Getting it right for every child:
Looking Back to Look Forward

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What is Getting it right for every child?

• Common coordinated framework for planning and action across all agencies
• Child at the centre
• All children, young people and families get the help they need when they need it
Where does GIRFEC come from?

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989:

- Right of children to be protected from harm and have their well-being promoted by families and the state
- Right of children to be consulted in decisions that affect their lives (Article 12)

Framework for Assessment of Children in Need and Their Families 2000

Original framework with accompanying Practice Guidance, published by Dept of Health and other government departments in London, laid down the idea of a multi-dimensional, multi-agency approach to assessment of children in need. The Framework was heavily influenced by theory and research on child development
For Scotland’s Children 2001

- Introduced idea of multi-agency services to support a child’s well-being
- Introduced idea of a Named Individual in the universal services
- Stressed the importance of a single Child’s Plan

Wider significant Scottish policy influences

- Child protection review: *It’s everyone’s job to make sure I’m alright* 2002
- *Protecting children and young people: the Charter* 2004
- Policies for all aspects of children’s services support the GIRFEC message e.g. Curriculum for Excellence, Early Years Framework, Health policies, Youth Justice, Substance Misuse
What theory and research has influenced GIRFEC?

- Child development and ecological theory
- A strengths approach to development
- The importance of resilience in childhood
- Research on children’s well-being from an adult and child perspective

Influences on well-being – a developmental-ecological approach

There are many influences on children’s well-being, including:
- parents
- wider family
- school
- play
- space
- community
- children themselves (My World Triangle)
The wellness/strengths developmental approach

- Approach gets away from success/failure model to one where children are seen as progressing (Lorion 2000)
A more optimistic view of the potential for positive change in childhood

• Stress in early years need not affect children permanently
• With the right circumstances children can develop resilience
• Children who miss out on particular experiences can make up ground
• Healthy development can occur under a far wider range of circumstances than was thought possible in the past

The importance of resilience in childhood

Building resilience helps children withstand adversity in childhood

See work by Brigid Daniel and colleagues:
 e.g. Assessing and Promoting Resilience in Children Workbooks 2002 JKP
Children’s well-being: UNICEF’s definition


The true measure of a nation’s standing is how well it attends to its children - their health and safety, their material security, their education and socialization, and their sense of being loved, valued, and included in the families and societies into which they are born.
Measuring well-being
York/Oxford definition 2009
(Bradshaw et al.)

7 domains of well-being:
• Income
• Health
• Education
• Housing
• Environment
• Crime
• Children in need

Well-becoming
(Ben Arieh 2001)

• Investment on children’s well-being now will influence how they are as adults
Well-becoming: the Scottish Government’s Outcomes for Scotland’s Children

We want all children to become

• Confident individuals
• Effective contributors
• Successful learners
• Responsible citizens

Well-being indicators
Research showing children can influence their own well-being

- Children as social actors - competent commentators on their well-being (Moss 2002)
- Children have the right to comment on decisions affecting their well-being (UNCRC: Children (Scotland) Act 1995)
- Well-being should include definitions of what is important to children (Tisdall and Davies 2004; Hill et al. 2004)
- Well-being is promoted by children being in control of their activities (Ben-Arie 2002)
- Children’s daily activities affect their well-being (Aldgate and McIntosh 2006)

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Research on styles of helping children and parents

The Department of Health’s Messages from Research series, including:
- Child Protection
- Implementing the Children Act 1989
- Supporting Parents

provided research evidence on what approaches best helped children and parents.
Bringing together the theory and the practice

• Values and Principles
• Core Components
• Practice Model
• Practice Guidance
• 3 year development Pathfinder in Highland
• Independent evaluation of the Pathfinder before full implementation

GIRFEC VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

• Promoting the well-being of individual children and young people
• Keeping children and young people safe
• Putting the child at the centre, promoting opportunities and valuing diversity
• Taking a whole child approach - using developmental-ecological theory
• Building on strengths and promoting resilience
• Providing additional help that is appropriate, proportionate and timely and supporting informed choice
• Working in partnership with families
• Respecting confidentiality and sharing information
• Promoting the same values across professions and making the most of each worker’s expertise
• Co-ordinating help and building a competent workforce
The GIRFEC Core Components 1

Getting it right for every child is founded on ten core components which can be applied in any setting and in any circumstance:

1 A focus on improving outcomes for children, young people and their families based on a shared understanding of well-being
2 A common approach to gaining consent and to sharing information where appropriate
3 An integral role for children, young people and families in assessment, planning and intervention
4 A co-ordinated and unified approach to identifying concerns, assessing needs, and agreeing actions and outcomes, based on the Well-being Indicators
5 Streamlined planning, assessment and decision-making processes that lead to the right help at the right time

Core Components 2

6 Consistent high standards of co-operation, joint working and communication where more than one agency needs to be involved, locally and across Scotland
7 A Named Person for every child and young person, and a Lead Professional (where necessary) to co-ordinate and monitor multi-agency activity
8 Maximising the skilled workforce within universal services to address needs and risks as early as possible
9 A confident and competent workforce across all services for children, young people and their families
10 The capacity to share demographic, assessment, and planning information electronically within and across agency boundaries
A network of support for every child
Looking to the future

• Munro Report on child protection endorses GIRFEC: prevention, promotion and protection
• Growing momentum of GIRFEC implementation providing evidence from practice
• Children and Young People Bill – strengthening child’s plan and multi-agency working