



**Working Together
With Parents Network**
Supporting professionals working with
parents with learning difficulties

Assessing Parents with Learning Difficulties - Key Messages

- Intelligence or IQ is a poor predictor of parenting ability.
- Intelligence or IQ measures are not reliable assessments of parenting ability.
- Intelligence or IQ measures should not be used as evidence of parenting capacity.
- Learning difficulties do not inevitably cause parenting difficulties. Parenting capacity changes, and is influenced by many factors including:
 - child characteristics such as health, temperament, and behaviour
 - environmental characteristics such as social support, and access to childcare
 - the complexity of the parenting task; and
 - parent's mental and physical health.
- Co-ordinated, holistic, multi-agency assessment should be comprehensive and consider the impact of all of these factors.
- The threat of child removal and stress associated with observation and assessment can impact upon a parent's performance and the interactions they have with their children.
- Parents with learning difficulties can experience discrimination, hate crime and lack of social support.
- Parenting skills can be learned if appropriate support is provided.
- Early support should be provided to prevent complications at birth and to help develop parenting skills.
- The best conditions for teaching parenting skills include:
 - teaching in the parent's home
 - skills are broken down and taught in steps
 - teaching materials do not rely heavily on literacy skills
 - skills are demonstrated to parents
 - parents are given an opportunity to practise skills
 - parents receive reinforcement and feedback about their performance.

For more details see our full document at: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/sps/wtpn/resources/index.html>. This document is adapted from:

http://www.healthystart.net.au/images/resources/02-Practice Points/Practice_Point_Parenting_Assessment.pdf

