



Wider Children’s Workforce Guidance for the use of “Day in my life” tools

Both national and local learning about child neglect has highlighted the need to gain an understanding of the child’s lived experience and also the importance of measuring change over time. Only by doing this can cumulative or escalating risks be identified.

There are six versions of the “day in my life” tool. There is a tool specifically written for the following cohorts of children:

- Pre birth
- Baby
- Pre-school aged child
- Primary school aged child
- Adolescent
- A Child with Disabilities

How to use the tools

The tools are designed to be used alongside parents or with children (where age and development appropriate). They consist of a list of questions, or prompts, to help shape the worker’s understanding of the lived experience of the child. They specifically focus on different parts of a child’s daily routine and care.

They can act as a starting point for a conversation or as a useful list of questions to help form a view of the day to day care of a child. They can highlight areas of strength in the parenting and also areas in need of development. It is important to work with parents in a strength based way, otherwise parents may feel undermined and criticised and this may make them less likely to retain a relationship with the professional.

Here are some examples of how this tool can be used:

Example 1:

A nursery worker observes that child S attends nursery late. When there he is often hungry, seems to find it difficult to concentrate and has frequent angry outbursts. He is collected by different people who are not members of the family. These factors make the professional curious.

The worker asks the mother if she can spend some time with her after she has dropped off the child on a couple of mornings one week. She explains that she has seen some new behaviours in child S and would like to see what ways the nursery and the mother can work together to understand them.

The nursery worker has prepared a sheet of paper, which is divided into 4.

Mornings	Child care
Afternoons after nursery	Bedtime

The worker uses the pre school age version of the “day in my life” to explore the different aspects of child S’s routine. One day she discussed the mornings and child care arrangements, on the second morning she reflects with the mother about afternoons and bedtime routines.

Together the mother and the nursery worker identify areas of child S’s routine that are working really well. They also both come to realise the importance of a good morning and bedtime routine – both for child S and for the mother, who is feeling exhausted. They complete a “So what do we know? Next Steps?” template and come up with a plan on how to build in a good morning and bedtime routine.

Example 2:

Child A goes to a primary school and is usually a bright, engaged, well presented and happy child. He has recently started to “hit out” at other children. He seems easily frustrated, he has fallen asleep in class and always appears to be hungry.

When the father comes to collect child A, the teacher asks if he has any concerns about child A. The father tells the teacher that he and his new girlfriend are struggling with child A, whose behaviour has changed of late. The father’s girlfriend moved into the family home a month ago. The teacher suggests that the father and girlfriend look at the questions on the primary school version of the “day in my life” together and come into the school the following week.

The teacher, father and girlfriend meet and reflect on the changes to child A’s routine. They complete a “So what do we know? Next Steps... “ template and come up with a plan to try to return child A to his previous routine, whilst gradually introducing the father’s girlfriend into the caring role.

Example 3:

Child G is 14 years old and has been referred to CAMHS as a result of concerns about his self harming behaviours and low self esteem. The CAMHS worker uses the “teenager day in my life” to form an initial assessment of the young persons needs. The CAMHS worker takes the list of questions and divides the questions to structure the planned appointments, as follows:



- Session 1 Waking up in the morning, breakfast and dressing
- Session 2 Getting to school, afterschool and afterschool
- Session 3 In school and afterschool and bedtime
- Session 4 Holidays, relationships and independence
- Session 5 So what do we know? Next steps?

The worker then uses what has been understood about child G to complete a “So what do we know? Next Steps? To reflect on what they have learnt and what the joint plan will be.

Capturing what is known and reviewing change over time:

The “So what do we know? Next Steps? template has been created to capture the outcome of discussions with children and their parents. This is a helpful way to not only capture information but also to analyse the information to inform both plans and reviews.