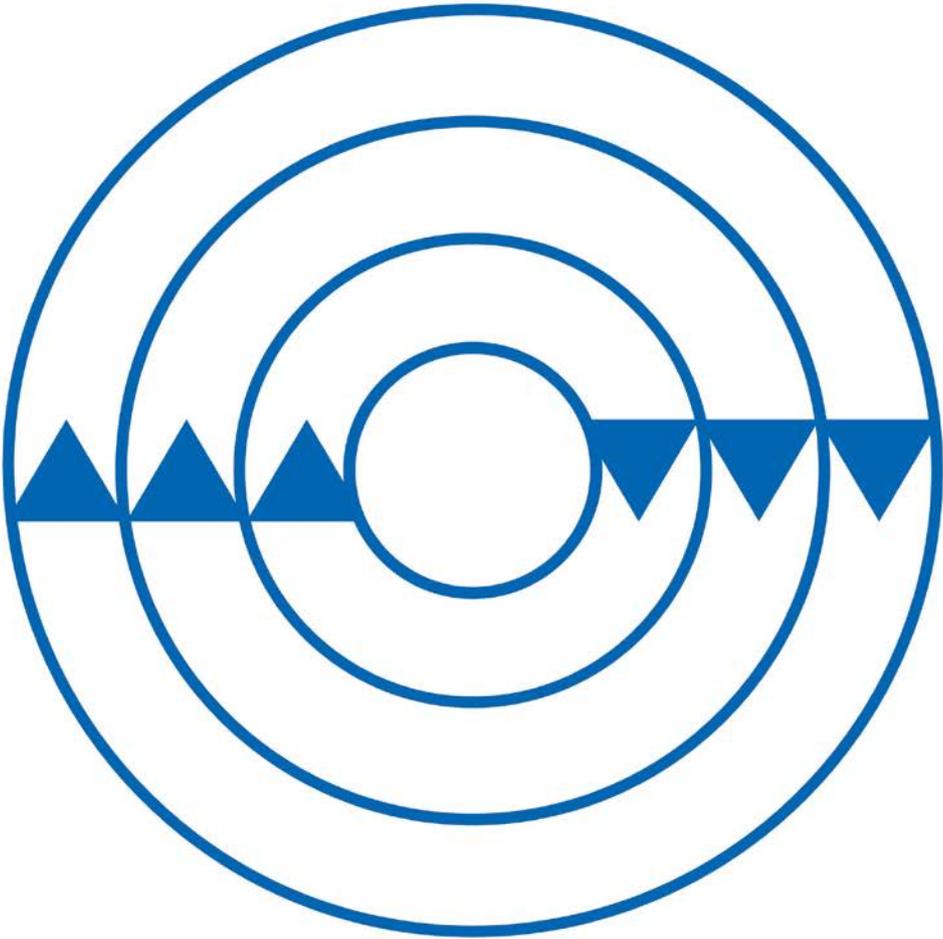


CHAPTER

**2**

process



**step 2**  
**the Strengths and**  
**Needs Assessment**



## STEP 2. THE STRENGTHS AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT

In making a Strengths and Needs Assessment you will work with the child, parent/guardian and family/whānau to understand:

- the strengths and needs of the child, parent/guardian and family/whānau
- other resources that can be accessed, or strategies that they have used to resolve previous issues.

**Note**

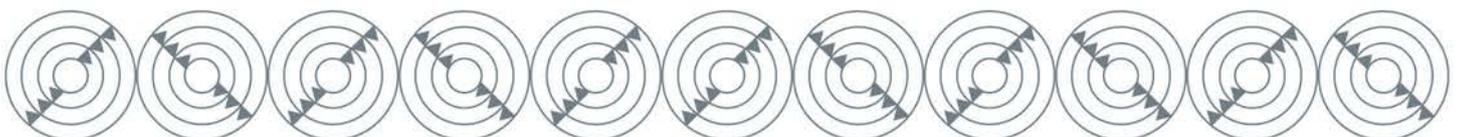
- Record all relevant information at each stage of the process
- Interaction/engagement with child and whānau across entire process



## our process

**Key points:**

- All services provided through this programme are to be based on a comprehensive Strengths and Needs Assessment.
- The time frame for completing a Strengths and Needs Assessment will depend on your initial assessment of the need level of the case, but should be completed as soon as possible after consent is given. The time frame should not exceed the following guidelines:
  - in high-need situations, within 10 working days
  - in medium-need situations, within 15 working days
  - in low-need situations, within 20 working days.
- The child, parent/guardian and family/whānau should be engaged and contribute to identifying their strengths and needs.
- The assessment process will respect the integrity, culture, values, and priorities of the child, parent/guardian and family/whānau.



## THE PROCESS

### Prepare for the Strengths and Needs Assessment

In most cases you will have already met with the child's parent/guardian or family/whānau to do the initial assessment.

You now have to build a partnership that allows you to continue to work together to address the issues that were identified in the initial assessment. As part of this, you will:

- review the reasons for concern and the referral
- answer any questions the parent/guardian and family/whānau have
- do the Strengths and Needs Assessment
- provide the family/whānau with information about the services available to them
- discuss the outcome of the assessment and get the family/whānau view about the most appropriate actions.

Those being assessed:

- are to be advised of their rights and responsibilities
- have a right to access information about themselves arising from the assessment
- will have their privacy and confidentiality safeguarded, unless a child's safety is at risk.

Where a child's safety is at risk, your organisation's child protection policy is to be followed along with An Interagency Guide Working Together Me Mutu Tā Tātou Tūkinō Tamariki.

Service providers are expected to have developed policies in relation to:

- child rights and responsibilities
- privacy and confidentiality
- cultural practice and responsiveness.

Get a copy of each of these policies from your manager/employer.

*Note: You can find out more about child, parent/guardian, and family/whānau rights and responsibilities from your employer.*

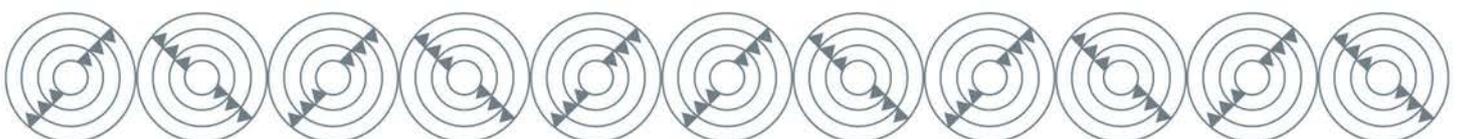
### Arrange to meet with child and the family/whānau

The purpose of this meeting is to:

- build rapport and trust
- develop a detailed picture of the child and family/whānau situation from each of their perspectives.

Think about cultural and safety issues to determine the best way to approach this stage of the process.

Contact the child and family/whānau to arrange a suitable time, date, and venue to meet. You can meet with each party separately.



Check they understand the process, and their rights and responsibilities.

Ask the child or family/whānau if they would like anyone else to attend. Other professionals can attend if there is consent and they are invited and/or they bring necessary skills such as interpreting or cultural advice.

You may need to meet with the parties more than once to complete a comprehensive Strengths and Needs Assessment.

#### **Your own preparation for the meeting**

- Prepare to meet with the parties. How formal will it be? What processes will be followed? What is the most appropriate venue and time for the meeting that suits the parties?
- Review what you already know about the child's circumstances and identify what you still need to find out.

## Undertaking the assessment

### **Information collection**

The information collection helps with exploring and identifying the strengths and needs of the child and any related strengths and needs of the parent/guardian and family/whānau. Wherever possible, needs should be balanced by strengths. The SDQ assessment is part of this process.

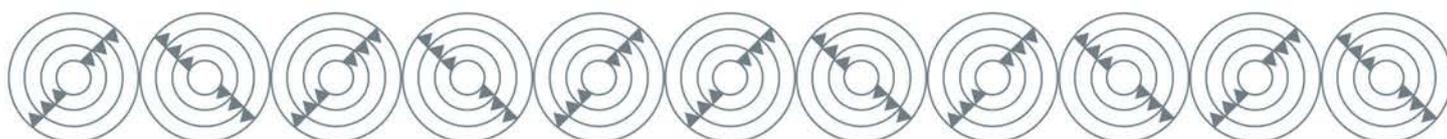
Some of the parents/guardians and families/whānau you work with may have prior experience of talking about their needs or being told about their problems. Try to have a discussion that allows the parent/guardian and family/whānau to express their strengths as well as their needs.

Work together to identify resources and skills within the family. Later on you will be able to allocate tasks and responsibilities according to these resources and skills.

*Note: You are not looking at goals and strategies at this stage.*

The information you gather will fall into three categories:

- a) child focused
- b) family/whānau focused
- c) additional information from other individuals (teachers) or agencies.



## a. child focused

<b>THE PRESENTING ISSUE</b>	<b>WHY WAS THE REFERRAL MADE? WHAT IMPACT DOES THIS ISSUE HAVE ON THE CHILD?</b>
Parent/guardian and family/whānau relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does the child interact:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ with parents?</li> <li>○ with other adult family members?</li> <li>○ with other siblings?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Child development milestones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the child attained the appropriate child-development milestones?</li> </ul>
Child health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the child have any health issues other than those that have been identified as immediate needs?</li> </ul>
Critical incidents or trauma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the child experienced any major incidents that may have had traumatic impact (e.g. accidents, deaths, separation of parents, abandonment, or past abuse)?</li> </ul>
Hobbies and interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How active is the child?</li> <li>• Do they have a range of age-appropriate interests?</li> <li>• What are those interests?</li> </ul>
Learning abilities and difficulties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the child have any previous history or professional diagnoses of learning difficulties?</li> <li>• Does the child enjoy learning?</li> <li>• What are they good at?</li> <li>• What do they have difficulty with?</li> <li>• What is the impact of this?</li> </ul>
Relationships with peers and school/kura	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the child have age-appropriate peer relationships?</li> <li>• Do they have a circle of friends?</li> <li>• Are they sociable, a leader, a bully, or isolated from peers?</li> <li>• Are they willing to attend school?</li> <li>• What is their behaviour at school?</li> </ul>
Sense of future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the hopes and aspirations of the child?</li> <li>• Is the child able to see himself/herself in positive future roles?</li> </ul>
Physical needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there adequate material resources to meet the child's basic physical needs (food, clothes, and housing)?</li> </ul>
Cultural identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the child's sense of his/her cultural identity?</li> </ul>



## b. Family/whānau focused

THE PRESENTING ISSUE	WHY WAS THE REFERRAL MADE? WHAT IMPACT DOES THIS ISSUE HAVE ON THE CHILD?
Parent/guardian and family/whānau dynamics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who has custody of the child?</li> <li>• Does the child have access to the other parent?</li> <li>• How do the parents relate to each other, the child, and any other children?</li> <li>• Are there major issues between the parents that will have an impact on the child (e.g. domestic violence)?</li> <li>• What are the positive ways in which the parents/guardians and family/whānau relate to each other and their children?</li> <li>• Who lives in the house?</li> <li>• How does the child relate to each person in the house?</li> </ul>
Family relationships with school/kura	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What relationship does the family have with school/kura and the child's teacher (positive, no relationship, or disinterest)?</li> </ul>
Current and past stressors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a history of any stressors and/or significant life events or traumas?</li> <li>• How were these issues resolved?</li> </ul>
Social and health issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do the parent/guardian and family/whānau have needs that affect their ability to parent (e.g. legal issues, substance abuse problems, financial issues, or emotional or psychological issues)?</li> <li>• What skills or resources have the parent/guardian and family/whānau developed to cope with these issues?</li> </ul>

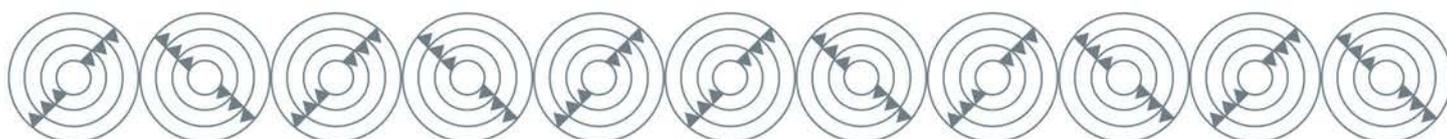
*Note: This is not a comprehensive list and will change for each child. Discuss any questions with your supervisor.*

## c. Additional information from other individuals or agencies

In some cases you will need to get information that the parent/guardian can't supply (e.g. the public health nurse may have to supply health information, or the school/kura may have information that has not been included in the referral). The person in the school/kura who has most contact with the child will need to fill in the SDQ (this will most likely be the teacher, but could be a teacher aide, or even the principal in a very small school/kura).

Check that you have permission from parent/guardian and family/whānau to consult with any agencies or individuals who may have relevant information.

As you will appreciate, an assessment can only ever be a snapshot of a moment in time. The child and family/whānau and their environment and circumstances are dynamic. The assessment, your conclusions, and the subsequent plans are to be regularly monitored and reviewed.



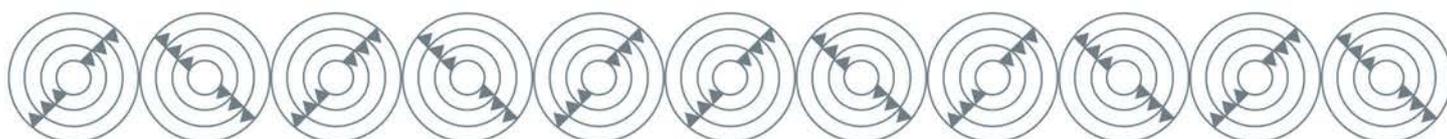
### Analyse the information: seven areas

Physical needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food</li> <li>• Housing</li> <li>• Clothing</li> <li>• Health or disability</li> <li>• Finances</li> <li>• Communications and transport</li> </ul>
Other supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of supports and services</li> </ul>
Parenting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive role models</li> <li>• Adult leadership</li> <li>• Consistent discipline</li> <li>• Appropriate affection</li> <li>• Understands child</li> <li>• Realistic boundaries</li> <li>• Adequate supervision</li> </ul>
Positive sense of the future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purpose in school/kura</li> <li>• Sense of belonging</li> </ul>
Sense of identity and dignity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of origins</li> <li>• Comfortable with self</li> <li>• Balances individual and group</li> </ul>
Skills to negotiate the world	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication skills</li> <li>• Educational ability</li> <li>• Social skills</li> <li>• Cognitive skills</li> <li>• Emotional skills</li> <li>• Problem-solving skills</li> <li>• Adaptability and flexibility</li> <li>• Coping with challenge</li> <li>• Ability to plan</li> </ul>
Pathways to growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Freedom from abuse</li> <li>• Freedom from neglect</li> <li>• Supportive school/kura</li> <li>• Home and school/kura alignment</li> <li>• Good role models</li> <li>• Absence of trauma</li> <li>• Positive peer relations</li> </ul>

### Determine intervention goals

Alongside the determined strengths and needs for child and family/whānau the analysis will enable you, child, and family/whānau to decide which of these needs will be addressed through the SWiS service. Address any identified needs through the use of existing strengths and any additional resources that may be required.

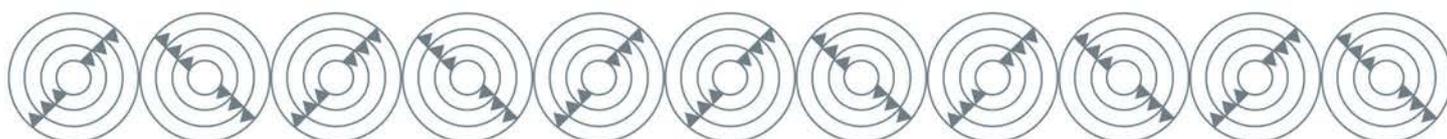
The next step is using the information you have acquired to develop an intervention plan.



## APPENDIX 1

This table shows the key players and their responsibilities for this step of the process.

KEY PLAYERS	RESPONSIBILITIES
Social worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a partnership with the child.</li> <li>• Develop partnerships with parent/guardian and family/whānau.</li> <li>• Gather relevant information.</li> <li>• Work with child, parent/guardian, and family/whānau to identify strengths and needs, and develop intervention goals.</li> <li>• Maintain a professional role to help child achieve better outcomes.</li> </ul>
Parent/guardian and family/whānau	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a partnership with social worker.</li> <li>• Work with social worker to identify issues of concern, strengths and needs, and intervention goals.</li> <li>• Actively participate to achieve better outcomes for the child.</li> </ul>
Child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribute to identification of strengths and needs.</li> <li>• Contribute to development of intervention goals.</li> <li>• Actively participate in the working relationship with the social worker to achieve better outcomes for themselves.</li> </ul>
Service provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have guidelines in relation to children's rights and responsibilities, privacy, and confidentiality of issues and concerns.</li> </ul>
Professional supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide professional social work supervision.</li> </ul>
School/kura	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide relevant information.</li> <li>• Provide additional support to the child, parent/guardian, family/whānau, and social worker.</li> </ul>
Other service agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide relevant information.</li> <li>• Provide additional support to the child, family/whānau, and social worker.</li> </ul>



## APPENDIX 2

This table shows the key documents for this step of the process.

DOCUMENT	WHAT IS IT FOR?	WHO CAN VIEW THE DOCUMENT
Referral/initial assessment	A reminder of the issue that triggered SWiS involvement, extent of needs, and timeframe for response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child</li> <li>• Social worker</li> <li>• Provider</li> <li>• Parent/guardian</li> <li>• SWiS supervisor</li> <li>• Social Services Accreditation Assessor</li> </ul>
Strengths and Needs Assessment (including SDQ assessment)	Clarifies the specific needs of the child and their family/whānau and the strengths they possess in relation to those needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child</li> <li>• Social worker</li> <li>• Parent/guardian</li> <li>• SWiS supervisor</li> <li>• Provider</li> <li>• Social Services Accreditation Assessor</li> </ul>
Onward referral	(May be made at this stage.) Serves to activate other services that may be necessary for the child's well-being.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child</li> <li>• Social worker</li> <li>• Parent/guardian</li> <li>• Provider</li> <li>• Professional supervisor</li> <li>• Social Services Accreditation Assessor</li> </ul>
Recorded data (for the relevant child only)	Records the information collected. Also records the analysis of the information, the intervention goals, and the overall goals that the social worker, family/whānau and child agree to work toward.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child</li> <li>• Social worker</li> <li>• Parent/guardian</li> <li>• SWiS supervisor</li> <li>• Provider</li> <li>• Social Services Accreditation Assessor</li> </ul>

