

The Best Interest of the Child-Questionnaire

The questionnaire is based on the Best Interest of the Child Model (see tabel 1). The BIC-model encompasses a list of fourteen environmental conditions, divided in family and other, societal, conditions that should be present in the rearing environment of the child, in order to protect its development into adulthood. In our view, the best interest of the child (Article 3(1) CRC) is strongly related to article 6 (2) of the same Convention. Article 6 (2) of the convention mentions the States' responsibility to protect the child's rights on life, development and living. To optimize the child's (healthy and prosperous) development its rearing environment has to supply for supportive conditions. The conditions selected, have been derived from existing theories and from the relevant empirical literature in the fields of developmental and educational psychology (Bartels and Heiner, 1989; Kalverboer, Zijlstra and Knorth, 2008). For every condition of the BIC-model, we decided which articles of the CRC would be offended if the condition was absent for a considerable period of time. If these conditions are present in the child's environment over a longer period of time, a positive effect on the development of the child may be expected. If not, the risk for developmental damage to the child is considerable implying that both the articles 3(1) and 6(2) of the Convention might be threatened as well as the other articles mentioned in relation to the particular condition (see tabel 1). Evidently, in individual cases the impact of such adverse environmental conditions may strongly depend of factors that contribute tot the vulnerability of the child. Rutter and Caprara (1995) formulated a number of issues which determine the impact of environmental risks on the development of a particular child. According to these authors, focus needs to be on the range of effects of indirect chain reactions involved in causal processes in perpetuation of their effects, reactions that reside in the interplay between individuals and their environments. This interactions-perspective implies that in decisions on individual cases on the following crucial issues have to be considered: *individual differences in vulnerability; shared and non-shared environmental effects; multiple adversities; indirect cumulative chain effects; risks and protective mechanisms; active processing of experiences and timing of experiences* (in Kalverboer, Zijlstra & Knorth, 2008).

Tabel 1

The Best Interest of the Child (BIC)-model

A	Family conditions: the present
<i>I</i>	<i>Physical well-being</i>
1	Adequate physical care
	Adequate physical care refers to the care for the child's health and physical well-being by parents or caretakers. They offer the child a place to live, clothing to wear, enough food to eat and (some) personal belongings. There is a family income to provide for all this. Besides the parents or caretakers are free of worries about providing for the child's physical well-being.
	CRC provisions that might be threatened if the condition is not supplied for: Art. 19, 20, 24, 26, 27, 32, 33, 34, 37, 39.
2	Safe physical environment
	A safe physical environment offers the child physical protection. This implies the absence of physical danger in the house or neighborhood the child lives in. There are no toxics or other threats in the house or neighborhood. The child is not threatened by abuse of any kind
	CRC provisions that might be threatened if the condition is not supplied for: Art. 19, 20, 23, 24, 26, 27, 32, 33, 34, 37, 39.
<i>II</i>	<i>Care and upbringing</i>
3	Affective atmosphere
	An affective atmosphere implies that the parents or caregivers of the child offer the child emotional protection, support and understanding. There are bonds of attachment between the parent(s) or caregiver(s) and the child. There is a relationship of mutual affection .
	CRC provisions that might be threatened if the condition is not supplied for: Art. 9, 10, 19, 20, 27, 37.
4	Supporting, flexible upbringing structure, adapted to the child
	A supporting, flexible upbringing structure means that the environment offers the child: enough daily routines in his or her life; encouragement, stimulation and instructions to the child and the requirement of realistic demands; rules and limits and instructions and an insight in the arguments for these rules and limits and

instructions;

control on his or her behavior;

enough space for his/her own wishes and thoughts, enough freedom to experiment and to negotiate over what is important to him or her;

no more responsibilities than he or she is capable of to handle (in this way the child learns what the consequences are of his/her behavior within the limits which the parents or caretakers have set).

CRC provisions that might be threatened if the condition is not supplied for:

Art. 12, 13, 14, 16, 18, 27, 37.

5 Adequate examples by parents

The parents or caretakers offer the child the opportunity to take over their behavior, values and cultural norms which are important, now and in the future.

CRC provisions that might be threatened if the condition is not supplied for:

Art. 9, 18, 19, 32, 33, 34, 37.

6 Interest

The parents or caretakers show interest in the activities and interests of the child and in his/her perception of the world.

CRC provisions that might be threatened if the condition is not supplied for:

Art. 12, 13, 14, 17, 27, 31.

B Family conditions: the past and the future

7 Continuity and stability in upbringing conditions, a future perspective

The parents or caretakers care for the child and bring it up in a way that attachment bonds develop. Basic trust is to be continued by the availability of the parents or caretakers to the child. The child experiences a future perspective.

CRC provisions that might be threatened if the condition is not supplied for:

Art. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 18, 20, 27.

C Societal conditions: the present

8 Safe physical wider environment

The neighborhood the child grows up in is safe, as well as the society the child lives in. Criminality, (civil)wars, natural disasters, infectious diseases et cetera do not threaten the development of the child

CRC provisions that might be threatened if the condition is not supplied for:

Art. 11, 23, 24, 27, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39.

9 Respect

The needs, wishes, feelings and desires of the child are taken seriously by its environment and the society the child lives in. There is no discrimination because of background, race or religion.

CRC provisions that might be threatened if the condition is not supplied for:

Art. 2, 5, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 19, 23, 30, 37.

10 Social network

The child (and his or her family) has a supportive social network he or she can count on.

CRC provisions that might be threatened if the condition is not supplied for:

Art. 20, 37, 31.

11 Education

The child receives a suitable education and has the opportunity to develop his/her personality and talents

CRC provisions that might be threatened if the condition is not supplied for:

Art. 17, 28, 29, 31.

12 Contact with peers or friends

The child has opportunities to have contacts with other children in various situations suitable to his or her perception or the world and developmental age.

CRC provisions that might be threatened if the condition is not supplied for:

Art. 19, 31.

13 Adequate examples in society

The child is in contact with children and adults who are an example for current and future behavior and who mediate the adaptation of important societal values and norms.

CRC provisions that might be threatened if the condition is not supplied for:

Art. 17, 19, 31, 32, 33, 34, 36, 37.

D Society: the past and the future

14 Stability in life circumstances, future perspective

The environment the child is brought up in, does not change suddenly and unforeseen. There is continuity in life circumstances. Remarkable changes are prepared for and comprehensible for the child. Persons to identify oneself with and sources of social support are available to the child over time. The child has ample opportunities to build up relations by language. Society offers the child chances and a future perspective.

CRC provisions that might be threatened if the condition is not supplied for:

Art. 8, 9, 10, 11, 20, 27, 30, 37, 38, 39.