

Child Impact Assessment Framework: Glossary of terms

Acrimonious separation: Where during separation the conflict does not subside, or which is at an intense level from the outset.

Affinity/ alignment is where the child does not have negative feelings for the other parent but prefers spending time with one parent. Alignment between a parent and child may develop before, during, or after separation or because of naturally occurring preferences because of the other parent's non-existent, interrupted, or minimal involvement, inexperience, or poor parenting (which does not reach the level of abuse or neglect).

Alienation: When a child's resistance/hostility towards one parent is not justified and is the result of psychological manipulation by the other parent. **Active alienating behaviour:** Intermittent, intentional words or actions aimed at either undermining the child's relationship with the other parent as a result of hurt or anger or emotional vulnerability. They may feel genuinely concerned for the child in the care of the other parent, but these concerns are unfounded. **Persistent alienating behaviour:** Persistently acting in a way to hurt the other parent and destroy their relationship with the child, rarely showing empathy, self-control or insight and taking on an obsessive quality.

Anxiety: A feeling that occurs when individuals are worried or afraid. It can be experienced through our thought, feelings and physical sensations.

Appropriate Justified Rejection: Justified rejection by the child to spending time with a parent or realistic estrangement because of harmful parenting including neglect or abuse or significant parenting limitations.

Attachment: age or gender appropriate reactions for resisting time with a parent for attachment reasons, including separation anxiety.

Authoritarian parent: This type of parenting style is a harsh, rigid emotional climate that is low in parental responsiveness (the nurturing aspect of the child) and high in parental demandingness (control over the child) (Spera, 2005).

Benign post-separation parental rejection: Benign post-separation parental rejection may occur when a child resists time with a parent because of their own preferences or reaction to their family situation. This term does not apply if they have experienced harm in any way, for example through witnessing domestic abuse, through harmful conflict or alienating behaviours. This resistance may subside over time.

Bias: Inclination or prejudice for or against a particular person, or opinion especially in a way considered to be unfair.

Characteristics: Features or qualities belonging typically to a person.

Child Arrangements Order: When people can't agree on where a child might live or who they should see, they might apply to the family court who will decide for them. The judge will look at what is best for the child or young person, taking into consideration the views of experts such as the Cafcass Officer and will make a decision setting out the arrangements.

Child resistance and refusal: When a child resists or refuses contact with a parent or carer, this can be due to a variety of reasons including, alienation.

Coercive control: An act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish or frighten their victim.

Commissioned Services: Programmes that are funded by the Ministry of Justice to deliver services by Cafcass. Examples include 'Child Contact Interventions' and the 'Separated Parent's Information Programme.'

Controlling Behaviour: A range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities or personal gain.

Co-operative Parenting: Style of parenting where inter-parental conflict is minimal or non-existent. Both parents can effectively communicate with issues about their child/ren and support and interact one another.

Depression: Low mood that lasts for a long time and affects everyday life. The mildest form can mean being in 'low spirits' but at its most severe it can mean life-threatening as it can make someone feel suicidal.

Developmental Needs: What the child requires in order to achieve changes in their physical, emotional and cognitive ability.

Disputes: A disagreement or argument between individuals.

Dispute Resolution: Other methods of solving issues other than litigation or going to court. Examples include negotiation and mediation.

Divided Loyalties: Where an individual is required to show loyalty to one relationship which results in them appearing disloyal to another deserving relationship.

Domestic Abuse: Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can include, but is not limited to: psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional.

Domestic Abuse Practice Pathway: Provides the Cafcass practitioner with a structured, focussed and stepped framework for assessing cases where domestic abuse is a feature, including the impact on the child.

Emotional Needs: The needs of a child to feel loved and cared for. Parents and carers should be aware of these needs and communicate with their child in a way that will support the child's positive growth and development.

Enforcement Order: If a party has not complied with a Child Arrangement Order, an enforcement order can be made to ensure compliance.

Expert: a person with a high level of knowledge or skill relating to a particular subject or activity e.g. psychologists. Experts are appointed by the court in family court cases.

Family Court: This is where important decisions are made about children, young people and their families. It is different to criminal courts where people go when they might have done something wrong. Decisions in the Family Court are made by Judges or Magistrates when people can't agree about what is best for a child or young person.

Family Court Advisers: Family Court social workers. Sometimes the Family Court may ask a family court adviser to meet with a child or young people to talk about their wishes and feelings and to make sure the family court hears what they have to say. The FCA also gives their view to the court about what is best for the child.

Family Justice Young People's Board: Group of over 50 children and young people aged between 7 and 25 who live across England and Wales. All members have either had direct

experience of the family justice system or have an interest in children's rights and the family courts. They help ensure that the work of the Family Justice Board is child-centred and child-inclusive.

Golden Thread: The golden thread of assessment refers to all risks identified at the start of an assessment being reconsidered at the end. It involves a combination of professional curiosity and applying social work knowledge that leads to no unanswered questions and defensible decisions in recommendations.

Harmful Conflict: When parents or carers actively disagree with each other and have difficulty putting their child's needs first and it becomes harmful for the child. As with all forms of harm to children, conflict can vary in intensity and impact.

Honour Based Violence: A crime or incident, which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community.

Hostility: Unfriendly or aggressive behaviour towards people or ideas.

Implacable Hostility: Extreme, negative behaviour exhibited to undermine a child's relationship with the other parent/ carer.

Litigation: Process of taking a case to the court so that a judgment can be made which is enforceable and binding.

Local Authority: This organisation is responsible for making sure all children and young people in their local area are kept safe by the people who care for them.

Neglect: Ongoing failure to meet a child's basic needs including being left hungry or dirty without adequate clothing, shelter or health care.

Nuanced: taking account of or including small but important differences in an approach.

Parenting Plan: Is a written plan worked out between parents after they separate, and it covers the practical issues of parenting and can help clarify arrangements needed to put in place to care for children after separation, without having to go to court.

Parenting Styles: Different approaches to parenting that may impact on the child's wellbeing.

Perpetrator: A person who carries out or commits a mostly criminal or malicious act.

Polarised: A division in two sharply contrasting opinions or set of beliefs.

Physical Abuse: Deliberately hurting someone causing injuries such as bruises, broken bones, burns or cuts.

Radicalisation: Negatively influencing a child with radical fundamentalist thought, which is associated with terrorism.

Re-Litigation: To litigate (bring to court) a case or a matter again.

Resilience: An ability to withstand or recover quickly from difficult circumstances.

Safeguarding letter: This is a letter that a Cafcass Worker will write and send to the Family Court. They will speak to the parties (usually the parents) and ask about the child or young person's safety and any worries that they might have.

Section 7 report: This report is ordered by the family court and makes either Cafcass or the local authority investigate all the circumstances of the family, often including the wishes and feelings of a child or young person, and send a report to the court.

Separated Parents Information Programme: Is a course which helps to understand how to put children first whilst parents are separating, even though disputes may be going on with the other parent. It helps parents learn the fundamental principles of how to manage conflict and difficulties.

Systemic approach: An approach that works with families and those who are in close relationships to bring about change. These changes are viewed in terms of the systems of interaction between each person in the family or relationship.

s.37 Report: The family court orders the local authority to produce this report into the child's circumstances when they are worried about the wellbeing of the child and it seems to the court that the right thing to do may be for a Care Order or Supervision Order to be made.

Therapeutic Intervention: Therapeutic interventions seek to address underlying emotional and psychological difficulties which are affecting the child's wellbeing through different therapeutic approaches.

Volatile Climate: A situation that is explosive and unstable, likely to change abruptly and unexpectedly.

Vulnerability: Being easily physically, emotionally or mentally hurt or influenced. Examples include if the individual has been subject to abuse, has had childhood trauma or is of a young age, has a disability or minority status.