

YLS/CMI™ 2.0: Family Circumstance/Parenting

This brief aims to provide information to all Youth Justice staff about what works for young people when addressing assessed need in the Family Circumstances/Parenting domain of the Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI™) 2.0.

High need in Family Circumstances/Parenting: What does this mean?

Young people with high need in the Family Circumstances/Parenting domain will often have family relationships characterised by:

- High levels of stress and conflict.
- Neglect and avoidance (young people do not feel cared for or supported).
- Antisocial attitudes and behaviours.
- Illegal or de-stabilising behaviours.

Higher total scores for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people likely reflect additional complex risk factors experienced linked to intergenerational trauma caused by colonisation and ongoing racism, marginalization and disadvantage. Recent studies of YLS/CMI™ validity with an Australian cohort indicated for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, [Peer Relations and Family Circumstances/Parenting were the most important domains](#) in predicting reoffending.

What does low or no need in Family Circumstances/Parenting look like?

Young people are less likely to engage in offending behaviours if they have family or other positive adults who are:

- Readily accessible.
- Emotionally and physically supportive.
- Caring, encouraging and warm.
- Provide firm boundaries
- Using [positive parenting](#) practices.

What if the young person is in care?

Parents are who the young person considers their family – whether that's their biological parents, kinship, or foster parents.

Usually the identified 'parents' will have been involved in the young person's life for a significant period (i.e. parents, grandparents), however, if the young person has been in a placement, this domain could also refer to a foster or kinship care family. The young person does not have to be living with either parent for this domain to apply.

If unsure, ask the young person who they consider to be their parents, particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people or in situations where they don't reside together (e.g. young people in residential care) or haven't had contact for an extended period.

Conversations need to occur with family as part of collateral information gathering to understand if there is Cultural Adoption that has happened in the kinship system.

Do all young people on Child Protection Orders have high need in Family Circumstances/Parenting?

Generally, yes.

Young people who have a history of child protection involvement have [significantly greater and more complex needs](#) than those with no child protection exposure, and are [more likely to engage in criminal behaviour as adolescents and adults](#). Further, [positive parenting practices](#), which may be absent from families involved with child protection, are known to be linked to lower levels of youth offending.

What if the young person denies any problems or issues in their family?

It is important to consider information from a range of sources to accurately determine assessment outcomes.

Assessment of the Family Circumstances/Parenting domain, like all domains, should be considered using self-reported information from the young person and family, and supported by evidence from other agencies (e.g. government agencies, family support services). It is important teams work collaboratively to gather information, for example an issue may not have been discussed with Caseworkers but had been discussed with Youth Worker or Indigenous Service Support Officer.

If the young person reports a positive relationship with their parent/s, but there is evidence of significant conflict between them and the young person (eg QPS call outs, Domestic Violence Orders) and it appears unstable/hostile/uncaring, then careful analysis of YLS/CMI™ scoring is needed. We know some of our young people experience a level of shame when there is conflict within their familial environment, and they may find it difficult to share. Refer to the [assessment guidelines](#) for additional clarification.

What activities and community services address high need in Family Circumstances/Parenting?

Any regular engagement with parenting or family support specialists that fosters a sense of belonging, connection, and secure attachment can contribute to reducing need.

Referrals: Youth Justice may refer families for support *with consent* if it is considered in the best interests of the young person and decreases the likelihood of them becoming in need of protection. Discussions may also be beneficial with relevant stakeholders (Department of Education, Health etc.) around who is best placed to discuss referrals and consent with the family.

External Services: Regular engagement with services such as [Intensive Family Support or Family Wellbeing Service](#) can assist families to prevent and address crises or problems and promote increased connection, cohesion, and wellbeing. Further, [Family and Child Connect](#) can assist families to connect with services in their community including supports that address homelessness, domestic and family violence, mental health, parenting behavioural, developmental needs, etc.

What core programs address high Family Circumstances/Parenting need?

Core internal programs that address high Family Circumstances/Parenting needs include:

- Integrated Case Management (ICM)
- Young, Black and Proud (YBP)

While not a core program, [Family Led Decision Making](#) (FLDM) has also been shown to be effective in empowering young people and families to be more involved in Youth Justice decision-making and strengthening their connections to culture, family, and community.

