star to parents – see below for some options.

We recommend finding opportunities to present the Family Star (Early Years) and to discuss the language and ideas with groups of parents before using it with them on a one-to-one basis.

2 Introducing the Star™ to parents

The way the Star is introduced is important in encouraging parents to engage, so take care to set up the right conditions for change. Be enthusiastic and clear, use open body language, be friendly (and perhaps provide biscuits!). Listen carefully and use what the parent says to make the Star relevant to them and their issues. You might do some of the following:

- Devise a short script to introduce the Star in a way that feels natural to you and clear for those you are working with
- If you meet with the parents you support in groups, it can be useful and save time to explain the Star to the group before starting one-to-one work within individual sessions
- By giving parents who are literate and interested a copy of the scales to read before the session.

When introducing the Star it is important to:

- Encourage parents to say if they do not understand the scales
- Explain that 5 is the top of the Star scales but not the end of the journey and people should continue to improve after they have reached this stage
- Be clear that it is not about getting an overall score out of 35, but about building up a map of their world, experiences and journey.

Some suggested phrases for introducing the Star include:

“It’s about you and your family to see where you are now – what’s going well and what isn’t going so well.”

“When life is tough, it’s hard to see the wood for the trees. This is a tool to help us unpick what is going well and any needs you have around how to support your children.”

“We’ll do it again in three to six months and you can get a visual picture of what’s changed. You can have a copy.”

“It’s about you, about going step by step on a journey, and we will do it together.”

You may want to explain that as well as supporting the parent’s progress, the Star is also necessary to help the service learn what it is doing well, and what it is not doing so well. However, it is best not to mention terms like “monitor”, “measure” or “data analysis”.

3 Discussing and completing the Star™ with a parent

The Star is a flexible tool that workers can use in a way that responds to the needs and interest of each parent. If you are working with more than one parent and they are at different points on the Journey of Change, focus on the experience of the children. (See page 14 for more detail).

- For most parents, it will be helpful to go through the Family Star (Early Years) Scales (for parents) together, collaboratively agreeing where they are now
- You can start with an open discussion and then introduce the Family Star (Early Years) Scales to complete, or start with the scales and use the parent's responses as a springboard for discussion. Whatever approach you choose, it is vital that the discussion and agreed number is based on the defined scales
- Encourage parents to mark where they are on the Star Chart themselves. Suggest they join the points to create their own Star shape
- Parents at 3 or above can probably take the lead in placing themselves on the Star scales. If someone is at 1 or 2, you may need to be more directive about where they place themselves on the scales
- If someone appears to be between two scale points, choose the point where they are most of the time or opt for the lower of the two points. Don't place parents between the scale points
- The visual Journey of Change (page 26) is an optional extra resource that can be used to explain the underlying model of change. This is included in the Family Star (Early Years) Scales for use with parents.

It is motivating and informative for parents to see the whole journey.

**Family support worker,
Camden**

Finding common ground is important. Tease out what is positive in one area and relate that to other areas.

**Family support worker,
West Sussex**

Use the Star™ to encourage self-reflection

Completing the Star collaboratively is a good opportunity to engage parents by creating time to talk. It can also encourage self-reflection, by asking parents for evidence of why they think they are where they are on the scales and taking the time to challenge appropriately and discuss their views.

Be positive and non-judgemental

Used well, the Star will support a conversation that covers areas about which parents may feel sensitive. Parents are often concerned or under-confident about their parenting so ensure that the parent does not feel

they are being judged, and clarify that the aim is not to get the highest score possible, but to understand how things are at this moment and find out where they might need help with their parenting.

Differences of opinion are helpful starters for discussion

Parents are often self-critical and those who lack confidence may place themselves lower on the journey than they are and need reminding of what is going well. Others might not recognise or admit how difficult things are and place themselves unrealistically high on the journey. Workers may then present evidence of discrepancies between what the parent says and how things are for their children. This paves the way for a more meaningful discussion or working relationship, and a more realistic assessment from which progress is possible.

Listen and challenge appropriately, but agree to differ if necessary

Arriving at a mutually agreed scale point on each of the scales can provide a rich basis for discussion and for learning about each family and how parents view themselves and their role as parents.

At the same time, it can be difficult for parents to acknowledge where they are, especially towards the start of the scales or when they feel under pressure from agencies in relation to their children. The process of choosing a scale point is therefore crucial in ensuring that the Family Star supports positive change.

Some parents may try to place themselves overly high on the Journey of Change. Overly low readings can also arise, particularly when parents start to gain some insight into their situation and may become very self-critical.

The extent to which you challenge this is a matter for your professional judgement. If you have done all you can to reassure the parent appropriately, build trust and encourage a realistic assessment, you can choose to record both their view and your own on the Star, either during the session with the parent or afterwards.

Recognising external factors

When using the Family Star (Early Years) it is important to recognise that although the Journey of Change is about parents and the changes they can make, they may also be facing barriers or difficult conditions beyond their control. These may include poor housing, lack of work opportunities or not having access to benefits, health or other services they need.

Use the notes section to record those external factors when creating or reviewing their action plan. Your service may then be able to use this information to identify gaps in provision, plan future developments or raise issues with policy-makers.

Using the Star started a good, deep conversation with the mother. She was very positive and wanted to keep her completed Star.

**Family support worker,
Family Action**

It is important not just to go with what the parent says and to feel OK about challenging them.

**Manager,
Family Action**

Finally...

Whatever approach you choose, it is vital that the discussion and agreed scale point are based on the defined scales. Unless everyone is using and understanding the steps, one person's 3 could be another person's 5. And although in these circumstances the process may still be helpful on a one-to-one basis, the collated Star data would not be useful.

The process of discussing and filling out the Star may well have quite an impact on the parent, so ensure the session finishes positively, and that the next steps are clear.

4 Using the completed Star Chart to agree actions and next steps

The visual of the completed Star provides an excellent basis for helping parents to think about changes and come up with actions that are needed. These actions can be noted on the Star Chart and Action Plan or on the Star Online. Once you have the completed Star, either on paper or on screen, look at it together and prompt the parent to reflect on it as a basis for what to do next, asking motivational questions such as:

- Is the shape of the Star an accurate picture of how things are for you now?
- What does it tell you about what is going well and any areas where you need support or are struggling to cope?
- What helps you in the areas that are going well? How might you apply those strengths in other areas of your life?
- What do you want to address first?

Once the areas are agreed, further questions might include:

- Where on the journey do you want to get to and by when?
- What actions are needed in order to bring about this change?
- Who is responsible for these actions?
- Is it appropriate to set a deadline for completing them?

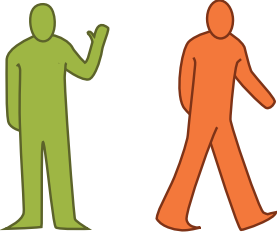
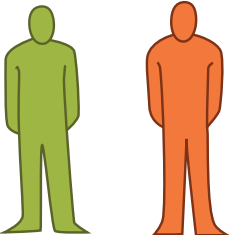
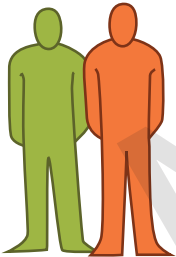


The following are pointers for how you might work with parents at the different steps of the journey towards effective parenting. These are general guidelines and what you do will also depend on your professional judgement and the particular circumstances of the family.

Encourage people to start by looking at where they are and then at where they would like to be.

**Family support worker,
West Sussex**

We have worked with this mother and son for eight months and in this one discussion we learnt more about the family than in all that time.

**Family support worker,
Buckinghamshire Council**

Stage	Possible approaches and actions that could be agreed
<p>Effective parenting</p> 	<p>At this stage the parent is helping their children to thrive and does not need support from a service. They may realise this for themselves and feel confident but, if not, the focus is to reassure them that they can continue to improve their parenting without relying on the service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure they know how to seek help in the future if it is needed • Maybe they could volunteer, or help their friends or others to make positive choices • If they are at this stage in all or most areas of parenting they may use universal services but do not need targeted support
<p>Learning what works</p> 	<p>At this stage a parent is learning from experience how to be effective and their children are benefiting from this. However there are some areas where things are not working so well or where parents are less confident. Here the focus of keywork may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping them reflect on what is working and not working, what makes them more likely to run into problems and how to deal with those situations differently • Celebrating the progress parents have made with caring for their children • Supporting them to deal with manageable difficulties themselves and offering more support through setbacks or larger difficulties
<p>Believing and trying</p> 	<p>Parents at this stage feel motivated and are trying to take responsibility to look after their children better for themselves. However, they find it difficult and often their actions don't match their intentions. Goals and actions at this stage may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging them to believe that they can be effective parents and that it is worth persisting with changes • Helping them to plan what they are going to do and to develop strategies and reminders for themselves • Encouraging them to spend more time with people they trust and who support them in making positive choices
<p>Accepting help</p> 	<p>At this stage, parents may say they want things to be different and agree to actions but not follow through. They may worry about the effect on their children but they are not doing much to change their behaviour or are afraid of doing the wrong thing. Support may need to focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building trust and reassuring them about confidentiality • Taking practical actions on behalf of the parent, for example setting up appointments for them and even accompanying them if possible
<p>Stuck</p> 	<p>At this stage children are not able to develop well or are at risk, but parents do not recognise the problems or willingly accept help. Perhaps they are not aware, do not see their behaviour as a problem or they worry but do not say anything. The focus could be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing trust and starting to build a relationship • Being clear about any risks and the possible consequences of not accepting help • Helping them to make their home safer for their children, including providing resources where possible • Explaining key milestones in a child's development and helping them recognise any issues with their children

5 Revisiting the Star™ at reviews

The Star is designed to be completed at least twice to show progress. The timing and frequency need to be agreed within your service when implementing the Star – see the Implementation Guide for more information on this. It usually makes sense to integrate the Star with times when parents are reviewing and planning ahead.

At each review, repeat the process of discussing each of the Star areas and agreeing where the parent is on each scale. We recommend you do this initially without reference to the previous Star readings, to allow the parent to focus on a snapshot in time without being influenced by trying to make comparisons. Once the new Star has been completed, it is helpful to compare the two to give an instant visual picture of change. You can then use this to encourage discussion:

- Does what the parent sees on the Star fit with their sense of how they have changed?
- How do they feel about what they see, especially where they have moved up the scales?
- What has helped them make progress? What strengths have they brought to this? What can they learn from this and apply to other areas?
- What areas do they want to address now – the same as before or new ones?
- Where do they want to get to by the next review? What actions will it take to make this happen?

Then complete a new action plan and, if working on paper, file the Star Chart and Action Plan, entering the data as required. If you are using the Star Online, the data will already be captured – just print and file the Star Chart, Notes and Action Plan.

When positive change occurs, reviews can be very helpful in encouraging and motivating both the parent and the worker, as the Star makes progress evident. Change is hard, particularly at the **believing and trying** stage and parents can be put off by any difficulties that arise. Seeing progress on the Star can help to encourage them and reinforce change as they start to try out new ways of doing things. You can use your discussions with parents to help point this out.

Because the Star helps to pinpoint where service users are making progress and where they are not, it has helped staff to think creatively about how to get greater improvements.

**Manager,
Single Homeless
Project**

I get a chance to say how I feel and how I am coping. It is good the second time because I understand what to do and can look back on the past.

Service user

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6 Frequently asked questions

Using the Star may mean working with parents in a different way. How natural and easy it feels for you will depend on your ways of working prior to the introduction of the Star. Most parents find that the Star is fairly self-evident and feels familiar and comfortable after they have used it a few times, but the following questions are most frequently asked in training.

What if we don't agree where the parent is in an area?

This is a rich starter for discussion. Part of the process of a parent making changes in a particular area is developing a realistic picture of how things are at the moment. Here are some pointers:

- Listen carefully to what the parents have to say – it will help you to understand their perceptions. They may also have information you are not aware of that will change your view.
- Present evidence for why you see things differently, explaining why you think the parent is at a different point on their journey. This will work best if you present specific examples rather than general statements. For example, “You tried getting the children up half an hour earlier but that didn’t work quite as well as you had hoped”, rather than, “You are still finding it hard to deal with behaviour issues”.
- Take into account the parent’s current situation. In the early part of the journey, they are likely to be less self-aware and this can result in a higher personal rating.

If you and the parent still disagree after discussion, record both readings on the Star Chart.

What if the parent can't or won't engage with the Star™?

Parents who are **stuck** in most or all areas will not, by definition, engage meaningfully with the Star. You may choose to share your worker-only assessments with them later, when they have started to co-operate with keywork, in order to demonstrate progress or to prompt learning and discussion.

It is unusual for parents to engage with keywork but to resist using the Star. If this happens, ask why and check they have had a sufficiently detailed introduction to the Star and have not misunderstood how it works or how the information will be used. You may also want to point out that the Star is an integral part of how your service or project provides support.

If parents don't make progress, will my performance be in question?

The purpose of the Family Star (Early Years) is to both support and measure change. When parents do not make progress on the Star, there are many possible explanations. It is not about judging the work of individual members of staff.

However, this may indicate that you have a particularly difficult caseload or need additional support or further training. You may want to discuss this with your manager.

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What if the parent doesn't want to discuss certain areas?

This can happen when a parent feels that some of the scales are not relevant to them because they do not have an issue in that area. If you also feel that this area poses no problems, simply place the parent at 5 for that scale and move on.

Some areas may be particularly sensitive or the parent may not be willing to discuss a problem. Many workers find that simply having an area as a scale on the Star can be a helpful way to introduce sensitive issues that do need to be discussed. However, the relationship of trust between the worker and parent, and the goal of supporting the parent's progress, are more important than the Star. If it is not helpful to continue, opt for either 5 or 1, and move to the next scale.

Won't parents be demotivated if they go back down the scales?

When negative change occurs, workers are sometimes concerned that seeing this so clearly on the Star will demotivate parents. Usually, however, the parent is only too aware that they have moved further away from their goal, and acknowledging this can be a helpful first step in reversing that trend. In these instances, it can be helpful to remind them that change is difficult and that it isn't necessarily a linear process.

It is also possible that parents may choose a lower scale point in a review than in an initial assessment. This can be a positive step that is indicative of greater self-awareness and trust. It is therefore important to identify whether any slip-backs are because things have got worse or the result of greater self-awareness and honesty, and to offer appropriate support.

What if a parent has limited English or literacy in English?

The Star materials are designed to be used flexibly. If a parent's English is limited, you may need to paraphrase the text in simplified language to support their understanding. If a parent has limited literacy in English, you could use the Star Chart and read out the short scale descriptions of the stages you feel they are closest to at that time. Make sure you still refer closely to the detailed scales in this guide yourself.

If you have a question that isn't answered here, or you have any concerns about the Family Star (Early Years), raise this with your manager. It is important that you have the chance to discuss your views, as the Star will only work well for you and the parents you work with if you feel comfortable using it.

Want to use this tool?
Visit www.outcomesstar.org.uk

Contact info@triangleconsulting.co.uk
or 020 7272 8765

Part 2: Detailed scales

Working with more than one parent

All the scales refer to “you”. For two-parent families, “you” means both parents.

If other family members are involved, such as a grandparent, “you” can refer to the whole family where there is agreement.

If you are working with more than one parent and they are at different points on the Journey of Change, focus on the experience of the children. For example, even if one parent is not able to give their children attention and support they could still be well supported emotionally if the other parent is fulfilling this role. The same will be true for family routine when one parent takes responsibility for this but the other does not.

When parents live separately but both have an active parenting role, complete the Star for the parent the service is working with.

Dealing with variations in parenting different children

In some cases a parent may have several children and not all of them are causing any concerns – the others are doing well – or they find some children easier to parent than others. Throughout the Star, discuss and record where they are in relation to the children where there are concerns or they need support.

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1 Physical health (detail)

This scale is about how well you are looking after your children's physical health. It is about doctors, dentists and treatment when they have health problems, plus things that build good health, such as enough healthy food, regular exercise and sleep. For babies it covers routine check-ups, breastfeeding where possible and positive weaning for a healthy start in life. It also covers looking after your own physical health.

5 Effective parenting

My children have a healthy lifestyle and receive any check-ups and medical treatment they need

- You look after your children's health, including treating minor problems at home and going for regular check-ups. You also look after your own health
- You and your children mostly have enough healthy food, sleep and exercise
- If you have a baby you are giving it a healthy start in life, including during pregnancy
- If any of your children has a disability or health condition (e.g. asthma, eczema, allergies), you keep them as healthy as possible
- You look after your children's health well enough and don't need support in this area

4 Learning what works

I'm learning how to create a healthy lifestyle for my children, with support

- You are learning how to introduce healthy food and healthy habits like regular teeth cleaning and exercise. You may be finding it works best if you also have a healthy lifestyle
- If you have a baby, you are finding out how to give it the best start in life, including during pregnancy, and becoming more confident in this. Your baby has its required check-ups and vaccinations
- You look after your children when they are unwell and if any of your children has a disability or health condition, you are learning ways of managing it
- There are still a few problem areas you need support with so that your children have all they need to be healthy

3 Believing and trying

I know it's up to me to make sure my children are healthy and I'm trying, but it's hard

- If you have a baby you know it's important to give it the best start in life, including during pregnancy, but find it hard to do the right things or worry about what you should do
- You know that healthy food and lifestyle are important and try to make healthy choices but you find it difficult and it often doesn't last long
- You take your children for some routine checks, but not all of them and you do not always follow advice. If they are ill you do something about it but are not always sure it is the right thing

2 Accepting help

I know there are problems with my children's health and I'm accepting help to address this

- As for 1, but you recognise your children's lifestyle is not healthy, are concerned about their health or accept that things need to change
- You allow others to help but don't take the initiative yourself

1 Stuck

There are concerns about the health of my children. I don't have help with this or don't accept help

- You don't take your children to the doctor or dentist, except in emergencies
- Your children may not be eating healthy food, may have too little exercise or sleep, and may be undernourished, obese or at risk of health problems later. If you have a baby you don't know what is needed for healthy development. You may also be neglecting your own health
- You do not see this as a problem or do not accept support

2 Emotional well-being (detail)

This scale is about ensuring your children grow up happy and able to deal with life's ups and downs. If you feel depressed or anxious or aren't coping well it can be harder to give your children the love, attention and connection with you that they need, and you will need support too. There is also space here to discuss any problems within the family connected to mental health, drugs or alcohol.

5 Effective parenting

I mostly feel fine and respond well to my children. I don't need support in this area

- You feel close and connected to your children. You can empathise with them and enjoy their company
- If you have a mental health issue, you are managing your symptoms so there is no negative impact on your children. You do not use illegal drugs or misuse alcohol
- Your own emotional well-being is good enough for you to be able to be there for your children
- Your children have what they need to be happy and deal with life's ups and downs and you don't need support with this

4 Learning what works

I'm learning to respond well to my children, with support

- You are learning new approaches to use in responding to your children, such as praising them more, and are noticing a positive impact when you do
- You have made progress with any issues that were affecting your well-being, such as a drug or alcohol problem or difficulties with a partner or ex-partner that affected you emotionally
- If you have a mental health issue, you are finding ways to protect your children from any effects of it
- Although you mostly feel able to cope, you need ongoing support in some areas

3 Believing and trying

I know it's important to be there for my children and I'm trying, but things keep getting in the way

- You know you need to address any issues that prevent you from responding positively to your children. Perhaps you have help for depression or other mental health issues, are tackling drug or alcohol misuse, or are trying to improve your relationship with a partner or ex-partner
- You try to give your children attention and be responsive to them. Sometimes it goes well but you find it hard to keep it up and may feel anxious
- Your children may experience you as inconsistent

2 Accepting help

I find it hard to cope but I'm accepting support to address this

- Emotionally you are not able to be there for your children. You have similar issues to 1 but you recognise that there is a problem and may worry about this
- If you have depression or other mental health issues or a drug or alcohol problem, you are aware that this is a problem and are accepting help
- You allow others to help but don't take the initiative yourself

1 Stuck

I can't cope or be there for my children but I don't want to talk about it

- You often feel pretty bad emotionally and/or you are not able to respond well to your children and give them what they need to grow up emotionally healthy and resilient
- You may be feeling low or depressed, lacking in confidence, anxious or hopeless, and/or upset by difficulties with a partner or ex-partner, or there are issues at home that prevent you from being there for your children
- If you are drinking a lot or using drugs this may be having a negative impact on your emotional well-being and on your children
- You do not see this as a problem, or do not accept support

3 Keeping your children safe (detail)

This scale is about appropriate supervision, ensuring your home is safe, protecting your children from accidents and, where necessary, internet safety. It is also about protecting yourself and your children from bullying, racial harassment and domestic abuse.

5 Effective parenting

My children are safe in my care

- You are safe, your home is safe, and the people who visit are safe for your children
- You teach your children about all safety issues appropriate to their age
- You think ahead and act straight away if you see a risk to your children's safety
- You don't need support with keeping your children safe

4 Learning what works

I'm finding ways to keep my children safe in my care, with support

- You are putting strategies in place to keep your children safe both at home and outside
- If there have been safety issues such as domestic abuse or inappropriate visitors, this has now stopped
- You are learning how to teach your children about safety issues appropriate to their age
- There are still a few problem areas you need support with

3 Believing and trying

I believe I can keep my children and myself safe and I'm making changes, but it's difficult

- Perhaps you are making changes to make your home safer for small children, trying to supervise them better, teaching them about staying safe or trying to find better childcare
- You are trying to change your own behaviour if this was affecting your children's safety
- If there has been domestic abuse, bullying or racial harassment, you know this needs to stop and are making changes
- If your children have been abused you are getting help for them
- You know this is important and are trying things but have not yet found what works or find it hard to keep going

2 Accepting help

My children are not safe enough but I'm accepting help to do something about this

- A crisis, accident or social worker has made you aware that your children are not safe in any of the ways described in 1, or you have realised it for yourself. It may feel awful to acknowledge this but you now accept help so things can change
- You may feel unsafe as well due to bullying, racial harassment, domestic violence or other crime
- You allow others to help but don't take the initiative yourself

1 Stuck

There are concerns about the safety of my children. I don't have help with this or don't accept help

- Your children are not safe for one or more of these reasons:
 - They are left unsupervised
 - There is a risk of accidents because harmful things are left around
 - There is domestic abuse within the family, so they are or at risk of harm directly or indirectly. They may be victims of physical, sexual or emotional abuse
 - Your behaviour, older siblings, or people who visit put them at risk
- You may not see this as a problem, or you do not accept support

4 Social networks (detail)

This scale is about you as a parent having the people, social contact and support you need and want, and your children being able to make positive friendships and develop social skills through spending time with other children. It is also about feeling settled and happy where you live and having access to places of religious worship and other facilities important to you and your family.

5 Effective parenting

I have the social contact I want and my children spend time with other children

- Your children spend time with other children and have or are developing appropriate social skills and positive friendships for their age
- Friends, neighbours or wider family meet your needs for support and company
- You are reasonably settled living where you are and have access to places of worship or other community services or facilities that are important to you
- You don't need support from a service in this area

4 Learning what works

My family is finding ways to have the social contact and connection we need, with support

- Your children spend time with other children so they can develop social skills and make friends as they grow up
- You have friends, neighbours or wider family you spend time with and maybe people you can call on for support, favours and childcare, and are exploring ways to feel more rooted and connected
- Perhaps you are learning which local activities work for you and/or your children and getting to know some new people
- You have addressed any harassment or bullying issues
- There are still a few problem areas you need support with

3 Believing and trying

I know my family needs more social contact and connection and I'm making changes, but it's hard

- You know your children need to mix with others so they can develop social networks and make friends and perhaps you also need or want more friends, connections or support
- You are trying to get to know more people locally or to see more of family or friends further away, or trying to find out about local facilities of interest to you
- If there are harassment or bullying issues you are trying to sort these out, with help
- You have not yet found what works or find it hard to keep going

2 Accepting help

We are isolated but I'm accepting help so we can start to feel more connected and supported

- As for 1, but you acknowledge that you are isolated or mixing with people who have a negative influence on your family
- You allow others to help but mostly don't take the initiative yourself

1 Stuck

We are isolated. I don't have help with this or don't accept help

- You have little helpful support from family or friends, or your children don't spend time with friends or positive peer groups to develop their social skills
- Perhaps you are a long way from family and/or friends, no one around speaks your first language or you have been threatened or feel that your family is not welcome because of drugs, domestic abuse, disability or complaints about you; or
- The people you are mixing with are a negative influence on the family – perhaps because they drink, are involved in crime or behave inappropriately
- You may not see this as a problem, or you do not accept support