

SPECIALIST PARENTING ASSESSMENTS

When a Standard Parenting Capacity Assessment May Not Be Enough.

A structured, accessible assessment approach for parents with additional needs or vulnerabilities: keeping the child's Safety, Needs and Welfare central.

When MALD[®] may be appropriate:

Consider a specialist approach where a parent has, or may have one or more of the following:

- **a Learning Difficulty or Learning Disability.**
- **Autism, ADHD or other Neurodivergence.**
- **Mental-health difficulties.**
- **Unresolved trauma.**
- **Difficulty processing, retaining or communicating information.**
- **Another vulnerability, requiring tailored adjustments.**

The aim is for a truly fair and accessible assessment process: which parents can understand and meaningfully participate in.

What makes this process different:

- **Tailored Reasonable Adjustments:** The MALD pace, communication and assessment approach can be adapted throughout in response to a parent's identified needs.
- **Interactive Assessment Tools:** The process employs visuals, cards, dolls and practical exercises – aimed at supporting engagement and understanding for all.
- **A Clear Assessment Plan:** The process, sessions and areas to be explored are set out and agreed at the outset – a parent is met at their own pace, with changes if needed.
- **Parent and Professional perspectives:** Self-assessment and collation of professional views help identify areas of agreement, difference and potential-change.
- **Using Evidence Beyond Interview:** Direct sessions, access-observations and relevant professional/support-network enquiries form part of the assessment process.

A Clear, Structured Process, from Instruction to Recommendations: with Court-Ready Reports

1. PLAN & ADJUST

Assessment plan, communication approach and reasonable adjustments agreed for the parent.

2. ASSESS & OBSERVE

Direct work, interactive tools, observations and relevant professional enquiries.

3. ANALYSE & RECOMMEND

Strengths, reservations, teaching/support needs and a clear professional recommendation.

ACCESSIBLE PROCESS, ROBUST EVIDENCE & CLEAR ANALYSIS

MALD[®] was devised by social work expert witnesses in consultation with a neurodivergence and learning-needs experts.

What a MALD[®] assessment gives you

A structured specialist assessment designed to connect the evidence about the parent with the individual needs and safety of the child.

INCLUDES THE CHILD'S DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS

Health • education • emotional & behavioural development • identity • family & social relationships • social presentation & self-care skills

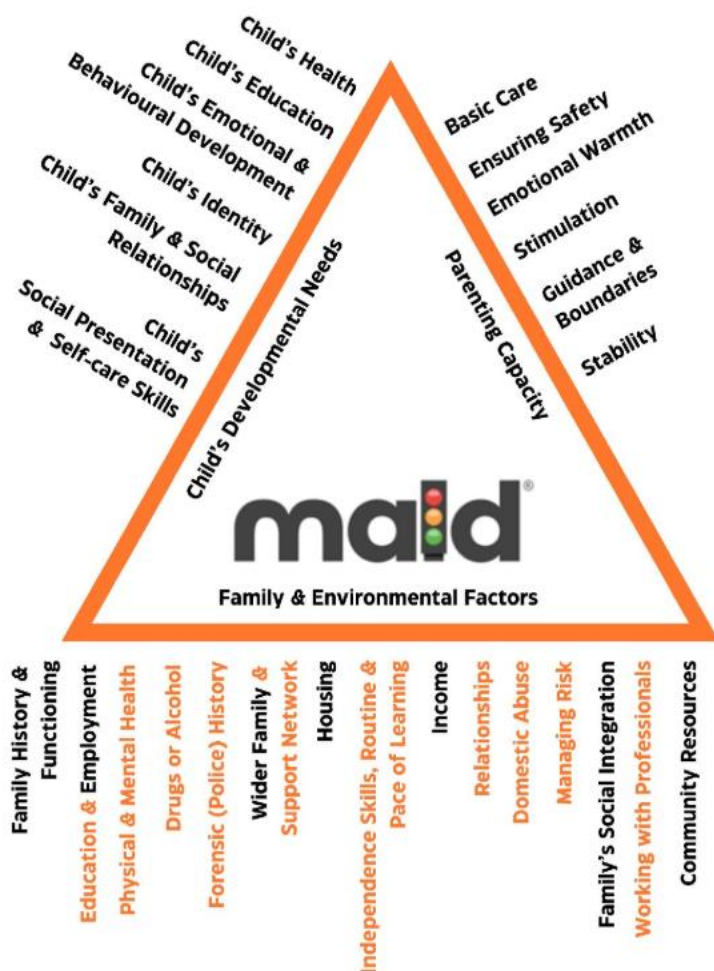
PARENTING CAPACITY

Basic care • ensuring safety • emotional warmth • stimulation • guidance & boundaries • stability • views on risk • identifying networks and professional supports

FAMILY & ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

Family history • health • substance use • relationships • domestic abuse • support network • housing • independence • routine • pace of learning • income • risk • effective working with professionals

The Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families (2000) has been updated by MALD[®] to include additional key subdomains, allowing for a thorough social work assessment to occur



Outcome: Clear Outputs for Better Decision-Making

AREAS OF STRENGTH

What the parent is currently able to do well for the child.

AREAS OF RESERVATION

Details of where concerns, limitations, worries or risks may remain.

TEACHING & SUPPORT NEEDS

What would need to change and what additional support is required: Now and in the Future.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A clear professional opinion based on the assessment evidence; with appropriate feedback provided to the participants.

COURT REPORT & EVIDENCE

A clear legal report is provided, which makes clear the outcomes and evidence base. Evidence can be provided in person or remotely.

The Key Question: With appropriate adjustments, support and teaching, can this parent safely and consistently meet this child's needs?

Useful where professionals need to understand...

- whether the parent has genuinely understood the concerns;
- the reasonable adjustments needed for meaningful participation and to achieve success;
- the parent's ability to learn, apply and sustain change;
- how identified vulnerabilities interact with parenting capacity

A process designed for all referrals sources:

- Legal Aid and Private Family-law Solicitors
- Tusla Principal Social Workers and social-work teams
- Parents and carers: s self-referrals
- Tusla Area Managers and senior decision-makers

Typical Assessment Timescale

Comprehensive assessments can be completed in approximately 8 weeks from instruction, subject to case complexity, engagement and information availability.

To Discuss a Current or Prospective Case

Email: steven@futuresdirections.ie

Or Call: 083 3721313

More details at www.MALDAssessment.co.uk or www.futuresdirections.ie

MALD[®] aims to support a fairer, clear and honest assessment process: through tailored-reasonable adjustments, greater accessibility and using specialist assessment tools.