

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

These questions should be considered whenever the checklists are being used. Going Home research emphasises the continuing significance of the circumstances that led to the original separation.

Has the child previously been looked after by social services?

yes no

Why was the previous separation necessary?

With whom was the child living immediately prior to the separation?

Have any court orders been made?

yes no

If so, what restrictions do they impose?

During the period he or she has been looked after, where has the child been placed?

- foster home
- residential care
- in another type of placement (please describe)

How far in miles is the child's present placement from the family home?

Is the child known to have been in contact with the following people prior to separation? (Please tick the appropriate boxes and indicate how frequent the contact has been in each case.)

- natural mother
- natural father
- male siblings (full/half/step)
- female siblings (full/half/step)
- stepmother
- stepfather
- grandparents
- aunts/uncles
- other relatives

To be completed as soon as possible once it is decided that the child should be looked after—ideally before separation.

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Where both the first two factors applied, nine out of ten children were living back at home within two years, compared with less than half (42%) for whom neither factor applied.

— The child's separation is by voluntary arrangement.

— Relationships in the family are reasonably good.

— The child has been in regular contact with family members.

To be completed at the child's first major review (in England within 28 days of separation). The precise timing will differ across countries but, whatever the legal requirements, it should be tackled within 42 days of separation.

Among children with both a role and territory in the family, 85% returned within six months of separation. Children with neither had rather less to return to: only 23% did so within six months.

The problems that made separation necessary are considered to have been at least partially resolved.

The family considers itself a 'family'.

The child retains a role within the family at each stage in the return process.

The child retains territory in the return home—a room or a bed—or has purposely left behind other personal possessions and keepsakes.

The social work plan is 'inclusive' in that the family have maintained a caring role and have been involved in decision making.

The child has been in regular contact with family members.

To be completed at the six month review or its nearest equivalent to review the needs and likely circumstances of children who may return home within the next year and a half.

Nearly half of those whose family relationships were assessed as reasonably good at six months returned home before two years; where this was not the case the figure was less than a quarter.

Family relationships are assessed as being of a relatively high quality.

The problems that made separation necessary are considered to have been at least partially resolved.

The child has been in regular contact with family members.

For reviewing the circumstances of young people away from home for several years who may be 'drifting', in that they have neither meaningful family links nor permanent placement. Many will return to their families as they enter adolescence.

When the first three factors applied, the chance of return between two and five years after separation was nearly five times as great as when none applied.

— The child is a boy.

— At the point of separation, the child's mother is the main provider of emotional support.

— The family receives financial support from social security.

— The child has been in regular contact with family members.

for children **under** the age of 11

This checklist can be used at any time, but could be particularly helpful during the weeks when return home is becoming imminent.

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When all five factors applied, 92% of the returns were successful compared with 57% where none applied.

— The child's family is prepared for the anxiety generated by return and the disputes that are likely to occur.

— Family relationships are of a fairly high quality.

— The child is not an offender.

— There is evidence of highly competent social work.

— Professionals are entirely satisfied with the voluntary arrangements with the family.

— The child has been in regular contact with family members.

for children **over** the age of 11

This checklist can be used at any time, but could be particularly helpful during the weeks when return home is becoming imminent.

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Where all four factors applied, four out of five (81%) of the children returned successfully compared with a quarter (25%) where none applied.

— The child's family is prepared for the anxiety generated by return and the disputes that are likely to occur.

— Family relationships are of a fairly high quality.

— The child is not an offender.

— The young person is establishing a role outside the family complementary to those inside the home.

— The child has been in regular contact with family members.